

**CONF 802: Theories of the Person**  
**School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution**  
**George Mason University**  
**Fall 2015**  
**Tuesdays, 7:20-10:00 pm**  
**Founders Hall 470**

**Instructor: Professor Leslie Dwyer**  
**Office hours by appointment**  
**Office: Metropolitan Building, Arlington Campus**  
**E-mail: ldwyer2@gmu.edu**

**Course Description:**

This is a graduate theory course designed primarily for S-CAR Ph.D. students. Students should have already taken, or currently be enrolled in, CONF 801 prior to enrollment.

Over the semester, we will be considering an interdisciplinary range of theories of personhood, culture and political subjectivity and their relationship to conflict and its transformation. Some of the key questions we will address include: how does personhood relate to conflict? How can we understand the operation of power and its relationship to subjectivity? How does identity become produced, reified or challenged through conflict? What kinds of social worlds emerge during and after conflict, and how do narratives, memories and culture become both challenges and resource for peace-building and reconciliation? How might we approach post-conflict trauma, and how do local lived realities intersect with globalizing discourses of post-conflict justice and psychosocial repair? We will be engaging the works of influential social theorists, and thinking about their application in particular U.S. and international conflict contexts.

This course is not a lecture course. Rather, it is an intensive graduate seminar designed to promote collaborative, critical dialogue. Participants are expected to arrive in class having thoroughly read and reflected on the week's readings, prepared to actively engage in discussion.

**Course Requirements and Evaluation:**

Grading for the course will be determined as follows:

Participation: 15%  
Class facilitation: 15%  
Short reading essays (6 total): 30%  
Final paper: 40%

**Participation:**

Your grade for participation will be based upon the quality and consistency of your contributions to our class discussions. Each week, you should be prepared not only to summarize what you have read and to discuss the authors' main points, but to provide a critical perspective on our

texts and their relation to other social theories and to issues of conflict analysis and resolution, both broadly and in particular settings. The questions you should be asking yourself as you read for class include: What are the authors' main concerns? How are they framing key theoretical concepts? Are their arguments logically compelling? How can we relate their arguments to the field of conflict analysis and resolution? How might they help us to better understand particular conflicts and evaluate conflict resolution strategies? What might be left out of a particular analysis that it would be important to explore? A superlative evaluation for participation will require you to regularly contribute your ideas to our discussion, as well as to serve as a generous interlocutor for your seminar colleagues. In other words, it is not the quantity of your contributions but the quality that matters most, as well as your ability to raise issues that spark collaborative consideration and to listen openly to others' perspectives.

### **Short Reading Essays:**

Six short (approximately 3-4 double-spaced pages) essays will be required over the semester. These essays should critically analyze the readings assigned for the week in which they are being submitted, and discuss their potential relationship to the field of conflict analysis and/or resolution. Essays should briefly lay out the main concerns of the readings, considering their theoretical assumptions and claims. You should be thinking critically about the logic and perspective underlying the readings, as well as how they relate to other theories we are discussing and to our understanding of conflict and post-conflict dynamics more generally. You may choose which weeks you wish to submit essays; please do not leave this task to the end of the semester! Essays may be submitted up to class time, by email, for that week's readings; essays submitted after a set of readings are discussed in class will not be accepted.

### **Class Facilitation:**

Each student will be responsible for choosing one class session and acting as a facilitator for an hour of our discussion. You are encouraged to approach this task creatively! In addition to helping us draw out key themes of the readings for that week, you may want to help us draw connections to practices of conflict resolution/transformation or to other important questions for our field.

### **Final Paper:**

A final paper of 15-20 pages will be due at the conclusion of the semester, on **Friday, December 18**. Course participants will choose their own topics, drawing upon the readings for the course as well as outside sources as relevant. Topics may include a theoretical question/issue that compels you, or a form or case of conflict. We will be discussing details and possibilities for this assignment in much greater detail in class.

### **Course Policies:**

Late assignments or "incomplete" grades will be given only in exceptional cases of personal or immediate family crisis. You **MUST** discuss the possibility of such arrangements with me

beforehand rather than waiting until an assignment is due. Failure to complete an assignment on time without prior discussion will result in a failing grade for that particular assignment.

Given the importance of your active, thoughtful participation to the success of the class and your own S-CAR career, attendance at all course meetings is expected. If you must miss a class, please let me know beforehand by email. Missing more than one class over the course of the semester will inevitably result in a lowered “participation” grade.

Course announcements will be made by email. Please make sure your GMU email account is activated and that you check it regularly. Given the unpredictable Virginia weather, always check your email the afternoon before class in case of emergency cancellation or delay.

Should you have questions, concerns or ideas you would like to discuss with me, please feel free to communicate via email to set up an in-person meeting (or phone conversations as needed to accommodate our respective schedules).

Course readings will be available on Blackboard, with the exception of full books, which will be available through the Arlington campus bookstore.

### **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 [oai.gmu.edu](http://oai.gmu.edu). 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 any questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with me.

