

## **CONF 802: Theories of the Person/Micro Theories**

Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

George Mason University

Fall 2005

Thursdays, 7:20-10:00 PM

Truland Building #666B

Instructor: Susan Allen Nan  
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### **Course Description**

**802 Micro Theories (3:3:0)** *Prerequisites: CONF 801, and acceptance in the doctoral program, or permission of instructor.* Understanding human conflict requires knowledge of human behavior, motivation and perception. Reviews and critically analyzes several psychological theories for their application to conflict analysis and resolution. Surveys work of major personality theorists as well as material on cognition, creativity, and change.

### **Introduction**

In this course, we will consider theories of human nature and their relevance to understanding conflict and conflict resolution. Topics covered include:

- Instinct
- Unconscious drives, early childhood history
- Collective trauma
- Personality
- Contingencies of reinforcement/incentives
- Cognition, metaphor
- Social learning and social environment
- Human potential
- Social interaction history
- Emotions
- Norms and culture
- Memory

### **Requirements**

Class presentation (15%) Sign up during first week for presentation during one of the classes weeks 3-13. Present 20-30 minutes, including discussion or exercises. Consider using practical examples, experiential exercises, and reports on conflict resolution literature that reflect or directly challenge the viewpoints of the week or are areas in which the week's approach could be applied. Presentations will be evaluated based on preparation, clarity, depth, and relevance to conflict analysis and resolution. *Please send your plans to me by e-mail for comment a week prior to the class during which you will*

*present. If you are presenting during the same class period as another student, please coordinate so that your presentations complement each other.*

Class participation (15%) All students are expected to participate actively in discussion in this seminar-style class. Absences will be excused only in exceptional circumstances.

Review paper (20%) Choose an article from a scholarly journal on a topic related to conflict analysis and resolution. Summarize the article, and then answer the following questions in a short (6-8 pages) paper:

What are the implied or expressed views of the author(s) concerning:

- a. The nature of conflict
- b. The nature of human beings: motivations, capacity to change, autonomy, basic drives, “natural behavior”; the roles of perception, goals and needs in conflict
- c. The range of possibilities for parties in conflict
- d. Processes useful in approaching conflict
- e. The role of culture in conflict
- f. The nature and precursors of change

Due October 6.

Final paper topic statement (10%) What BIG question will you address, and which three perspectives will you examine? What literature will inform your discussion of each of the three perspectives?

Due October 20.

Final paper (40%) Choose a BIG question from conflict analysis and resolution (e.g. why do wars start? Why do wars end? Why are people violent? How can parties resolve their differences peacefully?), and explore this question from the perspective of three theories/approaches to human nature. According to each approach, what are the causes of human nature and conflict? How does one produce change? Each paper should review the relevant literature of each of the three chosen perspectives, particularly literature which speaks to the chosen question. Include a critique and comparative analysis of the three perspectives. Papers should be 20-25 pages maximum.

Due December 8.

**Books (on order at GMU Bookstore):**

Goffman, Erwin. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Doubleday. 1959.

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Lorenz, Konrad (1966). *On Aggression*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc.

Nye, Robert D. *Three Psychologies: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner, and Rogers*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Wadsworth Publishing, 1999.

Volkan, Vamik. *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Westview Press, 1999.

**Reserves Readings** (Will be On Reserve at Arlington Campus Library):

Barone, D.F., M. Hersen and V.B. van Hasseltd, eds (1998) *Advanced Personality*. New York: Plenum Press. Chapters 3, 4, and 5, pages 57-122.

Nisbett, R.E. and Cohen, D. (1996) *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South*. Boulder: Westview Press.

**E-Reserves Readings**

Broome, Benjamin. "Managing Differences in Conflict Resolution: The Role of Relational Empathy" in Dennis J.D. Sandole and Van Der Merwe (eds.) *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application*.

Selections from Ed Cairns, ed. *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict*. Palgrave, 2003. Chapter 2: A Theoretical Overview of Memory and Conflict. By Patrick Devine-Wright. P. 9-33.

Chapter 10: Memories in Conflict: Review and a Look to the Future. By Micheal D. Roe and Ed Cairns. P. 171-180.

Franz de Waal, (1989) *Peacemaking among Primates*, Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. Prologue (pp. 1-7), Ch. 1, "False Dichotomies" (pp. 9-33) and Ch. 6, "Humans" (pp 229-271).

Kelman, H.C. (1970) "The Role of the Individual in International Relations: Some Conceptual and Methodological Considerations." *Journal of International Affairs*, 24, 1-17.

Lederach, John Paul. "Of Nets, Nails, and Problems: The Folk Language of Conflict Resolution in a Central American Setting." In Avruch, Kevin, Peter Black, and Joseph Scimecca, eds, *Conflict Resolution: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1991.

Christopher F. Monte. "John Dollard and Neal Miller/ Psychodynamic Social Learning Theory; Albert Bandura/ Social Cognitive Theory." Chapter 16 in *Beneath the Mask: An Introduction to Theories of Personality*. 1995. p. 550-581.

