

## CONF 720: ETHNIC AND CULTURAL FACTORS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Spring 2006 (Section 001)  
 Tuesday, 4:30-7:10 p.m., ARLTB 333A  
 Professor Kevin Avruch, *tel. & voicemail*: 703-993-3607;  
*e-mail*: kavruch@gmu.edu  
 Office Hours: By appointment (Truland Rm. 604)

### Course Description

This course explores the role of culture in the genesis, structuring, and resolution of processes of conflict within and between groups. We will pay special attention to ethnicity and other subcultural (or metacultural) markers of identity in complex social systems as both generators and outcomes of conflict. Analysis will proceed through consideration of case-studies drawn from a variety of cultural and social settings. We will also discuss some critiques of the culture concept with special reference to conflict analysis and resolution.

### Course Requirements

*Required Readings (available at the GMU Arlington Bookstore or through E-reserve\*):*

\*Kevin Avruch, "Type I and Type II Errors in Culturally Sensitive Conflict Resolution Practice," Conflict Resolution Quarterly 20(3):351-371, 2003 (*on E-reserve*)

Stanley Barrett, Culture Meets Power

Raymond Cohen, Negotiating Across Cultures, Revised Edition

John Conley & William O'Barr, Just Words: Law, Language and Power

Harold Isaacs, Idols of the Tribe: Group Identity and Political Change

Thomas Kochman, Black and White Styles in Conflict

Liisa Malkki, Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania

Lawrence Rosen, Bargaining for Reality: The Construction of Social Relations in a Muslim Community

*The following two books, also available at the Bookstore, are optional:*

Kevin Avruch, Culture and Conflict Resolution

Kevin Avruch, Peter W. Black & Joseph A. Scimecca, eds., Conflict Resolution: Cross-Cultural Perspectives (paperback)

The first requirement of this class is that you come prepared to discuss the readings. Also required is a term paper, on a topic of your choice, relevant to the (broad!) concerns of the class. This is due in my ICAR mailbox Friday, May 5, 2006. I'll have more to say on this in a hand-out later, but you might start thinking about possible topics; and you will need to talk with me when you decide on one. .

### **Course Program**

#### **Part I: Culture**

**Week 1 (1/24):** Course Orientation: What Is Culture? Why Study It?

**Week 2 (1/31):** How Study Culture? Ethnography etc.:  
Person, Society, and Conflict: A Moroccan  
Case-Study  
Read: Rosen, pp. 1-92

**Week 3 (2/7):** Negotiating Reality (Morocco continued)  
Read: Rosen, pp. 93-192

#### **Part II: Ethnicity & Other Identities**

**Week 4 (2/14):** Basic Group Identity-I: Towards  
Understanding Ethnicity-I  
Read: Isaacs, pp. 1-114

**Week 5 (2/21):** Basic Group Identity-II: Beyond Ethnicity  
Read: Isaacs, pp. 115-219

**Week 6 (2/28):** Interpersonal Conflict, Culture, and "Sub-Culture":  
American "Racial Styles"  
Read: Kochman, all

**Week 7 (3/7):** "Metacultures": Class, Institutional, Gender, and  
Legal Cultures (Understanding Discourse)  
Read: Conley & O'Barr, pp. 1-95, 129-140

- Week 8 (3/14):** Mid-Semester Recess: No Class
- Week 9 (3/21):** Ethnicity, the State, and Nationalism: "Making Culture" and its Costs  
Read: Malkki, pp. 1-152
- Week 10 (3/28):** Memory, History, and Genocide: Making Conflict and its Costs  
Read: Malkki, pp. 153-297

### **Part III: Using the Culture Concept in Conflict Resolution**

- Week 11 (4/4):** International Conflict Resolution, Diplomacy, and Negotiation  
Read: Cohen, pp. 3-106
- Week 12 (4/11):** Culture and Conflict Resolution  
Read: Cohen, pp. 107-226

### **Part IV: Cautions, Critiques, and Unanswered Questions**

- Week 13 (4/18):** Culture and the Problem of Power  
Read: Barrett, pp. 1-79
- Week 14 (4/25):** Culture Meets Power  
Read: Barrett, pp. 81-128
- Week 15 (5/2):** Misusing Culture in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Ethnicity, and Identity Reconsidered  
Read: Avruch, "Type and Type II Errors..." *E-reserve*  
*Term paper due May 5*

**NOTES:**