

**Conf. 650 - Advanced Skills, Fall 2009**

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**Class Days: Location Truland Room 647**

**Oct. 31 & Nov. 1, 2009** 10:00 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
**Nov. 14 & 15, 2009** 10:00 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
**Dec. 5 & 6, 2009** 10:00 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Welcome to the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and especially to the Certificate Program! I am delighted to have you in class and look forward to an engaging learning experience. My hope is to partner with you on creating an environment that promotes learning, discussions, reflection and integration.

**Course Overview**

This course is designed to help certificate students engage in critical thinking with regard to the intersection between conflict resolution theory and practice. Course topics will investigate issues pertaining to the articulated nexus between theory and practice with special attention to the challenges of translation, adaptation and transfer of these models.

The three-day weekends will address the following objectives:

- Create a learning community through readings on theory, class and on-line discussions, class exercises and engaging in constructive learning experiences;
- Provide a forum to discuss, analyze and critique the application, integration and evaluation of discussed approaches;
- Learn from each others valuable experiences as individuals, professional, students and more importantly members of the global community;
- Provide you with an opportunity to envision, develop & design, and gain practical experiences in applying conflict resolution practice.

**Course Philosophy**

As faculty for this class, I would like to acknowledge that my personal and professional experience, ethnic and cultural heritage, and religious identity impacts the way I understand the issues and the way I select to present them. In light of this acknowledgement, I would invite you to:

- a) Respect all points of view regardless of where you are on these issues;
- b) Listen to gain insight; reflect on what the other person is trying to communicate;
- c) Accept that we are here as a learning community – in which each person is a teacher and a learner.

**Course Expectations**

Due to the intensive nature of the three-day weekend format, the following expectations will ensure that you get the most rewarding and engaging experience from the class.

I would like to get your commitment to the following:

Attendance: consistent attendance is required. Failure to do so will be noted. Please let me know if you are facing circumstances beyond your control and inform me as soon as possible. The highest grade to expect is a “B” if you happen to miss one full weekend.

Participation: You are expected to participate fully in class discussions and activities. Structured exercises will support that objective. Please do not hesitate to let me know about your experience during class. I am happy to respond to any concerns that might impede your participation.

Preparation: The success of this class is dependent on our ability to discuss class readings. There will be opportunities to engage in on-line assignments, but first and foremost, in-class participation is a must. Please come prepared to

discuss all readings including the Oct. 13,14th class readings. I am aware that intensive readings are required for the class and that all of you juggle personal and professional responsibilities that might impede your completion of class readings. Please do your best. We all contribute to the success of the class and I personally consider it a shared responsibility.

Class Completion: Please note that departmental policies dictate that an incomplete grade is granted in cases of personal or immediate family illness.

Class assignments: You are expected to complete class assignments on time. Please request prior permission should you not be able to do so.

Should there be any additional assignments, they will be sent via email. You are responsible for keeping up with these up to date assignments.

#### **University Resources and Assistance**

- If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
- The Writing Center is available to all Mason students and offers online and individual consultations as well as workshops and mini-courses. Writers at all levels can benefit. Each Mason campus has a location; you can find them on the Arlington Campus in the Original Building, Room 334C, by phone at 703 993-4491 or online at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>
- You are responsible for knowing, understanding, and following Mason's Honor Code, found at: <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12>. Be sure that all work submitted is your own and that you use sources appropriately. I strongly recommend that you review requirements regarding use and citation of sources prior to submitting your final work.

#### **REQUIRED BOOKS:**

- Kraybill, Ronald et al. (2001) *Peace Skills: Manual for Community Mediators*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Deutsch, M. & Coleman, P. T. (Eds.) (2000). *The handbook of conflict resolution* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mayer, Bernie. (2009) *Staying with Conflict*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Edward de Bono. (1985,1999) *Six Thinking Hats*. New York: Back Bay Books. ISBN 978-0-316-17831-0 (pb)
- Docherty, Jayne. ((2005) *Strategic Negotiation*. Intercourse: Good Books.

#### **Required Articles: available online or thru mason library e-journals (mostly J-Store).**

- Wing, L. and Rifkin, J. "Racial Identity Development and the Mediation of Conflicts." In C. L. Wijeyesinghe and B.W. Jackson (eds.), *New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: A Theoretical and Practical Anthology*. New York: New York University Press, 2001.
- Paul Salem. "A Critique of western conflict resolution from a non-Western Perspective. In *Conflict Resolution in the Arab World: Selected Essays*. American University of Beirut Publications, 1997. 11-24
- Christison, Kathleen and Bill. "Meeting the Other in Israel and Palestine." Retrieved 1/14/08 from: [http://mostlywater.org/meeting\\_the\\_other\\_in\\_israel\\_and\\_palestine](http://mostlywater.org/meeting_the_other_in_israel_and_palestine)
- Nan, Susan Allen and Andrea Strimling, eds. "Coordination in Conflict Resolution." Special Issue of *Journal of International Negotiation*, forthcoming 2006.
- Sweetman, D. (2001). *Peace and conflict resolution in the face of terror*. Retrieved 2/2/2002 from <http://www.trinstitute.org/ojpcer/pterror.html>
- Volpe, M. & Strobl, S. (2003). Dispute resolvers in a post-September 11th world.
  - *Practical Dispute Resolution*, 3, (1), (pp. 1-15)

