

CONF 101- 005 - Conflict and Our World
Introduction to Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Fall 2012

Instructor: Phil Gamaghelyan Class: Tuesday/Thursday 3pm-4.15pm
Email: fgamagh2@gmu.edu Classroom: W 1007
Office: Northeast Module II, Room 117
Office Hours: Thursday 1:00-2:30pm or by appointment

Introduction-

Conflicts in our lives are an everyday occurrence and can be found everywhere: in a family, at a workplace, within and between societies or states. Some conflicts are violent and destructive, others are not. This course starts with the assumption that conflict is neutral. It can be destructive when we do not have the skills necessary to address it. But it can be also constructive and lead to improved relationships when we do.

The course will introduce the interdisciplinary field of conflict analysis and resolution. We will examine how various disciplines and schools of thought understand conflicts and what solutions they offer. Our aim is to develop an ability to understand and analyze conflicts from multiple perspectives and to maximize their constructive potential, be it in our personal lives and workplace or when working with conflicts internationally.

This course includes an overview of the field, of key approaches to analyzing and resolving conflicts, of various conflict resolution tools and techniques; it also includes a case study of a conflict where we can test the theories we learned and our analytical abilities.

By the end of the course, you should be able to recognize the alternative approaches to conflict and be able to analyze any conflict from more than one angle and be able to see its constructive potential, while at the same time having awareness about your own conflict style and approaches to conflict that you are most comfortable with.

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

Grading

This course will be evaluated in the following way:

Presence and active participation: 20%

4 short essays: 40 %

Group presentation: 10%

Final paper: 30%

Participation:

Your grade for participation will be based both on your attendance and on your contributions to our class discussions. Please note that you will be graded both on the *quality* and the *regularity* of your contributions. For each class, you should be prepared to summarize what you have

learned, discuss authors' main contributions to the field and convey your own critical perspective on the topic. When reading the texts, try to think about the following: What are the authors' main points? Are they compelling? Do they help to explain conflicts or resolve them? How are they similar or different from the other approaches we have discussed?

To receive a high grade for participation you should be an active and regular contributor to our discussions, as well as a generous listener. In other words, it is not the quantity of your contributions but the quality and your presence (which is not always verbal) that matters most, as well as your ability to listen openly to others' perspectives.

Short Essays:

Four short essays (approximately three 1,5-spaced pages long) will be required over the course of the semester. These essays should have three components: they should show your comprehension of the main ideas discussed in the readings of that particular week, convey critical analysis of the readings reflecting your (even if evolving) point of views on the topic, and contain a personal reflection on questions that the reading raised for you.

The essays will be graded based on your ability to understand and summarize the main points of the readings and your critical analysis of these readings. The third part of your paper, the reflections, will not be graded so you can freely explore and reflect on questions that the course materials raise for you. At the same time the reflections are a required part of the essay. So their absence will negatively affect the overall grade you receive for the essays.

The essays should be submitted electronically between weeks 2 and 11, which are the weeks when we have theoretical readings assigned. At least two of the essays should be submitted between weeks 2 and 6. These two essays, along with your participation, will serve as the basis for your mid-term grade. The remaining essays should be submitted between weeks 7 and 11. Within these limits, you can choose yourself which are the exact weeks when you prefer to submit the essays. The essays are due on Thursdays, before the start time of the class. No essays will be accepted after Week 11. The essays will be returned to you electronically, containing comments and a grade.

Important: the essays should be submitted electronically to fgamagh2@gmu.edu. The header of each essay should clearly identify the name of the student and the week that the essay relates to. I will be trying to review the papers within 7 days of their submission. If you do not get my comments on your essays within 10 days after you submitted them, please approach me or email me to ensure that the essay is not lost.

Group Presentations:

The class members will self-select into topical groups to further explore the theories discussed during the semester. The groups can choose a conflict and analyze it from social-psychological, political, economic, identity or other perspectives discussed during the semester. The groups will present detailed analyses of their conflicts and their suggestions for addressing them in the final weeks of the class.

Final Individual Paper:

30% of your final grade will be based on the final paper. This research paper can be based on the topic of your group presentation. Should you choose to analyze a different conflict, you need to discuss your choice with the professor prior to starting your research. Here you will discuss a conflict from a particular angle reflecting one or more theories and conflict resolution mechanisms covered during the course. The paper can contain (but does not have to be limited to) the following: problem statement; short background of the conflict; short description of theories from the course that you find relevant for the analysis of this conflict; and either suggestions for conflict resolution interventions or, alternatively, a discussion of what transformational processes (of actors/relationships/approaches) could pave a way for a sustainable peace.

