

CONF 660: Conflict Assessment and Program Evaluation
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University
Spring 2007

Class Time: Saturday and Sunday, 11:00am – 5:00pm
January 27-28, 2006, February 24-25, April 14-15

Location: Arlington Campus – Original Building 317
Webct41.gmu.edu

Instructor: Nike Carstarphen, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: TBD

Introduction

Prerequisites or corequisites: CONF 501 or 502, and acceptance in the graduate certificate program in Conflict Analysis and Resolution, or permission of instructor.

The course examines the assessment, monitoring and evaluation of conflict resolution programs and initiatives and will teach the evaluation strategies relevant for work in conflict or post-conflict contexts. Course readings will emphasize conflict assessment and evaluation methods for conflict resolution initiatives generally and specifically as these topics relate to the certificate programs, including: community planning and collaborative initiatives; conflict prevention, reconstruction and stabilization; intrastate and international conflict resolution and peacebuilding; and evaluating the use of specific conflict resolution skills and processes.

Practical difficulties and things to consider for conflict assessment and evaluation will include: balancing multiple purposes of evaluation; defining success; power and empowerment; funding; confidentiality; impartiality; ethics; cultural issues; conflict sensitivity; and working in conflict environments. Students will develop an appreciation and understanding of the emergent approaches for evaluating conflict interventions. Students will complete an evaluation design for a conflict intervention initiative as the major course requirement.

Objectives and Core Competencies

The course will focus on the following objectives:

- ❖ *To provide an overview of the role and importance of conflict assessment, monitoring and evaluation and the variety of approaches and tools available.*
- ❖ *The course will prepare participants to be able to conduct conflict assessments and link the assessments to conflict analysis, program design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.*
- ❖ *To provide an overview of the phases and steps in designing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation plan.*
- ❖ *To explore the constraints, challenges and other considerations an evaluator working in conflict environments might face, and how these influence the design and implementation of assessments and evaluations.*

By the end of the course, students will be expected to have the following core competencies:

- *Know how to conduct a conflict assessment.*
- *Know how to select the best approaches and tools for monitoring and evaluation given the goals of the evaluation and constraints and challenges to design and implementation.*
- *Know how to design a monitoring and evaluation plan that links conflict assessment and analysis to intervention goals, objectives, design and implementation.*
- *Know how to design specific data collection methods, measures, and indicators for use in monitoring and evaluation.*
- *Know how to conduct an evaluation, write an evaluation report and encourage utilization of findings.*

Course Expectations

1. *Consistent attendance.* Barring exceptional circumstances, you are expect to attend all weekends for the full time scheduled.
2. *Effective preparation.* Class will involve discussions and activities, which depend on your preparation.
3. *Appropriate participation.* Engage actively in the course in whichever of the formats you are most comfortable with: large group discussions, small group discussions, class exercises, on-line homework assignments between classes, etc.
4. *Course completion.* In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family illness.

Course Requirements

Students are responsible for completing individual and group assignments on time. You will be penalized the equivalent of a full letter grade for each day the assignment is late.

Some class assignments and readings will be on Websent via e-mail and students are responsible for checking GMU email and keeping up-to-date with these. Incomplete grades will not be granted save in cases of personal or immediate family illness or emergency.

1. **Preparation and Participation (10%)**. Students are expected to actively participate in class and to demonstrate completion of assigned readings. Given the intense schedule of this course, absences will be excused only in exceptional circumstances (for example, death in family and medical emergencies). Unexcused absences will negatively affect participation grades. An alternate assignment may be required for any excused absences (to be negotiated with the instructor).
2. **Assessment and Intervention Analysis (25%)**. Choose two of the recommended case studies (TBD). Each provides an example of an actual conflict and the conflict intervention design implemented based on an assessment. In your paper, compare and contrast the approaches taken in each case, using course readings as appropriate. The objective of this assignment is to understand how conflicts are typically assessed in the 'real world,' how they can yield specific goals and objectives, and how those are incorporated into the intervention design, and ultimately, an evaluation design. Further details to be provided in class.
Due Weekend Two, Saturday February 24
3. **Group Bibliographic Essay and Presentation (25%)**. The class will be divided into groups of 5 students (by certificate program of study or other method TBD) for the purpose of investigating,

analyzing and organizing existing resources for evaluation in specific conflict arenas (such as interfaith work, community mediation or peacekeeping). Each group will present their results the third weekend and provide an online resource guide available to all class members. The bibliographic essay is a narrative discussion and review of the literature, issues, indicators, evaluation approaches, organizations and resources relevant to your particular topic area, presented in such a manner as to help orient those new to the subject. The presentation will be a maximum of 30 minutes, including 10 minutes for discussion and Q&A. Further details to be provided in class.

