

# CONF 652

Conflict Analysis and Resolution for Prevention, Reconstruction, and Stabilization Contexts  
School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution  
George Mason University

## INSTRUCTOR

David Alpher, PhD  
dalpher@gmu.edu  
Phone: 703.380.5755 (cell)

Office Hours: After class or by appointment

Semester: Fall 2014

Class Dates:

Saturday, October 25

Saturday-Sunday, November 8-9

Saturday-Sunday, November 22-23

Saturday, December 6

Class Times: 10 AM – 5 PM; Class Location: Founders Hall 475, Arlington Campus

## Course description

Violent system level conflicts are complex, thus requiring strategic multifaceted responses. Using an integrated and interactive approach, this course will explore conditions in preconflict, conflict and postconflict environments; objectives of prevention, reconstruction and stabilization efforts; actions designed to meet those objectives; and potential impacts of ‘intervened’ actions. Collectively the class will explore the utility of conflict analysis and resolution theory and practical tools in those contexts. Students will be challenged to reflect upon and apply lessons from professional experience, in order to develop new and improved concepts and models for prevention, reconstruction and stabilization planning and programming. Based on principles of collaboration, integration, and innovation, the course will augment students’ current skill bases by refocusing their work processes through a conflict-sensitive lens. The overarching goal therefore is on developing the intellectual and practical skills of students necessary for planning and carrying out third-party interventions designed to diagnose and resolve intrastate violent and armed conflicts within the contexts of prevention, reconstruction and stabilization.

## Introduction

The re-development phase that follows large-scale violence is underscored by the need as well as the opportunity for multi-faceted, multi-level conflict sensitive transformation. Emerging from the anarchy of violent conflict-marred by destruction and injustice—opposing parties and their members are challenged to build just, sustainable peace from which growth and development can blossom, and future conflicts resolved peacefully (Botes, 2003). But the post-conflict environment is complex and non-linear. As such conflict does not actually end as reconstruction and stabilization begins. Rather reconstruction, stabilization, and prevention must occur in tandem with other larger multilayered conflict transformation and peacebuilding efforts. Redevelopment examines the post-conflict environment from a holistic perspective, emphasizing endogenous growth and prosperity resulting from peace which is supported and facilitated by

third parties who supplement physical, symbolic and intellectual resources to the sustainable peace cause.

### Course Objectives

- ◆ Class participants will learn about the actors, activities, goals, and ‘cultures’ of the institutions and organizations engaged in prevention, stabilization, and reconstruction, interventions at different phases, at different levels, and in different sectors.
- ◆ Class participants will examine and critique the academic theories, the assumptions and approaches underlying the international prevention, stabilization, and reconstruction activities of the different actors, including political, economic, military, humanitarian, human rights interveners and other interveners.
- ◆ Through case studies and simulations, participants will gain conceptual and experiential understandings of the policy, programmatic, and operational analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation processes that are required in international prevention, stabilization, and reconstruction interventions.

Office hours: There are no scheduled office hours for this class so questions and requests for class-related consultation will be handled before or after class, by email or by phone. However, if required, arrangements can be made to meet to discuss any issues the student may have.

### Course expectations

**Consistent attendance:** Barring exceptional circumstances, you are expected to attend all weekends for the full time scheduled.

**Effective preparation:** The quality of class discussions and activities depends on your preparation.

**Course completion:** In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family illness.

### Class format

This course will be run as a learning community—discussions, written assignments and classroom activities will facilitate the exchange of students’, faculty’s and presenters’ knowledge and experiences. The compressed course format means that your presence in class is essential.

Because it is interactive, in that you will be expected to discuss issues and be able to apply them to real life conflict situations, students are therefore expected to come to class well prepared. This means doing the assigned readings before coming to class (including the first session), and to be able to discuss the readings.

### Honor Code

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](http://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. SCAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

**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 (<http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/>) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) contact the instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations.

### **Grade distribution**

Participation 15 percent

Active participation is expected, both in the classroom and in the small group projects outside the classroom. Participants will work individually and in small groups both in the classroom and outside the classroom. Engage actively in the course in a variety of formats: large group discussions, small group discussions, class exercises, etc.

### **In-class weekly group simulations 15 percent**

Groups of approximately 3 students will be formed on the first day of class. Each group will apply the readings to practice through various scenarios taken from real life situations. This will be followed by 15 minute presentations per group. Students should take turns in presenting so that by the end of the course everyone would have had the rewarding experience of presenting on behalf of a group. This will be the same group for the final group project.

### **Short paper 20 percent**

Each student will write a short page paper (8 pages maximum) on the challenges of coordination and collaboration in Prevention, and Stabilization contexts using a specific case study. The paper will be due on November 8. More details will be provided in class.

### **Final paper 30 percent**

Each student will analyze a conflict of their choice (12 pages maximum). The analysis should include a theoretical framework as well as a prescription component where students link their analysis to an intervention model discussed in class. This will be due December 6. More details will be provided in class.

### **Group project and presentation (3 students per group) 20 percent**

In groups of 3 students will analyze a conflict of their choice. This assignment involves the following three components

1. An in-depth analysis of a conflict
2. An overview and evaluation of international intervention to date
3. Recommendations for interventions in prevention, stabilization and reconstruction

There will be some time for groups to meet during class time, but outside meetings will also be

necessary. Each group will give a 45 minutes presentation (with time for Q&A) on the final day of class, Saturday December 10. Groups may incorporate a variety of media during their presentations.

