

# CONF 302: Identity and Conflict

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M: 1:30 pm - 4:10 pm  
Robinson Hall A249

## Overview

This course is designed to explore complex interrelations of social identity and postmodern conflicts in society with the emphasis on the role of identity in processes of conflict resolution and transformation. Critical rethinking of ethnic, national and religious identities as both generators and outcomes of conflict will be important part of the course. Course aims to extend knowledge on structure and dynamic of identity-based conflicts and to develop a framework for their resolution. Course includes lectures, simulations, and case studies. The final assignment of the course requires students to conduct case study and design an intervention into a conflict of their choice.

### **Assessment of Students:**

Students participating in the full course will be graded based on the following:

1. Active participation in the class activities is worth 20 % of the final grade.
2. Students are required to write 4 papers on multiple identities, ethnic identity, national identity, and religious identity. The papers should be 3-5 pages in length and each paper is worth 15% of the final grade.
3. Students are required to conduct a case study of conflict of their choice and design an intervention. The case study can be drawn from the organizational, communal, national, or international level and should involve identity conflict in any form. The research paper should be 10 pages in length and is worth 20% of the final grade.

### **Writing Intensive Course:**

This course fulfills all of the writing-intensive requirements for the Conflict Analysis and Resolution undergraduate major through the assignments listed on pages three and four of the syllabus.

### **Required reading:**

Ashmore, R.D., Jussim, L. and Wilder, D. (2001) *Social identity, intergroup conflict and conflict reduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Brewer, M. B. (2003). *Intergroup relations*. Buckingham [England] ; Philadelphia, PA : Open University Press.

Brubaker, R. (1996). *Nationalism reframed: nationhood and the national question in the new Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rothman, J. *Resolving identity-based conflict in nations, organizations, and communities*. - San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997

Volkan, Vamik (1997). *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux

### Additional reading:

- Horowitz, Donald (1985). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkely, CA: University of California Press
- Helmick , Raymond G. & Petersen, Rodney L. (Eds). (2001). *Forgiveness and reconciliation: religion, public policy & conflict transformation*. Philadelphia : Templeton Foundation Press.
- Brubaker, R. (1996). *Nationalism reframed: nationhood and the national question in the new Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cockburn, C. *The space between us*. London, New York: Zed books, 1998
- Kelman, H. C. Nationalism, patriotism, and national identity: Social-psychological dimensions// D. Bar-Tal & E. Staub (Eds.), *Patriotism in the lives of individuals and nations*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1997.
- Kriesberg, Louis (2002). *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield
- Korostelina, Karyna.(2003) The Multiethnic State-Building Dilemma: National and Ethnic Minorities' Identities in the Crimea. *National Identities*, 5, N 2, p. 141-159
- Smith, Marc A. and Kollock, Peter (Eds). (1999).*Communities in cyberspace*. London ; New York : Routledge. <http://mutex.gmu.edu:2085/Reader/>

### Weekly Schedule

- January 23:        Introduction to Course. Introduction to Social Identity  
Reading: Brewer: 4-16 ; Volkan: 17- 29;
- January 30:        Theories of Social Identity  
Reading: Brewer: 32-41; Volkan: 36- 49, 81-100;
- February 6:        Identity, prejudice, and discrimination  
Reading: Ashmore:3-42; Brewer:43-67, 112-123,
- February 13:       Identity and conflict  
Reading: **Kriesberg: 2- 24, 55-64**; Rothman: 5-12
- February 20:       Ethnic Identity. Film and discussion  
Reading: Ashmore: 42-71; **Horowitz: 51-88**; Volkan: 101-116
- February 27:       Ethnic Identity And Conflict .Role-play on ethnic identity (Three families)  
Reading: Volkan: 157-167, Brewer: 20-32
- March 6:            National Identity  
Reading: Brubaker: 13-23; 55-79, Ashmore: 71-133
- March 13:           Break
- March 20:           Identity, Moral Denigration, and Violence  
Reading: Ashmore: 133-187
- March 27:           Nationalism, Patriotism and Citizenship  
Reading: **Kelman**, Korostelina (TBD)
- April 3:            National and Ethnic identity: Case Study Role-play on National Identity ( Town & Lake)

Reading: Tidiane Sy, Waseem, Buadaeng, (TBD)

- April 10: Religious Identity and Conflict  
Reading: **Helmick & Petersen**: 3-25, 97-116: **Volkan (Blind Trust)**: 113-171
- April 17: Identity-Based Conflict Resolution: Shared and Multiple Identities  
Reading: Brewer: 88-109, Rothman: 5-52, Ashmore: 187-213;
- April 24: Conflict Transformation: Building Relationship  
Readings: Volkan: 203-227, Brewer: 88-109, Rothman: 53-87 **Azar: 18-29**
- May 1: Paper presentations and discussion

## Assignments

### 1. Multiple identity paper.

Write a paper about your own social identity system using the following structure:

- a) List all social groups you involve in.
- b) List and briefly describe your social identities.
- c) Describe the most salient identities and give examples how they influence your attitudes, values, behavior.
- d) Show interrelations within system of social identities: which identities are very interconnected.
- e) Describe changes in identity salience and give examples when your non-salient identity became the most salient one.

You can choose one of the following forms:

- I. Write a letter for your friend about your social identity.
- II. Write a scientific self-report about your social identity.

The papers should be 3-5 pages in length, double space, 12. Due date is: **February, 13**

### 2. Ethnic identity paper.

Write a paper analyzing ethnic identity of your choice (identity of your own ethnic group or any other ethnic group) based on theoretical ideas of V. Volkan. Use his notions of chosen trauma and glory, phenomenon of minor differences and other notions to describe features of particular ethnic identity, give examples and provide conclusion about relevancy of the Volkan's theoretical approach. For this paper you can use interviews with representatives of ethnic group, examples from literature, art, and history. The papers should be 3-5 pages in length, double space, 12. Draft due date is: **March, 6.**

**Paper to be revised incorporating instructor's feedback.** Paper due date: **March, 27**

### 3. National Identity paper

You are working in a newspaper and received the following letter: "In current news people very often use words *nationalism* and *patriotism*. Are they similar or different? Do they describe the same processes and phenomenon or they have diverse meaning? What theoretical approaches describe them? How we can compare them?" Write the answer for this letter. The papers should be 3- 5 pages in length, double space, 12. Due date is: **April, 3**

### 4. Religious identity paper

There are a lot of different opinions about the role of religion in conflict expansion and resolution. Write a paper to show your own opinion about the impact of religion on process of conflict development, transformation and mitigation. Put your main statements in the beginning and develop them using multiple examples. The papers should be 5-7 pages in length, double space, 12. Due date is: **April, 17**

## **5. Final paper on case study and intervention.**

The case study can be drawn from the organizational, communal, national, or international level and should involve identity conflict in any form. Be sure to analyze conflict based on theoretical ideas and notions you studied during the course. Show how theoretical analysis can help to understand identity conflict and can serve as a basis for the intervention. Suggest your methods for conflict resolution, based on social identity theory. Plan to present your paper for seven minutes during last two classes. The research paper should be 10 pages in length double space, 12. Due date for draft is: **May, 1. Paper to be revised incorporating instructor's feedback. Due date for revised final paper is May, 8.**