

CONF 210  
THEORIES OF CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION

Semester:	Fall 2014
Class Time:	Tuesday-Thursday 12am – 1:15pm
Location:	West 1004
Instructors:	Hilmi Ulas
Office Hour:	<u>By appointment at Robinson B 365</u>
Instructor E-mail:	hulas@gmu.edu

Welcome to CONF 210! Building on what students have learned in CONF 101, this course further explores a variety of theories and frameworks for analyzing conflict and understanding resolution possibilities. Theories are basically generalizations about how the world works and why and how behavior occurs under certain circumstances. The understanding and application of theory are essential to glimpsing the 'big picture' of conflict and resolution. Course participants will be asked to reflect meaningfully on various theories in order to gain in-depth knowledge and contribute to the advancement of conflict theories.

Course participants will learn how to theorize and explore the ways of systematizing theories before applying them on particular cases and problems. We will look at the genealogy of theories trying to critically evaluate them, and explain their positive and negative sides. To gain better understanding of the basic theoretical concepts and assumptions, we will apply them on large-scale, violent, intergroup conflicts. This course will be run as a seminar with an emphasis on discussion and student participation. It is therefore crucial that students read the assigned books and articles prior to class. Active participation in class discussions and exercises will be expected.

**Course Requirements and Evaluation:**

In addition to regular attendance, 1) a short written comment on one (or more) of the readings for each session, 2) a presentation, 3) a final paper, and 4) thoughtful in-class and online participation are required.

- 1) Short Written Comment on Readings (30%): You will write short comments, thoughts, reflections etc., on a dedicated Google document shared with the instructor before coming to class (up to 5 paragraphs). You will be assigned to one of the four groups (which will rotate): a) one group will explore positive points about a theory/theories presented in readings, b) the second group will critique and explore deficiencies of the theory/theories, c) the third group will be expected to reflect on appropriate applications of a certain theory in different conflict situations, and d) the fourth group will 'synthesize' the week's theories with others we have already studied, comparing and contrasting at least two (more is welcome). These comments need not be a comprehensive coverage of the entire readings for the class, nor should they be summaries of the readings. Rather, this is an exercise to elicit your critical reactions to the readings. The comments therefore should reflect your intellectual engagement with the questions, theories, or cases provided by the readings.

- 2) The presentation (10%) will be based on your final paper. This would be an opportunity for you to present and get feedback on your arguments and ideas before submitting the final paper. A research proposal outlining the case study and the theories to be utilized should be sent to the instructor 3 weeks prior to the presentation date (5%). The instructor will either approve the project or ask the student to revise.
  
- 3) The final paper (30%). This paper will be a case study on which the student will apply the theories studied in order to analyze and propose a resolution for the conflict– or underline why one cannot be proposed. Although it need not be strictly followed, here is a sample outline of what your instructor expects to see in your final paper: 1) in the first section you will outline the case at hand; important here is to narrow down the time and level of study (e.g. Israeli-Palestinian Conflict from an individual perspective\*, post-2008); 2) in the second section you will be writing about the strengths and weaknesses of the theory/ies you will be utilizing, thus providing a rationale for their usage; 3) in the third section you will analyze the case at hand through the theoretical lens you identified; and 4) in the last section, you will evaluate/provide resolution opportunities for the case studied. All submissions should be made both in paper to the instructor and by e-mail. **Due: December 15 in class.**
  
- 4) Regular Attendance and Quality Participation (30%): This grade will be based upon the quality and consistency of your contributions to our class discussions and group exercises. Each week, you should be prepared not only to summarize what you have read and to discuss the authors’ main points, but to provide a critical perspective on our texts and their relation to other social theories and to issues of conflict analysis and resolution, both broadly and in particular settings. The questions you should be asking yourself as you read for class or prepare a group exercise include: What are the authors’ main concerns? Are their arguments logically compelling? How can we relate their arguments to the field of conflict analysis and resolution? How might they help us to better understand particular conflicts and their transformation? What might be left out of a particular analysis that it would be important to explore? A superlative evaluation for participation will require you to regularly contribute your ideas to our discussion, as well as to serve as a generous interlocutor for your colleagues. In other words, it is not the quantity of your contributions but the quality that matters, as well as your ability to raise issues that spark collaborative consideration, and to listen openly to others’ perspectives.

