CONF 490.001
Integration of Theory, Practice, and Research
Spring 2011
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Description:

In this course students examine and critically reflect upon protracted violent conflicts—their analysis and possible resolution. Analysis leads to knowledge of a conflict's defining elements, its root causes, social and political setting of the conflict, and factors that lead to hostilities and hatreds. An understanding of the negative relations among protagonist groups is critical, as is the possibility for transformation of group identities. Conflict resolution centers on planned interventions that, presumably address the conflict's root causes, attending in particular to the destructive relations among protagonists, towards the goal of transforming the spiral of negativity to a spiral of possible change. Program evaluation of practice is vital for determining which sorts of interventions work and do not work. Of course, there are no "quick fixes" to protracted conflict and no single sort of intervention suits all conflicts.

The selection of topics centers on certain themes of integration; yet we take a grounded approach to such themes. We focus on the complexity of ethnic-based violence, its underlying sources, its devastating effects on victims, and the possibility of reconciliation and recovery. The course is organized around four major topics. Unit One addresses core concepts in conflict studies. In Unit Two students apply these concepts to a study of the dynamics of ethnic-based violence, with particular attention given to the ethnic conflict in Darfur. Unit Three addresses various forms of conflict resolution practices. Again, the Darfur conflict provides a useful context for case studies of assessing certain interventions to date in this troubles land. In Unit Four students give oral presentations on a particular conflict, distilling the results of their portfolio on the sources, evolution, and possible resolution of a particular conflict.

As a synthesis course in the General Education program, CONF 490 stresses the critical thinking skills associated with the integration of theory, practice, and research in our field. This course also reveals the inherent interdisciplinary of our field, drawing upon finding from social psychology, anthropology, history, philosophy, policy studies and international relations. Upon completing a synthesis course, students will be able to:

1. Communicate effectively in both oral and written forms, applying appropriate rhetorical standards (e.g., audience adaptation, language, argument, organization, evidence, etc.)
2. Connect issues in a given field to wider intellectual, community or societal concerns using perspectives from two or more disciplines
3. Apply critical thinking skills to:
    a. Evaluate the quality, credibility and limitations of an argument or a solution using appropriate evidence or resources,
    b. Judge the quality or value of an idea, work, or principle based on appropriate analytics and standards.

Texts:

Sandole, Byrne, Sandole-Staroste and Senehi, eds., Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Routledge, 2009 [HCAR] Paperback **ISBN:** 978-0-415-57735-9

Rabinowitz, D. and K. Abu-Bakr. Coffins on our Shoulders: The Experience of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel. University of California Press. ISBN: 0-520-24557-1 (pbk.)

Emmanuel Jal and Megan Lloyd Davies, War Child: A Child Soldier's Story. St. Martins Press. ISBN-10, 0-312-38322-3. (pbk)

Course Readings:

Ramsbotham, et. al. 2005. "Statistics of Deadly Quarrels," " In Contemporary Conflict Resolution. pp. 55-77.

Sandole, Dennis. 1998. "A comprehensive mapping of conflict and conflict resolution: a three pillar approach." Peace And Conflict Studies 5(2). Access at http://www.gmu.edu/academic/pcs/sandole

John W. Burton, "Human Needs Versus Societal Needs," Chapter 3 in the Power of Human Needs in World Society.

Avruch, Kevin and Black, Peter (1993). "Conflict resolution in intercultural settings: problems and prospects." In Dennis J.D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe, (Eds). Conflict resolution theory and Practice. Manchester University Press. (E-Reserve)

Galtung, J. (1969). "Violence, peace and peace research." Journal of Peace Research, 6 (3): 167-191. (e-reserve)

Tanner, Victor. Rule of Lawlessness: Roots and Repercussions of the Darfur Crisis

Rothbart and Korostelina, "Understanding Group Identity as Collective Axiology" in <u>Why They Die: Civilian Devastation in Violent Conflict</u>

Rothbart "The Politics of Civilian Identity," in <u>Civilians and the Ideology of War</u>, forthcoming.

Rothbart, Korostelina, and Oren, "The Second Lebanon War," in <u>Why They Die: Civilian Devastation in Violent Conflict</u>, pp. 76-97.

Sudan Task Group, "Darfur 2009-2010: toward breaking the impasse: an inclusive consultation"

Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, "The Challenges of Postconflict Development," in <u>Postconflict Development</u>, edited by Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, Chapter 1.

Planning a Program Evaluation

"Program Development Model" Cooperative Extension: Program Development and Evaluation http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande

Teaching Technology: Blackboard
We use Blackboard for the course readings
courses.gmu.edu
username:
password:

Course Schedule and Readings:

Week 1 (January 27) Topic: Course themes, objectives, requirements, and activities.

