

Conf 320 Interpersonal Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Fall 2010, Robinson B120
Mondays 1:30-4:15
Instructor, Rabbi Bruce Aft, baft@gmu.edu; 703-407-7690 **Voice mail often works best...**

Office hours by appointment

Course Description

This course will explore in depth conceptual and theoretical issues involving interpersonal relations. We will utilize varieties of scenarios to help us get in touch with many of the key issues which impact upon our relationships ranging from discussions about Biblical heroes to differing communication patterns as represented in the movie *Revolutionary Road*. We will discuss how to utilize the things we learn from our own interpersonal relationships in helping us practice more effectively as conflict resolution professionals. Students will examine the various dimensions of one's self and social interactions which lead to interpersonal conflict, their possible associated causes, and methods of inquiry that lead to resolution. Students will learn about how to engage in difficult conversations and to reflect on who we are and what unique characteristics we bring to dealing with challenging situations. Looking at various types of responses to interpersonal conflicts and exploring options will help students grow professionally and personally. Utilizing the text *Getting to Yes* will provide opportunities to grow in our ability to negotiate. There will be at least two guest speakers.

.Assignments and Evaluation:

Short Term Essay#1 (3-5 pages) 10% Due on Sept.27

Short Term Essay#2(3-5 pages) 20% Due on Oct. 25

Classroom Participation (will be measured by in class assignments to be given by discretion of instructor and by involvement in class discussions) 10%

Group Assignment (Details will be discussed early in the semester) 30%

These will be on Nov. 8,15,22

Final Assignment (8-10 pages) 30% Due at the time when the final exam is scheduled and is in lieu of a final exam.

Course Materials

Required Books

Difficult Conversations, Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen

Getting to YES, Roger Fisher and William Ury

Handouts will be given out in class and recommended readings will be provided based upon interests of students....

*"To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: **Student members of the George Mason***

University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.”

Outline of Classes

August 30, Introduction and Guest Speaker(s) Amy Brener

Sept. 13,20 Revolutionary Road and Discussion (The Nature of Conflict and Perspectives on Conflict) (Chapters 1-4 in *Difficult Conversations*)

Sept. 27 Feelings and Identity (Chapters 5-6 in *Difficult Conversations*) First Assignment Due

Oct 4,12 Resolving and Preventing Conflicts (Chapters 7-12 in *Difficult Conversations*) PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS NO CLASS ON OCT 11 AND SO WE MEET ON OCT.12

Oct. 18 Biblical Models of Conflict and Their Impact on Our Lives (handouts will be given before this session)

Oct.25, Nov. 1 *Getting to Yes—Let’s Negotiate* Please read entire book by Oct. 25...Second Assignment Due

Nov. 8,15,22 Class Presentations

(Readings to be given out by each group in preparation for their presentations)

Nov.29 What Can We Learn From our Experiences that Help Us With Our Work (handouts to be given out)

Dec. 6 Current Case Studies (based upon the state of the world, real life situations will be discussed and analyzed)

Final Assignment Due at Time Scheduled for Final Exam in Lieu of Final Exam

Class subjects may be subject to change based upon availability of guest speakers/presenters

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Please come to class on time and prepared. Turn off cell phones, pagers, beepers, etc. Remain in class unless you have an emergency. Allow others and yourself to learn by refraining from by side conversations, passing notes, playing video games, reading e-mail, browsing websites, etc. Be mindful of the sensitivities of others in your comments in class; however, open discussion and dialogue are our goals.

We will be discussing contentious political issues in this course. Students are encouraged to express diverse perspectives. You are likely to encounter strong opinions. You will be expected to keep a balance between arguing your own position on these issues, listening to others, and helping the class to function as collectivity to understand the course content.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND 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, APA, 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’s fine for groups to divide project work among team members, the final product that’s 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 their 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

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>).

Library Services

Don't hesitate to contact the office with specific questions about holdings and research regarding the CAR field.

GOOD LUCK and I hope that each of you will LEARN SOMETHING and MAKE A DIFFERENCE!