

**SCHOOL FOR CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION (S-CAR)
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

GLOBAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION (CONF 340)

Semester: Fall 2014
Class Time: Thursday, 4:30 - 7:10 pm
Location: Fairfax Campus, Innovation Hall Room 135
Instructor: Dr. Dennis J.D. Sandole
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the causes and conditions of *complex violent conflicts* within and between states. The objective is to explore to what extent this knowledge can be used as a basis to better understand and respond to violent conflicts through either their *prevention, management, settlement, resolution* and/or *transformation*. Examples include the seemingly perennial Israeli-Palestinian conflict; conflicts that led to the genocidal implosion of former Yugoslavia (e.g., Bosnia and Kosovo) and conflicts that challenged successor states of the former Soviet Union (e.g., Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine and the Russian Federation) or have escalated to post-9/11 terrorism (e.g., Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Prerequisites:** Acceptance into S-CAR's BA/BSc. program and successful completion of CONF 101, or permission of the instructor.
2. **Class Format:** Classes will follow an *interactive seminar format*. Hence, class attendance, participation, and the *completion of relevant readings prior to class* are required.
3. **Assessment:**

[a] A **midterm paper**, worth 40% of the final grade, in which students, using the *3 Pillar Framework (3PF)* to facilitate their analyses, identify, discuss and assess, from the required course readings, the *major causes* of a specific violent conflict within and/or between states. In other words, according to our readings, what are the major causes of a specific violent conflict? (15-20 double-spaced pages [i.e., 250-300 words per page]). (NOTE: This is a **pillar 2 analysis**.) Due 16 October 2014.

[b] A **final paper**, also worth 40% of the final grade, in which students, again using the *3 Pillar Framework (3PF)* to facilitate their analyses and designs, (1) summarize the findings of their midterm papers and, on the basis of all required readings, (2) design an international intervention into their select conflicts. In other words, how should the conflicts selected by the class be handled by the international community? (15-20 double-spaced pages [i.e., 250-300 words per page]). (NOTE: This is a **pillar 1-2-3 analysis**.) Due 11 December 2014.

NOTE: Since these two (2) papers are meant, among other things, to demonstrate that students have been in the course, *the papers*

should contain appropriate references to course concepts and the corresponding readings. For further clarification -- including about the GMU Honor Code (e.g., avoiding any hint of plagiarism at all costs) -- please feel free to consult with the instructor.

[c] **Student presentations:** Each student will be invited to lead a discussion on one or more chapters from the readings by Ramalingam; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall; and/or Sandole (2010) (see "Required Readings," below). **In each case, the rest of the class will be expected to have read the same material to facilitate a rich discussion. Please consult with our course assistant about your preferences and the order and dates on which you want to make your presentations (which may be jointly given, involving more than one student per presentation).** Presentations should be aimed at distilling from the readings *their relevance to the themes of the midterm and final papers*; e.g., the causes of a particular violent conflict, with implications for dealing with them, including those resulting in terrorism. Students are also expected to participate in *scenario development exercises* (see below) (worth 20% of final grade).

Overall in-class *participation* will determine whether a "borderline" final grade of, for example, B+/A- remains in the B or A category.

5. Office Hours: 7:15 - 8:00 pm following each class, either in the classroom or in the CAR Office, located in Robinson B365, or by appointment.

6. Withdrawal: The last day to drop the course without incurring any tuition penalty is 26 September 2014.

REQUIRED READINGS

Students will be asked to read one article, Dennis J.D. Sandole's "A Comprehensive Mapping of Conflict and Conflict Resolution: A Three Pillar Approach," *Peace and Conflict Studies*, December 1998, vol. 5, no.2, pp. 1-30 (which can be accessed online at: <http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/pcs/sandole.htm>); and then the following:

(1) Ramalingam, Ben (2014). *Aid on the Edge of Chaos: Rethinking International Cooperation in a Complex World*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press **(ISBN 978-0-19957-802-3)**.

(2) Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Miall (2011). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts* (3rd Edition). Cambridge (UK) and Malden (MA): Polity Press **(ISBN 978-0-7456-4974-0)**.

(3) Sandole, Dennis J.D. (1999). *Capturing the Complexity of Conflict: Dealing with Violent Ethnic Conflicts of the Post-Cold War Era*. London and New York: Pinter/Continuum [Routledge], Chapter 6.

(4) Sandole, Dennis J.D. (2010). *Peacebuilding: Preventing Violent Conflict in a Complex World*. Cambridge (UK) and Malden (MA): Polity Press **(ISBN 978-0-7456-4166-9)**.

