

CONF 300.001: CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES & PRACTICE**Fall 2014:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00 – 4:15 p.m.; Robinson Hall A349**Instructor:** Gina Cerasani, Ph.D. Candidate, gcerasa1@gmu.edu**Office Hours:** Northeast Module II Room 130, Tuesdays and Thursdays
1:30 – 2:30 p.m. or by appointment**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Engaging in the practice of conflict resolution is what many of you plan to do and why you are here. But what does it mean to be a conflict resolution practitioner? What does one *do*? As you will discover in this course, there are many answers to that question, from activist to researcher to mediator. Because it is impossible to become skilled in multiple practices in the course of a semester, this class is not designed to provide skills training. Rather, we will explore the phases of analyzing and intervening in a conflict, the multiple approaches and challenges to each phase, and we will learn from those who are involved in the work of conflict resolution.

This course is organized around five key questions, each of which represents a phase of analyzing and resolving complex conflicts. During the semester we will spend three weeks on each of the following questions:

- What is happening?
 - In the first phase, one seeks to understand and analyze the conflict, employing a variety of models and frameworks designed for such tasks.
- Should I get involved?
 - In this phase one considers intervention options in light of what has already been done to address the conflict, as well as any ongoing efforts, and considers ethical challenges posed by intervening in the conflict at all and/or in particular ways.
- How should I intervene?
 - If the answer to question two is yes, one must select one or more intervention strategies. These should be linked to the analysis of the conflict and include facilitated dialogue, training, mediation, negotiation, problem-solving workshops, activism/advocacy, and organizational conflict resolution (ombudsman), to name several options.
- What are the complicating dynamics of the proposed intervention?
 - In this phase one considers the dynamics, structures, and other factors that will likely affect intervention in the conflict. Some examples include ethical considerations, structural inequalities, culture, social identities, logistics, and other potential opportunities and limitations.
- How will I know if I have helped?
 - The final phase of intervention is evaluation (although some forms of evaluation may occur during an intervention). Links between analysis, intervention, and evaluation should be clear.

Learning Groups

Throughout the semester you will work collaboratively with two or three of your classmates to answer the questions above for a current conflict in the US. Each small group will select one of the following conflicts to study:

- Influx of Central American migrant children in DC area (or another location)
- Sexual violence on college campuses (select one case)
- Clashes between black residents and police in Ferguson, MO
- Marijuana legalization in DC (or another similar case)
- Hydraulic fracturing (select one community affected by it)
- Gentrification and community displacement in DC (Museum Square apartments or a similar case in DC or another city)
- School redistricting in DC
- Bicycles/cars sharing roads in DC
- Water contamination in Charleston, WV

More than one group may study the same conflict if there is interest, or a group may select a different case of the same conflict. For example, two groups may study sexual violence on two different college campuses. Each group will give a short presentation in class every three weeks (a schedule will be set on the first day of class) on what the group has learned about the conflict being studied in relation to the question the class is engaging at that time. In addition, each student will write a short paper every three weeks on each question applied to the conflict his or her small group is studying. More details about these assignments, including due dates for the short papers, are in the ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION section of this syllabus.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

During the course, class participants will:

- Become familiar with models and frameworks for analyzing conflict.
- Be introduced to conflict resolution practices, such as reflective practice, negotiation, mediation, dialogue, restorative justice, problem solving workshops, and activism.
- Consider what constitutes ethical intervention in conflicts.
- Consider the ways in which narratives, social identities, and structures shape specific conflicts.
- Explore specific practices and third-party conflict intervention techniques through discussions with CAR practitioners.
- Increase critical thinking abilities by developing an appreciation of the dynamic relationship between conflict analysis and resolution.