All assignments, whether group presentations or individual papers should include a theory/ model and practice component. Students should not only incorporate class readings but also draw from practical experience as well as other relevant materials. Papers and presentations that make a clear link between analysis and international intervention models will score higher. If you have any questions not answered in this syllabus or have any concerns during the course, please feel free to ask the instructor.

### **Course Materials (Required texts)**

1. Lund, Michael S., Preventing Violent Conflicts: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy, USIP, 1999
2. Zartman, William I, Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques, Revised Edition, 2007.
3. Junne Gerd, Postconflict development: Meeting New Challenges, Lynne Rienner, 2005
4. Guide for Participants in Peace, Stability, and Relief Operations, USIP, 2007  
Practice/ Intervention Models/

### **Required (materials available online)**

1. DFID: Conducting Conflict Assessment: Guidance Note:  
[http://test.alertinternational.co.uk/sites/default/files/Conducting\\_Conflict\\_Assessment\\_Guidance.pdf](http://test.alertinternational.co.uk/sites/default/files/Conducting_Conflict_Assessment_Guidance.pdf)
2. USAID: Conflict Assessment, <http://test.alertinternational.co.uk/node/70>,
3. Anderson, M. and Lara Olson, Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners 2003, (cdainc.com)
4. GPPAC: Assessing Progress on the Road to Peace, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities, Issue Paper 5, May 2008
5. Kanyako, Vandy, The Challenges of Staging Elections in West Africa, Journal of International Peace operations, Vol. 2, No. 5- March-April 2007

### **Optional Readings**

- Aal, Pamela, Daniel Miltenberger and Thomas G. Weiss. Guide to IGOs, NGOs, and the Military in Peace and Relief Operations. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2000.
- Anderson, Mary B. Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—or War. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999.
- Collier, Paul, et al. Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy. Oxford: Oxford University Press and the World Bank, 2003.
- Covey, Jock; Dziedzic, Michael J.; and Hawley, Leonard R., The Quest for Viable Peace. Washington, DC: US Institute for Peace, 2005.
- Diamond, Louise and Ambassador John W. McDonald. Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1996.
- Duffield, Mark. Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security. London: Zed, 2001.
- Maley, William, Charles Sampford, and Ramesh Thakur, eds. From Civil Strife to Civil Society:

Civil and Military Responsibilities in Disrupted States. Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2003.

Miall, Hugh; Ramsbotham, Oliver; and Woodhouse, Tom. Contemporary Conflict Resolution, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press (2d Ed.), 2005.

Pugh, Michael and Neil Cooper, eds. War Economies in a Regional Context: Challenges of Transformation. London: Lynne Rienner, 2004.

Reychler, Luc and Thania Paffenholz, eds. Peacebuilding: A Field Guide. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002.

Stedman, Stephen John, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth Cousens, eds. Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002.

Talentino, Anrea Kathryn. Military Intervention After the Cold War. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2005.

## **Schedule of Classes**

### **OCTOBER 25**

Introductions (participants, materials, subject and field)

- Student introductions and objectives
- Review of the syllabus and class objectives
- Formation of groups of (3) three
- Critical questions in conflict analysis and resolution in PRS contexts
- Theory and Practice/ Government: Exploring the linkages in PRS contexts
- Conflict Prevention issues: case study

Readings:

1. Zartman, Peacemaking in International Conflict: Chapters 1& 2
2. Lund, Michael S., Preventing Violent Conflicts, Chapters 1& 2
3. Application/ Practice: DFID/ USAID conflict assessment model pgs. 1-34

### **NOVEMBER 8**

Approaches to peacemaking in PRS contexts

- Review of last class
- Peacemaking approaches
- Conflict prevention: Strategies and processes
- Theory and Practice/ Think Thank: Exploring the linkages in PRS contexts
- Guest Speaker
- Conflict Prevention intervention: case study
- Video

Readings

1. Zartman, Peacemaking in International Conflict: Chapters 3-7
  2. Lund, Michael S., Preventing Violent Conflicts: Chapters 3-5
- Application/Practice: International Crisis Group model

### **NOVEMBER 9**

Approaches to peacemaking (Intervention in protracted conflicts) in PRS contexts

- Review of last class
- Peacemaking with muscle (opportunities and challenges)
- Guest speaker

- Case study
- Implications for practice/ research institutions

Readings:

1. Kelman, Peacemaking in International Conflict: Chapters 8-11
2. Confronting War: Critical Lessons parts 1 and 2

## **NOVEMBER 22**

### **Short paper due**

Post-Conflict Development Challenges/ Stabilization and Reconstruction in PRS contexts

- Review of last class
- Core issues in post-conflict development
- Documentary
- Case study
- Implications for practice/ research institutions

Readings:

1. Junne Gerd and W. Verkoren, Postconflict development: Meeting New Challenges
2. Confronting War: Critical lessons parts 3 to 6

## **NOVEMBER 23**

Post-Conflict Development Challenges (Reconstruction)

- Review of last class
- Core issues in post-conflict Reconstruction
- Guest Speaker (The Peace Corps/ Atlas Fellows)
- Implications for practice

Readings:

1. GPPAC: Assessing Progress on the Road to Peace, May 2008
2. Guide for Participants in Peace, Stability, and Relief Operations, USIP

## **DECEMBER 6**

### **Final paper due**

Synthesis

- Review of last class
- Evaluating Intervention Outcomes (Bringing it all together)
- Project Presentations (45 minutes) Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4
- Course Summary and Critiques
- Final paper discussions
- The way forward