The paper should be between ten and twelve (10-12) pages long, be 1,5 spaced and use 12pt Times New Roman font. Proper citations, cover pages, page numbering, footnotes, and bibliography are expected. Papers should include at least fifteen bibliographic references directly relevant to the subject under discussion.

The final papers should be submitted electronically to fgamagh2@gmu.edu no later than December 13, 2012.

Grading:

The course will be graded according to the following:

Points	Grade
95-100	A+
90-94	A
85-89	A-
80-84	B+
75-79	B
70-74	B-
65-69	C
60-64	C-
50-59	D
0-49	F

Plagiarism and Honor Codes:

You can find a copy of the Honor Code at: academicintegrity.gmu.edu.

You are expected to abide by George Mason University's Honor Code while 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), are uncertain about how to cite a source, or if you have observed Honor Code violations, please discuss these with the Professor.

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific

regards to plagiarism, 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. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

S-CAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it."

SCAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code.

Student Services:

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>).

Required Texts:

Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey, and Bill Taylor, (1995). Zen of Groups. Fisher Books.

Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey, and Bill Taylor, (1995). The Art of Facilitation. Fisher Books.

John Paul Lederach, (2005). The Moral Imagination. Oxford University Press.

Thomas De Waal, (2010). The Caucasus; an introduction. Oxford University Press.

Recommended:

Maurice Halbwach, (1992). On Collective Memory. University of Chicago Press.

All other readings are available either on-line (links are provided in the syllabus) or on GMU Blackboard

COURSE AGENDA:

The course is structured to reflect the evolution of approaches to conflict, from more traditional approaches used in international relations to more recent developments in the field of conflict resolution. Each week is divided into two sections and covers a particular approach to conflict analysis and introduction to corresponding conflict resolution mechanism. Later in the semester we focus on applied techniques, such as facilitation, and case studies to test the acquired knowledge on a specific conflict case.

Week 1 - Introduction

Aug 28 – Welcome, introductions. Expectations from the class
Please review and bring your course syllabus

Aug 30 – Introduction to Conflict

Fisher, Williams Simon, Ludin, Williams – Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Acton (pp. 3-15)

Fizduff (2004) - Ending Wars: Developments, Theories and Practices (blackboard).

Review Search for Common Ground: Resources at: <http://www.sfcg.org/resources/>

Pay special attention to:

Basic Facts About Conflict: http://www.sfcg.org/resources/resources_conflict.html

Commonly Used Terms: http://www.sfcg.org/resources/resources_terms.html

Conflict styles: http://www.sfcg.org/resources/training/conversation_styles.html

Week 2 - Political and Economic Approaches to Conflict

Sept 4 – Realist and Economic Theories

Hans J. Morgenthau, "A Realist Theory of International Politics," *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (Boston: McGraw-Hill), 2006, pp. 3-16.

Collier, Paul (2007). "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy." World Bank. Available at

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~econpco/research/pdfs/EconomicCausesofCivilConflict-ImplicationsforPolicy.pdf>

Sept 6 – Rational Choice

Barry Posen - *The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict*. (pp. 27-47)

Michael Nicholson, "Negotiation, Agreement and Conflict Resolution: The Role of Rational Approaches and Their Criticism," in *New Directions in Conflict Theory: Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation*, Raimo Vayrynen, ed. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1991).

Week 3 - Negotiations and alternative explanations of conflict

Sept 11 - Negotiations

I. William Zartman, "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond," in Stern and Druckman, *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War* (Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000).

Sept 13 - Basic Human Needs Theory

John W. Burton, "Needs Theory," in *Violence Explained* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997)

Week 4 - Interactive Problem Solving

Sept 18 - Mediation and Consultation, Multi-Track Diplomacy

Ronald J. Fisher and L. Keashly, "The Potential Complementarity of Mediation and Consultation within a Contingency Model of Third Party Consultation," *Journal of Peace Research* 28:1 (1991): 29-42.

Review the web-site of the Institute of Multi-Track Diplomacy at www.imtd.org and <http://www.imtd.org/at-a-glance/mission/working-methods/what-is-multi-track-diplomacy/>

Sept. 20 - Problem Solving Workshops

Kelman, H.C. (2010). Interactive Problem Solving: Changing political culture in the pursuit of conflict resolution. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 16(4), 389–413

http://scholar.harvard.edu/hckelman/files/interactive_problem_solving0001.pdf

Week 5 - Identity

Sept 25 - Identity Conflict

“Identity Conflicts” at

http://www.beyondintractability.org/user_guides/identity_conflicts/?nid=5306

Kriesberg, Louis, 2003. “Us versus Them.” at

http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity_issues/

Gardner, Robert 2003. “Identity Frames.” At

http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity_frames/

Sept 27- Working with Identity Conflicts

Rothman, J. and M., Olson - From Interest to Identities: Toward a New Emphasis in Interactive Conflict Resolution (289-305).

