

CONF 300 Section 003
Conflict Resolution Techniques and Practice
Fall 2015

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Course Meetings: Monday & Wednesday 9 - 10:15 a.m.

Location: Mason Hall D005, Fairfax Campus

Office Hours: Only by appointment, Wednesday 10:30-11:30 am, Northeast Module II
(best way to reach me is e-mail)

Introduction

This course presents techniques and practices of conflict resolution. It provides an advanced consideration of CONF 101 with an introduction and focus on a variety of theories, frameworks, reflective practice and roles of the third party. In this course, students will acquire the ability to apply conflict resolution techniques in interpersonal, intrapersonal, intragroup, intergroup, community, and international conflict. By the end of this course, successful students will be able to demonstrate the ability to skillfully assess conflict as well as moving from conflict analysis to constructively intervene in conflict.

Assignments and Course Evaluation

Evaluation is based on participation, videotaped simulation, group case presentation, and final exam.

Participation (20%): Every one of you brings a rich notion and background of diverse culture and experience to this class. We will share our thoughts and knowledge and learn from one another. In our meetings: 1) Come to class prepared to discuss the readings. This means that you should have completed all the assigned readings prior to each class. 2) Be prepared for active discussion by creating a positive atmosphere of respect and enthusiasm. 3) Be respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreements while you are mindful. Discussion and participation will be worth 20% of your final grade.

Videotaped simulation (20%): In addition to active participation in class, roleplays, and discussions, you will be required to create two short videos to demonstrate the skills and techniques you learned from the course. You can team up with one-two of your peers. Each video will be five-ten minutes. In each video, you will select a skill (e.g. reframing, active

listening, etc.) and play out the simulation while videotaping. In the first two third of the video you play out the simulation and apply the techniques and skills. In the second part - the rest, one third of the video - you will present the result and provide explanation of techniques, challenges, and unexpected moments that you faced with.

If you prefer to work individually, one of your videos can be demonstration of your participation in an actual nonviolent protest. In this case, you will videotape the protest for five minutes, and in the second five minutes of the video, you will present the protest, causes, demands of demonstrators, and techniques that they have used for waging the protest and strategizing it. Short interview with one-two demonstrators is an asset.

Students submit their first video by 5:00 pm, Nov. 18th, and the second video by 5:00 pm, Dec. 2nd. Videos should be submitted on Blackboard on the assigned due-date.

* Make sure you have attached any required files to the assignment before clicking Submit. Your assignments are not completed until they are submitted. You must contact your instructor if you submit the wrong files or forget to attach files so that your instructor can reset the assignment attempts.

Group Case presentation (30%): You will join a team of no more than three students to present on an actual case of conflict. The conflict can be international, interpersonal, intergroup, or a current event discussing in media. You will assess the conflict and explain the intervention technique/s. The presentation will address the parties, drivers, source and dynamic of the conflict as well as the resolution of the conflict. Interview with conflicting parties or witnesses or experts involved in the conflict guarantees 10% of your final grade from 20% of participation. Presentations will take place in Oct-Dec. You will have a maximum of 40 minutes (20 - 30 minutes presentation, 10 minutes Q&A) to deliver your presentation. All of the members of team may participate in oral presentation and Q&A. Each students is graded individually and as a group. Meet with your team members to discuss and plan your presentation. Please submit the names of the members of your team and date preference of your presentation no later than September 16th.

Final exam (30%): The written final exam for this course will be an open-book, take home essay exam of 4-7 pages in length. Students will submit their paper through their Mason email to the instructor. Your final paper should include at least three refereed references. The exam and questions will be discussed in the class of Dec 7th. Students will submit their final exam by 5:00 pm, Dec 14th.

Paper Format: Papers for the course should be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins, and use a common 12-point Times New Roman font. The pages should be numbered and have a title, include your name and the instructor’s name, and consistently follow a single standard academic citation format.

Points Accumulated	Letter Grade
98-100	A+
94-97	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F

DUE DATES

- **Sep 16th, submit names and date of your presentation**
- **Nov 18th by 5:00 pm, submit your first video**
- **Dec 2nd by 5:00 pm, submit your second video**
- **Dec 14th by 5:00 pm, submit your final exam**

Required readings

Please read “Course Meetings & Readings” section for required pages and chapters for each day of our class. All assigned readings should be completed prior to class.

Bolton, R. (1986). *People skills: How to assert yourself, listen to others, and resolve conflicts*. NY: A Touchstone Book.

