

**CONF 501 Section 610**  
**Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution**  
Fall 2011  
University of Malta  
MA in Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean Security

Dr. Daniel Rothbart  
Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution  
email: drothbar@gmu.edu

**Description**

This course introduces students to the central themes, categories and doctrines of conflict analysis and resolution. Through analysis we acquire an understanding of a conflict's social/political setting, its root causes, the conditions that gave rise to negative relations among protagonists, and the consequences on the conflict parties and others. Particular attention is given to the sources of negativity among the conflict parties. Careful analysis of the conflict is critical to the work of conflict resolution practitioners. Not limited to one specific sort of intervention, conflict resolution refers to a range of possible activities that are intended to limit or reduce the negativities associated with relations among the conflict parties. Closely associated with such a goal are efforts by practitioners to settle, manage, mitigated, de-escalated, contained, terminated, prevented, or avoid conflicts. Of course, there are no "quick fixes" to any protracted conflict and no one sort of intervention that suits all conflict settings. Many viable interventions seek to address the conflict's root causes, deal with long-term grievances that damaged the relationship between the protagonists, and strive towards long-term and meaningful resolution.

In Unit I, we examine the means for a systematical analysis of conflicts, and Unit II addresses major topics of conflict management and resolution. Case studies are explored in both units. Throughout the course, we prioritize the tasks of reflecting critically on conflicts, drawing attention to its conditions, causes, and dynamics, as well as an evaluation of "what works" (or not) from various interventions.

**Objectives**

- a) Introduction to a systematic study of analysis and resolution of conflicts
- b) Examine alternative models for the causes of protracted conflicts.
- c) Demonstrate how skillful intervention by a practitioner requires critical reflection on the techniques deployed.
- d) Test interventionist techniques against case studies, revealing comparative strengths and weaknesses of various methods.
- e) Show the ethical underpinnings of practice by exposing for each method the value-commitments towards, for example, peace, equality, or justice.
- f) Show the close connections among conflict theories, research findings, and modes of practice.

## **Required Textbooks**

Bernard Mayer, *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: A Practitioner's Guide*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. 2000. ISBN 0-7879-5019-X (hard.)

Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: the prevention, management and transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, Oxford: Polity Press, 2005 (Second Edition): 0-7456-3213-0 (paperback) [CCR]

Sandole, Byrne, Sandole-Staroste and Senehi, eds., *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, Routledge, 2009. (paperback) [HCAR]

## **Required Articles, Chapters and Reports**

Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*  
<http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1999/rwanda/rwanda0399.htm> General Template for Research Design and Proposal

Johan Brosché and Daniel Rothbart, "Violence in Darfur," in *Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding: The Continuing Crisis in Darfur*, Chapter 1.

Roger Coate and Jerel Rosati, "Human Needs in World Society," Chapter 1 in *The Power of Human Needs in World Society*.

John W. Burton, "Human Needs Versus Societal Needs," Chapter 3 in *The Power of Human Needs in World Society*.

Galtung, J. (1969). "Violence, peace and peace research." *Journal of Peace Research*, 6 (3): 167-191.

Human Security Report: *Counting the Indirect Costs of War*

*Simulation of a Problem Solving Workshop*

Sudan Task Group, *Concept Proposal*.

Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, "The Challenges of Postconflict Development," in *Postconflict Development*, edited by Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, Chapter 1.

Esra Cuhadar Gurkaynak, et. al., "Evaluation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding" Chapter 20, pp. 286-299 in Sandole, et. al., eds., *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, Routledge, 2009

Ellen Taylor-Powell, Sara Steel, Mohammad Douglah, *Planning a Program Evaluation*.

## **Teaching Technology: Blackboard**

courses.gmu.edu  
username:  
password:

## **Course Schedule:**

### UNIT I: CONFLICT ANALYSIS

**October 3:** Introduction. Course themes, objectives, requirements, and activities.

Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda  
<http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1999/rwanda/rwanda0399.htm>

**October 4:** What are Conflicts?

Bernard Mayer, *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: A Practitioner's Guide*, Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 3-49.

Ramsbotham, et. al., "Introduction to Conflict Resolution: Concepts and Definitions" Chapter 1, CCR.

