APT's Fall 2013/Spring 2014

Practical Dialogue For A Global Society
Instructor: Leila Peterson, Michael Smith
Email: lpetersh@gmu.edu, msmit2@gmu.edu
Course Credit: CONF 690 / 890 (3 credits Fall 2013, 3 credits Spring 2014)

Communicating across differences of age, gender, language, culture, and political orientation, and in different contextual situations, is a useful skill for every individual. It is also integral to the success of any attempt to resolve conflict, whether individual, group/institutional, or global. The School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution and the English Language Institute (ELI) have partnered over the last four years to create an experiential learning opportunity in dialogue and cross-cultural communication (CONF 325: Dialogue and Difference). This joint course brings together students from the GMU undergraduate program with international students enrolled at the ELI who are developing their English language skills in anticipation of matriculating to degree status. Together, GMU and ELI students learn about the theory behind dialogue and cross-cultural communication, build individual skills, and learn how to design and implement a range of dialogue models and group process techniques.

The Practical Dialogue for a Global Society APT will work during the 2013-14 academic year to expand our model within the Mason community, in partnership with other academic institutions, and into the private sector. We will refine the curriculum, pilot the model with other departments, identify sources of long-term funding, and increase the body of knowledge about creating understanding across significant language and culture divides through research and evaluation. The APT will also explore how theater and the arts can be used to enhance dialogue. Department PhD and MS students who are interested in cross-cultural dialogue and want teaching and/or evaluation experience are encouraged to apply. We will meet in Arlington. Please contact Leila Peterson, lpetersh@gmu.edu in order to enroll.

Genocide Prevention Integration: Africa Great Lakes Region
Instructor: Tetsushi Ogata
Teaching Assistant: Bridget Moix
Course Credit: CONF 690 / 890 (3 credits Summer 2103, 3 credits Fall 2013, 3 credits Spring 2014)

This APT will run from Spring 2013 through Spring 2014. Students can register to participate on a semester-by-semester basis. For more information, contact Bridget Moix (bmoix@masonlive.gmu.edu)

This course applies knowledge being developed around integrated early warning systems to prevent and mitigate genocide and atrocities to the current situation in Kenya. Students will track and analyze ongoing, multi-level early warning and

prevention efforts through Kenya's national elections in March/April, drawing on S-CAR's relationships with actors involved in these efforts, including community-based peacebuilders in Kenya, national players in Kenya and the US, and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

Students will also experiment with acting as a node of early warning information gathering and distribution through the elections process, and will then develop policy and program recommendations for improving integrated early warning systems based on this experience. Students will test and distribute these recommendations with key partners and decision-makers as a means of applying course learning to advance improved theory and practice.

Funds are being sought to include a week-long fact-finding trip to Kenya to meet with and gather information from key constituencies in Kenya, and possible a lessons learned conference.

Nonviolence 2.0: Exploring the Evolution of Mind, Behavior, and Policy Toward a Less Violent World
Instructor: Marc Gopin
Email: mgopin@gmu.edu
Course Time: Tuesdays, 4:30 to 7:10 p.m.
Course Credit: CONF 690 / CONF 890 (3 credits Fall 2013 / 3 credits Spring 2014)

To apply, please send a cover letter to crdc@gmu.edu stating reasons for interest in APT, skills and abilities relevant to APT and what students hope to gain and learn in the APT. Please apply by May 31st.

Recent bodies of research in several fields have suggested a steady and widespread decline in global violence per capita over the past few hundred years. There are numerous factors contributing to that possible decline, but they roughly can be divided into shifts in how we as humans think and believe, how we behave, and what policies we are making for the way we organize our societies, locally, nationally and globally. The research however calls out for the need for a far more expanded and integrated approach of violence studies and nonviolence to conflict resolution practice.

Conflict resolution theory and practice has in general paid too little attention to the research on and about nonviolence, its history, development and practice, despite the fact that nonviolent efforts have a clear relationship to conflict management, resolution, and prevention. In this APT we will explore the possibility of an essential and expanded form of conflict prevention and resolution practice that in turn will inspire new conflict resolution theory. We wish to suggest new possibilities for a global project of nonviolence that integrates a far greater number of global actors and stakeholders in the nonprofit and for profit sectors who are not generally considered part of the conflict resolution field.

The APT will systematically explore, through research, intensive discussion, and interviews with activists and researchers, a path toward a systematic integration of violence reduction practices and policies into the current conceptualization of conflict analysis resolution theory and practice. Students will be expected not only to understand the relationship between nonviolence and conflict analysis and resolution, but will be encouraged to imagine bold, new ways to translate this understanding into practice.

