

CONF 101 (003); Fall 2010
Conflict and Our World:
Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Class Time: Friday: 1:30-4:10; Robinson Hall A, Room 106

INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: After class or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Across all human societies, conflict is part of daily life. Sometimes it may be an annoyance, such as arguing with a sibling over the last cookie; sometimes it is more serious, such as the debate over human cloning; and sometimes it is tragic, as in the ongoing events in Darfur, Democratic Republic of Congo and Middle East. Conflict can be destructive, for example, when it damages relationships among neighbors or relatives or destroys homes and livelihoods. Conflict can also be constructive, as shown by the effects of civil rights demonstrations in the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s. Our increased interconnection as a global society, as well as the upsurge in certain forms of violence, have heightened the need for more attention to determining how humanity can deal with conflict productively.

This course introduces the interdisciplinary study of conflict analysis and resolution. We will examine how and why conflict occurs in human society, and what we can do to mitigate its destructive aspects. The course includes an overview of the field including the central approaches to analyzing conflict, an extended case study of a conflict, an examination of several forms of intervention, and finally a consideration of new directions in conflict studies. We will highlight the societal, structural, and cultural factors that play a part in conflict and its resolution. At the end of the course, you should be able to analyze a conflict, to appreciate the contextual factors that influence conflict, to know the major conflict resolution techniques, and to understand the complexities of the most pressing contemporary conflicts. Conflict 101 fulfills the University General Education requirement for Social and Behavioral Sciences.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. *Consistent attendance.* Barring exceptional circumstances, you will be expected to attend class on a regular basis.
2. *Effective preparation.* Class involves discussion and activities that depend on advance preparation. All assigned readings should be completed PRIOR to class.
3. *Classroom etiquette.* Please come to class on time and prepared. Turn off cell phones, pagers, beepers, etc. Remain in class unless you have an emergency. Allow others and

yourself to learn by refraining from side conversations, passing notes, playing video games, instant messaging, reading e-mail, browsing websites, etc. Open discussion and dialogue are class goals but please be mindful of the sensitivities of others.

4. *Course completion.* In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of personal illness, or illness of an immediate family member. Class assignments that are submitted late can be penalized by one point for each day thereafter. If a student has a documented emergency, special arrangements can be made with the instructor.

5. *Paper format.* Papers should be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins, and use Times New Roman 12-point font. The pages should be numbered and stapled together. Headers should include only the course number (CONF 101), your name, and paper title. The first page of the paper should have the title. Edit your papers carefully as spelling and grammatical errors will lower your overall score.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Text:

Pruitt, D.G. & S. Kim. 2004. *Social Conflict: Escalation Stalemate, and Settlement.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Additional Readings (available on e-reserve).

Electronic and Other Materials

Course materials including syllabus, PowerPoint slides, reflection paper questions, and other relevant documents will be made available in class. Additional readings will be placed on 2-hour reserve at the Johnson Library and on e-reserve. The password to access e-reserve materials will be given in class.

ACADEMIC POLICIES & INFORMATION

Academic Honesty and Collaboration

George Mason University has an Honor Code with guidelines regarding academic integrity and which is designed, “to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community” (www.gmu.edu/catalog/policies). The Honor Code lays out strict penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and all written work for this course should include proper citations in a standard citation format (MLA, Chicago Style, etc.). If you are unsure about how to cite a direct quotation or concept from course or outside readings, then ask for help. “I wasn’t sure how to cite a source, so I left out the reference,” is not an acceptable defense for plagiarism. Copies of common style manuals are available at the GMU library reference desk or online at <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/workscited/>.

For individual class assignments, you may discuss your ideas with others or ask for feedback; however, you are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. You may not submit papers or presentations from other courses to fulfill assignments for this class.

For group class assignments, the names of all participants should appear on the work. While it is fine for groups to divide project work among team members, the final product submitted should represent a single, conceptually linked piece of work. A 360 evaluation model will be used to determine the final grade of each student in a group project. If a group is having trouble with a member not fulfilling his/her work obligation, then the group needs to bring the problem to the instructor's attention immediately.

STUDENT RESOURCES

GMU Writing Center

“The Writing Center seeks to foster a writing climate on campus and beyond by offering free writing support to George Mason students, faculty, staff and alumni. No matter what your writing abilities are, writing specialists can help you develop the skills you need to become a successful writer. Free services include: One-on-one 45 minute sessions with a writing specialist; online writing lab; one-on-one sessions with an ESL specialist; workshops on such topics as documenting sources, grammar and punctuation; writing handouts on a variety of subjects; a library of handbooks and writing manuals; [and an] online chat with a tutor about papers submitted to the Online Writing Lab” (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

Disability Support Services

Any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Support Services (993-2474) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) contact her or his instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations.