**Important:** As indicated above, your *short written comments* will be due **each Monday before class, by 11:59 pm**, unless indicated otherwise. Please be prepared to have a group meeting prior to this time to discuss the contents of your writing and, ultimately, to write them out on the Google Drive Folder which you will be privy to.

Delays, deferrals, or a grade of “incomplete” for the course will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family crisis. Late papers will receive penalized points. Students should also read the statement of SCAR’s Academic Standards and the University’s Honor Code.

### Grading:

The course will be graded according to the following chart:

Grade	95-100	90-94	85-89	80-84	75-79	70-74	65-69	60-64	50-59	0-49
	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C	C-	D	F

**Plagiarism and Honor Codes:**

You can find a copy of the Honor Code at: [academicintegrity.gmu.edu](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu).

You are expected to abide by George Mason University's Honor Code while preparing all work for this class. If you have any questions about Honor Code issues (e.g., whether you are permitted to discuss an assignment with a fellow student), are uncertain about how to cite a source, or if you have observed Honor Code violations, please discuss these with the Professor.

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at [academicintegrity.gmu.edu](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu). All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, 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. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

S-CAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it."

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**Student Services:**

**GMU Writing Center:** The Writing Center seeks to foster a writing climate on campus and beyond by offering free writing support to George Mason students, faculty, staff and alumni.

No matter what your writing abilities are, writing specialists can help you develop the skills you need to become a successful writer.

Free services include: One-on-one 45 minute sessions with a writing specialist; online writing lab; one-on-one sessions with an ESL specialist; workshops on such topics as documenting sources, grammar and punctuation; writing handouts on a variety of subjects; a library of handbooks and writing manuals; [and an] online chat with a tutor about papers submitted to the Online Writing Lab" (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

**Disability Support Services:**

Any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Support Services (993-2474) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) contact her or his instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations.

“George Mason University is committed to providing appropriate services and accommodations that allow self-identified students with disabilities to access programs and activities at the university as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. To achieve this goal, the university maintains and supports the Disability Resource Center Office, which is responsible for assuring that students receive the services and accommodations to which they are entitled. The professional staff of the Disability Resource Center Office coordinate services for students with disabilities, determine reasonable services and accommodations on the basis of disability, and act as a liaison between students and faculty/administration on concerns relating to services and accommodations” (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html>).

### **Readings:**

The following books will be available for purchase at the bookstore. All other readings are on Blackboard, available through the library, or can be found online.

### **Required:**

Ramsbotham, Oliver, et. al. 2011. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* [3<sup>rd</sup> ed.]. MA: Polity Press.

Melchin, Kenneth, and Cheryl Picard. 2008. *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Fineklstein, Norman. 2012. *What Gandhi Says: About Nonviolence, Resistance, and Courage*. NY: OR Book

Fillingham, L. A. 1993. *Foucault for Beginners*. CT: For Beginners LLC.

### **Course Schedule:**

***Important:*** Please note that your instructor reserves the right to change the schedule with a minimum of 2 weeks' notice as per the progression of the class.

### **Session 1 (Tuesday, August 26): Introduction\***

No readings assigned.

### **Assignment:**

1. Prior to class, please reflect on cases of conflict you would be interested in exploring (e.g. the conflict in Syria or Crimea; the conflict between the Republican and the Democratic parties, etc.), the conflict levels you would be interested in focusing on (e.g. interpersonal conflicts or international conflicts, etc.), and lastly the conflict theories which have thus far interested you the most (e.g. structural violence, relative deprivation, etc.). You will be asked to share your preferences with myself and the class. These decisions need not be final; rather, they are

to inform me on how to customize the class to best serve everyone's respective journeys in the field of conflict analysis and resolution.

