

CONF 330: Section 002
CONFLICT RESOLUTION: GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES
Spring 2015

Instructor: Richard E. Rubenstein
Thursdays, 4:30-7:10
Innovation Hall 136

Course Objectives

Welcome to CONF 330-002. This section of the course is designed to explore a cutting-edge problem in conflict analysis and resolution: the existence of serious conflicts generated by structured social, economic, political, legal, or cultural systems, and the need to resolve or mitigate these conflicts by helping to transform these systems. Our learning objectives are as follows:

- To understand the relationship between structures of violence and conflict and practices of conflict resolution
- To integrate a wide range of perspectives on violence and conflict within a structural frame that can influence practice and research
- To appreciate how conflict resolution can contribute to social change
- To improve students' ability to write and speak clearly and persuasively on matters of public and academic interest

Course Structure

The course begins with four classes exploring general theories of structural violence and system transformation. In the next eight classes, we focus, respectively, on *class* conflicts that generate poverty, crime, and social disorder, and *political-cultural* conflicts that generate ethnic and religious wars. In each segment, we consider (a) methods of analyzing system-generated conflicts; and (b) possibilities of resolving them nonviolently or with a minimum of violence. The course concludes with two classes exploring proposals to transform the U.S. political system in order to create new possibilities of social change.

Instructor and Office Hours

This section of the course is taught by Richard Rubenstein, whose office is in Metropolitan Bldg 5070 on the Arlington campus. He can be reached at 703-993-1307 or at rubenstein.richard@gmail.com. If the matter is urgent, call 703-400-7674. The instructor is available to talk about the course or any other matters of interest by appointment. His Fairfax office hours are Thursdays, 3:30-4:30 at the CAR office, or by appointment.

Graded Exercises and Related Matters

Grades in this course will be based on a practice exam (required but ungraded), a take-home exam (25% of grade); a report on a recommended movie (25% of grade), and a final term paper analyzing a systemic conflict and proposing specific ways to resolve or mitigate it (40% of grade). Further specs for all these exercises will be provided in class. A mark equal to 10% of the final grade will be given for active participation in classroom and on-line discussions. Students should clear the movies to be reviewed and submit brief summaries of their final paper topics to the instructor by the dates stated in the list of assignments, below.

In order to receive a passing grade, it is necessary to attend classes prepared to discuss the assigned reading and to turn in all assignments on time. Late papers will not be accepted without proof of a bona fide medical or family emergency. Please note that it is S-CAR policy to refuse to grant final grades of Incomplete for reasons other than documented medical or family emergencies.

University requirements are listed immediately below in language suggested by the Provost's Office. We will take time in the first class to discuss any questions that you may have about this material, including questions about plagiarism.

Academic integrity

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

GMU email accounts

Students must activate their GMU email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class.

Office of Disability Services

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. All

academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Other Useful Campus Resources

WRITING CENTER: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200;

<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES "Ask a Librarian"

<http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380;

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<http://caps.gmu.edu>

The UNIVERSITY CATALOG, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

Course Materials

The required articles and book chapters in this course will be delivered to students via email or placed on the S-CAR Community Forum (network.scar.gmu.edu) or in an accessible drop box. Please join the Community Forum as soon as possible; the course is listed as CONF 330-002. Recommended readings will be available either on the Forum or on reserve in Fenwick Library. Two films will also be viewed as part of the course.

There are two categories of reading materials, required reading and recommended reading. Required reading materials are mandatory. Recommended materials are optional but very useful for students wishing to deepen their understanding of the subjects under study. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to follow and critically examine daily news reports on current events related to social conflict; they will be discussed in class to supplement the assigned reading materials.

The **required readings** for purchase are as follows:

Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. Berrett-Kohler, 2009. ISBN-10: 160509277

Peter Edelman, *So Rich So Poor: Why It's So Hard to End Poverty in America*. New Press, 2012. ISBN-10: 1595589368

Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, 2002. ISBN-10: 0192802232

Recommended readings are as follows (the list will be extended during the term):

Gar Alperovitz, *What Then Must We Do? Straight Talk About the Next American Revolution*. Chelsea Green Publishing, 2013. ISBN 978-1-60358-492-0

Steven M. Buechler, *Understanding Social Movements: Theories from the Classical Era to the Present*. Paradigm Press, 2011. ISBN-10: 594519161

Noam Chomsky, *Power Systems*. Metropolitan Books, 2013. ISBN: 979-0-8050-9615-6

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage, 1979. ISBN-10: 0394727673

Joan Minieri, Getsos, and Klein, *Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community*. Jossey-Bass, 2007. ISBN-10: 0787979090

Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco, *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt*. Nation Books, 2012. ISBN-10: 1568586434

Eric Shragge, *Activism and Social Change: Lessons for Community Organizing*, Second Edition. U. of Toronto Press, 2013. ISBN-10: 1442606274

Sudhir Venkatesh, *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. Penguin, 2008. ISBN 978-0-14-311493-2

The list of recommended movies is as follows:

(All the films below are fictional unless labeled as a documentary)

Twelve Years A Slave (2013) Oscar winner this year about slavery in the U.S.