**Publicly Available Online Readings**

Beyond Intractability-- Essays on emotions.  
<http://www2.beyondintractability.org/essays.jsp?nid=2115>

Beyond Intractability – Essay on Psychological Dynamics of Intractable Conflicts  
[http://www2.beyondintractability.org/m/psychological\\_dynamics.jsp](http://www2.beyondintractability.org/m/psychological_dynamics.jsp)

## **Weekly Class Plans and Assignments**

### **Week 1 Theories of the Person overview.**

Placing theories of human nature in larger ontologies/worldviews.

Relating theories of human nature to theories of conflict and conflict resolution.

Introducing primary historical debates.

Thursday, September 1, 2005

### **Week 2 Primary historical debates, continued.**

#### **Instinct**

Thursday, September 8, 2005

Preparation:

Kelman, H.C. (1970) "The Role of the Individual in International Relations: Some Conceptual and Methodological Considerations." *Journal of International Affairs*, 24, 1-17.

Lorenz, Konrad (1966). *On Aggression*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc.

Franz de Waal, (1989) *Peacemaking among Primates*, Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. Prologue (pp. 1-7), Ch. 1, "False Dichotomies" (pp. 9-33) and Ch. 6, "Humans" (pp 229-271).

### **Week 3 Unconscious drives, early childhood history**

Thursday, September 15, 2005

Preparation:

Freud sections of

Nye, Robert D. *Three Psychologies: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner, and Rogers*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Wadsworth Publishing, 1999.

### **Week 4 Collective trauma**

Thursday, September 22, 2005

Preparation:

Volkan, Vamik. *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Westview Press, 1999.

## **Week 5 Personality**

Thursday, September 29, 2005

Preparation:

Barone, D.F., M. Hersen and V.B. van Hasseltd, eds (1998) *Advanced Personality*. New York: Plenum Press. Chapters 3, 4, and 5, pages 57-122.

## **Week 6 Contingencies of reinforcement/incentives**

Thursday, October 6, 2005

Preparation:

**Review papers due** at 7:20 pm as class begins. Late papers will be penalized in grading.

Skinner sections of Nye, Robert D. *Three Psychologies: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner, and Rogers*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Wadsworth Publishing, 1999.

## **Week 7 Cognition**

Thursday, October 13, 2005

Preparation:

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Lederach, John Paul. "Of Nets, Nails, and Problems: The Folk Language of Conflict Resolution in a Central American Setting." In Avruch, Kevin, Peter Black, and Joseph Scimecca, eds, *Conflict Resolution: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1991.

## **Week 8 Social learning and social environment**

Thursday, October 20, 2005

Preparation:

**Final paper topic statement due** at 7:20 pm as class begins.

Christopher F. Monte. "John Dollard and Neal Miller/ Psychodynamic Social Learning Theory; Albert Bandura/ Social Cognitive Theory." Chapter 16 in *Beneath the Mask: An Introduction to Theories of Personality*. 1995. p. 550-581.

Psychological Dynamics of Intractable Conflicts (Beyond Intractability)  
[http://www2.beyondintractability.org/m/psychological\\_dynamics.jsp](http://www2.beyondintractability.org/m/psychological_dynamics.jsp)

### **Week 9 Human potential**

Thursday, October 27, 2005

Preparation:

Carl Rogers section of Nye, Robert D. *Three Psychologies: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner, and Rogers*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Wadsworth Publishing, 1999.

### **Week 10 Social interaction history**

Thursday, November 3, 2005

Preparation:

Goffman, Erwin. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*.

### **Week 11 Emotions**

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Preparation:

Beyond Intractability-- Essays on emotions.

<http://www2.beyondintractability.org/essays.jsp?nid=2115>

Broome, Benjamin. "Managing Differences in Conflict Resolution: The Role of Relational Empathy" in Dennis J.D. Sandole and Van Der Merwe (eds.) *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application*.

### **Week 12 Norms and culture**

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Preparation:

Nisbett, R.E. and Cohen, D. (1996) *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South*. Boulder: Westview Press.

NO CLASS on Thanksgiving Day-- Thursday, November 24, 2005

### **Week 13 Memory**

Thursday, December 1, 2005

Preparation:

Selections from Ed Cairns, ed. *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict*. Palgrave, 2003.

Chapter 2: A Theoretical Overview of Memory and Conflict. By Patrick Devine-Wright. P. 9-33.

Chapter 10: Memories in Conflict: Review and a Look to the Future. By Micheal D. Roe and Ed Cairns. P. 171-180.

### **Week 14 Integration, Review, Catch-up, Paper presentations**

LAST CLASS

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Preparation:

Bring final paper to turn in. Papers are due promptly at 7:20 pm as class begins. Late papers will be penalized in grading. Incompletes will be granted only for extreme extenuating circumstances.