

Conf 642-001: Integration of Theory and Practice  
Spring 2008

Mondays, 7:20-10:00 pm  
Truland 333A

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Overview of Course

Welcome to Conflict 642: Integration of Theory and Practice. This is the capstone course in the final semester of your masters program that provides a formal structure in which to organize your thinking about the field of conflict analysis and resolution and your own studies within the field. Throughout the course we will look back on theories, intervention strategies, and research methods from your previous courses, as well as filling holes in your knowledge with new material. The aim is to pull together and integrate the wide variety of ideas, models, approaches, frameworks, theories and cases you have encountered in your studies of this complex field.

Often we will ask overarching questions about theory, research and practice:

What do we know?

What don't we know?

How can we find out what we don't know?

Our in-class discussions will probe linkages and gaps in order to help you develop a more comprehensive, integrated understanding of conflict analysis and resolution. As we review theories, methodologies and interventions, we will apply these to current social conflicts—both domestically and abroad.

Also, you will be asked to think about how you will use your education towards developing a satisfying career. We will explore funding and employment options and interview professionals—faculty, alumni, NGO leaders, etc.—in the field.

Course Requirements

There are four course requirements:

I. Participation

Regular attendance is required. You are expected to come to class prepared to engage with the topics and with your fellow students in a “learning community” format. You should undertake

the necessary background readings that will enable you to lead or participate in a discussion of the ideas, issues and problems that form the focus of attention for each weekly class. This will involve reading beyond the two basic textbooks for the course.

**2. Contemporary issue (seminar presentation) 30%**

At the first class meeting we will collectively create a list of contemporary problems, puzzles or issues in the field (e.g., the nature of religious conflict; differences between western and non-western mediation; the viability of conflict prevention; terrorism today and tomorrow; issues involved in working for governments). With one other team-mate, you will select a topic, research it to learn what experts have to say, formulate your own views, and prepare to lead a seminar-like discussion in class. One week prior to your presentation you and your team-mate will distribute important readings to help us prepare for the seminar. At the seminar, you will submit your notes for your presentation to the instructor.

**3. In-depth analysis of a social conflict (presentation and paper) 60%**

At the first class meeting we will create a list of contemporary social conflicts. These can be domestic (e.g. race relations, immigration, cultural wars) or beyond our borders (e.g. civil wars in countries around the world; regional conflicts; environmental conflicts; impact of globalization). You may want to join a group of no more than four to study this conflict. If you do, each person is to identify a specific component of the study to present and write on. You will make a final presentation to class on your topic and write a final paper of publishable quality (15-20 pages plus references and a bibliography). The paper will be rewritten and submitted for publication in some appropriate format (formats can range from journalistic to scholarly). The first draft of the paper is due at the time of your group's presentation (see the class schedule, below). The final version is due no later than May 5.

**4. Resumé and career reflection (paper) 10%**

During the semester you will interview at least two professionals doing the type of work that you want to do (or are doing now). You will write a resumé and a career reflection paper that indicates how you plan to proceed with the knowledge that you have and how you are going to get what you don't yet have. Resumes are due April 14 and career reflection papers are due April 21.

## REQUIRED READINGS

There are two required books for the class. Both are on reserve in the Burton Library if you do not have copies from your other classes:

- Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Miall. 2005. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Cambridge, UK: 56 Polity Press
- Schellenberg, James A. 1996. *Conflict Resolution: Theory, Research and Practice*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

In addition, we will create an e-reserve list for the class. At this point the following readings are already on e-reserve (see Weekly Schedule for due dates of readings). To access, use course no. 642-003, Dr. Sandra Cheldelin's name, and the password integrate.

