

CONF 300 Section 002
Conflict Resolution Techniques & Practice

When: Fridays, 10:30 a.m. – 1:10 p.m.
Where: Music/Theater Building 1002
Instructor: Rochelle Arms A.
Mediator, Restorative Justice Facilitator, and PhD Student (S-CAR)
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(646) 820-1175
Office Hours: Fridays 1:30 – 3 p.m. and by appointment (please email/call me to schedule)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Building on what you have learned in CONF 101, this course provides a comprehensive overview of central techniques (negotiation, mediation, arbitration, dialogue, and restorative practices) in the field of conflict resolution and the theories or analyses upon which those techniques rest. The course relies heavily on experiential learning, through role plays, guest speakers, interviews, and videos.

Through consideration of interpersonal, small group, community and international conflicts; we will use a reflective practice framework to learn skills, possible roles in conflict, and the ethical implications of our interventions. While the goal is not to be fully trained as mediators or facilitators, this course will be an excellent introduction should you decide to pursue further training in such areas. The reflective practice framework will foster conscientious thinking about our actions in conflict, whether as parties or interveners.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Participation: 30%

Participation is a critical component to learning in this course. You will be evaluated on the quality of your engagement (speaking, listening, roleplays) in class discussions and activities, and your preparation for class. Please give all assignments adequate time and consideration. Your collaboration will enhance both your own learning and the learning of the group. Your participation grade, therefore, depends on participation both in and out of the classroom.

Each week, you will also bring a question to share with the opening circle. The question should connect to class readings in relation to a real-life current event (whether micro or macro) that captures your interest.

Learning Journal: 20%

A learning journal is a place for reflection and discovery. As a tool it helps solidify and clarify insights and questions. It provides the space and opportunity to work in your own mental lab. Each week you will be asked to write an entry in your Learning Journal that responds to a particular prompt relevant to the week's discussion or skill. Please respond to the prompt, but know that you are free to travel where you will with your thoughts, as long as you remain reflective and intentional about what you are doing as you travel those paths. Your journals are on blackboard and each journal should be submitted by the

beginning of class. We will dedicate time each week to reflections and insights you captured in your journals. Keep each journal to about 500 words.

Midterm Assignment – 25% - Practitioner Interview and Presentation – Identify a peacebuilding practitioner to interview. Choose a group or organization that works in a conflict area in which you are interested, and identify an individual within that organization to interview. Learn as much as you can about the organization, if you are not already familiar with them. **By September 26**, you should have identified your interviewee, requested and scheduled the interview, and let me know the name of the interviewee as well as the questions you plan to ask them, as these relate to the course. Phone or Skype interviews are OK if the practitioner is not local. Please speak with me sooner than later if you have trouble identifying an interviewee, so that I can assist you.

Due October 10: Write a 3 – 5 page paper describing the work of the group/organization you chose, summarizing your interview and describing your insights. Please connect your learnings from the interview to what we have discussed in the course up to this point. *You will also present your learnings to the class on October 10.*

Final Exam – 25% - The final exam will consist of a targeted summary of your Learning Journals (2 - 3 pages, more instruction will be provided later), and two take-home essays (3 pages each), due **December 12, by 5 p.m.**

Extra Credit - 2 page paper, or 10 minute oral presentation, about one of the Brown Bag or Dialogue and Difference events. Extra credit may be used to supplement other assignments (i.e., a missed Learning Journal or late paper).

For Writing Assignments: Please write in 12 pt. Font, Times New Roman, double-spaced with 1 inch margins, numbered pages, and consistent citation style. Please refer to the library website for helpful citation guide: <http://infoguides.gmu.edu/content.php?pid=25047>.

For Reading Assignments: Unless you were asked to purchase a reading, all readings will be on Blackboard, online, or searchable through the GMU library databases.

Late Work/ Missed Classes

You are expected to attend every class and submit all assignments by their due dates. Missing class will negatively your participation grade and submitting class assignments late will reduce one letter grade for each day late. Please address any scheduling conflicts before you reach a deadline so that accommodations may be made. If you have a documented emergency, you may make special arrangements with me. Upfront communication works best, so please do not hesitate to approach me sooner than later.

Grading Scale, Points Accumulated, Letter Grade

Points	Grade	Points	Grade
98-100	A+	79-82	B-
93-97	A	75-78	C+
90-92	A-	74-70	C
87-89	B+	69-71	C-
83-86	B	61-68	D
		0-60	F

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Honor Code and Plagiarism

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. 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 me.

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.

STUDENT RESOURCES

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 (703-993-2474) 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>).