COURSE SYLLABUS

- 28 Aug** **I. Introduction: Course Overview.**
- 4 Sep** **II. The Problem: Conflict, Violence, and War.**
- A. The Subject Matter.
1. *Latent Conflict (LC)*.
2. Conflict Processes.
- a. *Manifest Conflict Process (MCP)*.
- b. *Aggressive Manifest Conflict Process (AMCP)*.
- (1) Post-Cold War Ethnic Conflicts.
- (2) Post-9/11 Terrorism.
- B. Why is a Course on Violent Conflict Necessary?
1. Violent Conflict Trends in the United States.
2. Violent Conflict Trends Worldwide.
- a. Domestic: The *spillover potential* of *intrastate* conflicts.
- (1) *Functional Spillover*.
- (2) *External Intervention*.
- [a] Ethnic Kin Intervention.
- [b] Humanitarian Intervention.
- (3) *Multiplier-Effect Systemic Contagion*.
- b. *Interstate/Trans-societal*(including post-9/11 terrorism and the "Clash of Civilizations").
- c. Need to Capture the *Complexity* of Conflict.
- C. Three Theoretical *and* Practical Questions:
1. How Can **MCPs** be *Prevented* from Becoming **AMCPs**?
2. What are the *Causes* of **AMCPs**?
3. How Do We Conduct *Research* on **AMCPs**?
- READ: Ramsbotham, et al. 2011, Chapters 1-3.
Ramalingam, 2014, Chapters 1-12.
- 11 Sep/
18 Sep/
25 Sep** **III. An Enhanced Basis for Understanding and Dealing with the Problem.**
- A. Three levels of Conflict Reality.
1. *Conflict-as-Symptoms* (Perceptible/Measurable Indicators of Underlying Causes and Conditions).
2. *Conflict-as-Process* (Underlying Conflicted Relationships).
3. *Conflict-as-Start-up Conditions* (Underlying Deep-Rooted Causes and Conditions of the Conflicted Relationships).
- B. A Comprehensive Mapping of Conflict and Conflict Resolution: *A 3-Pillar Approach (3PF)*.
- READ: Sandole, 1998.

Sandole, 2010 Chapters 1-2.

1. **Pillar 1: Conflict (Dependent Variable).**
 - a. Parties.
 - b. Issues.
 - c. Long-term Objectives.
 - d. Means.
 - e. Preferred Conflict-handling Orientations.
 - f. Conflict Environments.

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2. **Pillar 2: Conflict Causes and Conditions (Independent Variables).**

READ: Ramsbotham, et al. 2011, Chapter 4.
Sandole, 1999 (provided by instructor).

- a. *Individual Level (Image I).*
 - [1] Biological Theories.
 - [2] Physiological Theories.
 - [3] Learning Theories.
 - [4] Dissonance Theories.

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- b. *Societal/National level (Image II).*
 - [1] Domestic-Foreign Conflict Nexus.
 - [2] Crisis Decisionmaking.
 - [3] Action-Reaction Dynamics.
 - [4] Power Distance (e.g., China's rise).
 - [5] Imperialism (and "Lateral Pressures").
- c. *Trans-societal/International level (Image III).*
 - [1] [Endogenous vs. Exogenous Systems.
 - [2] Bi- vs. Multipolar Systems.
 - [3] Tendencies toward the "Unit Veto" System.
 - [4] International Distribution of Wealth ("Marxist Delight"): Income Inequality.
- d. *Global/Ecological Level (Image IV).*
 - [1] Environmental Degradation.
 - [2] Global Warming.
 - [3] The "Malthusian Nightmare" Revisited.

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3. **Pillar 3: Conflict Intervention.**

READ: Ramsbotham, et al. 2011, Chapters 5-10.

- a. 3rd Party Objectives.
 - [1] Violent Conflict *Prevention*
[= **Preventive Diplomacy**].
 - [2] Conflict *Management*
[= **Peacekeeping**].
 - [3] Conflict *Settlement*
[= **Coercive Peacemaking**].

[4] *Conflict Resolution*
[= **Collaborative Peacemaking**].

[5] *Conflict Transformation* [*Prevention*]
[= **Peacebuilding**].

b. 3rd Party Approaches for Achieving Goals.

[1] *Confrontational* and/or *Collaborative*
Processes.

[2] *Negative* and/or *Positive Peace*
Orientations.

[3] *Track-1* or *Multi-Track* Actors and
Processes.

16 Oct **MID-TERM PAPERS DUE**

23 Oct/ 30 Oct IV. **Application of Theory: Dealing with Complex Violent Conflict, War and Terrorism Globally.**

READ: Ramalingam, 2014, Chapters 13-19.
Ramsbotham, et al. 2011, Chapters 11-16.
Sandole, 2010, Chapters 3-5.

6 Nov/ 13 Nov/ 20 Nov/ V **Putting it All Together "in Practice" - Capturing the Complexity of Violent Conflict through Scenarios Development Exercises.**

A. Identify a *Conflict* (Current, Developing or Potential) that Could Worsen or Improve during the Next 5-10 Years (**Pillar 1**).

B. Explore *Conflict Trajectories*:

1. Identify the Factors -- "*Drivers*" -- That Could Make the Conflict Worse or Better (**Pillar 2a**).

2. Construct a *Scenario* Indicating How These Factors Could Combine to Make the Conflict Worse (**Worst-Case Scenario**=*Negative Trajectory*) or Better (**Best-Case Scenario**=*Positive Trajectory*) (**Pillar 2b**).

C. Design a *Strategy* for Responding to these Factors ("*Drivers*") to Either *Undermine* their Potential Negative Impact or *Enhance* their Positive Impact on the Conflict over Time (**Pillar 3**).

27 Nov/4 Dec **Conclusion: Course Wrap-Up.**

11 Dec **FINAL PAPERS DUE**