

CONF 210
THEORIES OF CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION

Semester:	Spring 2015
Class Time:	Mondays 10:30am – 1:15pm
Location:	Innovation Hall 208
Instructors:	Hilmi Ulas
Office Hour:	<u>By appointment at NE Module II</u>
Instructor E-mail:	hulas@gmu.edu

Welcome to CONF 210! Building on what students have learned in CONF 101, this course further explores a variety of theories and frameworks for analyzing conflict and understanding resolution possibilities. Theories are basically generalizations about how the world works and why and how behavior occurs under certain circumstances. The understanding and application of theory are essential to glimpsing the ‘big picture’ of conflict and resolution. Course participants will be asked to reflect meaningfully on various theories in order to gain in-depth knowledge and contribute to the advancement of conflict theories.

Course participants will learn how to theorize and explore the ways of systematizing theories before applying them on particular cases and problems. We will look at the genealogy of theories trying to critically evaluate them, and explain their positive and negative sides. To gain better understanding of the basic theoretical concepts and assumptions, we will apply them on large-scale, violent, intergroup conflicts. This course will be run as a seminar with an emphasis on discussion and student participation. It is therefore crucial that students read the assigned books and articles prior to class. Active participation in class discussions and exercises will be expected.

Classroom Etiquette

Please come to class on time and prepared. Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices, except for your note-taking devices. Remain in class unless you have an emergency. The use of laptops in class is discouraged except for taking notes. 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, as well as encouraging, hearing, and respecting other opinions.

If an emergency prevents a student from attending class, the student should let me know ahead of time when possible. Please, contact a classmate to find out what was missed. Students

are responsible for all announcements, assignments, and date changes made in class, and for all material covered in class, even if they are not there.

You may contact me by phone or by e-mail at any time. E-mailing is the best way to reach me. I shall respond to your query within 48 hours. Please, remember to always use your GMU email account when communicating with me.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

In addition to regular attendance, 1) a short written comment on one (or more) of the readings for each session, 2) a presentation, 3) a final paper, and 4) thoughtful in-class and online participation are required.

1) Short Written Comment on Readings (30%): You will write short comments, thoughts, reflections etc., on a dedicated Google document shared with the instructor before coming to class (up to 5 paragraphs). You will be assigned to one of the four groups (which will rotate): a) one group will explore positive points about a theory/theories presented in readings, b) the second group will critique and explore deficiencies of the theory/theories, c) the third group will be expected to reflect on appropriate applications of a certain theory in different conflict situations, and d) the fourth group will 'synthesize' the week's theories with others we have already studied, comparing and contrasting at least two (more is welcome). These comments need not be a comprehensive coverage of the entire readings for the class, nor should they be summaries of the readings. Rather, this is an exercise to elicit your critical reactions to the readings. The comments therefore should reflect your intellectual engagement with the questions, theories, or cases provided by the readings.

Important: As indicated above, your *short written comments* will be due **each Saturday before class, by 11:59 pm**, unless indicated otherwise. **Your groups will be allotted 15-20 minutes for said meetings in the class.** We will talk on this component more thoroughly in our first class.

2) The presentation (15%) will be based on your final paper. This would be an opportunity for you to present and get feedback on your arguments and ideas before submitting the final paper. Prepare to present on **April 27th**.

3) The final paper (35%): This paper will be a case study on which the student will apply the theories studied in order to analyze and propose a resolution for the conflict– or underline why one cannot be proposed. Although it need not be strictly followed, here is a sample outline of what your instructor expects to see in your final paper: 1) in the first section you will outline the case at hand; important here is to narrow down the time and level of study (e.g. Israeli-Palestinian Conflict from an individual perspective*, post-2008); 2) in the second section you will be writing about the strengths and weaknesses of the theory/ies you will be utilizing, thus providing a rationale for their usage; 3) in the third section you will analyze the case at hand through the theoretical lens you identified; and 4) in the last section, you will evaluate/provide resolution opportunities for the case studied. All submissions should be made by e-mail to hulas@gmu.edu. **Length: 10-15 pages. Due: May 11, 2015 @ 5 pm.**

- **Full-length Draft:** You will be required to write and electronically submit (to hulas@gmu.edu) a full-length draft (i.e. 10-15 pages). Take this opportunity to actually give a try to finalizing your final paper for submission. The grade you will receive on this assignment will account for 1/4th of your final paper grade; however, I will give you extensive feedback and the grading will be for a draft rather than for a regular paper. If you do well on the draft, you might not need to even write a final paper and re-submit as is. Drafts are due on **April 6th**.

