

**CONF 620/820**

**Reflective Practice in Conflict Analysis and Resolution**

December 2013

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**Course Description and Objectives**

Conflict is an inescapable part of our lives—in our personal relationships, at work, in community and in society. Sometimes it is a process in which we struggle over scarce resources, sometimes over misunderstandings or differences in meaning-making, and sometimes because of the positions we find ourselves in through narratives or stories that we have created or been victim of others' creations. To make it even more complex, conflict is always embedded in culture, history, identity and values systems.

This course is designed to help students engage in critical thinking on the intersection of peacebuilding theory and practice. The topics covered in this class investigate this nexus between theory and practice, exploring the various challenges that occur when contextualizing and applying the theoretical models to practice situations.

The class will also engage in a number of role-plays, and reflect on the practice. Reflective practice is the process interveners engage that consists of exploring a pattern of action, making adjustments during the action, or thinking about past action. In an elemental sense, most of us perform some form of reflective practice virtually every day. To the extent that reflective practice incorporates theory and experience, even the most mundane of activities engages aspects of experiential learning and nascent theory.

Conflict resolution is frequently a process that involves emotional intensity and relational complexity. This can be a factor in dyadic disputes, but is significantly present in deep-rooted multiparty conflicts. Because of this, it is critical that as practitioners we become skilled at integrating theory and experiential learning into practice at three stages of an intervention: 1) in analyzing or assessing the conflict in preparation for intervention; 2) during the intervention itself; and 3) in post intervention reflection. In this way, reflective practice is a form of "meaning making"—attempting to make sense of phenomena occurring around us through an interdependence of theory, experience and practice. It may also be a process of altering meaning-making systems designed toward transformation of the relationships for the parties in conflict. The objective is to build an understanding of integrative practices—negotiation, facilitation, mediation and dialogue—that can be utilized in a variety of conflict settings.

### **Course Objectives**

- Learn and practice basic skills required for peacebuilding work
- Learn to make skill and intervention choices that are contextually appropriate
- Demonstrate knowledge of a range of processes that can be used to facilitate effective communication and decision-making
- Apply theory and research skills towards intervention design and practice, and employ reflective practice throughout the process of peacebuilding

### **Course Philosophy**

I am delighted to have all of you in this class and look forward to engaging in a positive learning experience that will augment your practice skills. In this regard, I hope to partner with all of you to create a positive in-class environment that promotes learning, discussion, reflection and integration. As such, I invite you to:

- **Respect all points of view regardless of where you stand on particular issues**
- Create a space for dialogue and discussion of all view points present in the classroom
- Listen to gain insight and reflect on what is being said and on your own thoughts
- Learn from each other's experiences as practitioners, professionals and students

### **Class Policies and Procedures**

You are responsible for completing individual and group assignments on time. Some class assignments and readings will be sent via e-mail and you are responsible for checking your Mason e-mail and keeping up-to-date (not over quota) with it.

Incomplete grades will not be granted except in cases of personal or immediate family illness or emergency.

**Honor Code and Plagiarism:** Plagiarism or other violations of the **honor code** are not acceptable in this or any other GMU class. In addition to the following, please see the S-CAR handbook:

[http://www.gmu.edu/departments/S-CAR/newstudent/Appendix\\_L.pdf](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/S-CAR/newstudent/Appendix_L.pdf).)

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: [academicintegrity.gmu.edu](http://academicintegrity.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 that: (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, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

**S-CAR's Policy:** Faculty require all written work be available in electronic form so that it can be compared to electronic databases. Faculty may at any time compare your written work against electronic databases/plagiarism detection software without prior permission from you. Individual instructors may require work to be submitted in print and electronic form. You are encouraged to review your work through Blackboards SafeAssign program. The professor may also directly submit work using the same system.

### **Course Requirements**

This class is intensive in its very nature of a three-weekend format, and I would like you to have a fulfilling and rewarding experience. As such, I would like your commitment to the following:

Class Attendance: Consistent attendance is required. Failure to do so will be noted—the highest grade you can expect if you have more than one full day of unexcused absence is a B. Please inform me if you are facing circumstances beyond your control that prevent you from attending class. **If you are not able to make it to class on time, please let me know ahead of time.**

Class Participation: You are expected to participate fully in class discussions and activities - you are expected to participate fully in all exercises and complete all weekly-required readings in preparation for class discussion.