Unit One: Core themes of conflict analysis and resolution

Week 2: (February 3) Topic: Analyzing Conflicts
Readings:

Ramsbotham, et. al. 2005. "Statistics of Deadly Quarrels," " In <u>Contemporary Conflict Resolution</u>. pp. 55-77.

Sandole, Dennis. 1998. "A comprehensive mapping of conflict and conflict resolution: a three pillar approach." <u>Peace And Conflict Studies</u> 5(2). Access at http://www.gmu.edu/academic/pcs/sandole

Week 3 (February 10) "The Ghosts of Rwanda"

Week 4 (February 17) The Causes of Protracted Violent Conflicts

John W. Burton, "Human Needs Versus Societal Needs," Chapter 3 in the Power of Human Needs in World Society.

Avruch, Kevin and Black, Peter (1993). "Conflict resolution in intercultural settings: problems and prospects." In Dennis J.D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe, (Eds). Conflict resolution theory and Practice. Manchester University Press. (E-Reserve)

Galtung, J. (1969). "Violence, peace and peace research." Journal of Peace Research, 6 (3): 167-191. (e-reserve)

Week 5 (February 24) What is Conflict Research?

Tanner, Victor. Rule of Lawlessness: Roots and Repercussions of the Darfur Crisis

Unit Two: Ethnic-based Violence

Week 6 (March 3) Violence and Identities

Rabinowitz and Abu-Maker, Coffins on our Shoulders, Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

Celia Cook-Huffman, "The role of identity in conflict", Chapter 1, pp. 19-31, in Sandole, et. al., eds., Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Routledge, 2009 [HCAR]

Herbert Kelman, "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict" Chapter 12, in Sandole, et. al., eds., Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Routledge, 2009 [HCAR]

Week 7 (March 17) Violence and Identities (continued)

Rabinowitz and Abu-Maker, Coffins on our Shoulders, Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Rothbart and Korostelina, "Understanding Group Identity as Collective Axiology" in Why They Die: Civilian Devastation in Violent Conflict

Week 8: (March 24) Combatants and Civilians in War

Rothbart, "The Politics of Civilian Identity," in Civilians and the Ideology of War, forthcoming.

Rothbart, Korostelina, and Oren, "The Second Lebanon War," in <u>Why They Die: Civilian Devastation in Violent Conflict, pp. 76-97.</u>

Week 9: (March 31) Children in War

Emmanuel Jal, <u>War Child.</u>

UNIT Three: Conflict Interventions: Techniques of resolution

Week 10 (April 7) The Promise and Pitfalls of Mediation

R. Fisher, "Interactive conflict Resolution: Dialogue, conflict analysis, and problemsolving" in HCAR, Chapter 23

Sudan Task Group, "Darfur 2009-2010: toward breaking the impasse: an inclusive consultation"

Week 11 (April 14) Mediation and Development

T. Paffenholz, "Understanding the conflict—development nexus and the contribution of development cooperation to peacebuilding" in HCAR, Chapter 19

Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, "The Challenges of Postconflict Development," in <u>Postconflict Development</u>, edited by Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, Chapter 1.

Week 12 (April 21) Evaluation of Practice

Planning a Program Evaluation

"Program Development Model" Cooperative Extension: Program Development and Evaluation http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande

Unit Four: Presentations and future of the field

Week 13 (April 28) Oral presentations of conflict maps

Week 14 (May 5) The future of the Field

Course Requirements:

1. Participation.
Each class session will include a discussion-component that calls for active participation. Of course, regular attendance is expected. [10% of course grade.]

2. Essay on the core themes.

This essay is intended to summarize the core categories and doctrines of conflict analysis and resolution, as presented in Unit One. It is assigned February 17 and due in class February 24. [20% of course grade.]

3. Conflict Mapping.
For this assignment students formulate the defining elements of a protracted violent conflict, according to the model of conflict mapping to be presented. Background information will require outside research, probably with assistance from a reference librarian at GMU. The analysis also calls for the use of concepts, models, and themes presented during the course. Paper 10-12 pages double-spaced including references. The conflict mapping will be submitted in two stages:
   a. First draft: March 24 [10% of course grade.]
   b. Second (revised) draft; April 7 [10% of course grade.]

4. Conflict Intervention. Presentation of conflict intervention at poster session reviewed by a faculty panel. [20% of course grade.] Due April 7.

5. Final Exam. The final examination is comprehensive of the course content. This will be distributed during the last class (April 28) and due May 12. [30% of the course grade.]

HONOR POLICY
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.

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.