

## **CONF 657- 002: Facilitation Skills**

**Dr. Mazur**

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Office Hours by Appointment

School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

George Mason University

Arlington, VA

Spring Semester 2017 3 credits

Founders Hall Room 317

### **Course Schedule:**

Mondays 7:20-10:00 pm

First class January 23

No class March 13 Spring Break

Last class May 1

### **Course Purpose:**

To provide students with the knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and behaviors to:

Design facilitations

Conduct facilitations

Critically evaluate facilitators and facilitation skills

Learn group dynamics theory

Manage interactions and groups to accomplish goals

### **Course Objectives:**

Participants will learn the principles and ethics of participatory decision-making

Participants will assess and understand how to manage group dynamics, processes, and outcomes

Participants will learn and practice how to draft agendas, solicit ground rules, clarify role definitions, manage time, and be responsible for overall logistics

Participants will experiment with a range of techniques to manage interactions and will practice applying tools, tactics, and strategies in and outside of class

Participants will practice tools, tactics, and strategies in academic, work, and community settings and analyze their experiences.

**Prerequisites or co-requisites:** CONF 501 or CONF 502, and acceptance in the graduate certificate program in Conflict Analysis and Resolution, or permission of instructor.

**Course Expectations:** The class will meet once a week on Monday evenings for the semester (see specific time and dates above). The activities in these sessions will include a mixture of brief lectures, group activities, skill-building exercises, presentations, and discussion.

Related expectations of students include:

Consistent attendance. Attendance is required for all classes barring exceptional

circumstances. Please see me if you must miss a class and therefore need to do a make-up assignment. Please commit to being fully present when other students are presenting. Full-attention to the speaker is an important aspect of learning.

Effective preparation. Class will involve discussions and activities that require advance reading and other forms of preparation. Everyone will find class more productive, enjoyable, and worthwhile if each of us comes prepared. I am committed to doing so, and ask that you commit to this as well. There is a fair amount of reading involved. Please pace yourself, and feel free to read ahead.

Courtesy and civility. I seek to foster a positive classroom environment, characterized by shared enjoyment of the process of learning. I ask that we all treat each other with respect, listen carefully to each other's views, and seek to learn from one another's experience and insights.

Course completion. In keeping with departmental policy, I will only give incomplete grades in cases of personal or immediate family illness.

Integrity. I expect integrity of every student in all academic work. You can expect the same of me. All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. If you have not done so, please familiarize yourself with the Honor Code at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html>.

### **Class Policies and Procedures:**

Students are responsible for completing assignments on time. I may send some class assignments and readings electronically and students are responsible for keeping up-to-date with these.

### **University Resources and Assistance:**

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center provides tutors who can help you develop ideas and revise papers at no charge. It can sometimes accommodate walk-ins, but generally, it is best to call for an appointment. Location: ARL212 (in the main SPP suite). Contact: (703) 993-3762. The services of the Writing Center are also available on-line. <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>.

**Disability Resource Center:** The Disability Resource Center assists students with conditions affecting learning. Students with learning conditions that require special circumstances for exams or other writing assignments should provide documentation provided by the Disability Resource Center. Please contact the instructor to discuss your needs well in advance of the first class if possible. Location: SUB I, Room 222. Contact: 703-993-2474 or [www.gmu.edu/student/drc/](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/).

**Grading:** Your grade in this class will be determined as follows:

Class Participation:	40%
Journal:	25%
Final Facilitation:	35%

### **Class Participation/Skills Development (40%)**

Participants will practice facilitation skills at each class. We will practice tactics, strategies, and skills through exercises, scenarios, and case studies. I will evaluate your efforts based on the level of effort; use of appropriate tool, tactic, or strategy; and how you integrate class materials into the exercises. You will be asked to facilitate learning and discussions around several readings. And, you will be asked to give constructive feedback to others who facilitate. The success of the class depends largely on your active participation.

### **Journal (25%)**

You will have an ongoing writing assignment, i.e., keeping a journal of your reactions to class and the readings and your observations of facilitators throughout the semester. This should include your analysis of what you are learning and experiencing. You should reflect on the facilitations in class; the readings; your own facilitations including goals, preparation, and self-assessment, **and at least three facilitations that you observe outside of class** (e.g. worship, meetings, classes, etc.). This should be at least ten pages in length and will be **due on May 8**.

### **Final Facilitation (35%)**

Students will design a facilitation of their choosing to be conducted during the final class sessions. Your job is to teach us to be better facilitators teaching us a facilitation tool or concept that we can use as facilitators. As soon as possible, but no later than April 3, please let me know what you are planning for your final facilitation project. Please construct a facilitation experience for the class. This can be a dialogue that you set up, a difficult meeting with role-players, or teaching a conflict resolution or decision-making tool or game. I have many suggestions and materials, so please don't hesitate to discuss this with me. You will be expected to design something that will demonstrate your facilitation skills and techniques and contribute to the students' facilitation toolbox.

Each presentation will be time-limited, 45 minutes. Time management will be a major factor in completing this assignment successfully. The student should draft an agenda and create and bring the necessary materials. I will prepare a short evaluation. Please discuss your topic with me: [cmazur1@gmu.edu](mailto:cmazur1@gmu.edu) by April 3.