Class Assignments: Throughout the course there will be various learning experiences. Mediums will include videos, guest speakers, impromptu vignettes,

lectures, simulations and role-plays, journaling, structured observation, in- and outside-class activities and discussions. Specifically, you will be graded on the following course requirements:

**A. Class Discussion and Exercises (simulations, role-plays, in- and outside-class assignments, readings, debriefs, etc.): 20%**

Over the course of the semester, you will engage in brief exercises and discussions to assess the application of a number of practice methodologies at varied points of a conflict cycle and with different methodologies. During simulations you will assume various roles—parties in conflict or violence, interveners and observers—designed to give you practice opportunities to assess your own practice skills.

**B. Reflective Log: 15%**

Each day you will keep a *reflective practice log* recording reflections on class assignments, readings, discussions and exercises. The log is meant to help you develop your own skills as reflective practitioners as you learn conflict resolution practices. It is one medium to link theory and research to practice as your reflections will culminate in a research paper integrating readings, class exercises, feedback and your reflections. **A short log summary (3 pages) is due on December 6, 2013.** Graded assignment will be handed back on December 9.

**C. Group Presentation: 40%**

Select an ongoing conflict (community, national, international, organizational, environmental etc.) that is of interest to your group. Please submit one paragraph about the topic and names of group members by October 7, 2013. Presentations will be made on November 25, 2013.

- You may join a team of no more than 4 students
- Research, explore and analyze an ongoing conflict using theories of conflict analysis or any other relevant theory. You may opt to use a framework such as SPITCEROW (Mitchell, Christopher) or the Three Pillar Framework (Sandole, Dennis J. D.), or develop your own analytical framework.
- Develop an intervention into a specific area of the conflict. This intervention should be in the form of a 2-3 year peacebuilding and development project.
- Each group will present it as a **capstone product** that integrates classroom exercises and discussions, and simulation/ role-plays. Creativity is encouraged. Presentations will take place during the last two class sessions and each group is allowed 45 minutes to present.
- Please submit names of group members and date preferences for presentation no later than December 5, 2013.

- The project proposal should include the following information and should be no more than 15 pages:
  1. Brief description of the organization/team, previous work in the country/region where the work would be performed, and previous work responding to the specific project type.
  2. Project description, including goals and objectives, and duration.
  3. Project outcomes, deliverables, and performance indicators.
  4. Current equipment and resources available for use on the project.
  5. Evaluation procedure for the project and reflective practice methodology to be used during project
  
- Format and Content for the Line Item Budget: The two-page document (maximum) should conform to the above format requirements and include the following information at a minimum.
  6. Budget narrative which explains in detail the budget breakdown by line items in U.S. Dollars.
  7. Show a detailed breakdown of personnel costs by category, duty, or occupational class.
  8. All professional expenses must be listed.

**D. Practitioner Interview: 25%**

Identify a peacebuilding practitioner and interview the individual. Choose an organization that you are either working at or have access to and: a) find out all that you can about its peacebuilding and development programming, including formal and informal processes to resolve conflict, then, b) talk with an employee who is working “in the field” and interview her/him about their work in a conflict/post conflict/violent setting.

Preparation for your interview will include creating interview questions. You have flexibility to choose either close ended or open ended questions or both for the purpose of the interview. The write-up for this assignment should be at least 12 -15 pages and include the interview questions, summary of interview, and reflections of the process. You are encouraged to reflect on your role as an interviewer.

### Important Dates to Remember:

<b>Reflective Practice Log (15%)</b>	<b>December 6, 2013</b>
<b>Submit names of group members for capstone product</b>	<b>December 5, 2013</b>
<b>Group Presentations and Papers (20% + 20%)</b>	<b>December 12, 2013</b>
<b>Practitioner Interview: 25%</b>	<b>December 20, 2013</b>

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## **University Resources and Assistance**

### **English Language Institute**

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the GMU faculty or staff. For more information contact 703-993-3642 or malle2@gmu.edu.

### **The Writing Center**

The Writing Center provides tutors who can help you 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 online. **Contact:** 703. 993.4491 or <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>. It is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring.

### **Disability Resource Center**

The Disability Resource Center assists students with learning or physical conditions affecting learning. Students with learning differences that require special conditions for exams or other writing assignments should provide documentation provided by the Disability Resource Center. Please see your professor the first week of classes.

