

## **CONF 714 - Reflective Practice in Community Conflict Intervention**

Course Information: Spring 2009, Mondays 7:20 - 10:00 p.m.  
Arlington Building, GMU Campus, Room 256  
3.0 credit hours  
Instructor, Joan Orgon Coolidge  
[jcoolidge@gmu.edu](mailto:jcoolidge@gmu.edu); 202.413.7020  
Office hours: by appointment

### **Course Description and Objectives**

This course is designed to grapple with the meaning of the "good society" by exploring the various components of healthy and sustainable communities in contrast to deteriorating and/or oppressive ones. Theories about the nature of individuals and societies, of culture and the role of government will be read and discussed. What roles do individuals, institutions, and the mediating structures and relationships among them -- including third-party conflict intervenors-- play in advancing or diminishing positive social change? Building on reflective practice concepts introduced in CONF 713, students will apply theory to practice through facilitated discussions on weekly assigned reading, through in-class exercises and role-plays, and via field assignments in an urban community in SE Washington, D.C. Additionally, students will assess their own third-party intervention skill-set and will set strategic goals for advancing their skills.

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Overall, this course aims to provide a sustained opportunity to think critically about our third-party intervention goals as individual reflective practitioners and as members of the field of conflict analysis and resolution by exploring, from a variety of vantage points, the questions, "What are we trying to achieve?" "Where are we now?" and "What will be required to move from where we are now to where we want to be?" The secondary aim of this course is to practice applied theories of third-party intervention and thereby advance students' professional skills.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **A. Class Participation**

The success of this course depends on class attendance. Each class period will include a review of that week's assigned reading followed by discussion. Students will rotate leading the class in a facilitated discussion. A variety of in-class learning experiences will be offered, including role-plays, reflective practice and skills-building exercises, and guest speakers. Full participation and preparation (if required) in these activities are expected. (20% of grade)

## **B. Field Assignments**

Each class period, students will be given an opportunity to apply ideas, concepts and intervention strategies to an urban community in Southeast Washington D.C. so as to practice applied theory. These assignments will be done in teams and will build upon one another over the course of the semester. Some assignments will involve fieldwork (for example, attending a community event, a neighborhood advisory/council meeting, or a local school/church function, and possible pre-intervention activities). (20% of grade)

## **C. Reflective Practice Short Paper**

Students will keep a reflective practice log throughout the semester. This log will be similar to that which was required in Conf 713 in which students were asked to journal on assignments, readings, discussion and exercises as a means to reflect on their own skills, abilities and perspectives as well to reflect upon the use of third-party intervention strategies and techniques in particular conflict scenarios. Additionally, students will be asked to monitor their progress on their individual skills development goals. A 5-6 page paper that draws from the student's log, highlighting interesting dilemmas, insights, and turning points while reflecting on a particular reflective practice topic relating to community conflict intervention will be **due on Monday, March 23rd**. (20 % of grade)

## **D. Applied Theory of Community Conflict Intervention Presentation**

Drawing on all class readings and learning experiences, teams of students will present their own Applied Theory of Community Conflict Intervention that clearly articulates the existing theories, supporting research, and practice upon which it is based. The proposed applied theory should be directly applicable to the urban community we have studied over the course of the semester. Students will be asked to make their final presentations to representatives in the community they have studied. Students are required to submit a hard copy of their presentation scripts, materials and notes to the instructor prior to the presentation. Additionally, an executive summary of the presentation clearly articulating the applied theory and its uses must accompany these materials (3-5 pages).

Presentations are **due the final two weeks of classes** - exact dates to be determined. (40% of grade)

## **Class Policies and Procedures**

Students are responsible for submitting all work on time. You will be penalized the equivalent of a full letter grade for each class period the assignment is late. Incomplete grades will only be granted in cases of immediate personal or family illness or emergency.

Some class assignments and readings will be sent via email. Students are responsible for checking GMU email and staying current with these messages.