Coleman, P. T. (2011). *The five percent: Finding solutions to seemingly impossible conflict*. NY: Public Affairs Books.

Docherty, J. S. (2005). *The little book of strategic negotiation: Negotiation during turbulent times*. PA: Good Books.

Furlong, G. T. (2005). *The Conflict Resolution Toolbox: Models and Maps for Analyzing, Diagnosing, and Resolving Conflict*. Ontario: John Wiley and Sons. (*Available on E-Reserves and Online through Mason Libraries)

LeBaron, M. (2003). *Bridging cultural conflicts: A new approach for a changing world*. CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lederach, J. P. & Jenner, J. M. (2002). *A handbook of international peacebuilding: Into the eye of the storm*. CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mayer, B. (2000). *The dynamics of conflict resolution: a practitioner's guide*. CA: Jossey-Bass. (*Available Online through Mason Libraries)

Nagler, M. N. (2014). *The nonviolence handbook: A guide for practical action*. CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Schirch, L. & Campt, D. (2007). *The little book of dialogue for difficult subjects*. PA: Good Books. (*Available Online through Mason Libraries and E-Reserves)

Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. NY: Basic Books.

Schwarz, R. M. (2002). *The skilled facilitator* (New & Revised). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Watkins, J. M. & Mohr, B. J. (2001). *Appreciative inquiry: Change at the speed of imagination*. Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer. San Francisco: California.

*Additional required readings will be available through blackboard and e-reserves.

Course Policies

Late assignments: 1) Incomplete grades or late assignments will be given only in cases of personal or family crisis. You must discuss the possibility of such arrangements with your instructor beforehand rather than waiting until an assignment is due. Failure to turn in an assignment on time without prior discussion with instructor will result in a failing grade for that particular assignment. 2) If you have to miss a class, please let your instructor know beforehand

by email. Missing more than two classes over the course of the semester will inevitably result in a lowered “participation” grade. 3) Remember that even if you will be absent from class you should e-mail me your assignments. 4) To qualify for a make-up exam, student must notify instructor of the absence in advance (e-mail) and provide documentation.

Incomplete Grades: A grade of incomplete may be assigned by the instructor if a student is unable to complete a balance of coursework that shall not exceed 50% of that required in this syllabus.

Blackboard

Check our online blackboard site for this class frequently. Information on course readings, assignments, and class notes will be posted on the site. If you have any technical or trouble accessing the materials online, let your instructor know via email prior to the class.

Citation guideline

Students must follow the correct, academic form of citation. APA style is preferred. Please read <http://blog.apastyle.org> to learn how to cite, quote, and address in your papers. Typical in the social sciences is the following style:

-Article -> Simon, S. L., Field, J., Miller, L. E., DiFrancesco, M., & Beebe, D. W. (2015). Sweet/dessert foods are more appealing to adolescents after sleep restriction. *PLoS ONE*, *10*, 1–8.

-Book -> Brown, M. W., & Hurd, C. (2007). *Goodnight moon*. New York, NY: HarperCollins. (Original work published 1947)

-Wikipedia -> Psychology. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved October 14, 2009, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychology>

Quotations (See <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/direct-quotations/>)

-Research has found that “romantic partners maintain both biased and realistic views of a core relationship trait: physical attractiveness” (Solomon & Vazire, 2014, p. 524).

-Solomon and Vazire (2014) found that “romantic partners maintain both biased and realistic views of a core relationship trait: physical attractiveness” (p. 524).

Paraphrase (See <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/direct-quotations/>)

-Just as Sherlock Holmes investigates a case, psychologists must evaluate all the available data before making a deduction, lest they jump to an erroneous conclusion on the basis of insufficient evidence (Bram & Peebles, 2014, pp. 32–33).

-Bram and Peebles (2014) advocated for psychologists to evaluate all the available data before making a deduction, just as Sherlock Holmes investigates a case, lest they jump to an erroneous conclusion on the basis of insufficient evidence (pp. 32–33).

Honor Code and Plagiarism

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academic integrity at <http://oai.gmu.edu>. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are: 1) all work submitted be your own; 2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and 3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, or you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please ask your instructor.