**Location:** SUB I, Room 222 **Contact:** 703.993.2474 [www.gmu.edu/student/drc/](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/)

## **Required Readings Available on Dropbox**

Adobe Acrobat must be installed on your computer to view and print some readings. You can access Course Readings remotely from your home or office, and view and print materials using Adobe Acrobat Reader. All users of the E-Reserves must comply with the University Policy and Copy Right Law (Title 17, United States Code)

## Weekly Class Structure and Assignments

**DAY 1 ~ DECEMBER 2, 2013**  
**INTRODUCTION TO REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**

### Themes:

- Background on reflective practice, where and how it's being used; role in conflict analysis and resolution
- Tension between (and integration of) theory, research, and practice in conflict resolution
- Building a reflective class environment

### Class Activities:

- Introductions, review of syllabus, course requirements and structure  
Handouts: syllabus, course competencies, journal techniques & notes on final project
- Presentation: theory, research and practice in conflict resolution, levels of reflection and model building.

### Readings:

- Argyris, Chris and Donald A. Schön. 1992. *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*. Chapter 1: "Theories of Action", Chapter 2: "Evaluating Theories of Action", pp. 3-34. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 1 55542 446 5.
- Cheldelin, Sandra I., Wallace Warfield with January Makamba. 2004. Reflections on Reflective Practice, pp. 64-78. In *Research Frontiers in Conflict Analysis and Resolution*. Fairfax: Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University.
- Dugan, Máire A. 1996. A Nested Theory of Conflict. In *A Leadership Journal: Women in Leadership – Sharing the Vision*. Volume 1, pp. 9-19.
- Curhan, Jared et al (2006), What Do People Value When They Negotiate? Mapping the Domain of Subjective Value in Negotiation (First two cases)

### Assignments:

- For day 1 bring a conflict that you are either currently a party to or are deeply interested in and be prepared to present and discuss it.
- In groups of **2 or 3**:
  - a.) Select an image (on camera) that reflects what your group agrees is the intersection of the sacred and the secular. Submit that image to the dropbox folder **by Sunday, December 1, 2013**
  - b.) Conduct a negotiation of an actual purchase of something (be sure to plan what the purchase will be; only one member of the group needs to do the negotiation but all must be present to observe). Write a short (no more than three-paragraphs) paper that describes the experience and your reflections on your own part of the negotiation (planning, debrief, etc.). Submit to the dropbox folder **by Sunday, December 1, 2013**. [This is likely to be the first entry in your log journal.]

**DAY 2 ~ DECEMBER 3, 2013**  
**PRACTICE 1: REFLECTION IN ACTION & ETHICS**

**Class Activities:**

- Application of individual conflicts (see assignment from Week 1) to Conflict Analysis and Resolution models
- Review of Negotiation Images of Washington DC: lessons learned
- Negotiation debrief of purchases
- Discussion of readings

**Readings:**

- Duffield, Mark. 2001. The New Humanitarianism, pp. 75-107. *In Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. New York: Palgrave.
- Schrock-Shenk, Carolyn, ed. 2000. *Mediation and Facilitation Training Guide: Foundations and Skills for Constructive Conflict Transformation*. Pp. 280-281. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Services.
- Vasquez, John A. 2005. Ethics, Foreign Policy, and Liberal Wars: The Role of Restraint in Moral Decision Making. *In International Studies Perspectives*. Volume 6, Issue 3, pp. 307-315.
- Warfield, Wallace. 2002. Is This the Right Thing to Do? A Practical Framework for Ethical Decisions, Chapter 19, pp. 213-223. *In A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into the Eye of the Storm*. Lederach, John Paul, and Janice Moomaw Jenner, eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

**DAY 3 ~ DECEMBER 4, 2013**  
**Practice 2: Reflection in Action**

**Class activities:**

- Small group activity--facilitation
- Discussion of readings

**Readings:**

- Marsick, Victoria J., and Alfonso Sauquet. 2000. Learning through Reflection, Chapter 19, pp. 382-399. *In The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. Deutsch, Morton and Peter T. Coleman, Eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Fisher-Yoshida, Beth, Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) as Reflective Practice for Conflict Resolution Practitioners (2010)
- Schrock-Shenk, Carolyn, ed. 2000. *Mediation and Facilitation Training Guide: Foundations and Skills for Constructive Conflict Transformation*. pp. 218-226; 280-281. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Services. ISBN: 0 9642003 0 9.
- Schwarz, Roger M. 1994. *The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups*, Chapter 1, "Group Facilitation and the Role of the Facilitator", pp. 3-18, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. ISBN: 1 55542 638 7.