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 to engage when class begins. **The use of mobile phones, laptop computers, tablet computers, and other similar devices is not allowed in this class.** If you have been granted an exception to this rule and can present documentation, please see me. Please be considerate of your classmates in your interactions with them.
4. *Course completion.* In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of exceptional circumstances. Class assignments that are submitted late can be penalized up to one letter grade and will not be accepted beyond the following week. If a student has a documented emergency, special arrangements can be made with the instructor.
5. *Paper format.* Assigned 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. Edit your papers carefully as spelling and grammatical errors will lower your overall score.

Grading Scale, Points Accumulated, Letter Grade

Points	Grade	Points	Grade
98-100	A+	79-82	B-
93-97	A	75-78	C+
90-92	A-	74-70	C
87-89	B+	69-71	C-
83-86	B	61-68	D
		0-60	F

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts

Docherty, Jayne Seminare. 2004. The Little Book of Strategic Negotiation. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Lederach, John Paul and Janice Moomaw Jenner. 2002. A Handbook of International Peacebuilding: Into The Eye of The Storm. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pfund, Alicia, ed. 2013. From Conflict Resolution to Social Justice: The Work and Legacy of Wallace Warfield. New York: Bloomsbury.

Schirch, Lisa and David Camppt. 2007. The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Zehr, Howard. 2002. The Little Book of Restorative Justice. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Electronic and Other Materials

Burgess, Heidi. 2005. Activism. (G. Burgess & H. Burgess, Eds.) *Beyond Intractability*. Retrieved from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/activism> (Blackboard)

Dass, Ram and Paul Gorman. 1985. The Way of Social Action. In How Can I Help? New York: Alfred A. Knopf. (E-Reserve via Blackboard)

d'Estrée, Tamra Pearson, Larissa A. Fast, Joshua N. Weiss and Monica S. Jakobsen. 2001. Changing the Debate about "Success" in Conflict Resolution Efforts. *Negotiation Journal*, 17(2), 101-113. (Blackboard)

Elliott, Michael, Tamra Pearson d'Estrée and Sanda Kaufman. 2003. Evaluation as a Tool for Reflection. (G. Burgess & H. Burgess, Eds.) *Beyond Intractability*. Retrieved from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/Evaluation-Reflection> (Blackboard)

Kriesberg, Louis. 2003. Identity Issues. (G. Burgess & H. Burgess, Eds.) *Beyond Intractability*. Retrieved from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity-issues> (Blackboard)

Lewis, Helen. 2004. Evaluation and Assessment of Interventions. (G. Burgess & H. Burgess, Eds.) *Beyond Intractability*. Retrieved from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/evaluation> (Blackboard)

Maiese, Michelle. 2005. Neutrality. (G. Burgess & H. Burgess, Eds.) *Beyond Intractability*. Retrieved from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/neutrality> (Blackboard)

Maiese, Michelle. 2003. Problem-Solving Workshops. (G. Burgess & H. Burgess, Eds.) *Beyond Intractability*. Retrieved from http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/Anal_Prob_Solv/ (Blackboard)

Marsick, Victoria and Alfonso Sauquet. 2000. Learning Through Reflection. In The Handbook of Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice. Morton Deutsch et al. eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (Blackboard)

Watkins, Jane Magruder and Bernard J. Mohr. 2001. Appreciative Inquiry As a Process. In Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer. (Blackboard, optional)

Wehr, Paul. 2006. Conflict Mapping. (G. Burgess & H. Burgess, Eds.) *Beyond Intractability*. Retrieved from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict-mapping> (Blackboard)

Winslade, John, Gerald Monk and Alison Cotter. 1998. A Narrative Approach to the Practice of Mediation. *Negotiation Journal*, 14(1), 21-41. (Blackboard)

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. With rare exception, each student working in a group is given the same grade for an assignment. 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

Students 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; <http://accessibility.gmu.edu/studetnservices.html>) 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 S-CAR Liaison Research Librarian is Mary Oberlies. Her phone number is 703-993-8267 and her email address is moberlie@gmu.edu. Do not hesitate to contact her with specific questions about holdings and research or about whom to contact for materials still in the Fenwick Library on the Fairfax Campus.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

Participation: 10% Ongoing
Because much of this course involves in-class discussions and presentations, participation is a significant course grade. 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.

