

Syllabus CONF 642 – Distance Learning Course Integration of Theory and Practice, Spring 2017

Meeting place: Blackboard 9.1

Weekly schedule: Each week runs Monday-Sunday starting on January 23, 2017

Instructor: Rob Ericson, PhD

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Office Hours: by appointment (via telephone, email, Skype, or chat)

Primary Texts

1. Lederach, John Paul (2005), *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, Oxford University Press

We will start with this easy-to-read book exploring conflict resolution as an ethical practice. Note: Some of you have used this book previously at our school, but we will apply it in this class with a focus on integrating theory and practice. However, if you have studied this book recently and individually would rather read a different book related to aesthetics and ethics, please let me know your plans and I will make adjustments for you, as appropriate.

2. Jeong, Ho-Won (2010), *Conflict Management and Resolution*. New York: Routledge

This book goes beyond conflict analysis and explores the idea of managing conflict with the goal of resolution, a useful concept for integrating theory and practice.

3. Self-selected book or scholarly articles (your choice of readings related to your current or desired practice and approved by the instructor)

Considering that each of you will have a unique practice, in the last block of this course, I would like you to select reading tailored to your own interests, focusing on your practice.

Recommended Reading

- McDonald, John W. with Noa Zanolli (2009), *The Shifting Grounds of Conflict and Peacebuilding: Stories and Lessons*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bolles, Richard N. (2016), *What Color is Your Parachute 2016 Edition: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers*. Berkely: Ten Speed Press

Prerequisites or Corequisites: CONF 501, 601, 610, 713

Course Overview

Taken in the last semester of master's students course work, this course assists students in developing their own "generic" theory of conflict by reviewing and integrating their prior course work. Students will demonstrate a holistic comprehension of the field by writing a major essay of publishable quality about the causes, events, and resolution of a particular conflict of their own choosing.

- There are readings and activities due each week.
- There are two major assignments: 1) a final paper of publishable quality and 2) a portfolio that includes the assignments from this course. I have divided the assignments into components, each to be completed over roughly a 2-week period according to the schedule.
- Weekly participation is a significant portion of your effort and grade. It is important to complete all work within the week assigned, but if there are extenuating circumstances; such as sickness, family issues, travel or religious observances that conflict with our schedule, please let me know as soon as possible—I will try to accommodate your needs.

Course Logistics

This course will use a distance learning format; the primary meeting space will be on Blackboard 9.1; and we will use other means of keeping in touch such as: email, telephone, and Skype. In a typical module:

- you will read about 100 pages and discuss selected material with your classmates or complete a related exercise
- accomplish other on-line activities and respond to weekly requirements
- work on assignments to be submitted in the Blackboard assignment drop box according to the assignment schedule.

Though the delivery method is different, it should take you the same amount of time as a typical graduate course, spending 3 to 4 hours on coursework on each module (this includes the time you would have spent in a classroom), in addition to readings and major assignments.

It is critical to keep up with weekly requirements. I will provide a folder each week in our Blackboard course to specify required activities and assignments (available by clicking on 'Course Contents' on the course menu in Blackboard).

Blackboard

We will use Blackboard 9.1 for the course. Additional guidance on individual assignments and discussion questions will be posted there. Use the Blackboard assignment drop box to submit your work for grading. Please visit our Blackboard site regularly at: <http://mymason.gmu.edu>.

Technology Requirements for this Course

Please see "Technology Requirements" on the Course Menu in Blackboard. Download the software indicated onto your computer for use in the course. Pay special attention to the Blackboard supported browsers and operating systems.

Student Responsibilities

- **MasonLive/Email:** Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. For accessibility and privacy, the university, school, and program will send communications to students solely through their Mason email account—students should respond accordingly (See <https://masonlivelogin.gmu.edu/>).
- **Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester (See <http://ods.gmu.edu>).
- **Honor Code:** Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code (See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode>).
- **Virtual Classroom Conduct:** We value critical thinking and therefore, it is imperative that students read the assigned books and articles prior to the class with a critical eye. Active thought, quality of inputs, and a conflict resolution attitude should be your guiding principles.
- **University Libraries:** University Libraries provides resources for distance students. (See <http://library.gmu.edu/distance/>).
- **Writing Center:** The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. (See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).
- **Work Ethic:**

CONF642 is designed as a collaborative learning experience. It is important that students participate in every class and that they contribute actively to groups and class discussions. Please participate enthusiastically in group activities while respecting the opinions and valuing the work of other group members. You will be disappointed in this class if you focus on individual effort alone. However, any individual work should be strictly your own. Presenting another's work as your own (plagiarism) will result in a zero grade for the assignment. Also, please let me know how your final paper relates to your previous academic work—it is a problem if you just recycle a previously-written paper. While a powerful tool, please use the internet with caution. Reference your sources, resist the temptation to cut and paste material into your own work, and use independent validation of the information where appropriate.

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code:

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate how personal strengths, experiences, and skills match with a specific practice of choice (current or future).
2. Integrate conflict experiences, readings, and creative work into a practice.
3. Critically analyze conflict theories for validity and applicability.
4. Reinterpret or combine theories to improve utility.
5. Integrate relevant theories into your preferred practice.
6. Predict conflict phases using conflict cycles.
7. Evaluate and apply selected analysis tools.
8. Analyze and apply intervention strategies.
9. Analyze issues to conflict and create executive summaries.

