

CONF 601: Section 002 (Intensive)
THEORIES OF CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION
Spring 2015

Instructor: Richard E. Rubenstein
M and W, 1:30-4:10 p.m.
Founders Hall 312

Objectives

Welcome to CONF 601. This course is designed to explore a wide range of conceptual frameworks for analyzing and resolving social conflict. Our objectives include:

- Examining and critiquing social theories that may prove useful in analyzing various types of social conflicts
- Evaluating the usefulness of these social theories by applying them to specific conflict situations
- Assisting students to become better critics of conflict-related theories and more acute conflict analysts; and
- Enabling them to develop their own abilities to construct useful theories of conflict and conflict resolution.

Instructors and Office Hours

This section of the course is taught by Richard Rubenstein, Metropolitan Bldg 5070. 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.

Graded Exercises and Related Matters

Grades in this course will be based on three exercises: a short take-home exam on a theoretical topic (25% of grade), a book or movie review (25% of grade), and a final term paper applying selected theories to a conflict of the student's choice (40% of grade). 10% of the grade will be based on active participation in class discussions. Students should clear the books or movies to be reviewed with the instructor and submit brief summaries of their final paper topics by the dates stated in the list of classes and 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. Please note that it is S-CAR policy to refuse to grant 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;
COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380;
<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 a

drop-box accessible via computer. Please join the Community Forum as soon as possible; this is a class requirement. Recommended readings will be available either on the Forum or on reserve in the John Burton Library. One film 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 required 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.

Course Structure

In broad outline, three types of social theories will be studied in this course:

1. *Theories of social structure* – viewing a social institution, typically comprised of sustained, hierarchical, and multi-layered relationships, as a unit of analysis; accounting for “what you are inside of”
2. *Theories of human nature* – viewing each individual as a unit of analysis; accounting for “what is inside you” with an emphasis on what lies beneath the conscious level
3. *Theories of culture* – viewing an epistemological system of meaning-making as a unit of analysis; accounting for “what is inside us” with an emphasis on shared interpretive lenses with which to understand social phenomena

These three types are loose categories that overlap significantly. Structural theories include realism and functionalism, Marxism, relative deprivation, and modernization/globalization. Human nature theories include basic human needs, frustration-aggression, and psychoanalysis. Cultural theories include meaning-making, traditional approaches to conflict resolution, feminism, and postmodernism.

In order to help students assess the practical strengths and limitations of these theories, we will incorporate a case study session and a movie in the course.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

January 21

Introduction to the course

This session will offer an overview of the course and explore why we need to study theory deeply and critically in order to do conflict analysis and resolution. Read R.E.

Rubenstein, "Some Thoughts About Conflict Theory" and read his short story, "Sabbatical Term," from the anthology, *Phnom Penh Noir* (2012), both posted on the Community Forum.

January 26

Morgenthau's Realism

Required: Hans J. Morgenthau. 1967. *Politics among Nations*, Chapters 1, 3, 11

Recommended: John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. 2003, esp. pp. 267 et seq.

James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. 2001. *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*, 5th edition, 63-103

January 28

Burton's Basic Human Needs

Required: John Burton. 1979. "Institutional Values and Human Needs," from *Deviance, Terrorism, and War*, 85-94

Johan Galtung. 1991. *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*. Ed. John Burton, 301-335

Richard E. Rubenstein, "Basic Human Needs: Steps Toward Further Theory Development." www.gmu.edu/academic/ijps/vol6_1/Rubenstein.htm (1996)

Recommended: Coate and Rosati, *The Power of Human Needs in World Society* (Lynn Rienner, 1988)

Jay Rothman, *Resolving Identity-Based Conflicts in Nations, Organizations, and Communities* (Jossey Bass, 1997)

February 3

Gurr's Relative Deprivation

Required: Ted R. Gurr. 1970. *Why Men Rebel*. 22-58

Recommended: James C. Davies. 1972. *Anger, Violence and Politics*, Ed. I.K.

