REFLECTION IN PRACTICE:
A CLASS IN DAMASCUS, SYRIA
CONF 713, Spring 2011
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Rough Draft

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Course Description:

Reflective practice is the process of exploring a pattern of action, making adjustments during the action, or thinking about past action. In an elemental sense, most of us perform some form of reflective practice virtually every day. To the extent that reflective practice incorporates theory and experience, even the most mundane of activities engages aspects of experiential learning and nascent theory.

Conflict resolution is frequently a process that involves emotional intensity and relational complexity. This can be a factor in dyadic disputes, but is significantly present in deep-rooted multiparty conflicts. Because of this, it is critical that practitioners be skilled at integrating theory and experiential learning into practice at three stages of an intervention: (i) in analyzing or assessing the conflict in preparation for intervention; (ii) during the intervention itself; (iii) and post intervention reflection. In this way, reflective practice is a form of "meaning making", attempting to make sense of phenomena occurring around you through an interdependence of theory, experience and practice. Utilizing a uniquely challenging experience of fieldwork you will have the opportunity to engage aspects of reflective practice as noted above. The objective is to build an understanding of integrative practice that can be utilized in a variety of conflict settings.

The Syria Seminar is an intense experience in an environment that becomes practice and reflection the moment one enters Syria. The study and engagements are all in the shadow of a paradoxical combination of wonderful hospitality, fascinating people, and a complicated and intensely controlled political and security environment. There is a need to measure one's every word and action in order to honor and protect indigenous people, as well effectively practice citizen diplomacy and peacebuilding. Before, during, and after this trip the student experiences reflective practice at every moment, and the assignments are geared in this way precisely.

The model is a combination of intensive classroom study, speakers from the local region, touring of Damascus and the countryside, extensive field experience engaging communities across the Syrian spectrum day and night, combined with preparation meetings, follow up meetings, and individual and peer help with papers.

Course Objectives:

➤ Develop a deeper understanding of the importance and utility of personal reflection, when analyzing conflict systems, designing and implementing interventions.
➤ Build a sense of the intricate connection between theory and practice. Reflective practice is a critical step to this end, as it allows for a synthesis of theory and practice in a coherent and meaningful way.
➤ Develop the ability of cross-cultural understanding and engagement. It is also important to understand the utility of constructive public dialogue, especially in cross-cultural settings.
➤ Become aware of ethical considerations and develop sensitivity to ethical concerns when analyzing and intervening in conflict systems. Personal reflection is a sine qua non for detecting and understanding ethical concerns.

Course Structure:
The course will take place in January 2011, in addition to preparatory and follow-up meetings. Students will spend 10 days in Syria. Each day will be structured as 4 hours class time, and the rest of the day and evening in field experience, guided discussion, and diplomatic engagement. We will be studying, as well as travelling in the city and parts of the country.

Course Requirements:

A. Participation personally or virtually in one preparatory meeting prior to departure for Syria in January.

B. Effective and successful engagement with others in Syria, both in the class and with all Syrians that the class engages. **30% of Grade**

C. Reading all or most of *To Make the Earth Whole* prior to departure.

D. Reading all of the other readings listed below before papers are written.

E. Reflective Paper that: 1.Describes your experience of the intervention and trip, 2. Evaluates your own practice in Syria, 3. Evaluates the intervention as a whole from your perspective, 4. Recommends, in light of your experience, further experiments in practice in Syria or any region, global or domestic, of personal concern to you. (Journaling on the trip will help with this paper.) **30% of Grade**

F. Analytic Paper which evaluates the readings on the theory of engagement and reflective practice in light of your own experience in Syria. This paper must include a reasonably detailed synopsis of each reading (one page each). **20% of Grade**. Final papers are due the last day of Spring Semester courses, **Saturday May 7th.**

G. Design an intervention to an aspect of the conflict (individually or in groups) and present it in a public forum at ICAR. (Alternate arrangements will be made for students not in the D.C. area) **20% of Grade**

H. Follow up meeting, post-trip, in the Spring of 2011 to prepare for papers, evaluate the experience.

Reading Materials:

Required Text for Purchase:
Gopin, Marc. 2009. *To Make the Earth Whole: The Art of Citizen Diplomacy in an Age of Religious Militancy*. Lanham, MD. Rowman & Littlefield. Available at Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com and the publisher.

**Required Readings Available on E-Reserve
Or
2-hour Print Reserve (PR) at the Arlington Campus Library**

Adobe Acrobat must be installed on your computer to view and print some E-Reserves Readings. E-Reserves permits students to access Course Readings remotely from home or office, and allows students to view and print materials using Adobe Acrobat Reader. All users of the E-Reserves must comply with the University Policy and Copy Right Law (Title 17, United States Code)

Accessing E-Reserves:
1. Go to http://library.gmu.edu/
2. Click on the light green tab that says "E-reserves"
3. Using the drop-down boxes, select the course [**CONF 713 008**] and instructor Gopin, Marc.
4. Enter in the password (**transform**) and click "submit" to view the item. It is case sensitive.
5. To view and print an article click on the small PDF button or the Link button if available
If you experience problems with an electronic reserve item or need additional help please contact the E-Reserves Coordinator at 703.993.9043. If you need additional assistance please e-mail ereserves@gmu.edu.

The following e-reserve articles are now available and required reading for CONF 713 Spring 2011:

Argyis, Chris and Donald A. Schön. 1992. *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness.* Chapter 1: "Theories of Action", Chapter 2: "Evaluating Theories of Action", pp. 3-34. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 1 55542 446 5.

Avruch, Kevin and Peter W. Black (1993). "Conflict Resolution in Intercultural Settings: Problems and Prospects," in D. Sandole and H. van der Merwe, eds., *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice Integration and Application*. Manchester: Manchester

University Press. pp. 131-145.