## **Lecture 1 (Thursday, August 28): Conflict Resolution Theories Thus Far**

### Reading:

1. Ramsbotham et. al., Chapter 1

### Optional Reading:

1. Ramsbotham et. al., Chapter 3

### Theories Reviewed:

1. Relative Deprivation (Psycho-social Approach)
2. Greed vs. Grievance (Socio-economic Approach)
3. Basic Human Needs Theory (Psycho-social Approach)
4. Structural Violence (Socio-structural Approach)
5. Chosen Traumas and Ethic Tents (Psycho-social Approach)

## **Lecture 2 (Tuesday, September 2): Origins of Conflict Theories**

### Readings:

1. Machiavelli. *The Prince* Chapters XIV-XV, XVII- XVIII, XXV. Available at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1232/1232-h/1232-h.htm>
2. Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Chapter X: "Of Power, Worth, dignity, Honour, and Worthiness." Chapter XIII "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind". Available at: <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-contents.html>
3. Morgenthau, Hans. "A Realist Theory of International Politics." Available at: <http://internationalstudies.edublogs.org/files/2010/09/A-Realist-Theory-of-International-Politics.pdf>
4. Kant, Immanuel. *Perpetual Peace: A Political Sketch*. Available at: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kant/kant1.htm>
5. Krawford, Karyn. "Power in Society". Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/2365041/Marx\\_and\\_Conflict\\_Theory\\_-\\_Analysis\\_of\\_Power\\_in\\_Society](https://www.academia.edu/2365041/Marx_and_Conflict_Theory_-_Analysis_of_Power_in_Society)

## **Seminar 1 (Thursday, September 4): Leviathans and Democracies**

### Readings:

1. Ramsbotham et. al., Chapter 2
2. Paris, R. "Liberal Peace Thesis". Available through Google Drive.

## **Lecture 3 (Tuesday, September 9): Human Dimension & The Great Debate**

### Readings:

1. Burton, J. "Conflict Resolution: The Human Dimension". Available at: [http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol3\\_1/burton.htm](http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol3_1/burton.htm)
2. Sandole, J.D. "John Burton's Contribution to Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice". Available at: [http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6\\_1/Sandole.htm](http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6_1/Sandole.htm)
3. LeFebvre, R. and V. Franke. "Culture Matters". Available at: <http://www.mdpi.com/2075-4698/3/1/128/htm>
4. Avruch, K. "Type I and Type II Errors in Culturally Sensitive Conflict Resolution Practice". Available at: <http://staff.maxwell.syr.edu/cgerard/Fundamentals%20of%20Conflict%20Resolution/Type%20I%20and%20Type%20II%20Errors%20in%20Culturally%20Sensitive%20Conflict%20Resolution%20Practice.pdf>
5. Avruch, K. "Cross-Cultural Conflict", pp. 1-5. Available at: <http://www.eolss.net/ebooks/sample%20chapters/c14/e1-40-01-01.pdf>

## **Seminar 2 (Thursday, September 11): Debating the Human Dimension**

### Readings:

1. Ramsbotham et. al., Chapters 15 & 16
2. Rubenstein, R. "Basic Human Needs: The Next Steps in Theory Development". Available at: [http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6\\_1/Rubenstein.htm](http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6_1/Rubenstein.htm)

## **Lecture 4 (Tuesday, September 16): Lecture: Stepping Back – Interpersonal Dimension**

### Readings:

1. "Insight Blog". Available at: <http://www.insightconflictresolution.org/blog>
2. Glowacki, A. "Perception is at the Root of Conflict". Available at: <http://carleton.ca/ccer/wp-content/uploads/Glowacki-A-Perception-is-at-the-Root-of-Conflict.pdf>
3. Stone, R., et. al., 1999. *Difficult Conversations*. Available through Google Drive Folder.
4. Wilmot, W. W. and J. L. Hocker, 2007. *Interpersonal Conflict*. Available through Google Drive Folder.

