

**CONF 101, Section 004**  
**Conflict and Our World: Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution**  
**Fall 2012**

Lecture: Monday 9:00 to 10:15 in Innovation Hall 132

Recitation: Wednesday 9:00 to 10:15

Instructor: Dr. Leslie Dwyer

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Office Hours: Monday, 10:30 to 11:30 or by appointment

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 gun control or immigration; and sometimes it is tragic, as in recent events in Darfur and Afghanistan. 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 has 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 conflicts occur in human society, and what we can do to mitigate their destructive aspects while reinforcing their constructive potential. 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 reconciliation and sustainable peacebuilding. 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, appreciate the contextual factors that influence conflict, know the major conflict resolution techniques, and understand the complexity of the most pressing contemporary conflicts.

Attendance in both the lecture and recitation classes is not only mandatory but also crucial if you would like to succeed in this course. Some of the material will be discussed only in class and not in the readings. You should plan to complete the assigned readings prior to each class. Be sure to look up words that are unfamiliar to you but realize that some terms have specialized meanings in the field of conflict resolution. Ask in class if you have not understood a term or idea.

Over the course of the semester, students will participate in a number of Experiential Learning Activities, both in lecture sessions and in discussion section. The first ELA, on perceptions of conflict, will take place on September 17. The second ELA, on the conflict in Liberia, will take place over 4 meetings, on November 7, November 12, November 14 and November 19. These ELAs are essential for the course and you will have graded assignments based on each.

Classroom etiquette: Come to class on time and prepared. Turn off your cell phones, pagers, beepers, etc. Do not leave the room during class unless you have an emergency. Do not disturb

others by talking, passing notes, playing video games, etc. Do not check email or surf the web. Be mindful of the sensitivities of others in your comments in class; however, open discussion and dialogue are our goal.

Conflict 101 fulfills the University General Education requirement for Social and Behavioral Sciences.

### **Assignments, Percentages of Grade, Due Dates**

Attendance and Participation 10%

Assessed throughout the semester and includes participation in recitation section

2 Reflection Papers on Experiential Learning Activities, 10% each  
Due on November 14 and November 28

2 Short Papers (3 pages), 10% each  
Due on September 19 and October 29

One In-Class Midterm Exam, 20%  
Held in recitation section, October 3

Final Exam, 30%  
Held on December 17

Make-up exams and extensions of time for assignments will be arranged ONLY for documented personal illness or family emergency. Students with documented disabilities should make arrangements early in the term by contacting Professor Dwyer.

Guidelines for preparing the short essays and reflection papers will be provided in class.

You are expected to abide by George Mason University's Honor Code in preparing all work for this class. If you have any questions about Honor Code issues (e.g., whether you are permitted to discuss an assignment with a fellow student) or are uncertain about how to cite a source, or if you have observed Honor Code violations, please contact Professor Dwyer.

### **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 School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution library liaison is Gretchen Reynolds ([greynol3@gmu.edu](mailto:greynol3@gmu.edu)). Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research in these areas or whom to contact for materials in Fenwick Library.

### **Required Readings:**

These two books have been ordered at the University Bookstore.

Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim. *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*. 3rd Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill 2004.

Carolyn Nordstrom. *Shadows of War: Violence, Power and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press 2004.

All other readings are available through the library e-reserve or e-journal services. The password for this class is “**conflict**.”

It is highly recommended for this course, and for your undergraduate career, that you seek out information about current events in your community and in the world generally. Please make your readings a central part of our discussions in class and do not be afraid to bring in views that stir up conversation.

## **Schedule of Topics and Readings**

**(Week One) Monday, August 27 (Recitation Wednesday, August 29)**

Introduction to the Course

**(Week Two) Monday, September 3 – NO CLASS, HAVE A GREAT LABOR DAY  
(Recitation Wednesday, September 5): Conflict as Human Nature?**

Reading: Carolyn Nordstrom, 1998. "Deadly Myths of Aggression." *Aggressive Behavior* 24(2): 147-159. (available through e-reserves)

**(Week Three) Monday, September 10 (Recitation Wednesday, September 12): What is Conflict?**

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, pp. 3-36; Nordstrom book, pp. 5-17.

**(Week Four) Monday, September 17 (Recitation Wednesday, September 19): Nature and Sources of Conflict I**

**Experiential Learning Activity #1: "Mediated Perceptions" on September 17**

**First Short Paper Due in Recitation, Wednesday September 19**

Readings: Burton, 32-40; (available through e-reserves); Nordstrom book, pp. 19-69.

**(Week Five) Monday, September 24 (Recitation Wednesday September 26): Nature and Sources of Conflict II**

Readings: Collier, 197-216; Galtung 39-53 (available through e-reserves).