Conflict Resolution in Schools
Instructor: Marsha Blakeway
Email: mblakewa@gmu.edu
Course Time: TBD
Course Credit: CONF 690/ CONF 890 (3 credits Fall 2013 / 3 credits Spring 2014)

The purpose of this APT is to learn about and use conflict analysis and resolution strategies to support the development of the requisite processes and conditions for the productive analysis and resolution of conflicts of children and youth primarily in elementary and secondary school settings.

Some of the possible learning objectives of this APT are as follows:

Gain a thorough understanding of conflict resolution education (CRE) literature and practices in K-12 school settings including teaching/learning about conflict and conflict processes, social-emotional learning, nonviolence/violence prevention, anti-bullying, peer mediation, restorative practices;
Understand and evaluate the existing research and literature on elementary and secondary school conflict resolution and violence prevention programming;
Observe school CRE programming and interview practitioners in a variety of settings: school wide, in classroom, after-school, school system level; non-profit organization interventions;
Continue ongoing work with Alice Deal Middle School peer mediation, restorative practices, and teaching CRE in classrooms or after-school;
Develop CAR practice frameworks for working with students of different developmental ages, diverse backgrounds and students with special needs;
Develop specific simulations, case studies and/or activities for students that support experiential learning in concepts and practices of CAR including conflict transformation
To learn how school systems support/do not support conflict resolution/peer mediation/restorative justice education and processes.
Interested students should contact Marsha Blakeway at mblakewa@gmu.edu.

Tibet: Dialogue and Asymmetry
Instructor: Ho-Won Jeong
Email: Please email Lisa Shaw at lshaw2@gmu.edu
Course Time: Wednesdays 4:30 to 7:10 p.m.
Course Credit: CONF 690 / 890 (3 credits Fall 2013, 3 credits Spring 2014)

The Tibet Dialogue and Asymmetry APT will focus on themes such as the links between inner peace and outer peace, compassion, spirituality and conflict, nonviolent resistance, etc. We will study these issues in the context of power asymmetry and conflict transformation in Tibet. One of the main questions we may ask is how the marginalized can organize resistance nonviolently and at a spiritual level against oppression despite an overwhelming power imbalance. Another question we will consider is how to overcome the destructive brute force imposed on the oppressed. This course will also be closely linked to CAR practice including facilitating dialogue among Tibetan youths and conducting research on asymmetric conflict to learn meanings and practice of compassion, etc. We also plan to be involved in dialogue with other groups that are interested in the topic.

Students interested in this APT should contact Lisa Shaw at lshaw2@gmu.edu. Please note that students must receive an override permission from the instructor to register for the APT; this course is not available for open enrollment.

The Power of Counternarratives
Instructors: Arthur Romano, Sara Cobb
Email: aromano7@gmu.edu, scobb@gmu.edu
Course Time: TBD
Course Credit: CONF 690/CONF 890 (3 credits Fall 2013 / 3 credits Spring 2014)

There is, at present, a growing literature on counternarratives that addresses the dynamics of power in conflicts through the analysis of master and counter narratives. This literature comes from a wide variety of knowledge bases and areas of action including; social movements, NGOs, non-profits, and the development and intelligence spheres; as well as many of the social sciences. The term counter-narrative is a growing buzzword in articles exploring topics as far ranging as gun control, globalization, capitalism, and even liberal peacebuilding. As this term becomes more and more common, a wider variety of organizations see the value in understanding the counternarratives at work in a given situation and employing strategies to forward their own discourse.

The (possible) objectives of this APT might include the following:

To gain a thorough and critical understanding of counter-narratives, across an interdisciplinary literature
Learn how to do case study research;

Develop 6 case studies that explore the effective use of counternarratives in conflict analysis and resolution;
Learn how to write role plays to support experiential learning about counternarratives in conflict processes;
Drawing on these case studies, develop 6 simulations, role plays, that enable people to experience the role of counternarratives in conflict and its transformation.
Learn how to conduct a case study approach to training using role plays.
Run 5 simulations, three each semester for the S-CAR community, hosted by the Center for the Study of Narrative and Conflict
To create a training program for a specific audience – e.g. the intelligence community, the development community, activists engaged in Social Movements, etc. – and present this training program
These learning objectives require not only the development of substantive knowledge about counternarrative as well as experiential learning, they also provide an opportunity to learn to design and conduct conflict resolution workshops and training sessions and to do the leg work needed to get people engaged in this work.

Students interested in this APT should contact Dr. Arthur Romano or Dr. Sara Cobb (emails listed above).