

**Syllabus CONF 501 – Distance Learning Course  
Integration of Theory and Practice  
Fall 2015**

**Meeting place:** Blackboard 9.1

**Weekly schedule:** Each week runs Monday through Sunday starting on August 31, 2015

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**Office Hours:** by appointment (via telephone, email, Skype, or chat)

**Prerequisite or co-requisite for all MS CONF majors – open to non-major graduate students**

- Introduces field of conflict analysis and resolution.
- Examines definitions of conflict and diverse views of its “resolution.”
- Explores thinking about human behavior, and social systems as they relate to origins of conflict and role of conflict in violent and peaceful social change.
- Considers appropriate responses to conflict at interpersonal, inter-group, industrial, communal, and international levels.

**Primary Texts**

- Lederach, John Paul (2005), *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, Oxford University Press
- Pruitt, Dean G., Sung Hee Kim (2004), *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
- Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Mall. (2011), *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Polity Press.

**Course Overview**

- There are readings and activities due each week; it is important that we all work at the same pace, neither getting ahead nor behind on weekly ventures.
- There are other significant assignments outlined below. You will find these assignments on Blackboard where you will post your creative responses or links to them, as appropriate. (Note: there may be to assignments adjustments prompted by current events related to conflict or changes in available of resources, but the scope of the work will remain constant.)
- It is important to complete all work on schedule, but if there are extenuating circumstances; such as sickness, family issues, travel, or religious observances that conflict with our schedule, please let me know as soon as possible—I will try to accommodate your needs.

Major Assignment Component(s)		Major Assignments	Total
Warm-up Paper (5 points)		Create Portfolio (5 points)	10 points
		Mid-Term Exam (10 points)	10 points
Paper Proposal (5 points)	Annotated Bibliography and Draft Paper (10 points)	Final Paper (25 points)	40 points
Participation (30 Points)		Presentation (10 points)	40 Points
<b>100 Points</b>			

**Course Logistics**

- This course will use a distance learning format; the primary meeting space will be on Blackboard 9.1; and we will use other means of keeping in touch such as: email, telephone, and Skype. In a typical weekly module:
  - you will read about 100 pages and discuss the material with your classmates or complete a related task;
  - accomplish on-line activities and respond to weekly requirements;
  - work on assignments to be submitted in the Blackboard assignment drop box according to the assignment schedule.
  
- Though the delivery method is different, it should take you the same amount to time as a typical graduate course. In addition to readings and major assignments, expect to spend 3 to 4 hours on coursework for each module, (this accounts for the time you would have spent in a classroom). It is critical to keep up with weekly requirements. I will provide a folder each week in our Blackboard course to specify required activities and assignments (available by clicking on 'Course Contents' on the course menu in Blackboard).

## **Blackboard**

- We will use Blackboard 9.1 for the course. I will post additional guidance on individual assignments and discussion questions there. Use the Blackboard assignment drop box to submit your work for grading. Please visit our Blackboard site regularly at: <http://mymason.gmu.edu>.

## **Technology Requirements for this Course**

- Please see “Technology Requirements” on the Course Menu in Blackboard. Download the software indicated onto your computer for use in the course. Pay special attention to the Blackboard supported browsers and operating systems.

## **Student Responsibilities**

- MasonLive/Email:

Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. For accessibility and privacy, the university, school, and program will send communications to students solely through their Mason email account—students should respond accordingly (<https://masonlivelogin.gmu.edu/>). Please indicate the course number in all emails to the professor.

- Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester (See <http://ods.gmu.edu>).

- Honor Code and Virtual Classroom Conduct:

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code (See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode>). We value critical thinking and therefore, it is imperative that students read the assigned books and articles prior to the class with a critical eye. Active thought, quality of inputs, and a conflict resolution attitude should be your guiding principles.

- University Libraries:

University Libraries provides resources for distance students. (See <http://library.gmu.edu/distance/>).

- Writing Center:

The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. (See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

- Work Ethic:

CONF 501 is a collaborative learning experience. Everyone should participate in every class and contribute actively to groups and class discussions. Please participate enthusiastically in group activities while respecting the opinions and valuing the work of your colleagues. You will be disappointed in this class if you focus on individual effort alone. However, any individual assignments should be strictly your own. Also, please let me know if your final paper relates to your previous academic work—it is a problem if you just recycle a previously-written paper. While a powerful tool, please use the internet with caution. Reference your sources, resist the temptation to cut and paste material into your own work, and use independent validation of the information where appropriate.

Please adhere strictly to the Mason honor code: *To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: **Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.***

### Learning outcomes

1. Recognize and describe important elements (e.g., theories, schemas, models) in the field of conflict analysis and resolution.
2. Evaluate the definitions of conflict and the diverse views of conflict resolution.
3. Analyze the link between human behavior and social systems as origins of conflict.
4. Apply the appropriate level of intervention needed across the spectrum from self-help to formal mediation.
5. Create solutions for a suite of conflict types.
6. Collaborate in a group to accomplish a goal.

### Weekly Schedule

As needed, I may change some of the activities listed below, but the scope of the course will be unchanged. Distance learning courses are dynamic—to ensure we achieve our learning outcomes, we may need to negotiate weekly schedule changes. We will focus on learning, fairness, and reason in any approved changes.

