

74485 CONF 731-001: Conflict in Organizations

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Office Hours by Appointment

School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

George Mason University, Arlington, VA

Fall Semester 2016 3 credits

Founders Hall Room 477

Class Schedule:

Mondays 7:20-10:00 pm

First class August 29

No class September 5

Recess Columbus Day, October 10; instead meet Tuesday October 11

Last class December 5

Course Purpose:

To provide SCAR students with the skill and ability to:

Understand the theories of organizational conflict

Learn and practice an array of intervention tools

Discern the appropriate intervention strategy

Design and conduct effective interventions

Evaluate the success/failure of real intervention cases

Course Objectives:

Participants will examine the theories of organizations in conflict and the themes of organizational success. They will learn to assess systemic issues and design tailored interventions with a solid ethical foundation. The students will understand and practice the tools of intervention. They will evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and apply that learning to new case studies. Participants will review the underlying tenets of good leadership and become adept at looking at systems.

Course Expectations:

The class will meet during fall semester every Monday evening from 7:20-10:00. The students will do three projects outlined below. The activities in this class will include a mixture of lectures, group activities, skill-building exercises, case studies, role plays, and discussion. Each student will evaluate their peers and receive feedback.

Class Policies and Procedures:

Consistent attendance. Students must attend all class sessions for the entire scheduled time, barring unforeseen and exceptional circumstances. If a student needs to miss a class, they should discuss this with me in advance and work with me to create an alternative assignment.

Effective preparation. Class sessions will involve discussions and activities that require advance reading and other forms of preparation. Everyone will find class more productive, enjoyable, and worthwhile if each person comes prepared. I am committed to doing so, and ask that the students commit to this as well. There is a fair amount of reading involved. Please feel free to read ahead.

Courtesy and civility. I seek to foster a positive classroom environment, characterized by shared enjoyment of the learning process. I ask that we all treat each other with respect, listen carefully to each other's views, and seek to learn from one another's experience and insights.

Meeting Deadlines. Students are responsible for completing assignments on time.

Course completion. In keeping with departmental policy, I will only give incomplete grades in cases of personal or immediate family illness.

Integrity. I expect integrity of every student in all academic work. Students can expect the same of me. All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. If students have not done so, please familiarize yourselves with the Honor Code at [HYPERLINK "http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html"](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html)
<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html>.

University Resources and Assistance:

Writing Center: The Writing Center provides tutors who can help students develop ideas and revise papers at no charge. It can sometimes accommodate walk-ins, but generally, it is best to call for an appointment. The services of the Writing Center are also available on-line. Location: ARL212 (in the main SPP suite). Contact: (703) 993-3762 [HYPERLINK "http://writingcenter.gmu.edu" http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu).

Disability Resource Center: The Disability Resource Center assists students with learning or physical conditions affecting learning. Students with learning styles that require special conditions for exams or other writing assignments should provide documentation provided by the Disability Resource Center. Please contact me to discuss your needs well in advance of the first class if possible. Location: SUB I, Room 222. Contact: 703-993-2474
www.gmu.edu/student/drc/.

Grading: The grade in this class will be determined as follows:

Class Participation:	20%
Class Presentations:	40%
Final Project:	40%

Class Participation (20%)

It is important for students to contribute to class discussions and bring their insights and questions related to the readings and presentations. Students are encouraged to share their knowledge, creativity, and perspectives. We learn through a diversity of opinions and experiences and feedback. I will evaluate you based on the level of effort, application of the readings, and how you integrate your knowledge and class materials into our in-class work. You will be asked to provide constructive feedback to others during the class. And you will receive feedback from your class participants. The success of the class depends largely on your preparation and active participation.

Class Presentations (40%)

Students will do two in-class presentations. First, please select a theme of your choice from the topics in the syllabus and do a presentation on that theme for that week. This presentation should be no more than 30 minutes. Second, please select a leadership book of your choosing and create an engaging presentation on that book for the class, analyzing how leadership impacts organizational conflict. I have many book titles, so please see me if you need ideas. This presentation should be no more than 30 minutes. The key here is to distill the essence of the book to help us learn theories of successful leadership. In both presentations, you are encouraged to create materials for the students and to lead exercises, demonstrations, and/or role plays. You will be graded on your creativity, transfer of relevant information, and ability to synthesize and succinctly communicate the important issues.