University Policies

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

S-CAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

Mason Email Accounts

Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

Campus Resources

Office of Disability Services (ODS): This office is available to serve all students with disabilities, including those with cognitive (e.g., learning, psychological, and closed head injury), sensory, mobility, and other physical impairments. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. (703) 993-2474; <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Writing Center: The Writing Center is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring. (703) 993 -1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

University Libraries: <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (703) 993 - 2380; <http://caps.gmu.edu>

Course Meetings & Assignments

Students should complete all reading prior to the class when the readings are listed. We will practice every session's technique through roleplays. We will also use videos, and interviews related to the topic for better understanding and discussion.

Week One - Introduction

Aug. 31st: Course plan overview & forming groups

Sep. 2nd: Nature and context of conflict, needs, interests, and values in conflicts

- Mayer, Chapter 1
- Furlong, Chapter 1

Week Two - Complexity, Coherence, and conflicts

Sep. 7th, Labor Day, No Class

Sep. 9th: unresolvable conflicts and causes

- Coleman, pp.15-26, 146-170.

Week Three - Models of conflict analysis (Sign-up for Group Presentation,)

Sep. 14th: Eight different lenses and models of conflict analysis

- Furlong, Chapter 2, 4, 5, 6, 7

Sep. 16th: Circles and Boundaries

- Furlong, Chapter 8, 9, 10, 11

Week Four - Skill Building

Sep. 21st: Attending, Bridging, Active listening, Reframing, Questioning, Reflective responding

- Bolton, chapter 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Sep. 23rd: Communication challenges and satisfactory solutions

- Bolton, Chapter 2, 13, 15

* Recommended reading: That's Not What I Meant, by Deborah Tannen

Week Five - Reflective practice

Sep. 28th: From techniques to reflect

- Schön, Chapter 2

Sep. 30th: Culture considerations and ethical dilemmas

- Avruch, (in Sandole's book), Conflict Resolution in Intercultural Setting, pp. 131-145
- LeBaron, Chapter 1

Week Six - Peacemaking, Peacekeeping & Peacebuilding

Oct. 5th: Differences between peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding

- Lederach, pp. 38-46, 261-270.
- Schirch, pp. 8-27.

Oct. 7th: Group presentation and discussion I

Week Seven - Mediation

*****Oct. 12th is Columbus Day. The class will meet instead on Tuesday, October 13 in normally assigned classroom.***

Oct 13th: Skills in mediation and necessity of agreement

- Mayer, pp. 189-213, 215-222, 234-235.

Oct. 14th, Group presentation & discussion II (Submit Your Individual Case Study Paper by 5:00 pm)

Week Eight - Negotiation

Oct. 19th: levels of negotiation and when negotiation is applicable

- Docherty, pp. 18-22, 38-46, 72-83.

Oct. 21st: Group presentation and discussion III

Week Nine - Facilitation & Consultation

Oct. 26th: Deciding whether, how, and why to intervene

- Schwarz, Part 1; How facilitation helps groups, pp. 3-17

Oct. 28th: Group presentation and discussion IV

Week Ten - Appreciative Inquiry

Nov. 2nd: Why AI works in an intervention process (Nov. 1st Daylight Saving Time Ends)

- Watkins, Chapter 3; Appreciative inquiry as a process

Nov. 4th: Group presentation and discussion V

Week Eleven - Dialogue

Nov. 9th: Dialogue and its different styles

- Schirch & Campt, *The little book of dialogue for difficult subjects*.

Nov. 11th, Veterans Day, No Class

Week Twelve - Problem solving

Nov. 16th: Collaborative problem solving, Alternatives to collaborative problem solving

- Bolton, pp. 232-259.

Nov. 18th: Group presentation and discussion VI, Submit your first video by 5 pm

Week Thirteen - Nonviolent Action

Nov. 23rd: What is nonviolence, Sheros and heros of nonviolent movements and their techniques

- Nagler, *The nonviolence handbook*, pp. 1-38

Nov. 25th: Methods and strategies in nonviolent action

- Nagler, pp. 39-65

Week Fourteen - Conflict Prevention

Nov. 30th: Advantages of conflict prevention, early warning, and Preventive diplomacy

- Ackerman, The idea and practice of conflict prevention. pp. 339-347.

Dec. 2nd: Group presentation and discussion VII, Submit your second video by 5 pm

Week Fifteen

Dec. 7th: Course evaluation, Exam's Questions Distributed & Discussed, celebration of learning.

Dec. 9th: Studying course readings at home and working on your final paper. No class.

Week Sixteen - Dec. 14th, Submit your final exam on by 5:00 pm.