Halpern, J. and H., Weinstein - Rehumanizing the Other: Empathy and Reconciliation.

Week 6 - Violence

Oct 2 - Structural Violence

Johan Galtung. Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. Journal of Peace Research, Sage Publications, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1969), pp. 167-191

URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/422690>

Oct 4 - Cultural Violence

Johan Galtung. Cultural Violence Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 1990), pp. 291-305

Week 7- Social-Psychology

Oct 9 - NO CLASS! Columbus Day recess (Monday classes/labs meet Tuesday. Tuesday classes do not meet this week)

Oct 11 - Chosen Trauma

Vamik Volkan, 2001. “Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity.” Group Analysis 34(1):79-97.

Daniel Bar-Tal and Eran Halperin (2009). Overcoming Psychological Barriers to Peacemaking: the influence of beliefs about losses. In Mikulincer and Shaver, Prosocial Motives, Emotions, and Behavior: The Better Angels of Our Nature (pp. 431-448). American Psychological Association. Washington, DC.

Week 8 - History, Memory, Narrative

Oct 16 – Collective Memory

Required: Tint, Barbara 2010. "History, Memory and Intractable Conflict." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 27(3):239-256.

and

Phil Gamaghelyan, (2010). Lessons of «History». *Journal: Analyticon*. Available at:
<http://thenotblackandwhite.wordpress.com/2011/03/10/lessons-of-%C2%ABhistory%C2%BB/>

Recommended: Maurice Halbwach, (1992). *On Collective Memory*. University of Chicago Press. Preface and Chapters 1-3 are strongly recommended

Oct 18 - Memory, History and Conflict Resolution

Sara Cobb, 2004. "Fostering Coexistence in Identity-Based Conflicts: Towards a Narrative Approach." In A. Chayes and M. Minow, eds., *Imagine Coexistence*. Jossey Bass: San Francisco: pp. 294-310.

Week 9 - Human Nature

Oct 23 – Carolyn Nordstrom, "Deadly Myths of Aggression." *Aggressive Behavior* 24(2):147-159.

Oct 25 – Elaine Scarry. "The Difficulty of Imagining Other Persons," In *The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistence*, ed. E. Weiner. 1998. New York: Continuum, pp. 40-62.
Facilitation Exercise

Week 10 - Dialogue and Facilitation

Oct 30 – How groups work, group dynamics, power, leadership, conflict
Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey, and Bill Taylor, (1995). *Zen of Groups*. Fisher Books.

Nov 1 – Facilitation

Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey, and Bill Taylor, (1995). *The Art of Facilitation*. Fisher Books.

Facilitation Exercise

Week 11- Moral Imagination

Nov 6 - John Paul Lederach, (2005). *The Moral Imagination*. Oxford University Press.

Chapters 1-7

Nov 8 - John Paul Lederach, (2005). *The Moral Imagination*. Oxford University Press.
Chapters 11-15

Week 12 – Case Study: Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh

Nov 13 – Introduction

Thomas De Waal, (2010). The Caucasus; an introduction. Oxford University Press. Chapters 1-4.

Nov 15 – Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Process

Philip Gamaghelyan (July, 2005). Intractability of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: a myth or a reality? Peace and Conflict Monitor. <http://www.monitor.upeace.org/documents/intractability.pdf>

Artak Ayunts (2012), Current Format of Negotiations over Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Perspectives from Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Caucasus Edition.

<http://caucasusedition.net/analysis/current-format-of-negotiations-over-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-perspectives-from-armenia-and-nagorno-karabakh/>

Humay Guliyeva, (2010). Karabakh: A Long and Winding Road to Distant and Difficult Peace. Caucasus Edition. <http://caucasusedition.net/analysis/karabakh-a-long-and-winding-road-to-distant-and-difficult-peace-2/>

Week 13- Final Projects

Nov 20 - Presentations of Group Projects

Nov 22 - **Thanksgiving Break, No Class**

Week 14- Final Projects

Nov 27- Presentations of Group Projects

Nov 29- Presentations of Group Projects

Week 15- Final Projects

Dec 4- Presentations of Group Projects

Dec 6 - Last day of class, reflections, evaluation

Final papers due on Dec 13 by midnight!

Electronic copies of the papers to be sent to fgamagh2@gmu.edu by midnight on Dec 13. Please keep a backup copy in case of any problems.