Pop Quizzes: 20% Occasional
Questions on pop quizzes will draw from the assigned readings for the day of the quiz. You will be allowed to write as much as you would like from the readings on one 4 X 6 index card, and you may refer to the index card while taking the quiz.

Short Papers: 25% Due Sep. 11, Oct. 2, Oct. 23, Nov. 13 and Dec. 4
Each student will write one short paper (3-5 pages) for each question upon which this course is organized. In the papers, you will apply each question to the conflict you are studying in your learning group. Although the conflict about which you will write is one you are studying as a group, the short papers are written individually and must represent individual work.

Group Presentations: 25% Every 3 weeks
Each group will give a short presentation (approximately 10 minutes) on each of the questions upon which this course is organized. The content of these presentations is much more important than the style. The idea is for each group to share their findings, insights, questions, challenges, and ideas with regard to the conflict they are studying and their efforts to analyze it and develop an intervention that will move parties toward resolution. Class discussion will follow each presentation.

Final Exam: 20% Due Dec. 11
These final integration essays will be open book, take home essays that will be distributed electronically on Nov. 25. Answers to each of the 3 questions should be 2 (complete) to 3 pages in length. **Exams must be submitted electronically by Dec. 11 at 5:00 p.m.** LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED ONLY IN CASES OF DOCUMENTED PERSONAL ILLNESS OR FAMILY EMERGENCY.

COURSE AGENDAWeek 1 (Aug 26 and 28): Introduction to the course and conflict analysis

- Introductions and syllabus review
- Form groups and select conflicts for study
- Understanding a conflict

Readings:

- Burgess and Burgess in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 6: *How Do I Get Good Information in a Short Time?*, pages 59-73.
- Marsick and Sauquet, *Learning Through Reflection*, pages 382-399.
- Mitchell in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 5: *How Much Do I Need to Know?*, pages 49-58.
- Wehr, *Conflict Mapping*, Beyond Intractability, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict-mapping>

Week 2 (Sep. 2 and 4): What Is Happening? Understanding a Conflict

- Considering the lenses of race and culture
- Models and frameworks for analyzing conflict (slides on Blackboard)
- Film: Fruitvale Station

Readings:

- Avruch in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 7, *What Do I Need to Know About Culture? A Researcher Says....*, pages 75-87.
- Warfield in Pfund, Chapter 1, *What We Need to Know: Factors of Race, Culture, and Ethnicity in Dispute Resolution*, pages 3-13.

Week 3 (Sep. 9 and 11): What Is Happening? Understanding a Conflict

- Group presentations on analysis of conflicts
- Analyzing Conflict Through Film: Fruitvale Station
- **Assignment due on Sep. 11: Short Paper 1**

Week 4 (Sep. 16 and 18): Should I Get Involved? Assessing the Environment

- Asking initial questions about a conflict environment
- Group presentations on assessment

Readings:

- Diamond in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 3, *Who Else is Working There?*, pages 25-35.
- Lederach in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 4, 37-46 *Where Do I Fit In?*, pages 10-13.
- Marks and Marks in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 2, *What Do They Want Me to Do?*, pages 15-23.

Week 5 (Sep. 23 and 25) Should I Get Involved? Assessing the Environment

- Considering affects of intervention
- Group presentations on assessment

Readings:

- Anderson in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 20, *Can My Good Intentions Make Things Worse?*, pages 225-233.
- Dass and Gorman, Chapter 6, *The Way of Social Action*, pages 153-183.

Week 6 (Sep. 30 and Oct. 2): Should I Get Involved? Assessing the Environment

- Assessing ethical concerns
- Group presentations on assessment
- **Assignment due on Oct. 2: Short Paper 2**

Readings:

- Warfield and Schoeny in Pfund, Chapter 7, *Is Maintaining Peace Always Right? Reconnecting Systems Maintenance with Social Justice*, pages 107-124.
- Zehr and Aapengnuo in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 18, *To Whom Am I Accountable?* pages 201-211.