### **Required Texts (additional readings may be posted on Blackboard)**

Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making, Sam Kaner with Lenny Lind, Catherine Toldi, Sarah Fisk, and Duane Berger. Jossey Bass, 2007.

Selected sections of the IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation, Sandy Schuman (Ed). Jossey Bass, 2005. Selected sections of Ingrid Bens, Facilitating with Ease! Core Skills for Facilitators, Team Leaders and Members, Managers, Consultants, and Trainers (any edition).

## **Class Meeting Times and Readings:**

### **1. Monday January 23, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

#### Topics:

Ground rules

Ice Breakers

Facilitator roles and skills

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

The Syllabus and skim

Pages vii-37 in Sam Kaner's Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making.

Please review the chapters 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 12, and 14 in the IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation so you can select one chapter to teach on January 30 for 20 minutes with a class partner.

### **2. Monday January 30, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

#### Topics:

Delving into the IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation

Obtaining and giving feedback

Evaluating facilitators

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

Your IAF Handbook selected chapter

Come prepared to teach and facilitate discussion around your selected chapter of the IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation.

### **3. Monday February 6, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

#### Topics:

Tools and techniques

Facilitative listening skills

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

Pages 41-87 in Sam Kaner's Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making.

### **4. Monday February 13, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

Planning and preparing for meetings

Developing agendas

Facilitation design, principles, and dynamics

Clarifying the facilitator's role, commitments, authority, and contracting

Accountability and ethics

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

Pages 89-133 in Sam Kaner's Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making and Please review the Facilitator's code of Ethics, Statement of Values, and Core Competencies at <https://www.iaf-world.org/site/>.

### **5. Monday February 20, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

#### Topics:

Facilitating successful discussions (who goes when, stacking, managing divergent perspectives, focusing the discussion, tracking different lines of thought, and silence). Guiding the flow, time-management, decision making, and reaching and documenting outcomes.

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:  
“Process Tools for Facilitators,” Chapter 8 or 9 depending on your edition of Ingrid Bens, Facilitating with Ease! Core Skills for Facilitators, Team Leaders and Members, Managers, Consultants, and Trainers. Please go to <https://www.iaf-world.org/site/> and review the IAF Youtube called the “Power of Facilitation.”

**6. Monday February 27, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm.**

Topics:

Facilitating difficult people and stressful situations

Handling objections

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

Pages 135-187 in Sam Kaner’s Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision Making.

**7. Monday March 6, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

Topics:

Assess the group dynamics, development, and shifting goals

Choosing tools in the moment

Principles of participatory decision-making

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

Pages 203-241 in Sam Kaner’s Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision Making.

**Monday March 13, 2017 NO CLASS Spring Break March 13-19, 2017**

**8. Monday March 20, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

Topics:

Building trust through transparency and clarifying values

Advanced Communication

Collaborative process goals

Analysis, designs, and frameworks

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation, Pages 241-294.

**9. Monday March 27, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

Topics: Humor, emotion, anger, and shame

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation, Pages 295-311 and TBD

**10. Monday April 3, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

Topics: Final Facilitations, evaluations, and feedback

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation, Pages TBD

**11. Monday April 10, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

Topics: Final Facilitations, evaluations, constructive feedback, agendas, and introductions

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation, Pages 241-311

**12. Monday April 17, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

Topics: Final Facilitations, evaluations, constructive feedback, and summaries

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation, Pages 335-350; 361-380

**13. Monday April 24, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

Topics: Final Facilitations, evaluations, constructive feedback, and lessons learned

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation, Pages 459-494

**14. Monday May 1, 2017 7:20-10:00 pm**

Topics: Final Facilitations, evaluations, constructive feedback, and best practices

Readings: Before coming to class, please read:

IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation, Pages 563-90

## **Bibliography**

- Bens, Ingrid. *Facilitating with Ease! Core Skills for Facilitators, Team Leaders and Members, Managers, Consultants, and Trainers*. 3rd ed. Jossey-Bass, 2012. Print.
- Cloke, Kenneth, and Joan Goldsmith. *Resolving Personal and Organizational Conflict: Stories of Transformation and Forgiveness*. 1st ed. Jossey-Bass, 2000. Print.
- Cohen, Raymond. *Negotiating Across Cultures*. United States Institute of Peace, 2011. Print.
- Gudykunst, William B. *Communicating With Strangers*. 4th ed. McGraw Hill Higher Education, 2002. Print.
- Kaner, Sam. *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*. 2nd ed. Jossey-Bass, 2007. Print.
- Maxwell, Kelly E., Biren Ratnesh Nagda, and Monita C. Thompson. *Facilitating Intergroup Dialogues: Bridging Differences, Catalyzing Change*. Stylus Publishing, 2011. Print.
- Saunders, Harold H. *A Public Peace Process: Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2001. Print.
- Schoem, David, and Sylvia Hurtado, eds. *Intergroup Dialogue: Deliberative Democracy in School, College, Community, and Workplace*. U Michigan, 2001. Print.
- Schuman, Sandy, ed. *The IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation: Best Practices from the Leading Organization in Facilitation*. Jossey-Bass, 2005. Print.
- Schwarz, Roger M. *The Skilled Facilitator: A Comprehensive Resource for Consultants, Facilitators, Managers, Trainers, and Coaches*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002. Print.