Weekly Schedule:

This schedule is subject to change in the event of unforeseen circumstances (e.g., weather, etc.). Also, I may change or delete some of the weekly activities, while the overall scope will remain the same.

	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Video Content and Readings</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
			I will base the participation score on the timeliness and quality of weekly discussions and activities	
Week 1 <i>Integration</i> <i>Learning objective 1</i>	Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-lecture: Getting started video 	Synthesize <ul style="list-style-type: none"> About yourself Elevator speech Discussion 	Reflective Integration Paper
Week 2 <i>Integration</i> <i>Learning objective 1 and 2</i>	Conflict Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View video: Arab Spring Lederach Chapters 1-9 	Evaluate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Mind-mapping Explanation of current or future practice Conflict style inventory 	
Week 3 <i>Practice</i> <i>Learning objectives 2 and 3</i>	Conflict Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambassador McDonald's <i>Multi-track Diplomacy</i> Lederach Chapters 10-14 	Evaluate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Publication biography Letter of recommendation 	Resume

<p>Week 4</p> <p>Practice</p> <p>Learning objectives 2 and 3</p>	<p>Conflict Analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambassador McDonald's <i>Water for Life Parts I and II</i> 	<p>Evaluate and Apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Gather artifacts of conflict work and learning Evaluate and apply selected analysis tools Focus on practice 	
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Theory</p> <p>Learning objectives 3 and 4</p>	<p>Conflict Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-lecture: Dual Concern model <p>Joeng</p> <p>Chapters 1-3</p>	<p>Analyze</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Group affinity exercise Categorization of theories Assess a list of theories for validity and applicability Summary of 3-5 theories 	<p>Set up Portfolio</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Theory</p> <p>Learning objective 3 and 4</p>	<p>Conflict Identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-lectures: Creative theory examples <p>Joeng</p> <p>Chapters 4-6</p>	<p>Synthesize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Determine assumptions and limitations selected theories Identify sources of selected theories and read background material. Identity Exercise 	

<p>Week 7</p> <p>Theory</p> <p>Learning objective 4 and 5</p>	<p>Conflict Resolution Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Luther King speech <p>Joeng</p> <p>Chapters 7-9</p>	<p>Evaluate and Apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Identify and analyze imagery • Consider and apply a theory to the narrative • Group recommendations 	<p>Creative Theory and Paper Proposal</p>
<p>Week 8</p> <p>Practice</p> <p>Learning objectives 5 and 6</p>	<p>Conflict Reconciliation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-lecture: Strategy presentation <p>Joeng</p> <p>Chapters 10-12</p>	<p>Analyze</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Analyze selected conflicts using conflict cycles • Identify the editorial guide for your targeted publication • Explain your publication strategy 	
<p>Week 9</p> <p>Practice</p> <p>Learning objectives 7 and 8</p>	<p>Creating a Plan for Practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambassador McDonald <i>Peace Corridor</i> <p>Self-Selected Readings</p>	<p>Synthesize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze conflict and simulate an intervention • Submit a four-panel executive summary • Review of draft paper 	<p>Annotated Bibliography and Draft Paper</p>

<p>Week 10</p> <p>Integration</p> <p>Learning objectives 7 and 8</p>	<p>Exploring Schemas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambassador McDonald <i>Empire and Nation State</i> <p>Self-Selected Readings</p>	<p>Evaluate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Explore schemas from readings Evaluate and comment on papers written by peers Produce effective feedback to peers and teachers 	
<p>Week 11</p> <p>Integration</p> <p>Learning objectives 8 and 9</p>	<p>Exploring Context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tank Man video <p>Self-Selected Readings</p>	<p>Evaluate and Apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Explore and explain context Incorporate feedback into written documents 	<p>Final Paper</p>

<p>Week 12</p> <p>Integration</p> <p>Learning objectives 8 and 9</p>	<p>Exploring Intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambassador McDonald <i>Divided Cyprus</i> <p>Self-Selected Readings</p>	<p>Synthesize</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Identify effective and ineffective presentation techniques Produce a presentation on your final paper Execute a remote presentation 	<p>Presentation</p>
<p>Week 13</p> <p>Practice</p> <p>Learning objectives 8 and 9</p>	<p>Conflict Code of Ethics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-lecture: Habermas and the Theory of Communicative Action Rules of Robotics video <p>Self-Selected Readings</p>	<p>Evaluate and Apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Review http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml Create a code of ethics as a group on a wiki application Develop a personal code of ethics 	
<p>Week 14</p> <p>Practice</p> <p>Learning objective 9</p>	<p>Imagining the Future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-lecture: Learning Wheel 	<p>Evaluate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Identify a specific limited-time volunteer opportunity What could you do to give something back? On-line course evaluation 	<p>Final Portfolio</p>

Grading Criteria

Major Assignment Component	Weighting	Major Assignments	Weighting	Follow-on Assignment	Weighting	Total
		Reflective Integration Paper	5 points			5 points
Resume	5 points	Final Portfolio	5 points			15 points
Set up Portfolio	5 points					
Creative Theory and Paper Proposal	5 points	Final Paper	20 points	Presentation	10 points	45 points
Draft Paper	10 points					
Participation	Weekly graded deliverables plus additional points for other activities					35 points
Total						100 Points

Grading Scale (points): A 100-93; A- 92-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80; C 79-70