4) Regular Attendance and Quality Participation (20%): This grade will be based upon the quality and consistency of your contributions to our class discussions and group exercises. 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 or prepare a group exercise include: What are the authors’ main concerns? 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 their transformation? 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 colleagues. In other words, it is not the quantity of your contributions but the quality that matters, as well as your ability to raise issues that spark collaborative consideration, and to listen openly to others’ perspectives.

Grading:

The course will be graded according to the following chart:

Grade	95-100	90-94	85-89	80-84	75-79	70-74	65-69	60-64	50-59	0-49
	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C	C-	D	F

Policy on Incompletes:

Delays, deferrals, or a grade of “incomplete” for the course will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family crisis. Late papers will receive penalized points. Students should also read the statement of SCAR’s Academic Standards and the University’s Honor Code.

Plagiarism and Honor Codes:

You can find a copy of the Honor Code at: academicintegrity.gmu.edu.

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."

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Student Services:

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>).

Readings:

The following books will be available for purchase at the bookstore. All other readings are on Blackboard, available through the library, or can be found online.

Required:

Ramsbotham, Oliver, et. al. 2011. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* [3rd ed.]. MA: Polity Press.

Melchin, Kenneth, and Cheryl Picard. 2008. *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Fineklstein, Norman. 2012. *What Gandhi Says: About Nonviolence, Resistance, and Courage*. NY: OR Book

Fillingham, L. A. 1993. *Foucault for Beginners*. CT: For Beginners LLC.

Course Schedule:

***Important:* Please note that your instructor reserves the right to change the schedule with a minimum of a week's notice as per the progression of the class.**

Week 1 (Monday, January 26): Intro & Recap

Reading:

1. Ramsbotham et. al., Chapters 1 & 2
2. LeVine, M., 2015, "Why Charlie Hebdo attack is not about Islam", *AlJazeera* [online], available at: <http://m.aljazeera.com/story/20151106726681265>

Optional Reading:

1. Ramsbotham et. al., Chapter 3

Theories Reviewed:

1. Relative Deprivation (Psycho-social Approach)
2. Greed vs. Grievance (Socio-economic Approach)
3. Basic Human Needs Theory (Psycho-social Approach)
4. Structural Violence (Socio-structural Approach)
5. Chosen Traumas and Ethic Tents (Psycho-social Approach)

Week 2 (February 2): Origins of Conflict Theories

Readings:

1. Machiavelli. *The Prince* Chapters XIV-XV, XVII- XVIII, XXV. Available at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1232/1232-h/1232-h.htm>

- Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Chapter X: “Of Power, Worth, Dignity, Honour, and Worthiness.” Chapter XIII “Of the Natural Condition of Mankind”. Available at: <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan-contents.html>
- Kant, Immanuel. *Perpetual Peace: A Political Sketch*. Available at: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kant/kant1.htm>
- Krawford, Karyn. “Power in Society”. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/2365041/Marx_and_Conflict_Theory_-_Analysis_of_Power_in_Society
- Paris, R. “Liberal Peace Thesis”. Available through BlackBoard.

Week 3 (February 9): Human Dimension & The Great Debate

Readings:

- Burton, J. “Conflict Resolution: The Human Dimension”. Available at: http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijsps/vol3_1/burton.htm
- Sandole, J.D. “John Burton's Contribution to Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice”. Available at: http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijsps/vol6_1/Sandole.htm
- LeFebvre, R. and V. Franke. “Culture Matters”. Available at: <http://www.mdpi.com/2075-4698/3/1/128/htm>
- Avruch, K. “Cross-Cultural Conflict”, pp. 1-5. Available at: <http://www.eolss.net/ebooks/sample%20chapters/c14/e1-40-01-01.pdf>
- Ramsbotham et. al., Chapters 15 & 16

Week 4 (February 16): Stepping Back – Interpersonal Dimension

Readings:

- “Insight Blog”. Available at: <http://www.insightconflictresolution.org/blog>
- Glowacki, A. “Perception is at the Root of Conflict”. Available at: <http://carleton.ca/ccer/wp-content/uploads/Glowacki-A-Perception-is-at-the-Root-of-Conflict.pdf>
- Melchin, K. and C. Picard, Chapters 3 & 4
- Finlay, L. “Reflecting on 'Reflective Practice'”. Available at: <http://www.open.ac.uk/cetl-workspace/cetlcontent/documents/4bf2b48887459.pdf>