## **Seminar 3 (Thursday, September 18): Negotiating Interpersonal Conflict Resolution**

### Readings:

1. Melchin, K. and C. Picard, Chapters 3 & 4
2. Finlay, L. "Reflecting on 'Reflective Practice'". Available at: <http://www.open.ac.uk/ctl-workspace/ctlcontent/documents/4bf2b48887459.pdf>

## **Lecture 5 (Tuesday, September 23): Culture Strikes Again: Of Clashes and Human Rights**

### Readings:

1. Huntington, S. P. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?". Available at: [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/Huntington\\_Clash.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/Huntington_Clash.pdf)
2. Donnelly, J. 1984. "Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights". Available through Google Drive Folder.
3. Ayton-Shenker, D. "The Challenge of Human Rights and Cultural Diversity". Available at: <http://www.un.org/rights/dpi1627e.htm>

4. Ramsbotham et. al. Chapter 15.

#### **Seminar 4 (Thursday, September 25): Rights vs. Culture, Championship Clash**

##### Readings:

1. Said, E. "Clash of Ignorance". Available at: <http://www.thenation.com/article/clash-ignorance#>
2. Brooks, D. "Huntington's Clash Revisited". Available at: [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/04/opinion/04brooks.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/04/opinion/04brooks.html?_r=0)
3. IRIN. "Justice for a Lawless World?: Whose Rights?". Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/indepthmain.aspx?InDepthId=7&ReportId=59466>
4. Musalo, K. "When Rights and Cultures Collide". Available at: <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/ie/v8n3/rightsandcultures.html>

#### **Lecture 6 (Tuesday, September 30): Psychology and Group Identity**

##### Readings:

1. Volkan, V. 1985. "Need to Have Enemies and Allies". Available through Google Drive Folder.
2. Delanty, G. 1997. "Habermas and Occidental Rationalism". Available through Google Drive Folder.
3. Korostelina, K. V. 2007. "Chapter 8: Formation of National Identity and Conflict Intentions of Minorities". Available through Google Drive Folder.
4. Emerson, R. M. "Power-Dependence Relations". Available through Google Drive Folder.

##### Theories Re-visited:

1. Ethnic Tents
2. Chosen Traumas
3. Greed and Grievance

#### **Seminar 5 (Thursday, October 2): Identity Crisis**

##### Readings:

1. Korostelina, K. V. 2007. Chapters 7 & 9. Available through Google Drive Folder.
2. Seymour, C. "Social Psychological Dimensions of Conflict." *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: September 2003  
<<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/social-psychological>>.

#### **Lecture 7 (Tuesday, October 7): Functionalism and Conflict**

##### Readings:

1. Merton, R. K. "The Unanticipated Consequences of Social Action". Available through Google Drive Folder.
2. Parsons, T. "The Functional Prerequisites of Social Systems". Available through Google Drive Folder.
3. Luhmann, N. "Functional Differentiation". Available through Google Drive Folder.
4. Alexander, J. "After Neofunctionalism". Available through Google Drive Folder.

#### **Seminar 6 (Thursday, October 9): Does Conflict Have a Function?**

##### Readings:

1. Coser, L. "The Functions of Social Conflict". Available through Google Drive Folder.

2. Collins, R. "The Basics of Conflict Theory". Available through Google Drive Folder.

### **Lecture 8 (Tuesday, October 14): Socialism, Class, and Revolution**

#### Readings:

1. Marx, K. & F. Engels. "Manifesto of the Communist Party". Available through Google Drive Folder.
2. Badiou, A. "The Communist Hypothesis". Available at: <http://newleftreview.org/II/49/alain-badiou-the-communist-hypothesis>
3. Buechler, S. M. "Marx and Lenin". Available through Google Drive Folder.

