

CONF 802: Theories of the Person/Micro Theories

Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

George Mason University

Fall 2006

Wednesdays, 4:30-7:10 pm

Truland Building #666B

Instructor: Susan Allen Nan
Office Hours: By appointment, generally Mon, Weds, Thurs, Fri, 10 am- 4 pm
Office: Room 642 ICAR, Truland Building
Phone: (703) 993-3653
E-mail: snan@gmu.edu

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:

- Key questions regarding people and people in conflict
- Micro-macro theory links
- Instinct
- Unconscious drives, early childhood history
- Collective trauma
- Approaches to personality
- Contingencies of reinforcement/incentives
- Mind, cognition, metaphor
- Memory
- Social learning and social interaction history
- Norms and culture, Gender
- Emotions
- Human potential
- Consciousness
- Interfaces of Psychotherapy and Conflict Resolution
- Conflict Resolution Practice informed by Micro-Theories

Requirements

Class presentation (15%) Sign up during first and second week for presentation during one of the classes weeks 2-10. Present 20-30 minutes total, including discussion or exercises time. Consider using practical examples, experiential exercises, and reports on conflict resolution literature that reflect or directly challenge the viewpoints considered that week or are areas in which the week's approach could be applied. Do NOT try to cover all the week's readings, or to summarize the readings. Presentations will be evaluated based on preparation, clarity, 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. This lets me be sure not to prepare class material that duplicates what you plan. If you are presenting during the same class period as another student, please coordinate so that your presentations complement each other.*

Class participation (10%) All students are expected to participate actively in discussion in this seminar-style class. Absences will be excused only in exceptional circumstances.

Book Review (25%) Choose a book from the broad areas of psychology, conflict resolution, spirituality, religion, organizational development, self-help, or other related field that you have not previously read and that sparks your interest in some personal way. Read the book. Then write a book review of approximately 6 pages double spaced. Focus your book review on evaluating the book's utility, message, intended audience, contribution to the literature, role in an important area of research, etc. Consider reflecting on how the book helps you make sense of your life or your work. Less than half of your book review should summarize the main points of the book; a major part of the book review should be your opinion about the book's usefulness in terms of understanding aspects of your life or conflict and conflict resolution related theory or practice.

Note: this assignment will be easier if you do not choose an edited volume with separate chapters by many different authors. Regardless of how many contributors a book has, you should *choose a book that speaks to you and a topic you wish to consider now*. In addition, if you choose a very recently published book, consider submitting your book review for publication in a relevant journal.

Due September 27.

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? Prepare a two page summary of your plans for your paper. You may also add a bibliography.

Due Nov. 1.

Final paper (40%) Choose a BIG question from conflict analysis and resolution (e.g. Why do wars start? What is the fundamental human nature of people engaged in protracted conflict? What is conflict? What is conflict resolution? What internal shifts need to happen in people to allow conflict resolution to proceed? Why do whole nations

go to war? Why are people violent? How can parties resolve their differences peacefully?), and explore your chosen question from the perspective of three theories/approaches to human nature. For example, according to each approach, what is human nature and what are the causes of conflict? What are the desired changes involved in conflict resolution? How are these desired changes produced? 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. In what ways do these three perspectives complement each other? Contradict each other? As a whole, what guidance do they offer scholar/practitioners of conflict resolution? What additional insights does our field need in this area? Papers should be 20-25 pages maximum.

Due December 6.

Honor Code

Plagiarism or other violations of the honor code are not acceptable in this or any other GMU class. See the ICAR handbook (http://www.gmu.edu/departments/ICAR/newstudent/Appendix_L.pdf) for clarification of related issues, or ask me if you have any questions. It is much better to ask prior to turning in an assignment, rather than waiting for a faculty member to notice something that should have been cited. Papers turned in for this class may be analyzed with online plagiarism detection services such as Turnitin.com.

Books (on order at GMU Bookstore):

Bandura, Albert. *Aggression: A Social Learning Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973.

Cloke, Kenneth. *The Crossroads of Conflict: A Journey Into the Heart of Dispute Resolution*. Janis Publications, 2006.

Hanh, Tich Nhat. *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. New York: Bantam Books, 1991.

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. HarperCollins Publishers, 1999.

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

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

Volkan, Vamik. *Killing in the Name of Identity: A Study of Bloody Conflicts*. Charlottesville, VA: Pitchstone Publishing, 2006.

Yoder, Carolyn. *The Little Book of Trauma Healing: When Violence Strikes and Community Security is Threatened*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005.

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.

Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. Chapter 1: Women's Place in Man's Life Cycle.

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

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.

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

Tannen, Deborah. *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1990. Chapter Six: Community and Contest: Styles in Conflict.

Publicly Available Online Readings

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

Creative Marginality: Exploring The Links Between Conflict Resolution And Social Work by Jay Rothman, Randi Land Rothman, and Mary Hope Schwoebel
<http://www.gmu.edu/academic/pcs/RothSchw81PCS.htm>

On Reserve at GMU Arlington 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.

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.

Considering key questions regarding people and people in conflict.

Emphasizing personal nature of theories of the person.

Wednesday, August 30, 2006

No preparation for first class.

Week 2 Micro-Macro links.

Instinct

Wednesday, September 6, 2006

CLASS PRESENTATION DATE

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.

Week 3 Unconscious drives, early childhood history, collective trauma

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

CLASS PRESENTATION DATE

Preparation:

Freud sections of

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

Volkan, Vamik. *Killing in the Name of Identity: A Study of Bloody Conflicts*. Charlottesville, VA: Pitchstone Publishing, 2006.

Week 4 Mapping Approaches to Personality Theories, Trauma Continued

Wednesday, September 20, 2006
CLASS PRESENTATION DATE

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.

Yoder, Carolyn. *The Little Book of Trauma Healing: When Violence Strikes and Community Security is Threatened*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005.

Week 5 Contingencies of reinforcement/incentives

Presentation of Book Reviews

Wednesday, September 27, 2006
CLASS PRESENTATION DATE

Preparation:

Review papers due at 4:30 pm as class begins. Late papers will be penalized in grading. Each student will speak briefly (less than 5 minutes) on the book he/she chose to review.

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

Week 6 Mind, Cognition, Memory

Wednesday, October 4, 2006
CLASS PRESENTATION DATE

Preparation:

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. HarperCollins Publishers, 1999. Chapters 1-8, Chapter 13, and Chapter 25.

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.

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.

Week 7 Social learning and social interaction history

Wednesday, October 11, 2006

CLASS PRESENTATION DATE

Preparation:

Bandura, Albert. *Aggression: A Social Learning Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973.

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

Week 8 Norms and Culture, Gender

Wednesday, October 18, 2006

CLASS PRESENTATION DATE

Preparation:

Excerpts from

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

Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. Chapter 1: Women's Place in Man's Life Cycle.

Tannen, Deborah. *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1990. Chapter Six: Community and Contest: Styles in Conflict.

Week 9 Creating a Personal and a Class “Theory of the Person”

Wednesday, October 25, 2006

Workshop with Elizabeth Johnson, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange

Preparation:

Using any art form you wish, explore your own “theory of the person.” What are people? How do we develop? How do we relate with others? How do we engage in conflict and conflict resolution? Bring some sort of representation of your “theory of the person” to share in class—a poem, drawing, painting, sculpture, dance, music, weaving, food creation, etc.

Week 10 Emotions

Wednesday, November 1, 2006

CLASS PRESENTATION DATE

Preparation:

Final paper topic statement due at 4:30 pm as class begins.

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 11 Human potential and Consciousness

Wednesday, November 8, 2006

CLASS PRESENTATION DATE

Preparation:

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

Hanh, Tich Nhat. *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. New York: Bantam Books, 1991.

Week 12 The Interfaces of Psychology and Conflict Resolution

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

Guest Speaker Donna Read

Preparation:

Creative Marginality: Exploring The Links Between Conflict Resolution And Social Work by Jay Rothman, Randi Land Rothman, and Mary Hope Schwoebel
<http://www.gmu.edu/academic/pcs/RothSchw81PCS.htm>

Reading available from guest speaker (will be forwarded by e-mail in advance):
EH Schein, Three Cultures of Management

Thanksgiving Recess

NO CLASS on Wednesday, November 22, 2006

Week 13 Conflict Resolution Practice Informed by Micro-Theories

Wednesday, November 29, 2006

Preparation:

Cloke, Kenneth. The Crossroads of Conflict: A Journey Into the Heart of Dispute Resolution. Janis Publications, 2006.

Week 14 Paper Presentations

Integration, Review, Catch-up

LAST CLASS

Wednesday, December 6, 2006

Preparation:

Bring final paper to turn in. Papers are due promptly at 4:30 pm as class begins. Late papers will be penalized in grading. Incompletes will be granted only for extreme extenuating circumstances.

Exam Period December 12-19

No Final Exam

Individual appointments available for paper return and individual reflections on course