- Babbie, Earl. 1992. *The Practice of Social Research*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Chapter 4, “Research Design,” pp 88-112. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing
- Cheldelin, Sandra, Daniel Druckman, Larissa Fast with Kevin Clements. 2008. Chapter 2, “Theory, Research, and Practice” in Cheldelin, et al., editors, *Conflict*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Continuum.
- Cobb, Sara. 2008 Chapter 6, “Narrative Analysis” in Cheldelin, et al., editors. *Conflict*, pp. 9-34. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition New York: Continuum.
- Druckman, Daniel. *Doing Research*
- Hoffman, Bruce. 1998. *Inside Terrorism*, Chapter 1, “Defining Terrorism”, pp 13-44. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kraybill, Ron 2000. “Reflections on Twenty Years in Peacebuilding”, Chapter 2 in Sampson, Cynthia and John Paul Lederach, editors, *From the Group Up: Mennonite Contributions to International Peacebuilding*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp 30-44
- Lederach, John Paul. 2000. “Journey from Resolution to Transformative Peacebuilding”, Chapter 3 in Sampson, Cynthia and John Paul Lederach, editors, *From the Group Up: Mennonite Contributions to International Peacebuilding*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp 45-55
- Nhat Hanh, Thich 2007. *The Art of Power*. Chapter 9, “Sparking a Collective Awakening”, pp 159-175, New York: HarperOne
- Sandole, D.J.D. (1998) “A comprehensive mapping of conflict and conflict resolution: a three pillar approach” in *Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Dec 1998, p 1-30 available online @ <http://www.gmu.edu/academic/pcs>

# WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

## INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD

### WEEK 1, January 28: Introduction to the Course

- Welcome and introductions
- Syllabus review: expectations, requirements, and learning community design
- Identify a list of contemporary problems, puzzles or issues in the field (a weekly space)
- Identify a list of contemporary social conflicts you want to explore (presentations at end of semester)
- Guests?

#### Assignments:

- For week 2: select contemporary issue topic and team-mate for in-depth study.
- For week 2: select current social conflict and team-mate(s) for in-depth study.
- For week 2: bring transcript and sort components of courses into three predominant areas: theory, research and practice
- For week 2: bring at least two examples of maps and/or frameworks you have encountered in your studies and be prepared to discuss them: what do these maps/frameworks say, how are they helpful, what are left out and how might you improve them.

### WEEK 2, February 4: Maps and Frameworks for Conflict Analysis

- Finalize schedule of topics and presentations over the semester
- Overview of the masters program—how do your courses relate to Theory, Research and Practice?
- Where are the gaps? What overlaps? What do you know? What don't you know? How are you going to learn what you don't know?
- Presentation and discussion of various conflict resolution maps and frameworks

#### Readings—to be completed before class:

- Sandole, <http://www.gmu.edu/academic/pcs>, p 1-30
- Begin a literature search on the contemporary issue

#### Assignment:

- For week 3: Continue literature search and begin working with team-mate on the contemporary issue

### WEEK 3, February 11: Conflict as a unifying field of study

- Where do “conflict studies” come from?
- How has the field developed since the early days?
- What do we know? What don't we know? How are we going to find out?
- Survey of curricula of other masters programs.
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#### Readings:

- Ramsbotham et al, Chapters 1 and 2, pp 3-54
- Schellenberg, Chapter 1, p 7-16
- Continue work on the contemporary issue presentation

**Assignment:**

- For week 4: identify at least three primary theorists' analyses of *causes* of conflict and be prepared to discuss similarities and differences.
- Teams # 1, 2, 3: submit readings for contemporary issue seminar on week 4

## THEORY

**WEEK 4, February 18: Conflict Causes and Conditions**

- Theories about causation
- What do we mean by a “cause”?
- What are individual characteristics theories? Social process theories?
- Contemporary issue seminars by teams #1, 2, 3, 4

**Readings to be completed before class:**

- Ramsbotham et al, chapters 4 and 5, pp 78-131
- Schellenberg, chapters 3 and 4, pp 39-78
- Continue work on contemporary issue presentation

**Assignment:**

- For week 5: identify at least two structural theories and on formal theory that makes sense to you in explaining protracted conflicts
- Teams #4, 5, 6, 7: submit readings for contemporary issue seminars for week 5
- Begin research on current social conflict

**WEEK 5, February 25: Structural Theory and Terrorism**

- What are social structural theories? Formal theories? Why are they helpful?
- What theories inform our thinking of terrorism?
- Contemporary issue seminars by teams #4, 5, 6

**Readings:**

- Schellenberg, chapters 5 and 6, pp 79-102
- Hoffman, chapter 1, pp 13-44
- Continue the literature search on both the contemporary issue and the social conflict