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. S-CAR’s policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

As the instructor for the course, I will regularly use GMU’s electronic plagiarism check software to scan students’ work for plagiarism. In accordance with GMU’s regulations, I will refer all cases of suspected plagiarism directly to GMU’s Honor Committee. GMU policy states that once a faculty member suspects plagiarism has occurred, that suspicion must be directed to the Honor Committee without discussion with the student in question. Please note the seriousness of this issue, and if you have ANY QUESTIONS AT ALL about what might constitute plagiarism please discuss them with me.

## **The Writing Center:**

The Writing Center is a free writing resource that offers individual, group, and online tutoring. To find out more, or to make an appointment, please visit <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

## **Course Materials:**

The following books have been ordered from the Arlington Campus Bookstore:

Avruch, Kevin 2012. *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution*. New York: Paradigm Publishers.

Butalia, Urvashi 2000. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Judith Butler, 2010. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* New York: Verso.

Cobb, Sara, 2012. *Speaking of Violence: The Politics and Poetics of Narrative in Conflict Resolution*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Das, Veena 2006. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fassin, Didier. 2013. *Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing*. New York: Polity.

All other readings will be available on Blackboard.

## **Course Schedule:**

### **Week 1, Tuesday, September 1: Introduction**

Introduction to course aims, processes and expectations.

Behar, Ruth 2015. "Read More, Write Less." *Savage Minds: Notes and Queries in Anthropology*. <http://savageminds.org/2015/02/02/read-more-write-less/>

### **Week 2, Tuesday, September 8: Conflict and Theories of "Human Nature"**

Thomas Hobbes. "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning their Felicity, and Misery," in *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill*, ed. E.A. Burt. (1939) 1967. NY: Modern Library, pp. 159-162.

Sigmund Freud, "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death."

Karl Marx, "Preface" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and "Human Requirements and Division of Labour Under the Rule of Private Property," from *Economic and*

*Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844.*

Elaine Scarry. "The Difficulty of Imagining Other Persons," In *The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistence*, ed. E. Weiner. 1998. New York: Continuum, pp. 40-62.

Carolyn Nordstrom, "Deadly Myths of Aggression." *Aggressive Behavior* 24(2):147-159.

Autesserre, Severine. 2009. "Hobbes and the Congo — Frames, Local Violence, and International Intervention (2003-2006)." *International Organization*.

### **Week 3, Tuesday, September 15: Cultural Perspectives on Conflict**

Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," *The Interpretation of Cultures*, NY: Basic Books, 1973.

Alexander Hinton, 2003. "Why Did You Kill? The Cambodian Genocide and the Dark Side of Face and Honor," in Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, eds., *Violence in War and Peace: A Reader*. NY: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 157-168.

Merry, Sally 2003. "Human Rights Law and the Demonization of Culture (And Anthropology Along the Way)." *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 26:1: 55-77

Avruch, Kevin 2012. *Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution*. New York: Paradigm Publishers.

#### Recommended Background Reading:

Burton, John 1990. *Conflict: Basic Human Needs*. New York: St. Martins Press.

Richard Rubenstein, 2001. "Basic Human Needs: The Next Steps in Theory Development." *The International Journal of Peace Studies*. 6(1).

### **Week 4, Tuesday, September 22: Personhood and Identity in Conflict**

Smedley, Audrey 1998. "'Race' and the Construction of Human Identity." *American Anthropologist* 100(3):690-702.

Merry, Sally 2001. "Racialized Identities and the Law." In Ida Susser and Thomas C. Patterson, eds., *Cultural Diversity in the United States*. Malden: Blackwell. Pp. 120-139.

Leve, Lauren 2011. "Identity." *Current Anthropology* 52(4):513-535.

Michael Taussig, 1984. "Culture of Terror – Space of Death: Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26(3):467-497.

Julie Peteet, "Male gender and rituals of resistance in the Palestinian Intifada: a cultural politics

of violence,” in *Violence: A Reader*, C. Besteman, ed., 2002, New York University Press, pp. 244-272.

Background Reading:

“Identity Conflicts” at  
[http://www.beyondintractability.org/user\\_guides/identity\\_conflicts/?nid=5306](http://www.beyondintractability.org/user_guides/identity_conflicts/?nid=5306)

Kriesberg, Louis, 2003. “Us versus Them.” at  
[http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity\\_issues/](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity_issues/)

Gardner, Robert 2003. “Identity Frames.” At  
[http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity\\_frames/](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity_frames/)

**Week 5, Tuesday, September 29: Narrative in Conflict and Conflict Resolution**

Sara Cobb, 2012. *Speaking of Violence: The Politics and Poetics of Narrative in Conflict Resolution*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dwyer, Leslie 2009. “A politics of silences: violence, memory and treacherous speech in post-1965 Bali.” In Alex Hinton and Kevin O’Neill, eds., *Genocide, Truth, Memory and Representation: Anthropological Approaches*. Durham: Duke University Press.

**Week 6, Tuesday, October 6 [NOTE: THERE ARE NO GMU CLASSES TUESDAY OCTOBER 13 DUE TO COLUMBUS DAY RECESS] Memory and Conflict**

Liisa Malkki, From Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania, in Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, eds., *Violence in War and Peace: A Reader*. NY: Wiley-Blackwell.