### **Seminar 7 (Thursday, October 16): How to Revolt**

#### Readings:

1. WikiHow. "How to Start a Revolution". Available at: <http://www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Revolution>
2. Robinson, S. "Six People You Need to Start a Revolution". Available at: [http://www.alternet.org/story/154968/6\\_people\\_you\\_need\\_to\\_start\\_a\\_revolution?page=0%2C0](http://www.alternet.org/story/154968/6_people_you_need_to_start_a_revolution?page=0%2C0)

### **Movie Day (Tuesday, October 21): Non-Violence**

Movie of the Day: A Force More Powerful

or

Gandhi\* (3hrs)

### **Seminar 8 (Thursday, October 23): What is This Nonviolence Anyway**

#### Readings:

1. Fineklstein, N. *What Gandhi Says*.

### **Lecture 9 (Tuesday, October 28): Social Movements & Media**

#### Readings:

1. Buechler, S. M. "Contentious Dynamics and Passionate Politics". Available through Google Drive Folder.
2. Buechler, S. M. "Framing and Social Construction". Available through Google Drive Folder.
3. Ramsbotham, et. al. Chapter 17.

#### Theories Re-visited:

1. Relative Deprivation
2. Greed vs. Grievance

### **Seminar 9 (Thursday, October 30): Moving, Socially, with Media Exposure**

#### Readings:

1. Westminster Papers. pp. 25-71 & pp. 115-122.
2. Aday, S. et. al. "Watching From Afar: Media Consumption Patterns Around the Arab Spring". Available at: <http://henryfarrell.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ABS4793731.pdf>

### **Lecture 10 (Tuesday, November 4): Role of the State**

#### Readings:



1. Tilly, C. *Coercion, Capital, and the European States*. Chapters 3 & 4. Available through the Google Drive.
2. Tilly, C. "Warmaking and Statemaking as Organized Crime". Available through the Google Drive.

### **Seminar 10 (Thursday, November 6): States vs. People**

#### Readings:

1. Weber, M. "The Nature of Charismatic Domination". Available through the Google Drive.
2. Foucault, M. "Panopticism". Available through the Google Drive.
3. Utilitarianism. Available at: <http://www.philosophypages.com/hy/5q.htm>
  - Save reading the last section on *The Subjection of Women* for next week.

#### Theories Revisited:

1. Hobbes's Leviathan.

### **Lecture 11 (Tuesday, November 11): Post-Modernism**

#### Readings:

1. Havel, V. "The Need for Transcendence in the Postmodern World". Available at: <http://www.worldtrans.org/whole/havelspeech.html>
2. Fillingham, *Foucault for Beginners*.

### **Seminar 11 (Thursday, November 13): Panopticon, Gender, and Other Themes**

#### Readings:

1. West, C. and D. H. Zimmerman. "Doing Gender". Available through the Google Drive.
2. Butler, J. "Subversive Bodily Acts". Available through the Google Drive.
3. Mills, S. "The Subjection of Women". Available at: <http://www.philosophypages.com/hy/5q.htm>
4. Ramsbotham, et. al. Chapter 13.

#### Theories Revisited:

1. Foucault's Panopticon

### **Lecture 12 (Tuesday, November 18): Protraction, Intractability, and Complexity**

#### Readings:

1. Coleman, P.T. *Selected pages on Complexity*. Available through the Google Drive.
2. Ramsbotham, et. al. Chapter 4.

### **Seminar 12 (Thursday, November 20): Gideon's Knot, Damocles's Sword**

#### Readings:

1. Coleman, P.T. *Selected pages on Resolving Intractability*. Available through the Google Drive.

### **Seminar 13 (Tuesday, November 25): Some Prominent National and Global Issues\***

#### Assignment:

Be ready to discuss (i.e. conduct research on) hyperpartizanship, racial conflict, income inequality, Syrian Conflict and R2P, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, militarism, democracy vs. philosopher king, etc. Feel free to post (at least 24 hours prior to class) topics and/or resources you would like to include in the class discussion on the Google Drive document created for this purpose.

**NO CLASS: November 27 – Thanksgiving Break**  
**Have a Happy Thanksgiving and Enjoy! :)**

**Seminar 14 (Tuesday, December 2): Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Transformation – and Transmutation**

Readings:

1. Ramsbotham, et. al. Chapters 4-10.

**Presentations (Thursday, December 4): Day 1**

**Presentations (Tuesday, December 9): Day 2**

**Presentations (Thursday, December 11): Day 3**

**Winter Wrap-up (Tuesday, December 16): Tying Loose Ends & Moving Forward**