

CONF 659: LEADERSHIP IN CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION
School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University

Semester: Spring 2014

Dates: March 22; April 5-6; April 13; May 3-4

Location: Arlington: Founders Hall 467

Class Time: 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Instructor: Robert C. Fisher, JD
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Office Hours: by appointment

Leadership in conflict situations occurs at the interpersonal, group, and systems levels. The field of conflict analysis and resolution has focused historically on the role of individuals and groups in promoting and resolving conflict. Individuals, acting alone or in teams, attempt to resolve conflict utilizing a variety of approaches. The role and importance of leadership frequently is an important ingredient in studying and resolving conflict. For example, while conflict often is analyzed as competing interests, values, and cultures, and sometimes deep-rooted needs, the role of leadership in relation to those factors often is not considered.

We will explore leadership across a range of conflict scenarios, with an emphasis on collaborative leadership. In many instances, leadership roles are imbedded (and not necessarily visible) in a conflict, and part of the activity in this course will be to examine particular conflicts to determine how leadership contributed to the emergence, perpetuation, or resolution of conflict. We will use case modeling and experiential learning approaches to identify different aspects of leadership roles in conflict. Students also will integrate reflective practice with personal leadership development.

We will conduct the course as partners in learning and the class as a learning laboratory. Engagement with class members and primary responsibility for your own learning constitute a vital part of the course. You are expected to examine your ideas and worldviews.

Course Emphasis: In this course we will examine the:

- Study of leadership;
- Role of leadership in conflict and conflict resolution;
- Characteristics of collaborative leadership and other leadership models;
- Role of culture, gender, race / ethnicity, age, technology, etc. in leadership;
- Skills useful for leadership in a conflict setting; and
- Leadership aspects of third party roles.

Course Requirements:

Participation

50 percent

- Students are expected to participate actively in class and online in between classes. Students must demonstrate familiarity with concepts, theories, and models discussed in the literature and readings. Lively discussion is *expected*.
- Students should come to each class prepared to present and discuss an example of
 - a current conflict situation or a conflict where the student was involved
 - good, bad, or the absence of, leadership as portrayed in current events
- As leadership is a group activity each student will organize and lead discussions in class about leadership topics and to explore the leadership aspects of a particular conflict.

*Writing***50 percent**

- **Class Survey:** information will be provided. *Due:* before the first class
- **Leadership Interview:** to expose students to different perspectives on leadership, each student will interview someone in a leadership role and provide a brief written summary and a short presentation. *Due:* April 5th.
- **Book Review:** in addition to assigned readings for each class, students will read and summarize a book tailored to their individual leadership interests. *Due:* April 13th.
- **Reflective Essays:** to further awareness of the role of leadership, each student will prepare two short essays (concise expression is encouraged) on leadership topics. *Due:* TBD.
- **Leadership Paper.** Each student will submit a paper (length TBD) about the leadership dimensions of a conflict. A brief description of the conflict and the leadership analytic approach is *due* no later than April 13th. *Paper Due:* May 7th.

Further guidelines for each of these assignments will be discussed during the first class.

READINGS:**Texts**

Gardner, John, *On Leadership*, Free Press, 1997 (paperback edition)

Jackson, Brad and Parry, Ken, *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book About Studying Leadership*, Sage Publications, Inc., 2nd edition 2011

Readings available on Blackboard:

Deresiewicz, William, "Solitude and Leadership," *theamericanscholar.org*, Spring 2010, <http://www.theamericanscholar.org/solitude-and-leadership>

Kahneman, Daniel, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2011:

- Introduction (*excerpt*)
- Chapter One: "The Characteristics of the Story"
- Chapter Four: "The Associative Machine"
- Chapter Nine: Table – "Characteristics of System 1"
- Chapter Nineteen: "The Illusion of Understanding"
- Chapter Twenty: "The Illusion of Validity" (*excerpt*)
- Conclusions (*excerpt*)

Ladkin, Donna, *Rethinking Leadership, A New Look at Old Leadership Questions*, Edward Elgar, 2010 – Preface and Chapter Nine: "What has it meant to rethink leadership?"

Luke, Jeffery, *Catalytic Leadership: Strategies for an Interconnected World*, Jossey-Bass, 1998:

- Chapter Two: "Defining Public Leadership"
- Chapter Eight: "Facilitating Productive Working Groups" (*excerpt*)

Recommended:

Markman, Art, *Smart Thinking, Three Essential Keys to Solve Problems, Innovate, and Get Things Done*, Perigee, Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 2012

Additional Readings: other leadership related materials as assigned and optional readings will be available on Blackboard

CLASS TOPICS / AGENDA

SESSION #1: March 22

Focus: personal approaches to leadership and conflict

- Introduction and expectations
- Ways of looking at conflict
- Location of leadership in conflict
- Explore leadership concepts, models, theories
- Organize our work together – activities, assignments, grading, protocols, etc.

Readings:

Gardner, pp. 1-66

Jackson and Parry, pp. 1-44

Kahneman, Introduction (*excerpt*) and Chapter One: “The Characteristics of the Story”

Ladkin, Preface

Luke, Chapter Two: “Defining Public Leadership”

SESSION #2: April 05 + 06

Focus: aspects of culture, gender, race, etc. related to leadership

- Explore leadership concepts, models, theories
- Practice leadership styles, skills and abilities
- Interviews - brief presentations / discussion
- Leadership in a conflict (*presentation and discussions*)
- Personal reflection
- Mid-Course Evaluation

Readings:

Gardner, pp. 67-111

Jackson and Parry, pp. 45-94

Perruci article

SESSION #3: April 13

Focus: leadership and decision-making - implications of brain research

- Failed Leadership
- Explore leadership concepts, models, theories
- Practice leadership styles, skills and abilities
- Leadership books - brief presentations
- Leadership in a conflict (*presentation and discussions*)
- Personal reflection

Reading for Class:

Gardner, pp. 112-156

Jackson and Parry, pp. 95-111

Kahneman,
Chapter Four: “The Associative Machine”
Chapter Nine: Table – “Characteristics of System 1”
Chapter Nineteen: “The Illusion of Understanding”
Chapter Twenty: “The Illusion of Validity” (*excerpt*)

SESSION #4: May 03 + 04

Focus: leadership opportunities and challenges in the future

- Collaborative leadership – opportunities / limits
- Intergenerational leadership, technology, and future leadership challenges
- Practice leadership styles, skills and abilities
- Leadership integration exercise: TBA
- Leadership in a conflict (*presentation and discussions*)
- Reflection
- Closing and evaluation

Reading for Class:

Deresiewicz, William, “Solitude and Leadership”
Gardner, pp. 157-199
Jackson and Parry, pp. 112-151
Kahneman, Conclusions
Ladkin, Chapter Nine: “What has it meant to rethink leadership?”
Luke, Chapter Eight: “Facilitating Productive Working Groups” (*excerpt*)

ACADEMIC POLICES AND INFORMATION

You are expected to respect the learning process and integrity is expected of everyone in all academic work. You are expected to acknowledge the contributions of others in both discussions and writings. Please feel free to contact me, by phone or email, to discuss the class, your personal performance, or the conduct of others.

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. You can find a copy of the Honor Code in the [Mason catalog](#).

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.