The Grapes of Wrath (1940) Film version of the John Steinbeck novel starring Henry Fonda

The Battle of Algiers (1967) Classic film by Gillo Pontecorvo about anti-colonial revolution in Algeria

American History X (1998) An American Nazi goes to prison and learns about race, starring Edward Norton

Lone Star (1996) John Sayles movie about an unsolved murder and the legacy of social conflict in Texas

Modern Times (1936) Charlie Chaplin classic about industrial life

Paradise Now (2005) Palestinian friends become terrorists

The Quiet American (2002) Run up to the Vietnam War, Graham Greene's novel as a film starring Michael Caine

Burn! (Queimada) (1969) Gillo Pontecorvo film about a Caribbean revolution, starring Marlon Brando

District 9 (2009) Science fiction film about revolution and state terror

High Noon (1952) Mythic Western about criminals and good guys with Gary Cooper

M (1931) Great Fritz Lang movie about crime and punishment, starring Peter Lorre

The Baader-Meinhof Complex (2008) German documentary about terrorists of the 1980s

Syriana (2005) Imperial politics and violence in Syria, starring George Clooney

Men with Guns (1997) John Sayles film about political violence in Latin America

The Salt of the Earth (1954) Film about a miner's strike in the American Southwest

A Clockwork Orange (1971) Stanley Kubrick's fantasy of delinquency and totalitarianism in a future Britain, based on the Anthony Burgess novel

The Concrete Jungle (The Criminal) (1960) Stanley Baker in a great film about crime and prison life

Michael Collins (1996) Liam Neeson as the leader of the IRA during the Easter Uprising against Britain

The Other Conquest (La Otra Conquista) (2000). Controversial Mexican film about the conquest of the Aztecs by the Spanish

La Guerre Est Fini (The War is Over) (1966). Alain Resnais' brilliant film about a Spanish revolutionary coping with failure, starring Yves Montand

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

January 22: Intro to course: Do systems generate violence? How? How can violent systems be transformed?

Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research*, 6:3 (1969); "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research*, 27:3 (1990)

Richard E. Rubenstein, "Conflict Resolution and the Structural Sources of Conflict," in *Conflict Resolution: Dynamics, Process, and Structure*, Ed. Ho-Won Jeong (1999)

January 29: The problem of class conflict

Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party,"

www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf)

David Harvey, Berkeley Lecture on *Capital*. <http://vimeo.com/16098398>

(2009)

Gar Alperovitz, selection from *What Then Must We Do?* (2013)

Thomas Sowell, "Poverty and Dependence" (1981).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlsHNzp5SoM>

Restore America's Legacy, "The Myth of Class Warfare in America."

<http://restoreamericaslegacy.com/the-legacy-journal/166-the-myth-of-class-warfare-in-america>

February 5: The problem of system-transformation

Arthur Koestler, "The Yogi and the Commissar"

<http://www.unz.org/Pub/Horizon-1942jun-00381>

Tony Cliff, "Rosa Luxemburg"

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1969/rosalux/2-reforrev.htm>

Van Gosse, "What the New Deal Accomplished"

Piven and Cloward, "The Structuring of Protest"

Practice midterm paper posted on Forum: due at or before Feb. 19th class

February 12: First case: Poverty as a source of conflict

Peter Edelman, *So Rich, So Poor* (2012)

February 19: Crime and punishment

Michel Foucault, selection from *Discipline and Punish*

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* (2012), on YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gln1JwDUI64>

Jennifer Schuessler, "Drug Policy as Race Policy," *New York Times*, 3/6/12

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/07/books/michelle-alexanders-new-jim-crow-raises-drug-law-debates.html?_r=0

Practice midterm paper due via email

First mid-term paper topics posted on Community Forum. Due on or before March 5 class

February 26: Transforming the poverty/crime system

David Cole, "Can Our Shameful Prisons Be Reformed?" *NY Review of Books*, 11/19/09

David Simon, "There are Now Two Americas," *The Guardian*, 12/7/13

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/08/david-simon-capitalism-marx-two-americas-wire>

Economic Policy Institute, "Research and Hopes for Shared Prosperity." Articles at <http://www.epi.org/>

Daniel J. Mitchell Discusses the Fifty-Year War on Poverty (Cato Institute), 1/7/14

<http://www.cato.org/multimedia/media-highlights-tv/daniel-j-mitchell-discusses-fifty-year-war-poverty-al-jazeera>

March 5: Return mid-term paper.

View film:

March 12: NO CLASS -- SPRING BREAK

March 19: Second case: Empire as a source of conflict

Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*

Samuel F. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, 1993

Rubenstein and Crocker, "Challenging Huntington," *Foreign Policy*, 1994

Niall Ferguson, "How Britain Made the Modern World," YouTube, 2009

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSbMBh0YC1c>

Deadline for getting prof's approval for the movie you are reviewing

March 26: The war on terrorism

Richard E. Rubenstein, "The Psycho-Political Causes of Religious Terrorism"

Stephen M. Walt, "Beyond Bin Laden: Reshaping U.S. Foreign Policy"

Noam Chomsky, "The War on Terrorism," YouTube, 2008, Parts I and 2

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3bFaw3J8vE>

William Kristol et al, "The War on Terror," articles from *The Weekly Standard*

<https://www.weeklystandard.com/keyword/War-on-Terror>

Gareth Porter, "The War On ISIS." <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/real-politics-behind-us-war-1739057128>

April 2: Transforming the imperial system

Richard E. Rubenstein, "Conflict Resolution in an Age of Empire" (2012)

Joseph Nye, "Global Power Shifts" (TED Talk, 2010),

http://www.ted.com/talks/joseph_nye_on_global_power_shifts

Noam Chomsky, selection from *Power Systems* (2013)

April 9: Strategies for systemic change

Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, 1-111

April 16: View film:

Book or movie review due via email by start of class

Deadline for clearing final self-selected term paper topics with professor

April 23: Transforming systems through social action

Eric Shragge, selection from *Activism and Social Change: Lessons for Political Organizing, 2d Ed.* (2013)

Gar Alperovitz, selection from *What Then Must We Do?* (2013)

April 30: Course wrap-up, with guest speakers

May 12: Final term papers due via email