Library Services

The SCAR program library liaison is Sarah Sheehan at Fenwick library. She is available by email at ssheehan@gmu.edu and by phone at 703-993-3709. Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research.

English Language Institute

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the GMU faculty or staff. For more information contact 703-993-3642 or malle2@gmu.edu.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring. For general questions and comments please contact wcenter@gmu.edu or call: 703-993-4491.

Counseling

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 703-993-2380. <http://caps.gmu.edu>

CLASS TOPICS and ASSIGNMENTS

General Class Agenda:

- Opening Circle – check in, journal reflections, weekly questions
- Introduction of Week’s Topic
- Activity, Video or Speaker
- Open Discussion
- Closing Circle – take-aways – questions answered, questions pending

Week 1 – August 29 - BEGINNING

- Introductions
- Building our learning space
- Course plan overview
- Nature of conflict
- Conflict contexts

Reading: The Dynamics of Conflict by B. Mayer, Ch. 1 and 2

Week 2 – September 5 – HOW CAN I HELP?

- Spectrum of practice vis a vis conflict contexts

- What does it mean to help?
- Intervener Identities
- Intervener considerations in the face of conflicts

Readings:

- Selections from How Can I Help? by Ram Dass and Paul Gorman
- The Dynamics of Conflict by B. Mayer, Ch. 6
- Strategic Peacebuilding Pathways by J. P. Lederach <http://kroc.nd.edu/strategic-peacebuilding-pathways>
- Diamond in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 3, *Who Else is Working There?* Pp. 25-35.
- Lederach in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 4, *Where Do I Fit In?* pp. 10-13.
- Marks and Marks in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 2, *What Do They Want Me to Do?*, pp. 15-23.

Week 3 – September 12 – REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

- What do we mean by reflective practice?
- Developing a reflective practice model for our course
- Discussion of Interview Assignment

Readings:

- Schön, Donald. 1983. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 2, pp. 21-69.
- Elliott, Michael, Tamra Pearson d’Estrée and Sanda Kaufman. 2003. Evaluation as a Tool for Reflection. (G. Burgess & H. Burgess, Eds.) *Beyond Intractability*. Retrieved from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/Evaluation-Reflection>
- d’Estrée, Tamra Pearson, Larissa A. Fast, Joshua N. Weiss and Monica S. Jakobsen. 2001. Changing the Debate about “Success” in Conflict Resolution Efforts. *Negotiation Journal*, 17(2), 101-113. (GMU Library Database)
- “Learning through Reflection on Experience, An Adult Learning Framework for How to Handle Conflict.” In *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (3rd edition). Ch. 24.

Homework: Take NBI Thinking Preferences Test online (you will receive instructions via email) – 20 minutes

Week 4 – September 19 - INTRO TO SELF IN CONFLICT

- Communication challenges
- Thinking Preferences, conflict styles
- Implications of your own styles/strengths for your work

Readings:

- Your NBI results (to be emailed to you)
- *People Skills* (Bolton). Ch. 1 and 2
- *Difficult Conversations*, Ch. 1, 2, and 5 (Blackboard)

Week 5 – September 26 – INTRO TO CORE (TRANSLATABLE) SKILLS

- Competencies

- Listening
- Reflection, Roleplays

Readings: *People Skills*, Ch. 3 and 4

DUE: Interviewee scheduled and questions you will ask them

Week 6 – October 3 – CORE SKILLS CONTINUED

- Reflection Continued
- Summary, Roleplays

Reading:

- “Reflection” by Peter Miller
- *People Skills*, Ch. 5 and 6

Week 7 – October 10 – INTERVIEW PRESENTATIONS

- 10 - 15 minutes per student
- **DUE: Interviewee Paper (see above directions)**

Week 8 – October 17 – MEDIATION

- Definitions, Types
- Mediation Video
- Roleplays

Readings:

- *Dispute Resolution: Beyond the Adversarial Model*, pp. 266-280
- “Becoming a Believer,” in *Stories Mediators Tell* (Galton and Love, eds.), pp. 193-202

Week 9 – October 24 – RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- Origins and definitions of RJ
- What does it look like? Program examples
- Roleplay
- Evaluation

Readings:

- *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, Ch. 1, 2, and 4

Week 10 – October 31 – NARRATIVE APPROACH TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Guest speaker – Alison Castel, S-CAR PhD Candidate, Center for the Study of Narrative and Conflict Resolution

Reading:

- Winslade, John, Gerald Monk and Alison Cotter. 1998. A Narrative Approach to the Practice of Mediation. *Negotiation Journal*, 14(1), 21-41.