Due Weekend Three, Saturday/Sunday, April 14-15

4. **Final Paper (40%).** The final paper is an integrative paper demonstrating mastery of the course topics, emphasizing conflict assessment and evaluation design. Students have three options for the final paper. Each option has the same purpose and includes the same level of detail, they simply differ in their starting points. All papers should be 20-25 pages and be supported through research. The papers should be as specific and practical as possible since the assignment is designed for you to demonstrate your ability to design a monitoring and evaluation plan.

Due Monday, May 7. The three options are:

- a. **Real Project** – Select a real conflict and conflict intervention that you have personal access to as the basis for the paper (the instructor will try to identify some real projects). Briefly describe the conflict and the assessment that the intervention was designed to impact. Identify the goals and objectives of the intervention. Design a monitoring and evaluation plan to measure progress towards achieving these goals and objectives. Identify the type of evaluation you have selected and discuss the alternative approaches considered. Also include the purpose of the evaluation, hypothesis (if any), intended audience, specific data collection and analysis plan, and how the results of the evaluation will be distributed and utilized. The paper should be written in a format consistent with typical evaluation plans/reports (minus the results and conclusions section assuming there isn't time/access to conduct an actual evaluation). Further details to be provided in class.
- b. **Case Study** – Select an actual conflict assessment of a real conflict situation and use this as the basis for selecting a specific intervention and designing a monitoring and evaluation plan for that conflict and intervention. Briefly describe the conflict and its assessment that the intervention was designed to impact. Identify the goals and objectives of the intervention. Design a monitoring and evaluation plan to measure progress towards achieving these goals and objectives. Identify the type of evaluation you have selected and discuss the alternative approaches considered. Also include the purpose of the evaluation, hypothesis (if any), intended audience, specific data collection and analysis plan, and how the results of the evaluation will be distributed and utilized. The paper should be written in a format consistent with typical evaluation plans/reports (minus the results and conclusions section assuming there isn't time/access to conduct an actual evaluation). Further details to be provided in class.
- c. **Pick-up from CONF 502** – In CONF502, you wrote a paper analyzing a conflict and making recommendations for intervention in that conflict. Use your CONF502 paper as the basis for selecting a specific intervention and designing a monitoring and evaluation plan for that conflict and intervention. Briefly describe the conflict and its assessment that the intervention that was recommended to impact the conflict. Identify the goals and objectives of the intervention. Design a monitoring and evaluation plan to measure progress towards achieving these goals and objectives. Identify the type of evaluation you have selected and discuss the alternative approaches considered. Also include the purpose

of the evaluation, hypotheses (if any), intended audience, specific data collection and analysis plan, and how the results of the evaluation will be distributed and utilized. The paper should be written in a format consistent with typical evaluation plans/reports (minus the results and conclusions section assuming there isn't time/access to conduct an actual evaluation). Further details to be provided in class.

University Resources and Assistance

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: ARL 334C (in the main SPP suite; call for office hours)

Contact: (703) 993-4491 <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

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/

Electronic Reserves

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://oscr.gmu.edu>
2. Click on the magnifying glass (Search electronic reserves)
3. Using the drop-down boxes, select the course [CONF 660] and instructor [Carstarphen]
 - a. The section and faculty are opposite of what is on the schedule
 - b. Be sure it says "Spring 2007"
4. Enter in the password (**TBD**) and click submit to view the item
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 993-9043. If you need additional assistance please e-mail ereserves@gmu.edu.

Academic Integrity

You are responsible for knowing, understanding and following Mason's Honor Code, found at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12>. Be sure that all work submitted is your own and that you use sources appropriately. It is recommended that you review requirements regarding use and citation of sources prior to submitting your final work.

Readings

Required Texts

The required texts are available at the GMU Arlington Bookstore or from online booksellers.

Posovac, Emil J. and Raymond G. Carey. *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies. Sixth Edition.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Required Books/Articles/Manuals (Available On-line)

Most of the following readings are PDF files and can be read using an Adobe reader, available for download on the library webpage.

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project, 2004.* Project Co-Directors: Diana Chigas and Peter Woodrow. <http://www.cdainc.com/rpp/> (Click on link to *Reflecting on Peace Practice Handbook (PDF)*).

Church, Cheyanne and Julie Shouldice. *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions: Framing the State of Play.* Derry/Londonderry: INCORE, 2002.
<http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/chc07/> Click on the pdf area, located on the bottom half of the page.

Church, Cheyanne and Julie Shouldice. *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions Part II: Emerging Practice and Theory.* Derry/Londonderry: INCORE, 2003. See
<http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/chc08/> Click on the pdf area, located on the bottom half of the page.