“George Mason University is committed to providing appropriate services and accommodations that allow self-identified students with disabilities to access programs and activities at the university as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. To achieve this goal, the university maintains and supports the Disability Resource Center Office, which is responsible for assuring that students receive the services and accommodations to which they are entitled. The professional staff of the Disability Resource Center Office coordinate services for students with disabilities, determine reasonable services and accommodations on the basis of disability, and act as a liaison between students and faculty/administration on concerns relating to services and accommodations” (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html>).

Library Services

The CAR library liaison is Melissa Johnson (703.993.2212). Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research in these areas or whom to contact for materials still in the Fenwick Library on the Fairfax Campus.

Campus Maps

From time to time, class will be held in rooms other than the one stated above. Please refer to the links below to determine where on campus classes will occur.

Links to find SUB I & II Rooms Campus Map Explorer:

<http://eagle.gmu.edu/map/fairfax.php> Student Union I & II Maps (Third Floors):

<http://www.gmu.edu/operations/facilities.htm> - FloorMaps,

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

Participation 15%

Because much of this course involves in-class, experiential learning, active participation counts significantly towards your overall grade total. Course attendance is expected and is part of your participation grade. Just showing up for class does not represent 'A' participation work. Students are expected to complete their reading assignments on time and to participate in class discussions and exercises. Most classes will start with quizzes.

Essay 20%

Students will be responsible for the submission of a four page essay. This paper will correspond to the course themes and should draw heavily from course discussions, in-class exercises, and course readings. A formal citation should be used. (more details will be provided in class). The questions will be handed out on October 29 and is due November 5.

Group case study presentation 15%

Throughout the session, students will partner with 3-4 of their peers in learning groups. Each group will give a brief (20 minute) presentation based on a case study of a conflict of their choice. It could be a local, national or international conflict. Each group member must actively participate in both the preparation of and the delivery of the final product. 360 degrees evaluation method will be used. Presentation should be in the form of a PowerPoint. The presentations will be on December 3 and 10 respectively.

In class exam 20%

One in-class exam will be given on October 10. It will cover all the core ideas and skills covered in the class up to that period.

Final Written Exam 30%

The written exam for this course will be an open-book, take home essay exam, distributed in class on December 10. Completed exams must be returned to **Robinson B, Room 365 latest 4:00 pm** in an envelope marked with instructor's name and course number. If the office is closed, drop the envelope through the mail slot in the door. Only hard copies will be accepted. **LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED ONLY IN CASES OF DOCUMENTED PERSONAL ILLNESS OR FAMILY EMERGENCY.**

Points Accumulated	Grade
98-100	A+
93-97	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
74-82	B-
63-73	C
52-62	C-
41-51	D
0-40	F

Grading Scale, Points Accumulated, Letter Grade

COURSE AGENDA

Week 1 (September 3): Introduction to the Field of Conflict Resolution

Introductions, Syllabus Review, course expectations

Readings: Pruitt & Kim: Chapter 1

Week 2 (September 10): Nature and Sources of Conflict

Readings: Pruitt & Kim: Chapter 2

Michael Howard, "The Causes of war", in *Turbulent Peace* (E reserve)

Week 3 (September 17): Strategic Choice and Tactics

Readings: Pruitt & Kim: Chapters 3 and 4

Week 4 (September 24): Actors and their motives

Readings: Stewart & Brown, "Motivations for Conflict: Groups and Individuals" in *Leashing the dogs of War*, (E-reserve)

Week 5 (October 1): Escalation and Structural Change

Readings: Pruitt & Kim: Chapter 5

Week 6 (October 8): EXAMS

MID TERM EXAMS (In Class)

Week 7 (October 15): (COLUMBUS DAY RECESS) NO CLASS

Week 8 (October 22): Approaches to Analyzing Conflict/ Conditions of Escalation

Readings: Pruitt & Kim: Chapter 6

Pruitt & Kim: Chapter 7

Week 9 (October 29): Perspectives of Escalation

Readings: Pruitt & Kim: Chapter 8

Roy Licklider, "Obstacles to peace Settlement" in *Turbulent Peace* (E-Reserve)

Week 10 (November 5): Stalemate and Settlement/ problem solving

Readings: Pruitt & Kim: Chapter 9 and 10

Week 11 (November 12): Documentary

Documentary

Week 12 (November 19): Third Party intervention

Readings: Pruitt & Kim: Chapter 11

Pamela Aall, "What do NGOs bring to peacemaking?", in *Turbulent Peace* (E-reserve)

Week 13 (November 26): THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS

Week 14 (December 3): The future of conflict resolution

Andrew Mack, "Successes and challenges in Conflict Management" in *Leashing* (Ereserve)

Class presentations (Groups 1 and 2) 20 minutes group presentations of a case study

Week 15 (December 10)

Class presentations (Groups 3 and 4)

Final essay questions handed out

Week 16 (December 17)

***Final Essay due latest 4:00 pm, at Robinson B365**