## Required Reading

### Books and Journals

- Avruch, Kevin. Culture and Conflict Resolution. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute for Peace, 1998.
- Blechman, Frank. Interview with Julian Portilla. Beyond Intractability.org 2003 20 Nov. 2008 <[http://www.beyondintractability.org/Audio/frank\\_blechman/?nid=2411](http://www.beyondintractability.org/Audio/frank_blechman/?nid=2411)>
- Burgess, Heidi, and Guy Burgess. "The Civil Rights Mediation Oral History Project." 2008. Conflict Management Initiative and the Conflict Information Consortium at the University of Colorado. 4 Jun 2008. <[http://www.civilrightsmediation.org/the\\_project.shtml](http://www.civilrightsmediation.org/the_project.shtml)>
- Docherty, Jayne Seminare Docherty, "Negotiating Meaning," The Little Book of Strategic Negotiation: Negotiating During Turbulent Times. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005: 60-71.
- Dukes, Franklin E., Marina A. Pisolish, and John B. Stephens. Reaching for Higher Ground in Conflict Resolution: Tools for Powerful Groups and Communities. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.
- Fisher, Roger and Daniel Shapiro. Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate. New York: Penguin Group, 2005.
- Hancock, Landon E. and Christopher Mitchell (eds). Zones of Peace. Bloomfield CT: Kumarian Press, 2007.
- Kochman, Thomas. Black and White Styles in Conflict. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- "Intervening in Community Crises: An Introduction for Psychiatrists" by The American Psychiatric Associations' Task Force on Third Party Intervention in Community Crisis, 1974: 6-16. (contributing authors for this article include James Laue, Gerald Cormick and Alana Cohen).
- Laue, James H. "Sociology as Advocacy; There are no Neutrals." Sociological Practice 7 (1989): 110-122.
- Laue, James H. "Power, Conflict and Social Change," Masotti, Louis H. and Don R. Bowen, editors. Riots and Rebellion: Civil Violence in the Urban Community. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1968.
- Laue, James H. "The Development of Community Conflict Intervention," The Journal of Intergroup Relations. 9.2 (Summer, 1981): 3-11.

- Laue, James H. and Gerald Cormick. "The Ethics of Intervention in Community Disputes," Bermant, Gordon, Herbert C. Kelman, and Donald P. Warwick, editors. The Ethics of Social Intervention. Washington, DC: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, 1978.
- Laue, James H., Sharon Burde, William Potapchuk, Miranda Salkoff. "Getting to the Table: Three Paths, Using Mediation to Shape Public Policy," Mediation Quarterly. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; 20 (Summer 1988): 7-22.
- Lederach, John Paul. The Little Book of Conflict Transformation: Clear Articulation of the Guiding Principles by a Pioneer in the Field. Intercourse, PA: Good books, 2003.
- Levine, Bertram. Resolving Racial Conflict, The Community Relations Service and Civil Rights, 1964-1989. Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2005.
- Peace and Conflict Studies, A Journal of the Network of Peace and Conflict Studies, Vol. 6.1 (1999).
- Schirch, Lisa and David Camp. Dialogue for Difficult Subjects. Intercourse: PA, Good Books, 2007.
- Sharp, Gene. Waging Nonviolent Struggle. Boston: Extending Horizons Books, 2005. (parts one, three and four, and chapter 12)
- Ury, William. The Third Side: Why We Fight and How We Can Stop. New York: Penguin Books, 1999, 2000.
- Wallace Warfield. Interview. Civil Rights Mediation.org. May 2000. 21 Nov. 2008  
<[http://www.civilrightsmediation.org/interviews/Wally\\_Warfield.shtml](http://www.civilrightsmediation.org/interviews/Wally_Warfield.shtml)>
- Wilkins, Roger. "Cities after the 1960s -- Where Have All The Promises Gone?" George Mason University; Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution's Sixth Annual Lynch Lecture, December 3, 1993.
- Zehr, Howard. The Little Book of Restorative Justice. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2002.

## University Resources and Assistance

**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.

**Location:** ARL 212 (in the main SPP suite)

**Contact:** (703) 993-1200 or <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

**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 Resources Center. Please see one of the instructors 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/)

**Counseling Center and Psychological Services (CAPSP):** Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides a wide range of services to faculty, staff and students. Services are provided by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists and professional counselors. The Center provides individual counseling, group counseling, workshops and outreach programs -- experiences to enhance a student's academic performance.

**Location:** SUB I, Room 364

**Contact:** 703.993.2380 [www.gmu.edu/departments.csd](http://www.gmu.edu/departments.csd)