

CONF708: Identity and Conflict

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Spring 2011
Thursdays: 4:30 pm - 7:10 pm
R Arlington: Founders Hall 467

Overview

This course is designed to explore complex interrelations of social identity and postmodern conflicts in society with the emphasis on the role of identity in processes of conflict resolution and transformation. Critical rethinking of ethnic, national and religious identities as both generators and outcomes of conflict will be important part of the course. Course aims to extend knowledge on structure and dynamic of identity-based conflicts and to develop a framework for their resolution. Course includes lectures, simulations, and case studies. The final assignment of the course requires students to conduct case study and design an intervention into a conflict of their choice.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

GMU EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Students must activate their GMU email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class.

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

OTHER USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES:

WRITING CENTER: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES "Ask a Librarian"

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

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380;

<http://caps.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

Assessment of Students:

Students participating in the full course will be graded based on the following:

1. Active participation in the class activities is worth 25 % of the final grade.

2. Students are required to write 2 papers on multiple identities and ethnic identity. The papers should be 3-4 pages in length and each paper is worth 20% of the final grade.

3. Students are required to conduct a case study of conflict of their choice and design an intervention. The case study can be drawn from the organizational, communal, national, or international level and should involve identity conflict in any form. The research paper should be 15 pages in length and is worth 35% of the final grade.

Required reading:

Ashmore, Richard D., Jussim, Lee, and Wilder, David (Eds). (2001) *Social identity, intergroup conflict, and conflict reduction*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.

Korostelina, K. V. (2007) *Social identity and conflict*. Palgrave

Peacock, J. L., Thornton, P. M. and Inman, P. B. (2007). *Identity Matters: Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict*. Berghahn Books

Tilly, C. (2005) *Identities, boundaries and social ties*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers

Volkan, Vamik (1997). *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Rothbart, D. and K. V. Korostelina (2007) *Identity, morality and threat*. Lexington (readings will be provided by the professor)

Additional readings will be provided on E-reserve. The password is "identity"

Weekly Schedule

- January 27: Introduction to Course. Introduction to Social Identity
Reading: Korostelina: 15-21; 59-67; Rothbart and Korostelina: ch.7; Volkan: 19 - 29;
- February 3: Theories of Social Identity
Reading: Korostelina: 21-32; Volkan: 36- 49, 81-100; Tilly: 3-10; 60-67
- February 10: Structure and Dynamics of Social Identity
Reading: Korostelina: 71-93; 113-121
- February 17: Identity, prejudice, and discrimination.
Reading: Ashmore: 3-42; Rothbart and Korostelina: ch.6; Peacock: 34-48, 98-119
- February 24: Identity and conflict
Reading: Korostelina: 127-154; Rothbart and Korostelina: ch.12;
- March 3: Identity, Moral Denigration, and Violence
Reading: Ashmore: 133-187; Rothbart and Korostelina: ch.1, 3
- March 10: Ethnic Identity and conflict
Reading: Ashmore: 42-71; Volkan: 101-116; 157-167; **Horowitz: 51-88;**
- March 17: no classes
- March 24: National Identity
Reading: Ashmore: 71-133; Korostelina: 181-187; Peacock: 15-33; Tilly: 171-198;

- March 31: National and Ethnic identity: Case Study
Reading: Peacock: 73-98, 157-170; Rothbart and Korostelina: ch.8
- April 7: Religious Identity and Conflict
Reading: Rothbart and Korostelina: ch.9; Peacock: 171-234
- April 14: Identity-Based Conflict Resolution: Early-warning and Identity management
Reading: Korostelina: 201-239
- April 21: Conflict Transformation: Building Relationship
Readings: Volkan: 203-227, Ashmore: 187-213; Rothbart and Korostelina: ch. 14
- April 28: Paper presentation and discussion
- May 5: Paper presentations and discussion

Assignments

1. Multiple identity paper.

Write a paper about your own social identity system using the following structure:

- a) List all social groups you involve in.
- b) List and briefly describe your social identities.
- c) Describe the most salient identities and give examples how they influence your attitudes, values, behavior.
- d) Show interrelations within system of social identities: which identities are very interconnected.
- e) Describe changes in identity salience and give examples when your non-salient identity became the most salient one.

You can choose one of the following forms:

- I. Write a letter for your friend about your social identity.
- II. Write a scientific self-report about your social identity.

The papers should be 3-4 pages in length, double space, 12. Due date is: **February 24**

2. Ethnic identity paper.

Write a paper analyzing ethnic identity of your choice (identity of your own ethnic group or any other ethnic group) based on theoretical ideas of Volkan, Horowitz, or Eriksen. Use his notions of chosen trauma and glory, phenomenon of minor differences and other notions to describe features of particular ethnic identity, give examples and provide conclusion about relevancy of the theoretical approach. For this paper you can use interviews with representatives of ethnic group, examples from literature, art, and history. The papers should be 3-4 pages in length, double space, 12. Paper due date: **March 24**

3. Final paper on case study and intervention.

The case study can be drawn from the organizational, communal, national, or international level and should involve identity conflict in any form. Be sure to analyze conflict based on theoretical ideas and notions you studied during the course. Show how theoretical analysis can help to understand identity conflict and can serve as a basis for the intervention. Suggest your methods for conflict resolution, based on social identity theory. Plan to present your paper for seven minutes during last two classes. The research paper should be 15 pages in length double space, 12. Due date for draft is **April 28**. **Due date for final paper is May 12**.