Feierabend, R.L. Feierabend, and T. R. Gurr., 67-84

James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. 2001. *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 5th ed., 231-263

February 5

Galtung's Structural and Cultural Violence

Required: Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" (1969)

Richard E. Rubenstein, "Conflict Resolution and the Structural Sources of Conflict" (1999)

Recommended: Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means* (1998); "A Theory of Conflict," in Lester Kurtz, *Encyclopedia of Peace* (2009)

First paper topics distributed. Paper due via email before class on February 12

February 10

Marx's Class Struggle

Required: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. 1848. "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1848) <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/>

1850. "Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte"
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm>

1870. "The Civil War in France"
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1871/civil-war-france/intro.htm>

Recommended: Richard E. Rubenstein. 1993. "Resolving Class Conflicts," *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application*. Ed. D.J.D Sandole and H. van der Merve, 146-157

Terry Eagleton, *Why Marx Was Right* (2011)

David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, 2004

February 9

Marxism After Marx

Required: David McLellan, *Marxism After Marx* (4th Ed. 2007),

Recommended: Richard Rubenstein, "Rich's Little Lenin Primer" (2012)

Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (2001)

Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (1959)

Alain Badiou, "The Communist Hypothesis" available on Community Forum

Return first paper via email before close of business today

Case study materials emailed to students today

February 11

Film: "The Battle of Algiers"

February 16

Case analysis

Case study materials were emailed to you at least one week prior to this session. Be ready to apply each of the theories learned in weeks 1 to 5 in the analysis and resolution of the conflict described in the scenario. Then ask these questions: (1) How useful is each theory for explaining why the conflict emerged and grew in a way it did? (2) How helpful is the theory in your attempt to explore possible ways to resolve the conflict? (3) What similarities and differences do you find between alternative theoretical approaches to conflict analysis and resolution? There is no need to submit your answers to these and other questions in writing. But be prepared to present your thoughts in class.

Recommended: Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 35-105
Clear book or movie to be reviewed with instructor today

February 18

Volkan's Ethnic Violence and Psychoanalysis

Required: Vamik Volkan. 1997. *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. pp. 19-29, 36-49, and 81-100

Recommended: Christopher Mitchell. 1989. "Psychological Dimensions of Conflict," from *The Structure of International Conflict*

Terry Eagleton. 2012. "Freud and Lacan," from *Literary Criticism*, Ch. 5

Herbert Marcuse. 1966. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. (Especially Chapters 1 to 4, pp. 11-105)

February 23

Weber's Modernization (and Globalization)

Required: C.E. Black. 1966. *The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History*, 1-34

Paul Collier, 2006. "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy," 1-25

Richard Rubenstein. 2008. "Conflict Resolution in an Age of Empire: New Challenges to an Emerging Field," from Sandole and Byrne, *Handbook of Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice*

Recommended: Harry Magdoff. 1978. *Imperialism: From the Colonial Age to the Present*. Especially Chapter 3: Imperialism: A Historical Survey and Chapter 6, pp. 94-113, 165-197.

Thomas L. Friedman. 2005. *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*. pp. 3-47, 414-438

Jan A. Scholte. 2000. *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*

February 25

Huntington's Clash of Civilizations

Required: Kevin Avruch and Peter W. Black. 1991. "The Culture Question and Conflict Resolution." *Peace and Change*, 16 (1), 22-45

Samuel P. Huntington. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*.

Summer, vol. 72 <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19930601faessay5188/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations.html>

R.E. Rubenstein and J.P. Crocker. 1994. "Challenging Huntington." *Foreign Policy*. Autumn, Vol. 96

Recommended: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Rev. Ed.* (Verso, 1993)

Black and Avruch, "Cultural Relativism, Conflict Resolution, and Social Justice."

www.gmu.edu/academic/pcs/BlackAvruch61PCS.html

March 2

Non-Western Perspectives on Conflict

Required: Mohammed Abu-Nimer. 2000-2001. A Framework for Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam. *The Journal of Law and Religion*. vol. 15, nos. 1 & 2, 217-265

Nomonde Masina. 2000. Xhosa Practices of *Ubuntu* for South Africa, in *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts* edited by I.W. Zartman. pp. 169-181

Johan Galtung. 1988. Peace and Buddhism: An Evaluation of Strong and Weak Points. *Transarmament and the Cold War: Peace Research and the Peace Movement*, 369-380

Recommended: Students from Africa, Asia, and Latin America are invited to make recommendations on Community Forum and to come to class prepared to discuss methods of conflict management and resolution used in their societies

March 4

Foucault's Postmodernism

Required: Michel Foucault. 1979. Chapters titled "The Body of the Condemned" and "Illegalities and Delinquency" in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. pp. 3-31, 257-292

Recommended:

Judith Butler. 2006. *Gender Trouble*

"Foucault and Feminism." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/f/foucfem.htm>

Slavoj Zizek. 2009. *First As Tragedy, Then As Farce*

March 16

Course wrap-up and celebration

March 23

Final term papers due via email today