**(Week Six) Monday, October 1 (Recitation Wednesday October 3): Nature and Source of Conflict III**

Readings: Volkan, 19-28, 36-49; Nordstrom book, pp. 71-137.

**Midterm Exam: October 3 during Recitation Section**

**(Week Seven) Tues, October 9 (NOTE TUESDAY CLASS MEETING FOR COLUMBUS DAY) (Recitation Wednesday, October 10): Approaches to Analyzing Conflict**

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, pp. 37-188; Kriesberg, 455-476 (available through e-reserves).

**(Week Eight) Monday, October 15 (Recitation Wednesday October 17): Third Party Roles**

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, 226-258

**(Week Nine) Monday, October 22 (Recitation Wednesday October 24): Mediation and Interactive Problem Solving**

Readings: Pruitt and Kim, 189-225; Zartman and Touval, 437- 454.

**(Week Ten) Monday, October 29 (Recitation Wednesday October 31): Gender, Conflict and Peacebuilding**

In-class film: “Pray the Devil Back to Hell”

Readings: Cheldelin and Eliatamby (available through e-reserves).

**Second Short Paper Due in Recitation, Wednesday, October 31**

**(Week Eleven) Monday, November 5 (Recitation Wednesday November 7): Peacebuilding I: Civil Society**

Experiential Learning Activity 1A (Wed) – Liberia Case Study

Readings: Barnes, 7-24; Belloni, 182-210 (available through e-reserves).

**(Week Twelve) Monday, November 12 (Recitation Wednesday November 14): Peacebuilding II**

Experiential Learning Activities IB (Mon) and IIA (Wed) – Liberia Case Study

**Wednesday Nov 14: Experiential Learning Activity I Response Paper Due**

Readings: Lederach, 23-35; Barsalou, Judy. April 2005. “Trauma and Transitional Justice in Divided Societies,” United States Institute of Peace Special Report 135, <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr135.pdf> (available through e-reserves)

**(Week Thirteen) Monday, November 19 (NO RECITATION, HAPPY THANKSGIVING): Peacebuilding III**

Experiential Learning Activity IIB (Mon) – Liberia Case Study

Readings: Nordstrom book, 141-173; Hampson and Mendeloff (available through e-reserves).

**(Week Fourteen) Monday, November 26 (Recitation Wednesday November 28): Peacebuilding IV**

Readings: Nordstrom book 175-185; Ackerman and Duvall, 305-333 (available through e-reserves).

## **Wednesday, November 28: Experiential Learning Activity II Response Paper Due**

### **(Week Fifteen) Monday, December 3 (Recitation Wednesday December 5)**

Integration: What have we learned? Where do we go from here?

**(Week Sixteen) Monday, December 17 -- FINAL EXAM. This will be an in-class exam held in our regular classroom from 7:30 to 10:15 am.**

### **E-Reserve/E-Journal Reading List**

The following readings are available on e-reserves or e-journals:

Ackerman, Peter and Jack Duvall. 2000. "The American South: Campaign for Civil Rights." In *A Force More Powerful*. New York: Palgrave, 305-333.

Barnes, Catherine. "Weaving the Web: Civil Society Roles in Working with Conflict and Building Peace." In *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society*. Edited by Paul Van Tongeren, et al. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005.

Barsalou, Judy. April 2005. "Trauma and Transitional Justice in Divided Societies," United States Institute of Peace Special Report 135, <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr135.pdf>

\*Belloni, Roberto. "Civil Society in War-to-Democracy Transitions." In *From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding*. Cambridge University Press, 2008, 182-210.

Burton, John. 1997. "Needs Theory." In *Violence Explained*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 32-40.

Cheldelin, Sandra and Maneshka Eliatamby, 2011. *Women Waging War and Peace: International Perspectives of Women's Roles in Conflict and Post-Conflict Reconstruction*. New York: Continuum.

Collier, Paul, 2007. "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy." In *Leashing the Dogs of War*. Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 197- 216.

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

Hampson, Fen Osler, and David Mendeloff. "Intervention and the Nation-Building Debate." In *Leashing the Dogs of War*. Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Kriesberg, Louis. 2001. "Contemporary Conflict Resolution," In *Leashing the Dogs of War*. Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. Washington, DC: United States

Institute of Peace Press, 455-476.

Lederach, John Paul. 1997. "Reconciliation: the Building of Relationship." In *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 23-35.

Volkan, Vamik. 1997. "Ethnic Tents: Descriptions of Large-Group Identities," and "Chosen Trauma: Unresolved Mourning." In *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 19-28, 36-49.

Zartman, I. William, and Touval, Saadia. 2007. "International Mediation." In *Leashing the Dogs of War*. Chester Crocker, Fen Olser Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 437-454.