#### **You may also enjoy:**

- Maiese, Michelle. "Elicitive Training." *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: September 2004  
<[http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/prescriptive\\_elicitive\\_training/](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/prescriptive_elicitive_training/)>.
- Argyris, Chris and Donald A. Schön. (1992). *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*. Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 3-34. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (Only Chapter 1 is available on e-reserve. Book available at the Arlington Library reserve desk – 2 hr check out limit)
- Windslade, John. "Mediation with a Focus on Discursive Positioning." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol. 23, no. 4, Summer pp: 501-515 (please retrieve from e-journal data base)
- Kardia, Diana and Todd Sevig. "Embracing the paradox: Dialogue that incorporates both individual and group identities." In *Intergroup Dialogue: Deliberative democracy in school, college, community and workplace*. Edited by David Schoem and Sylvia Hurtado. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. Pp 247-265
- Abdalla, A. (2000-2001). Principles of Islamic interpersonal conflict intervention: A search within Islam and western literature. *Journal of Law and Religion*, 15, 51-184.
- Abu-Nimer, M. (1997). Conflict resolution training in the Middle East: Lesson to be learned. *Journal of International Negotiation*, Fall, 1- 24.
- Babbitt, E. & Pearson D'Estree, T. (1996). An Israeli- Palestinian women's workshop: Application of the interactive problem-solving approach. In C. Cocker, F. Hampson, & P. Aall (Eds.), *Managing global chaos: Sources of and responses to international conflict* (pp. 501-529). U.S.: United Institute of Peace.
- Mitchell, C. (1993a). The process and stages of mediation: The Sudanese cases. In David Smock (Ed.), *Making war and waging peace* (p. 147) Washington, D.C: United Institute for Peace Press.
- Ronald J. Fisher.(1997) *Inter-Active Conflict Resolution* Syracuse University Press.
- Peacebuilding; A Field Guide edited by Luc Reyckler & Thania Paffenholz (Boulder, CA; Lynne Reinner; 2001)
- Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Mennonite Conciliation Services (Akron, PA; MCC Resources; 2001)

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

##### **Assignment #1 : (10%)**

**Due: Nov. 10, 2009**

Choose an organization that you are either working at or have access to and: a) find out all that you can about its conflict management systems to include formal and informal processes to resolve conflict, b) talk with an employee who is a user of such processes or someone who is responsible in implementing such processes. Write a reflective paper on what your experience has been with regard to completing this assignment, what did you learn about the organizational approach to resolving conflict, others perspectives on these approaches, and provide any additional insights that you may have gained. If all of your efforts fail at gaining access to identify and meet with someone who is a user or implementer of such processes, write up the reflective paper on your assessment of why that is the case. Write up 5-7 pages.

##### **Assignment #2 : (30 percent)**

**Due: Nov. 20, 2009**

2 (a): Choose someone to interview regarding a conflict with which they have personal experiences. Preparation for your interview will include creating interview questions and considering how to establish a climate of openness within the interview. Interviews should be recorded to complete 2 (b). After the interview, capture immediately your immediate reflections and reactions. Come to class ready to share 3-5 lessons learned / insights with regard to that particular experience. (15%) (Nov. 5)

2 (b): Using your handwritten notes and recording of the interview, transcribe the interview (word by word) to include any additional comments that you may have shared throughout the interview. Use the transcript to identify recurring themes that you might identify throughout the interview. These themes should be marked to include points

in the narrative to support a theme, metaphor, symbols and stories told by the respondent. Write up a 7- 10 page paper summarizing your analysis and linking it to course readings and concepts. (25 %) (Due date: Nov. 16)

**OR:**

**Personal Reflective Practitioner Book  
(adapted from Dr. Nancy Snider)**

Each chapter (3+ pages single spaced) is to integrate readings, class discussions and personal applications. The purpose of the assignment is to develop reflective practice, increase self and other awareness and clarify your role and purpose as a practitioner.

Chapter One: The Influentials

Chapter Two: Conflict and Power

Chapter Three: Nurture, renewal and your thoughts as a Practitioner

Chapter Four: Leading and intervening

*Chapter One: The Influentials*

Who are the people and what are the experiences that have molded and influenced you to enter into the conflict resolution field? The aim here is to identify stories of positive significance as well as stories that prompted you to step into the field of conflict resolution, peace building and justice field of work.