Rosalind Shaw, “Memory Frictions: Localizing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Sierra Leone.” *International Journal of Transitional Justice*. 2007; 1: 183-207.

Tint, Barbara 2010. “History, Memory and Intractable Conflict.” *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 27(3):239-256.

Tint, Barbara 2010. “History, Memory, and Conflict Resolution: Research and Application.” *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 27(4):369-399.

Background Reading:

Vamik Volkan, 2001. “Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large-Group Identity.” *Group Analysis* 34(1):79-97.

**Week 7, Tuesday, October 20: Case Study: India-Pakistan**

Butalia, Urvashi 2000. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

### **Week 8, Tuesday, October 27: Power and the Production of the Self**

Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," From *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972-1977*. 1981, New York: Random House, pp. 78-108.

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Excerpts.

Vivienne Jabri, 2013. Peacebuilding, the Local and the International: A Colonial or Postcolonial Rationality? *Peacebuilding* 1(1):3-16.

Biehl, Joao, Byron Good and Arthur Kleinman. "Introduction: Rethinking Subjectivity."

Goett, Jennifer 2015. "Securing Social Difference: Militarization and Sexual Violence in an Afro-Nicaraguan Community." *American Ethnologist* 42(3):475-489.

### **Week 9, Tuesday, November 3: Structural/Symbolic Violence and Social Inequality**

Pierre Bourdieu, "Gender and Symbolic Violence," in Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, eds., *Violence in War and Peace: A Reader*. NY: Wiley-Blackwell.

Paul Farmer, "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below," in Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, eds., *Violence in War and Peace: A Reader*. NY: Wiley-Blackwell.

Didier Fassin, 2013. *Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing*. New York: Polity.

#### Recommended Background Reading:

Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3. (1969), pp. 167-191.

Galtung, Johan. "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 1990), pp. 291-305.

### **Week 10, Tuesday, November 10: Theorizing the Everyday**

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, 1993 *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Ch. 6 & 7.

Taussig, Michael. 1989. "Terror as Usual: Walter Benjamin's Theory of History as a State of Siege." *Social Text* 23:3-20.

Scott, James, 1987. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven:

Yale University Press. (Selections)

1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Heaven, CT: Yale University Press. (Ch. 2 “Domination, Acting, and Fantasy.” Pp. 17-44).

2009 *The Art of Not Being Governed (Civilization & the Unruly)*

**Week 11, Tuesday, November 17: Theorizing Social Landscapes of Violence**

Das, Veena 2006. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*.

**Week 12, Tuesday, November 24: Post-Conflict Contexts and the Social Self**

Leslie Dwyer and Degung Santikarma, 2006. “Posttraumatic Politics: Violence, Memory and Biomedical Discourse in Bali,” in *Understanding Trauma*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rosalind Shaw, 2005. "Rethinking Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: Lessons from Sierra Leone." United States Institute of Peace Special Report #130. Washington, DC: USIP Press.

Kim Theidon, 2015. “Pasts Imperfect: Talking About Justice with Former Combatants in Colombia.” In A. Hinton and D. Hinton, eds., *Legacies of Violence*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Doughty, Kristin 2014. “‘Our Goal is Not to Punish but to Reconcile’: Mediation in Postgenocide Rwanda.” *American Anthropologist* 116(4):780-794.

**Week 13, Tuesday, December 1: Representing Conflict and Suffering**

Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman, “The Appeal of Experience; The Dismay of Images: Cultural Appropriations of Suffering in Our Times,” From *Social Suffering*, eds. A. Kleinman, V. Das and M. Lock (1997: University of California Press).

Philip Gourevitch, “Among the Dead,” In *Disturbing Remains: Memory, History and Crisis in the Twentieth Century*, Michael Roth and Charles Salas, eds. (2001, Getty Research Institute Publications).

Mark Pedelty, “From ‘War Stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents,’” in VWP, pp. 402-409.

Cynthia Keppley Mahmood, 2008. “Anthropology from the Bones: A Memoir of Fieldwork, Survival, and Commitment.” *Anthropology and Humanism* 33(1-2): 1-11.

Sadaf Rashid Ali, Debbie James, and Fred Vultee, 2013. “Strike a Pose: Comparing Associated Press and UNICEF Visual Representations of the Children of Darfur.” *African Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* (3)1: 1-26.



Review the images and materials at: <http://www.imaging-famine.org/>

**Week 14, Tuesday, December 8: Power, Mourning and Hope**

Guernica, March 15, 2010. "A Carefully Crafted F\*\*k You." Available at:  
[https://www.guernicamag.com/interviews/a\\_carefully\\_crafted\\_fk\\_you/](https://www.guernicamag.com/interviews/a_carefully_crafted_fk_you/)

Judith Butler, 2010. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* New York: Verso.

**Friday, Dec. 18: Final papers due by close of business via email to [ldwyer2@gmu.edu](mailto:ldwyer2@gmu.edu).  
Please keep a backup copy in case of any problems.**