Church, Cheyanne and Mark Rogers. *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring & Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programmes.* Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground, 2005.
http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment. FEWER, International Alert, and Saferworld, March 12, 2004.
http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/resource_pack.html

Elliot, Michael, Pearson d'Estree, Tamra, and Kaufman. "Evaluation as a Tool for Reflection," *Beyond Intractability.* Ed. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, USA. September 2003.
http://www2.beyondintractability.org/m/Evaluation_Reflection.jsp

Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, USAID. *Conducting a Conflict Assessment: A Framework for Strategy and Program Development.* August 17, 2004. pp. 1-29.
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/conflict/publications/docs/CMM_ConflAssessFrmwrk_May_05.pdf

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Evaluation Office. *Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results.* New York: UNDP, 2002. (Introduction, Part I-III).
<http://stone.undp.org/undpweb/eo/evalnet/docstore3/yellowbook/>

Required E-Reserves

D'Estree, Tamra Pearson, Larissa Fast, Joshua Weiss, and Monica Jakobsen. "Changing the Debate about 'Success' in Conflict Resolution Efforts." *Negotiation Journal*, vol. 17. no. 2. pp. 101-113.

Fisher, Ronald J. (2001) "Cyprus: The failure of mediation and the escalation of an identity-based conflict to an adversarial impasse" *Journal of Peace Research* 38(3): 307-326.

Ross, Marc Howard. (2000) "'Good-Enough' Isn't So Bad: Thinking about success and failure in ethnic conflict management" *Peace and conflict: Journal of peace psychology* 6(1), 27-47

Stern, Paul C., and Druckman, Daniel. "Evaluating Interventions in History: The Case of International Conflict Resolution." *International Studies Review*, vol. 2, number 1, 2000, pp. 33-63.

Conflict Assessment Case Studies (TBD)

Evaluation Case Studies (TBD)

CLASS PLANS AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEKEND 1 – January 27-28, 2006, 11am-5pm

Saturday, 1/27/06 — Introductions, Conflict Assessment

Introduction

- Class members
- Introduction to the Course, Syllabus Overview
- Introduction to Conflict ADIM&E Cycle (assessment/analysis, design & implementation, monitoring & evaluation)

Overview of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for Conflict Interventions

- The State of Theory and Practice in M&E for Conflict Resolution & Peacebuilding
- Defining Success and Failure in Conflict Resolution Intervention
- Theories of Change

Conflict Assessment

- Approaches and tools
- Case studies

Sunday, 1/28/06—Conflict Assessment cont'd

Assessment & Planning

- Connecting Assessment to Intervention Design & Program Planning
- Conflict Sensitive Planning and Intervention Design

Application

- Case Studies
- Sign up/Select Group for Group Presentation in Weekend 3

Required Reading for Weekend 1

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. *Reflecting on Peace Practice Project, 2004*. Project Co-Directors: Diana Chigas and Peter Woodrow. Collaborative for Development Action. Cambridge, MA, USA and the Life & Peace Institute, Uppsala, Sweden.

<http://www.cdainc.com/rpp/> (Click on link to *Reflecting on Peace Practice Handbook (PDF)*). pp. 1-29.

Church, Cheyanne and Julie Shouldice. *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions: Framing the State of Play*. Derry/Londonderry: INCORE, 2002.

<http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/chc07/> (Click on the pdf area, located on the bottom half of the page). pp. 1-53.

Church, Cheyanne and Julie Shouldice. *The Evaluation of Conflict Resolution Interventions Part II: Emerging Practice and Theory*. Derry/Londonderry: INCORE, 2003. See

<http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/chc08/> (Click on the pdf area, located on the bottom half of the page). pp. 1-45.

Church, Cheyanne and Mark Rogers. *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring & Evaluation in*

Conflict Transformation Programmes. Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground, 2005.
http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html Ch. 1-3; pp. 1-55.

Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment. FEWER, International Alert, and Saferworld, March 12, 2004. Read: Introduction; Ch 1-2; 3-module 1-2; about 46 pages of reading (you can skim parts more focused on development and humanitarian assistance, although this might help your understanding of peace building work, especially since these fields are increasingly integrated with peace building).
http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/resource_pack.html

Elliot, Michael, Pearson d'Estree, Tamra, and Kaufman. "Evaluation as a Tool for Reflection," *Beyond Intractability*. Ed. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, USA. September 2003.
http://www2.beyondintractability.org/m/Evaluation_Reflection.jsp

Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, USAID. *Conducting a Conflict Assessment: A Framework for Strategy and Program Development*. August 17, 2004. pp. 1-29.
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/conflict/publications/docs/CMM_ConflAssessFrmwrk_May_05.pdf

Ross, Marc Howard. (2000) "'Good-Enough' Isn't So Bad: Thinking about success and failure in ethnic conflict management" *Peace and conflict: Journal of peace psychology* 6(1), 27-47.

