

CONF 399/695
Conflict in America: Race, Gender, Class, and Sexuality
Summer 2013

Course Description:

The field of conflict Analysis and Resolution was developed largely to deal with conflicts “over there” where people struggle in exotic contexts. We are allured by the foreignness and tragedy of these conflicts and often imagine that what we see going on in our back yard is of an entirely different nature. But conflict happens right here at home, and it need not be bloody to be serious. We have escalated conflicts here in the United States with divisions across lines of race, gender, class and sexuality lines among others. We will address these conflicts in this class, with special attention to structural and cultural forms of violence, over and above the direct forms that are more immediately newsworthy. Students interested in interpersonal, community and even global conflict resolution will find rich themes suitable for their course of study covered in this class.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the class, students should be able to:

- Articulate and refine a scholarly question about one domestic conflict.
- Gather interview or focus group pilot evidence appropriate to your question.
- Analyze your data for application to your case.
- Connect your findings to some broader debate about that conflict in a presentation.

Graded Exercises and Related Matters:

You will be graded on the development of a pilot research project on the topic of domestic conflict. The project will require either four interviews or one focus group with suitable respondents. The goal of the project is not to produce new knowledge, but only to demonstrate familiarity with the issues pertinent to your conflict in application to empirical data that the student collects.

Your research project will be graded using the following elements:

- Inquiry journal: 15 points
- Participation in inquiry team meetings, including taking the lead in at least one meeting (question, data collection, data analysis, PowerPoint presentation): 20 points

- Active participation and satisfactory progress towards project goal: 35 points
- Development of Research PowerPoint presentation (or other suitable presentation software program document): 30 points (and presentation must be presented to earn a passing grade)

Grading:

- To earn an A, students need to earn over 90 points
- To earn a B, students need to earn over 80 points
- To earn a C, students need to earn over 70 points.
- Less than 70 points but successful presentation of poster will earn a D
- Less than 60 points or failure to complete project and present poster will earn an F.

Instructor and Office Hours:

This section of the course is taught by Solon Simmons, who can be reached at ssimmon5@gmu.edu. Office hours will be held on the Fairfax campus, NEMII building on Thursday at 9:30-11:15 AM.

Academic Integrity:

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

Diversity:

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is

essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

Privacy:

Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this project. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

Disability Accommodations:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Semester Plan:

Week 1: The Discursive Context

The Eclipse of Equality: Arguing American on Meet the Press
by Solon Simmons

Monday May 20
Tuesday May 21
Wednesday May 22
Thursday May 23

Week 2: Race

The New Jim Crow
by Michelle Alexander

Monday May 27
Tuesday May 28
Wednesday May 29
Thursday May 30

Week 3: Gender

Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead

by Sheryl Sandberg

Monday June 3

Tuesday June 4

Wednesday June 5

Thursday June 6

Week 4: Class

Where We Stand: Class Matters

by Bell Hooks

Monday June 10

Tuesday June 11

Wednesday June 12

Thursday June 13

Week 5: Sexuality

Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity

by Judith Butler

Monday June 17

Tuesday June 18

Wednesday June 19

Thursday June 20