<u>Weeks</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Activities</u> (2 points per week)	<u>Assignments</u>
Week 1	Introduction to the Course	<p>The participation score will be based on the timeliness and quality of weekly discussions and activities.</p> <p>Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About yourself – introductions</li> <li>• Quiz on syllabus</li> <li>• What is conflict (Rubenstein)</li> <li>• Video Mini-lecture: Learning philosophy</li> <li>• Discussion on conflict experience (introduction to rubric)</li> </ul>	<p>Grading criteria and rubrics for activities are in your Blackboard course folder.</p>
Week 2 Learning Outcome #1, #6	Introduction to Conflict Resolution	<p>Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Reading Responses</li> <li>• Video Mini-lecture: Galtung’s model</li> <li>• Explanation: Richardson - Deadly Quarrels essay</li> <li>• Conflict style inventory</li> <li>• Video: History of our institution (Rubenstein)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Ramsbotham, Chapters 1-3</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Warm-up Paper</p>

<p>Week 3 Learning Outcome #1, #6</p>	<p>Violent Conflict</p>	<p>Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Reading Responses</li> <li>• Student-teacher connection.</li> <li>• Video Mini-lecture: Azar – PRC</li> <li>• Explanation: UN Peacekeeping essay</li> <li>• Video: Origins of Conflict Field (Rubenstein)</li> <li>• Case Study: Coltan mining in Congo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Ramsbotham, Chapters 4-7</li> </ul>
<p>Week 4 Learning Outcome #1, #6</p>	<p>Post-Conflict Work</p>	<p>Evaluating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Reading Responses</li> <li>• Video: Mini-lecture: Peacebuilding</li> <li>• Set up portfolio blog</li> <li>• Elevator speech</li> <li>• Video: Multi-track diplomacy (McDonald)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Ramsbotham, Chapters 8-10</li> <li>• Create Portfolio</li> </ul>
<p>Week 5 Learning Outcome #2, #6</p>	<p>Cosmopolitan Conflict Resolution</p>	<p>Evaluating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Reading Responses</li> <li>• Video: Mini-lecture: Lifeworld</li> <li>• Video: Immigration enforcement policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Ramsbotham, Chapters 11-13</li> <li>• Mid-semester feedback survey</li> </ul>

<p>Week 6 Learning Outcome #2, #6</p>	<p>Ethics of Conflict Resolution</p>	<p>Evaluating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Reading Responses</li> <li>• Explanation: future</li> <li>• Video: Case study: Waco Conflict</li> <li>• Video: Case study: MOVE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Ramsbotham, Chapters 14-17</li> <li>• Paper Proposal</li> </ul>
<p>Week 7 Learning Outcome #3</p>	<p>Conflict Theory</p>	<p>Analyzing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bb Discussion</li> <li>• Affinity exercise (journal)</li> <li>• Video: Importance of Research (Rubenstein)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Ramsbotham, Chapters 18-20</li> </ul>
<p>Week 8 Learning Outcome #5</p>	<p>Conflict Management</p>	<p>Analyzing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bb Discussion</li> <li>• Conflict solutions exercise</li> <li>• Video: Reasons to enter Conflict field (Rubenstein)</li> <li>• Video: Mini-Lecture Dual Concern Model</li> <li>• Video: Tank Man event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Pruitt, Chapters 1-4</li> <li>• Mid-term Exam</li> </ul>

<p>Week 9 Learning Outcome #4</p>	<p>Change Management</p>	<p>Applying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bb Discussion</li> <li>• Video: Mini-lecture: structural change</li> <li>• Essay and Pictures: Explanation: escalation</li> <li>• Video: Change in government (Rubenstein)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Pruitt, Chapters 5-8</li> </ul>
<p>Week 10 Learning Outcome #4</p>	<p>Conflict Settlement</p>	<p>Applying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bb Discussion</li> <li>• Video: Martin Luther King</li> <li>• Martin Luther King exercise</li> <li>• Video: Settlement processes (Rubenstein)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Pruitt, Chapters 9-11</li> <li>• Annotated Bibliography and Draft Paper</li> </ul>
<p>Week 11 Learning Outcome #5</p>	<p>Moral Imagination</p>	<p>Creating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group activity: 4-panel Recommendation (topic of the week)</li> <li>• Explanation: 4 panel exercise.</li> <li>• Question: global ethics</li> <li>• Global Conflict: Global Warming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Lederach, Chapters 1-5</li> </ul>



<p>Week 12 Learning Outcome #5</p>	<p>Sense of Place</p>	<p>Creating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group activity: 4-panel Recommendation</li> <li>• Write a Haiku (course blog)</li> <li>• Video: Empire and Nation State (McDonald)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Lederach, Chapters 6-10</li> <li>• Final Paper</li> </ul>
<p>Week 13 Learning Outcome #5</p>	<p>Sense of Time</p>	<p>Creating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group activity: 4-panel Recommendation (topic of the week)</li> <li>• Explanation: environment</li> <li>• Personal ethics statement</li> <li>• Update portfolio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Lederach, Chapters 11-15</li> </ul>
<p>Week 14 Learning Outcome #5</p>	<p>Imagining the Future</p>	<p>Synthesizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critique presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation</li> </ul>

**Grading Scale (points): A 100-93; A- 92-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80; C 79-70; F <70**