General Template for Research Design and Proposal

**October 5: From Needs Deprived to Conflicts**

Johan Brosché and Daniel Rothbart, *Violence in Darfur, in Violence, and Peacebuilding: The Continuing Crisis in Darfur*, Chapter 1.

Roger Coate and Jerel Rosati, "Human Needs in World Society," Chapter 1 in *The Power of Human Needs in World Society*.

John W. Burton, "Human Needs Versus Societal Needs," Chapter 3 in *The Power of Human Needs in World Society*.

**October 6:** The Dynamics of Conflict

Bernard Mayer, *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: A Practitioner's Guide*, Chapters 3 and 4, pp. 50-93.

Galtung, J. (1969). "Violence, peace and peace research." *Journal of Peace Research*, 6 (3): 167-191. (e-reserve)

Celia Cook-Huffman, "The role of identity in conflict", Chapter 1, pp. 19-31, in Sandole, et. al., eds., *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, Routledge, 2009 [HCAR]

### UNIT II: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

**October 10:** What is Resolution?

Bernard Mayer, *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: A Practitioner's Guide*, Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. pp. 97-213.

**Oct. 11:** Peacemaking

Ramsbotham, et. al., "Containing Violent Conflict: Peacekeeping" Chapter 6, CCR.

Ramsbotham, et. al., "Ending Violent Conflict: Peacemaking" Chapter 7, CCR.

Human Security Report: Counting the Indirect Costs of War

Simulation of a Problem Solving Workshop

**Oct 12:** Peacebuilding

Ramsbotham, et. al., "Post-War Reconstruction" Chapter 8, CCR

Sudan Task Group, Concept Proposal.

Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, "The Challenges of Postconflict Development," in *Postconflict Development*, edited by Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren, Chapter 1.

**October 13:** Integrating theory, research, and practice. The future of the Field

Esra Cuhadar Gurkaynak, et. al., "Evaluation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding" Chapter 20, pp. 286-299 in Sandole, et. al., eds., *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, Routledge, 2009

Ellen Taylor-Powell, Sara Steel, Mohammad Douglah, *Planning a Program Evaluation*.

**Course Requirements:**

Each class session will include a discussion component that calls for active participation. Of course, regular attendance is expected.

The course grade will be determined by evaluation of a (1) research design, (2) Presentation of research design, (3) a mid-term exam, and (4) a final exam.

1. Research Design

Objectives: The primary objective of this paper is to formulate a comprehensive design plan for some possible research on a topic in conflict analysis or conflict resolution. The particular topic that you select can be drawn from the organizational, communal,

national, or international level. You should select a topic that is relatively small-scale so as to avoid the difficulties of expending an enormous amount of time gathering and analyzing data. Data gathering can be done through interviews, observations, questionnaires, or a combination of these. For example, if you are researching the opinions of members of a particular ethnic community and do not have much funding, then you should plan on interviewing 20-30 people from such a local community.

#### Structure of Research Design.

Your research plan will present a particular topic of study in analysis or resolution, why the topic is important for our field, the primary research questions that you seek to answer, the methodology for collecting data and for analyzing data, and a list of important references that are relevant to your topic. Study carefully the template for research design/proposal. Organize your plan according to the following sections, as defined in the template.

1. Title
2. Summary of your research
3. Statement of the Problem and Research question
4. Research Objectives/Questions
5. Methodology
  - (a) Operational definitions [including reference to a particular conflict theory]
  - (b) Type of Study
  - (c) Universe of Study
  - (d) Data collection procedure
  - (e) Method of Analysis
6. Biographic references

#### Specifics.

Your answers will be evaluated by their accuracy, supporting arguments, and clarity of writing for each of the elements above. The research paper will be 7-9 pages in length double space. The due date is Wednesday, October 12 during class. Late papers will not be accepted. This term paper will count for 30% of your course grade.

#### 2. Presentation of research design.

During week two of the class each student will summarize their research design to the class, identifying the central elements for the research and briefly answering questions. 10% of course grade.

#### 3. Midterm Exam.

A take home exam will be distributed on October 6 and returned on October 10. 30% of course grade.

#### 4. Final exam/report.

The exam questions will be given Thursday, October 13 and due Sunday October 16 at noon. 30% of course grade.

## **HONOR POLICY**

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

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. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct.

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.