Week 7 (Oct. 7 and 9): Intervening in Conflict

- Negotiation, Problem-Solving Workshops and Organizational Conflict Resolution
- **Guest speaker on Problem-Solving Workshops: Ned Lazarus**
- **Guest speaker on Organizational Conflict Resolution: Samantha Levine-Finley**
- Group presentations on intervention

Readings:

- Docherty, *The Little Book of Strategic Negotiation*, pages 5-83.
- Maiese, *Problem-Solving Workshops, Beyond Intractability*, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/problem-solving-workshops>

Week 8 (Oct. 16): Intervening in Conflict

- Reflective Practice and Dialogue
- Group presentations on intervention

Readings:

- Schirch & Camppt, *The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects*, pages 5-87.
- Warfield and Cheldelin in Pfund, *Reflections on Reflective Practice*, pages 147-162.

Week 9 (Oct. 21 and 23): Intervening in Conflict

- Mediation, Restorative Justice, and Activism
- **Guest speaker on Restorative Justice: Rochelle Arms**
- Group presentations on intervention
- **Assignment due on Oct. 23: Short Paper 3**

Readings:

- Burgess, *Activism*, Beyond Intractability, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/activism>
- Winslade, Monk, and Cotter, *A Narrative Approach to the Practice of Mediation*, pages 21-41.
- Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, pages 3-63.

Week 10 (Oct. 28 and 30): Intervening in Conflict: Complicating Dynamics

- Ethical challenges
- Group presentations on complicating dynamics in interventions

Readings:

- Maiese, *Neutrality*, Beyond Intractability, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/neutrality>
- Warfield in Pfund, Chapter 9, *Is This the Right Thing to Do? A Practical Framework for Ethical Decisions*, pages 139-146.

Week 11 (Nov. 4 and 6): Intervening in Conflict: Complicating Dynamics

- Complicating dynamics in identity conflicts
- **Guest speaker on conflict between transgender community and police in Washington, DC: RJ Nickels**
- Group presentations on complicating dynamics in interventions

Readings:

- Kriesberg, *Identity Issues*, Beyond Intractability, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity-issues>
- Warfield in Pfund, Chapter 3, *Managing Ethnic/Racial Conflict for Community Building*, pages 37-71.

Week 12 (Nov. 11 and 13): Intervening in Conflict: Complicating Dynamics

- Considering practical, logistical, and emotional dynamics in interventions
- Group presentations on complicating dynamics in interventions
- **Assignment due on Nov. 13: Short Paper 4**

Readings:

- Kraybill in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 22, *Do I Go?*, pages 251-259.
- Lederach in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 23, *How Long Will It Take?*, pages 261-270.

- Potter in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 24, *How Will I Sustain Myself?*, pages 271-280.

Week 13 (Nov. 18 and 20): Evaluating Conflict Interventions

- Understanding evaluation of interventions and considering options
- Group presentations on evaluation

Readings:

- d'Estrée, Fast, Weiss, and Jakobsen, *Changing the Debate about "Success" in Conflict Resolution Efforts*, pages 101-113.
- Elliott, d'Estrée, and Kaufman, *Evaluation as a Tool for Reflection, Beyond Intractability*, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/Evaluation-Reflection>
- Lewis, *Evaluation and Assessment of Interventions, Beyond Intractability*, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/evaluation>

Week 14 (Nov. 25): Evaluating Conflict Interventions

- Incorporating evaluation into interventions
- **Guest speaker on evaluating Seeds of Peace: Ned Lazarus**
- Group presentations on evaluation

Readings:

- Mika in Lederach and Jenner, Chapter 21, *How Can I Evaluate My Work?*, pages 235-247.

Week 15 (Dec. 2 and 4): Evaluating Conflict Interventions and course wrap-up

- Group presentations on evaluation
- **Assignment due on Dec. 4: Short Paper 5**
- Final exam