Week 5 (February 23): Of Clashes and Human Rights

Readings:

- Huntington, S. P. 1993. “The Clash of Civilizations?”. Available at: http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/ Acrobat/Huntington_Clash.pdf
- Donnelly, J. 1984. “Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights”. Available through BlackBoard.
- Ramsbotham et. al. Chapter 15.
- IRIN. “Justice for a Lawless World?: Whose Rights?”. Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/indepthmain.aspx?InDepthId=7&ReportId=59466>

5. Musalo, K. "When Rights and Cultures Collide". Available at: <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/iie/v8n3/rightsandcultures.html>

Week 6 (March 2): Models of Human Behavior

Readings:

1. Volkan, V. 1985. "Need to Have Enemies and Allies". Available through BlackBoard.
2. Delanty, G. 1997. "Habermas and Occidental Rationalism". Available through BlackBoard.
3. Korostelina, K. V. 2007. Chapters 7, 8, & 9. Available through BlackBoard.
4. Emerson, R. M. "Power-Dependence Relations". Available through BlackBoard.

Theories Re-visited:

1. Ethnic Tents
2. Chosen Traumas
3. Greed and Grievance

Week 7 (March 16): The Rwandan Conflict

Movie: Ghosts of Rwanda

Reading:

1. Merton, R. K. "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action". Available through BlackBoard.

Week 8 (March 23): Socialism, Class, and Revolution

Readings:

1. Marx, K. & F. Engels. "Manifesto of the Communist Party". Available through Google Drive Folder.
2. Badiou, A. "The Communist Hypothesis". Available at: <http://newleftreview.org/II/49/alain-badiou-the-communist-hypothesis>
3. WikiHow. "How to Start a Revolution". Available at: <http://www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Revolution>
4. Robinson, S. "Six People You Need to Start a Revolution". Available at: http://www.alternet.org/story/154968/6_people_you_need_to_start_a_revolution?page=0%2C0

Theories Re-visited:

1. Relative Deprivation
2. Greed vs. Grievance

Week 9 (March 30): Non-Violence, Social Movements, and Media

Movie: A Force More Powerful

Readings:

1. Fineklstein, N. *What Gandhi Says*.
2. Ramsbotham, et. al. Chapter 17.
3. Westminster Papers. pp. 25-71 & pp. 115-122.

Week 10 (April 6): Nature of the State*

Readings:

1. Tilly, C. *Coercion, Capital, and the European States*. Chapters 3 & 4. Available through the Google Drive.
2. Tilly, C. "Warmaking and Statemaking as Organized Crime". Available through the Google Drive.
3. Utilitarianism. Available at: <http://www.philosophypages.com/hy/5q.htm>
***Save reading the last section on *The Subjection of Women* for next week.

Week 11 (April 13): Post-Modernism

Readings:

1. Havel, V. "The Need for Transcendence in the Postmodern World". Available at: <http://www.worldtrans.org/whole/havelspeech.html>
2. Fillingham, *Foucault for Beginners*.
3. Mills, S. "The Subjection of Women". Available at: <http://www.philosophypages.com/hy/5q.htm>
4. Ramsbotham, et. al. Chapter 13.
5. Foucault, *Panopticism*. Available on BlackBoard.

Week 12 (April 20): Systemic Approaches & Discussing Prominent National and Global* Issues

Readings:

1. Coleman, P.T. *Selected readings*. Available through the Google Drive.
2. Ramsbotham, et. al. Chapter 4.

Assignment:

Be ready to discuss (i.e. conduct research on) hyperpartizanship, racial conflict, income inequality, Syrian Conflict and R2P, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, militarism, democracy vs. philosopher king, etc. Feel free to post (at least 24 hours prior to class) topics and/or resources you would like to include in the class discussion on the Google Drive document created for this purpose.

Week 13 Presentations (April 27)*

No readings due

Week 14 (May 4): Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Transformation and Transmutation//Wrap-up

Readings:

1. Ramsbotham, et. al. Chapters 4-10.
 - We will discuss how this class will impact you (i.e. expectations in the higher level classes from you).
 - I will distribute and explain a 'grading rubric'/expectations sheet for the final paper assignment.
 - We will conduct the final evaluations for the class.

Final Paper due Monday, May 11th at 5 pm. No exceptions or extensions.