

Confl 302: Identity, Culture and Conflict

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Wednesdays 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Venue: Music and Theater Building Room 1004 (MTB 1004).

Under what circumstances does identity and culture cause conflict? Can identity- based conflicts be resolved? This course explores social conflicts with special emphasis on the role played by identity in those conflicts and their resolutions. Using relevant theories and case studies it analyzes social identity-based conflicts and their possible resolutions. Critical thinking of ethnic, national and religious identities as both generators and outcomes will be important part of the course.

Course Objectives

This course seeks to:

1. Assist students to become better conflict analysts and resolvers
2. Help students to become more conscious of the role played by their own identities in analyzing conflicts.
3. Help students to examine multiple identities and critically evaluate stereotypes
4. Assist students to write clear and logical papers.

Writing Intensive Requirement.

This course fulfills all of the writing intensive requirement for the Conflict Analysis and Resolution undergraduate major through the assignments listed in this syllabus.

Assessment and Expectations

Students in this course will be graded based on the following:

1. Participation: 10% of the final grade. Regular attendance and consistent informed participation in class discussions and activities is expected. It is important to complete all assigned readings prior to each class so that you are prepared to engage in discussions.

2. Three Written Assignments (3-4 pages): 45% of the final grade.
3. Group Presentations: 15% of the final grade
4. Final Exam: 30% of the final grade.

Assignments

Assignment 1: Write a reflection paper based on your own identities. In your paper explain how your identities generated conflict or help in the transformation of a social conflict. Social conflicts can also generate new forms of identities. In your paper explain new identities that you acquired as a result of social conflicts. How did you deal with conflicts that emerged from your identities? (15%) **Date Due, September 24, 2014**

Assignment 2.

Choose a YouTube video or article on identity-based conflict. Describe the type of conflict presented in the article or video of your choosing. In what ways does the conflict qualify as identity based conflict? Using theories of social identity, analyze the conflict in question and design a conflict transformation strategy for that conflict (15%). **Date Due, October 15, 2014**

Assignment 3

Book Review. Write a review of *Cultural Contestation in Ethnic Conflict* by Ross Marc Howard M. (2007 (15%)). **Date due, October 29, 2014**

Final Exam:

The exam questions will be distributed in class on December 03, 2014.

Date Due, December 10, 2014

Remember the Golden Rule: No Sweat No Gain. Grades are not given but earned.

Required Texts

Brewer, M. B. (2003). *Intergroup relations*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Ashmore R.D. Jussim, L. and Wilder, D. (2001) *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict and Conflict Reduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Korostelina, K. (2007). *Social Identity and Conflict: Structures, Dynamics and Implications*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Howard, R. M. (2007). *Cultural Contestation in Ethnic Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rothman, J. (1997). *Resolving Identity-based Conflict in Nations, Organizations, and Communities*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Volkan, Vamik. (1997). *Blood Lines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. Boulder: Westview Press.

N/B Additional readings will be provided in class or via email.

Honor Code and Plagiarism:

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.

Student Services

Writing Center:

The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. (See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>). ESL Help: The program was designed specifically for students whose first language is not English who feel they might benefit from additional, targeted support over the course of an entire semester. (See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/?page_id=10)

Grading Scale (points)

A 100-93

A- 92-90

B+ 89-87

B 86-83

B- 82-80

C 79-70

F 70

*Please note that many Mason graduate programs have minimum grade expectations that require students to achieve a grade of B- or higher to remain in good academic standing. Please consult with your department for specific information.

Schedule of Classes

August 27: Introduction

Welcome, overview, class norms, and initial exploration of the theme of identity

September 3: Theories of Social Identities

Readings

Korostelina Chapter 1; Brewer pp 4 - 16

Gardner, Robert 2003. "Identity Frames." At

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

Rothbarth D and Korostelina, K. Why they Die, pp 127-139

September 10: The Relationships between Individual and Social Identities

Readings:

Korostelina: Ch 2, Brewer, pp 32- 41; Volkan 36 -49; 81-100

Kriesberg, Louis. (2003). "Us versus Them." at

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

September 17: Identity Prejudice and Discrimination

Readings:

Ashmore, pp 3 - 42, Brewer pp 43 – 67; 112-123.

September 24: Identity and Conflict

Readings: Rothman, pp 5-12.

❖ *Students submit their Reflection Papers in class*

October 1: Gender and Conflict

Readings:

Makahamadze T, Isacco A and Chireshe 2011. Examining the Perceptions of Zimbabwean Women about the Domestic Violence Act, pp 706-727

United Nations Council Resolution 1325. Chapters 1-4

October 8: Gender and Conflict continued.

United Nations Council Resolution 1325. Chapters 5-7

October 15: Ethnicity and Nationality.

Film discussion: Mugabe and the White African:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajPJ9OD7OfQ>

Readings

Volkan 101-116; Ashmore 42-71

❖ *Students submit their papers in class*

October 22: Identity, Moral Denigration and Violence

Short film discussion

Readings:

Ashmore pp 133- 87. Additional readings to be announced.

October 29: Religion, Nationalism and Conflict

Readings

Volkan: Ch 9

Gopin, Marc. (1997). Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution. *Peace and Change*, 22(1), 1-31.

Sibanda F, Makahamadze T and Maposa R, S (2008). 'Hawks and Doves': The Impact of Operation Murambatsvina on Johane Marange Apostolic Church in Zimbabwe' *Exchange* (37), 68-85

- ❖ *Students submit their papers in class*
- ❖

November 5: Identity-Based Conflict Resolution

Readings

Brewer, pp 88-109; Rothman 5-52; Ashmore, pp 187-213.

November 12: Conflict Transformation

Reading

Volkan, pp 203-227; Brewer, pp 88-109. Rothman, pp 57-83.

November 19: Group Presentations

No Readings

December 3: Group Presentations

No Readings

December 10: Students submit their exam scripts via email

The End.