**Assignment:**

- For week 6: review at least 5 masters theses and/or doctoral dissertations at ICAR. What were the problem statements and the methodology used?
- Teams #8, 9, 10, 11: submit readings for contemporary issue seminar for week 6

## RESEARCH

### **WEEK 6, March 3: Research in Conflict Analysis and Resolution**

- Discussion of nexus of theory, research and practice
- Discussion of research outcomes at ICAR—problem statements and methodologies used
- What do we know? What don't we know? How are we going to find out?
- Contemporary issue seminars by teams #8, 9, 10, 11

#### **Readings:**

- Cheldelin et al, chapter 2
- Schellenberg, chapter 2, pp 17-38
- Ramsbotham et al., chapter 3, pp 55-77
- Continue the literature search on both the contemporary issue and the social conflict

#### **Assignment:**

- For week 7: review research papers that you have written for your ICAR program. What methodologies did you use and why? What are you most comfortable with and why?
- Teams #12, 13, 14: submit readings for contemporary issue seminar for week 7

March 10: SPRING BREAK

No Class

**WEEK 7, March 17: Research Methodologies in Conflict Resolution**

- What are the most common methodologies? The newest? (Guest Lecture)
- What research methodologies are you most comfortable using? What don't you know? How are you going to learn it?
- How do we increase research productivity in the field?
- Contemporary issue seminars by teams #12, 13, 14

**Readings:**

- Cobb, Chapter 6,
- Druckman, Chapter
- For week 9 (and 12): interview two practitioners about their experiences in handling issues of power and coercion (week 9) and what was missing in their education and training to do their practice (week 12).
- Continue the literature search on the social conflict

**Assignment:**

- Continue literature search and begin writing paper on the social conflict

PRACTICE

**WEEK 8, March 24: Coercion, Power, Negotiation, and Adjudication**

- Practitioners' stories of handling power and coercion
- Similarities and differences between practitioners' experiences and warring states

**Readings:**

- Schellenberg, chapters 7, 8 and 9, pp 119-172
- Ramsbotham et al., chapters 5 and 6, **get pages**
- Continue work on the social conflict paper

**Assignments:**

- For Week 9: Identify two practice methodologies that you can discuss—their strengths and liabilities

**WEEK 9, March 31: Adjudication, Mediation, Dialogues, New Practices**

- Practice methodologies: our favorites, what works, what doesn't, and why?
- **First group presentations on contemporary social conflicts**

**Readings:**

- Ramsbotham et al., chapters 12, 13, 14, and 15, pp. **get pages**
- Schellenberg, chapters 10, 11, and 12, pp 173-214
- Nhat Hanh, chapter 9, pp 159-175

- Continue work on the social conflict paper

**Assignments:**

- For Week 10: pick one topic—peacemaking, reconstruction, peacebuilding or reconciliation—and be prepared to identify the most common elements of these and examples of where this has “worked”

**WEEK 10, April 7: Models of Peacemaking, Reconstruction, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation**

- What have we learned about containing and ending violent conflict? Examples of what works and what has not. (Guest lecture)
- **Second group presentations on contemporary social conflicts**

**Readings:**

- Kraybill, chapter 2, pp 30-44
- Lederach, chapter 3, pp 45-55
- Ramsbotham et al., chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10
- Continue work on the social conflict paper

**Assignments:**

- For week 11: bring resumé that reflects your education, career experiences and career goals

**WEEK 11, April 14: Next Steps in Practice**

- Practitioners’ reflections on their work: what did they know? What was missing? How did they get what was missing?
- Review of resumé and feedback from colleagues
- **Third group presentations on contemporary social conflicts**

**Readings:**

- Ramsbotham et al, chapter 16, pp 316-331
- Continue work on the social conflict paper

**Assignments:**

- For week 12: finish career reflections paper.

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- Discuss rewriting of papers and publication options (Guest Lecture)

**WEEK 13, April 28**

- **Fifth group presentations on contemporary social conflicts**
- Continue discussion of rewriting techniques and publications options

**WEEK 14, May 5**



- Complete Group Presentations
- Wrap up and course evaluation