Bush, Baruch and Joseph Folger. 1994. *The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict Through Empowerment and Recognition,* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Cheldelin, Sandra I., Wallace Warfield with January Makamba. 2004. Reflections on Reflective Practice, pp. 64-78. In *Research Frontiers in Conflict Analysis and Resolution.* Fairfax: Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University.

Driver, Michael J. et al. 1993. *The Dynamic Decision Maker: Five Decision Styles for Executive and Business Success.* Chapter **1**, pp. 1-17; & Chapter **2**, pp. 18-37. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 1 55542 593 3.

Duffield, Mark. 2001. The New Humanitarianism, Chapter 4, pp. 75-107. In *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security.* New York: Palgrave. ISBN: 1 85 649 749 6.

Dugan, Máire A. 1996. A Nested Theory of Conflict. In *A Leadership Journal: Women in Leadership – Sharing the Vision.* Volume 1, pp. 9-19.

Dukes, E. Franklin. 1996. Facilitation of Dialogue, Chapter 5, pp. 62-75. In *Resolving public conflict: Transforming community and governance.* Manchester: Manchester University Press. ISBN: 0 7190 4514 4.

Gelinas and James. 2008. *Meaningful Public Conversations: Essential Principles and Practices for Strengthening Collaboration in our Communities*, Gelinas and James, Inc., 2008, http://74.125.93.132/search?q+cache:PUq8q63GBa4J:www.hbmwd.com/

LeBaron, Michelle. 2003. *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World.* Chapter 1, pp. 3-31; & Chapter 10, pp. 271-289. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 0 7879 6431 X.

Lederach, John Paul. 1995. *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures.* Chapter 6, pp. 55-62. New York: Syracuse University Press. ISBN: 0 8156 2725.

Lederach, John Paul. 1998. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies.* Pp. Washington, DC: USIP. Pp. 23-63. ISBN: 978-1-878379-73-3

Marsick, Victoria J., and Alfonso Sauquet. 2000. Learning through Reflection, Chapter 19, pp. 382-399. In *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice.* Deutsch, Morton and Peter T. Coleman, Eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 0 7879 4822 5.

Schirch, Lisa. 2004. *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding.* pp. 97-161.Kumarian Press. ISBN: 978 1 56549 194 6

Schön, Donald, 1983. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action.* Chapter 2, "From Technical Rationality to Reflection-in-Action" (p 21-69) New York: Basic Books.

Ting Toomy, Stella. 1999. *Intercultural Communication: An Introduction*, Chapter 1, New York: Guilford Press. pp 3-24.

Vasquez, John A. 2005. Ethics, Foreign Policy, and Liberal Wars: The Role of Restraint in Moral Decision Making. In *International Studies Perspectives*. Volume 6, Issue 3, pp. 307-315. ISBN: 1528 3577.

Yankelovich, Daniel, 1999. Chapter 2, pp 6-47. The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming conflict into cooperation, New York: Simon and Schuster. ISBN-68485457-0

Warfield, Wallace. 2002. Is This the Right Thing to Do? A Practical Framework for Ethical Decisions, Chapter 19, pp. 213-223. In *A Handbook of International*

Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm. Lederach, John Paul, and Janice Moomaw Jenner, Eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 0 7879 5879 4.

Watkins, Jane Magruder and Bernard J. Mohr. 2001. *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer. Chapter 2 "Appreciative Inquiry : History, Theory and Research."

Watkins, Watkins, Jane Magruder and Bernard J. Mohr (2001) *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer. Chapter 3 "Appreciative Inquiry as a Process." Week 9

***Please note: due to copyright laws the following readings are on print reserve at the Arlington campus library.

1. Bush, Baruch and Joseph Folger. 1994. The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict Through Empowerment and Recognition, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (this is also an e-book; however, it can be accessed by just one student at a time, so just in case I've put it on a print reserve)

2. Lederach, John Paul. 1998. Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. Washington, DC: USIP. Pp. 23-63. ISBN: 978-1-878379-73-3

3. Schirch, Lisa. 2004. Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding. pp. 97-161.Kumarian Press. ISBN: 978 1 56549 194 6

4. Lederach, J.P., and Moomaw Jenner, J. (Eds) (2002). Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 0 7879 5879 4.

5. Yankelovich, Daniel, 1999. Chapter 2, pp 6-47. The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming conflict into cooperation, New York: Simon and Schuster. ISBN-68485457-0

Recommended Reading: http://kroc.nd.edu/sites/default/files/crs_reflective_final.pdf

Honor Code and Plagiarism

A reminder: Plagiarism or other violations of the **honor code** are not acceptable in this or any other GMU class. In addition to the following, please see the ICAR handbook:

http://www.gmu.edu/departments/ICAR/newstudent/Appendix_L.pdf.)

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 the professor.

ICAR's Policy: Faculty require that all written work must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared to electronic databases. Faculty may at any time compare a student's written work against electronic databases/plagiarism detection software without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require work to be submitted in print and electronic form. Faculty are encouraged to require students to submit work through Blackboards SafeAssign program. Faculty may also directly submit work using the same system.

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University Resources and Assistance

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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 provides tutors who can help you develop ideas and revise papers at

no charge. It can sometimes accommodate walk-ins, but generally it is best to call for an appointment. The services of the Writing Center are also available online.
Location: ARL311   **Contact**: 703. 993.4491 or http://writingcenter.gmu.edu. It is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring.

Disability Resource Center
The Disability Resource Center assists students with learning or physical conditions affecting learning. Students with learning differences that require special conditions for exams or other writing assignments should provide documentation provided by the Disability Resource Center. Please see one of the instructors the first week of classes.
Location: SUB I, Room 222 **Contact**: 703.993.2474 www.gmu.edu/student/drc/