BETWEEN WEEKEND 1 & 2 – January 29, 2006 – February 23, 2006

Ongoing/ Interim Online Discussion (TBD)

- Select an unassigned reading from *Beyond Intractability* or Selected Bibliography on Evaluation of Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Initiatives (TBD). Distribute the reading to the Class Online Forum, and compare and contrast the approaches to different evaluation models discussed in the readings. Prepare and post an on-line presentation by **Monday, February 5**. Everyone is expected to read all on-line presentations, discuss them on-line, and be prepared to bring this discussion and questions to class.
- Discuss the Study Questions posed in the book by Posovac and Carey.

WEEKEND 2 – February 24-25, 2006, 11am-5pm

Saturday, 2/24/06 – Baselines and Introduction to Monitoring & Evaluation

*****Assessment and Intervention Analysis Paper Due*****

Baseline Studies

- Approaches and tools

Introduction to Conflict Monitoring and Evaluation

- Purposes/Types of M&E
- Overview of Evaluation Models
- Monitoring

Evaluation Planning

- Steps in Planning an Evaluation
- Selecting M&E Criteria and Setting Standards
- Case Study examples

Sunday, 2/25/06 – Designing a Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

Indicators

- Developing Indicators

Measures

- Developing Measures

Evaluation Management

- Who Conducts M&E: Power and Empowerment
- Evaluation Management
- Case Study examples

Readings for Weekend 2

Church, Cheyanne and Mark Rogers. *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring & Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programmes*. Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground, 2005. Ch. 4-9, pp. 56-177.

http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

Conflict Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation. *Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment*. FEWER, International Alert, and Saferworld, March 12, 2004. Ch 3, Module 3-Conflict-sensitive monitoring and evaluation; 8 pages

http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/resource_pack.html

D'Estree, Tamra Pearson, Larissa Fast, Joshua Weiss, and Monica Jakobsen. "Changing the Debate about 'Success' in Conflict Resolution Efforts." *Negotiation Journal*, vol. 17. no. 2. pp. 101-113.

Posovac, Emil J. and Raymond G. Carey. *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies. Sixth Edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003. Ch 1 - 4, 7, pp. 1-94 & 132-152.

Stern, Paul C., and Druckman, Daniel. "Evaluating Interventions in History: The Case of International Conflict Resolution." *International Studies Review*, vol. 2, number 1, 2000, pp. 33-63.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Evaluation Office. Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results. New York: UNDP, 2002. (Introduction, Part I-III; pp. actual page numbers 1-59; please note that you can ignore/skim information specific to UNDP as you wish) <http://stone.undp.org/undpweb/eo/evalnet/docstore3/yellowbook/>

Case Study

Fisher, Ronald J. (2001) "Cyprus: The failure of mediation and the escalation of an identity-based conflict to an adversarial impasse." *Journal of Peace Research* 38(3): 307-326.

BETWEEN WEEKEND 2 & 3 – February 26 – April 13, 2006

Ongoing/ Interim Online Discussion (TBD)

- Discuss the Study Questions posed in the book by Posovac and Carey.

WEEKEND 3 – April 14-15, 2006, 11am-5pm

Saturday, 4/14/06 — Designing a Monitoring & Evaluation Plan continued

Group Presentations: 1 & 2

Methods

- Quantitative: Non-experimental, quasi-experimental, experimental
- Qualitative
- Cost-benefit analysis

Panel of Guest Speakers (TBD)

Sunday, 4/15/06 — Real World Evaluations: Challenges and Other Considerations

Group Presentations: 3 & 4

Challenges and Evaluation Pitfalls

- Ethics
- Working under Budget, Time and Political Constraints and Other Challenges

The Evaluation Report

- Structure and audience

Utilizing Findings

- Course Wrap-Up and Resources to Share
- Evaluations

Readings for Weekend 3

Church, Cheyanne and Mark Rogers. *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring & Evaluation in Conflict Transformation Programmes*. Washington, DC: Search for Common Ground, 2005. Ch. 10-12, pp. 178-226

http://www.sfcg.org/programmes/ilr/ilt_manualpage.html

Posovac, Emil J. and Raymond G. Carey. *Program Evaluation: Methods and Case Studies. Sixth Edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003. Ch. 5, 8-14.

**** FINAL PAPERS DUE: MAY 7, 5pm ****