Final Project (40%)

Students will complete a final project with three components: (1) Conducting an interview, analysis, and intervention (proposed if need be) related to an organizational conflict; (2) Writing a 5-8 page paper explaining the relationship between your project and theories we discussed in class and/or assigned readings; and (3) Presenting your findings in class. The presentations of your case study should be no more than 30 minutes. Papers are due the last day of class, December 5. Grades are based on the quality of the writing and the oral presentation. Critical thinking and analysis are key.

Required Texts (Portions of the following texts):

Bingham, Lisa. Mediation at Work which can be downloaded for free at:
<http://www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/Mediation.pdf>. DC: IBM Center
Business of Government, 2003.

Costantino, Cathy, et al. Designing Conflict Management Systems. San Francisco:
Jossey Bass, 1996.

Ury, William. The Third Side. NY: Penguin, 2000.

Class Meeting Times and Readings:

1. Monday August 29, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Introduction, goals, and agenda. We will discuss the nature of organizations and key concepts for assessment and intervention. Interests and influence related to organizational conflict. Leadership Lessons from Colin Powell.

Monday September 5, 2016 NO CLASS

2. Monday September 12, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Getting started with foundation documents and frameworks.
Please read the following on www.ADR.gov

Click the tab on the top entitled ADR resources and guidance

- Spectrum of Collaborative Processes
 - Core Principles For Non-Binding Workplace ADR Programs
 - A Guide for Federal Employee Mediators: A Supplement to and Annotation of the Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators Issued by the American Arbitration Association, the American Bar Association, and the Association for Conflict Resolution (May 9, 2006) (PDF)
Guide issued by the Federal Interagency ADR Working Group Steering Committee
 - Sample Declaration of Policy on Use of Alternative Means of Dispute Resolution
 - Key Elements to Implementing a Successful ADR Program
 - Sample Roster Requirements (PDF)
 - Criteria for Serving as a Mediator in Selected Federal and State Mediation Programs
 - Evaluation checklist outline (PDF)
- Group dynamics and organizational conflict. Psychological safety.

3. Monday September 19, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Please read Mediation at Work which can be downloaded for free at:

<http://www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/Mediation.pdf>. Communication and organizational conflict. Mediation as an intervention skill.

4. Monday September 26, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Please read Designing CM Systems pp. ix-48. Diversity and organizational conflict. Facilitation as an intervention skill.

5. Monday October 3, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Please read Designing CM Systems pp. 49-95. Culture and organizational conflict. Unconscious bias.

6. Tuesday October 11, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm. No Class Monday October 10, 2016

Please read Designing CM Systems pp. 96-149. Power and organizational conflict. Training as an intervention skill.

7. Monday October 17, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Please read Designing CM Systems pp. 150-198. Change management and organizational conflict. Feedback.

8. Monday October 24, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Please read Designing CM Systems pp. 199-229. Guest speaker. Generational issues and organizational conflict. Climate Assessments.

9. Monday fadasctober 31, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Please read Third Side pps. viii-56. Emotional Intelligence and organizational conflict. Process circles, cafes, and adialogues.

10. Monday November 7, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Please read Third Side pps. 57-101. Please take the StrengthsFinder pursuant to these instructions. Please come to class with your top 5 strengths. <http://wbu.gmu.edu/>. If you scroll down on the page, there is an option for GMU students to take the StrengthsFinder for free. Teams and conflict. Assessments.

11. Monday November 14, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Please read Third Side pps. 101-154. Trust and organizational conflict. Coaching as an intervention skill.

12. Monday November 21, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Please read Third Side pps. 154-196. Final Reports. Designing interventions.

13. Monday November 28, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Please read Third Side pps. 197-218. Final Reports. Evaluation of intervention strategies.

14. Monday December 5, 2016 7:20-10:00 pm

Please read the materials I handed out on November 28. Final Reports. Review and wrap up.