*Chapter Two: Conflict and Power*

*Conflict Style: Who am I?* How has my culture shaped my conflict style? To assist others in conflict, we need to first understand and manage our own conflict style. What is your understanding of power and conflict? Identify the particular personal power sources that you carry.

You may also want to incorporate discussion of the following questions:

- Identify the types of conflict situations you are likely to avoid?
- How has an important but unresolved conflict situation affected you?
- Describe one experience in your work or in your life where you observed an effective third party intervention of conflict?

*Chapter Three: Nurture, renewal and your thoughts as a Practitioner*

What nurtures and renews your work in transforming and or influencing individuals, groups and systems in conflict. Describe some core factors that give "life" and resilience to your work. What three wishes might heighten your vitality and effectiveness in your work?

*Chapter Four: Leading and Intervening*

Reflect on your leadership skills that you bring to work as an intervenor. What are your gifts and strengths? Actively elicit feedback from someone who knows you well and has observed you in some critical situations or interventions that you have undertaken. What specific leader attributes they see in you? Identify a few principles and values that guide your style of leadership as you move forward in your practice. Share examples as you deem appropriate.

**Assignment #3 : (40 percent)**

**Due: Dec. 5 & 6,2009**

Group Project (2 – 4 working groups)

Select an on-going conflict (community, national, international, organizational, environmental, . . .) that is of interest to you and other members of the group.

- Research, explore, and analyze on-going efforts that may have been initiated to address the conflict. It is advised that the conflict is more than 3 years old or has enough published data for you to be able to research.
- Evaluate these efforts from a conflict resolution perspective and in light of class discussions and readings.
- Select and evaluate a process to address the conflict that might build on existing efforts or changes the way the conflict is being understood or addressed. Be ready to defend your choice of process. As a third party, what skills sets will you and your team need to have to make it a success and why?

- Prepare a group presentation for class members. The purpose of your presentation is to educate your listeners in *a brief presentation* on the conflict, its sources, dynamics and current outcome. Your proposed design should speak to the rationale behind your approach, assessment and intervention tools that you deem appropriate. You are encouraged and will be rewarded on the interactive nature of your group presentation. Additional criteria will be developed by the entire class. Your class presentation should end with a lessons learned slide with regard to the group's experience. **(Due: Dec. 5-6)**
- Write a reflection paper (no more than 5 pages) about your group experience. Reflect on your own participation. **(Due: Dec. 10)**

**Please submit an electronic copy by midnight of the assigned dates. THANKS!**

**Class Participation, preparation and WebCT discussions (20 percent)**

In addition to in-class exercises and participation, there may be some discussion topics based on class readings and discussion questions generated in the classroom that will be posted to the course online discussion board.

### CLASS PLAN

I am fully aware of the heaving reading load, but want to give you a chance to sample a broad range of authors from the field. Please try to do as much reading as you can in preparation for class. My preference is to weave the theories, themes, concepts, and practice into case studies that will be introduced to initiate discussions. For example Deutsch is a great reference book, so please feel free to read as many chapters as you can. I selected a few, but hopefully we will cover most of the concepts and themes covered in the book.

Please come to class with one discussion question related to class readings for each week. We will post these questions weekly and use some of them in class discussions and occasionally online discussions.

**Week 1: Oct. 31 & Nov. 1, 2009**

**10:00 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

#### **Conflict Resolution Practice: Overview**

In the first week we will attempt to respond to the following questions:

- Why advanced courses in conflict resolution practice?
- What do we know about practice?
- When we speak about the nexus between theory and practice, what do we mean?
- What are the dominant / and commonly used approaches?
- Class activities and exercises (TBD)

#### Assigned readings in preparation for class:

*Read: Kraybill -Manual for community mediators  
Wing  
Deutsch Part 4, Part seven: chapter 32  
Read Debono  
Docherty  
Guest speaker (TBD)*

**Week 2: Nov. 14, 15, 2009**

**10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

#### **Practice reconsidered – Challenges and opportunities**

#### **Lead voices - Discussions**

#### Assigned readings in preparation for class:

*Mayer (as many chapters as you can)  
Volpe  
Salem  
Sweetman  
Chistison  
Guest speaker TBD*

**Week 3: Dec. 5 & 6, 2009**

**10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

#### **Integration, reflection and conclusion**

In this final week, we will attempt to respond to discuss:

What did we learn about our own theories of practice, opportunities and limitations?  
In reflection and if we had advice to provide to other conflict resolution practitioners, what would they be? Who do we need to partner with and why?

Group presentations

Assigned readings in preparation for class: Please come to class with one or two discussion questions related to class readings.

*Deutsch Chapter 2, 27  
Part 8  
Nan*

**Group presentations / CELEBRATION**