**DAY 4 ~ DECEMBER 5, 2013**  
**Multi-party FACILITATION**

**Class activities:**

- Case Study

**Readings:**

- Permanand, Shadell. 2009. *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual: Foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitations*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Chapter 2, Section 4, pp. 59-62, "Culture' and the Mediator's Baggage", Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Justice and Peacebuilding, ISBN: 0 9542 0030 9, Akron, PA.
- *The little Book of Conflict Transformation: Clear articulation of the guiding principles by a pioneer in the field* by John Paul Lederach
- Schirch, Lisa. 2009. *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice manual: foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitation*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Chapter 2, Section 1, pp. 32-33, "Ten principles of Identity for Peacebuilders", Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Justice and Peacebuilding, ISBN: 0 9642 0030 9, Akron, PA.
- Schirch, Lisa. 2009. *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice manual: foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitation*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Chapter 2, Section 4, pp. 66-67, "theories of Gender, Conflict and Peacebuilding", Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Justice and Peacebuilding, ISBN: 0 9642 0030 9, Akron, PA
- Menkel-Meadow, Carrie and Harold Abramson. 2011. *Mediating Multiculturally: Culture and the Ethical Mediator*, University of California, Irvine.

**DAY 5 ~ DECEMBER 6, 2013**  
**FACILITATION**

**Class activities:**

- Role play

**Due:**

- Log summary paper (3 ~ 5 pages)

**Readings:**

- Bush, Baruch and Joseph Folger., 1994. *The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict, Chapter 1*
- Moore, Christopher (1996) "How Mediation Works" chapter 2 in *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco.
- Shapira, Omer, 2009. Exploring the Concept of Power in Mediation: Mediators' Sources of Power and Influence Tactics. *Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution*

- Watkins, Watkins, Jane Magruder and Bernard J. Mohr (2001) *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer. Chapter 3 “Appreciative Inquiry as a Process.”
- The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry by Sue Annis Hammond (Jan 27,2009)

<p><b>DAY 6 ~ DECEMBER 9, 2013</b>  <b>PRACTICE 3: MEDIATION—WESTERN MODEL</b></p>
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**Themes:**

- History and the nature and practice of mediation
- A continuum of intervention model
- Where and how mediation as a process is used and mediation activities
- The role of reflective practice in mediation

**Class activities:**

- Video excerpts from *The Mediators* (Teresa Wakeen, Chris Moore, Peter Adler, Joan Kelly/Nina Meirding, Howard Bellman, John Paul Lederach, Homer LaRue and Don Saposnek)
- Michael Lewis mediation video
- Practice: introductions in mediation—Western model

**Readings:**

- Avruch, Kevin and Peter W. Black (1993). “Conflict Resolution in Intercultural Settings: Problems and Prospects,” in D. Sandole and H. van der Merwe, eds., *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice Integration and Application*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. Pp. 131-145.
- LeBaron, Michelle. 2003. *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World*. Chapter 1, pp. 3-31; & Chapter 10, pp. 271-289. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 0 7879 6431 X.
- Lederach, John Paul. 1995. *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures*. Chapter 6, pp. 55-62. New York: Syracuse University Press. ISBN: 0 8156 2725.
- Watkins, Jane Magruder and Bernard J. Mohr (2001) *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer. Chapter 3 “Appreciative Inquiry as a Process.”

<p><b>DAY 7 ~ DECEMBER 10, 2013</b>  <b>WESTERN &amp; NON-WESTERN MODELS-NONVIOLENCE</b></p>
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**Readings:**

- TBD

**DAY 8 ~ DECEMBER 11, 2013**  
WESTERN & NON-WESTERN MODELS-NONVIOLENCE

**Readings:**

- Lederach, John Paul. 2009. *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice manual: Foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitation*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Justice and Peacebuilding, ISBN: 0 9642 0030 9 Akron, PA, Chapter 2, pp. 25-27.
- Roy, Beth. 2009. *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual: Foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitations*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Chapter 2, pp. 25-27, "Thinking about Power", Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Justice and Peacebuilding, ISBN: 0 9642 0030 9, Akron, PA.
- Schirch, Lisa. 2009. *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice manual: foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitations*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Chapter 2, Section 1, pp. 32-33, "Ten principles of Identity for Peacebuilders", Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Justice and Peacebuilding, ISBN: 0 9642 0030 9, Akron, PA.
- Widener, Michael N. 2011. *The Five-Tool Mediator: Game Theory, Baseball Practices and Southpaw Scouting*

**DAY 9 ~ DECEMBER 12, 2013**  
PRESENTATIONS