Week 11 – November 7 – DIALOGUE, MULTI-PARTY PROCESSES

- Guest speaker – Gina Cerasani, PhD candidate

Readings:

- Selections from *The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects* (Schirch & Camp))
- *The Little Book of Cool Tools for Hot Topics* (Kraybill & Wright) – all

Week 12 – November 14 – COMPLICATING DYNAMICS, ETHICAL QUESTIONS, CRITIQUES OF PRACTICE

- Ethical Dilemmas in practice
- Social Justice
- Power
- Culture
- Final Exam Instructions distributed

Readings:

- Hansen, Toran. (2008). Critical conflict resolution theory and practice. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. 25(4). 403 – 427. (GMU Library Database)
- *Dispute Resolution: Beyond the Adversarial Model*, pp. 391–395, 405-408, 409-412, 442-446.
- From “Conflict Resolution and the Dilemma of Power,” in *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution* (Avruch), pp. 168 -173
- *The Dynamics of Conflict* – Ch. 3 and 4

Week 13 – November 21 – BIOPSYCHOLOGY OF CONFLICT

- Possible guest speaker: Steve Kotev
- Physiological responses to conflict
- Body Exercises for responding to conflict stress

Readings:

- Video: <http://www.integralalive.com/2012/08/13/paul-linden/> (Embodied Peacemaking – Paul Linden demo)
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEcdGK4DQsg> (neuroendocrinologist Robert Sapolsky on stress)
- Linden, Paul (2003) *Reach Out: Body Awareness Training for Peacemaking*, CCMS Publications, Columbus. This text is available in PDF format as a free download from <http://being-in-movement.com/reach-out>.
- Other readings TBD

Week 14 – December 5 – INTEGRATION, CLOSING

- Time to go more in depth or finalize prior topics
- Integrating our learnings
- Closing and goodbyes

FINAL EXAM ASSIGNMENTS DUE DECEMBER 12 by 5 p.m.

CLASS BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Some of these materials are assigned readings, and others serve as extra resources for us. **Books for purchase are in bold.***

Argyris, Chris and Donald A. Schön. (1992). *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Publishers.

Avruch, Kevin. (2013). *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Identity, Power, and Practice*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Bolton, R. (1986). *People Skills: How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others, and Resolve Conflicts*. New York: Touchstone.

Dass, Ram and Paul Gorman. (1985). *How Can I Help?* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Deutsch, M., Coleman, P. T., & Marcus, E. C. (2006). *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice* (2 edition.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

d'Estrée, Tamra Pearson, Larissa A. Fast, Joshua N. Weiss and Monica S. Jakobsen. 2001. Changing the Debate about "Success" in Conflict Resolution Efforts. *Negotiation Journal*, 17(2), 101-113.

Elliott, Michael, Tamra Pearson d'Estrée and Sanda Kaufman. 2003. Evaluation as a Tool for Reflection. (G. Burgess & H. Burgess, Eds.) *Beyond Intractability*. Retrieved from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/Evaluation-Reflection>

Hansen, Toran. (2008). Critical conflict resolution theory and practice. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. 25(4). 403 – 427.

Kraybill, R., & Wright, E. (2007). *Cool Tools for Hot Topics: Group Tools to Facilitate Meetings When Things Are Hot* (Original edition.). Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Kriesberg, Louis. 2003. Identity Issues. (G. Burgess & H. Burgess, Eds.) *Beyond Intractability*. Retrieved from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity-issues>

Lederach, John Paul and Janice Moomaw Jenner. (2002). *A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into The Eye of The Storm*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lederach, John Paul - Strategic Peacebuilding Pathways
<http://kroc.nd.edu/strategic-peacebuilding-pathways>

Mayer, Bernard (2012). *The Dynamics of Conflict: A Guide to Engagement and Intervention* (2nd edition.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Menkel-Meadow, Carrie J., Lela Love, Andrea Schneider, Jean Sternlight (2010). *Dispute*

Resolution: Beyond the Adversarial Model. New York: Aspen Publishers.

Pfund, Alicia, ed. (2013). *From Conflict Resolution to Social Justice: The Work and Legacy of Wallace Warfield.* New York: Bloomsbury.

Schirch, Lisa and David Camp. (2007). *The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects.* Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Stone, Douglas, Bruce Patton and Sheila Keen (1999). *Difficult Conversations, How to Discuss What Matters Most.* New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Winslade, John, Gerald Monk and Alison Cotter. (1998). A Narrative Approach to the Practice of Mediation. *Negotiation Journal*, 14(1), 21-41.

Zehr, H. (2002). *The little book of restorative justice.* Intercourse, PA: Good Books.