CONF 101 – 002: Conflict and Our World  Spring 2018
The School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution George Mason University

Dr. Douglas Irvin-Erickson  dirviner@gmu.edu
Class Meeting Time  10:30 am - 11:45 am, T  Merten Hall 1200
Office Hours  12 to 1 pm, T  NE Module II, #108

Recitations:
Recitation for Lecture 002 - 19052 - CONF 101 - 301
10:30 am - 11:45 am  TR  Planetary Hall 127  Singmila Shimrah  sshimrah@gmu.edu

Recitation for Lecture 002 - 19053 - CONF 101 - 302
10:30 am - 11:45 am  TR  West 1007  Cynthia Nassif  cnassif2@gmu.edu

Course Description:
Across all human societies, conflict is part of daily life. Sometimes it may be an annoyance, such as arguing with a sibling over the last cookie; sometimes it is more serious, such as the debate over gun control or immigration; and sometimes it is tragic, as in recent events in Darfur and Afghanistan. Conflict can be destructive, for example, when it damages relationships among neighbors or relatives or destroys homes and livelihoods. Conflict can also be constructive, as shown by the effects of civil rights demonstrations in the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s or the Solidarity movement in Poland in the 1980s. Our increased interconnection as a global society has heightened the need for more attention to determining how humanity can deal with conflict productively.

This course introduces the interdisciplinary study of conflict analysis and resolution. We will examine how and why conflicts occur in human society, and what we can do to mitigate their destructive aspects while reinforcing their constructive potential. The course includes an overview of the field including the central approaches to analyzing conflict, an extended case study of a conflict, an examination of several forms of intervention, and finally a consideration of reconciliation and sustainable peacebuilding. We will highlight the societal, structural, and cultural factors that play a part in conflict and its resolution. At the end of the course, you should be able to analyze a conflict, appreciate the contextual factors that influence conflict, know the major conflict resolution techniques, and understand the complexity of the most pressing contemporary conflicts.

Conflict 101 fulfills the University General Education requirement for Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Course Readings:
- All readings are on blackboard, except Martin Luther King Jr.
- Required to buy: Martin Luther King, Jr., The Radical King, Edited by Cornel West (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015) ISBN: 978-0-8070-3452-1
- You will be required to purchase/download/stream/borrow/rent the movies listed below, and watch them in time for your assignment due dates.
Course Requirements:

- 6 Movie Papers. Each paper is worth 10% of your grade
- 1 Final Exam, worth 40% of your grade.

Papers on Documentaries

- Paper 1: A Force More Powerful due Feb. 8
- Paper 2: Brining Down a Dictator due Feb. 22
- Paper 3: A River Changes Course due March 8
- Paper 4: The Fog of War due March 29
- Paper 5: Pray the Devil Back to Hell due April 12
- Paper 6: Burma VJ due April 26

You must use the paper template on blackboard.

All papers must be turned in on Blackboard & turned in on paper during recitation sections.

All documentaries are on reserve at the Library. No excuses for not watching them. Plan ahead.

Late papers will not be accepted. No exceptions will be made. Plan ahead.

Attendance Policy

- Missing more than 3 classes will result in a failing grade for the semester.

Paper Grading Rubric

- See rubric on blackboard.

Paper Assignments

- All papers must be between 500 and 600 words. You must cite 2 sources in each paper, only from the readings on the syllabus. NO OUTSIDE SOURCES ALLOWED.
- Use the theory from the readings to ask questions about the movies, and to analyze the movies.
- You are responsible for developing your own question, based on close readings of the text, each week.
- You are then responsible for answering that question (the answer is your thesis), and defending your thesis through evidence and careful analysis.
- I expect that you have all taken your introductory composition courses, or are taking them currently, whether here at Mason or from another university. If you need a refresher, this is a wonderful site maintained by my former professor, Jack Lynch. It’s called, “How to Get an A on your English Paper.” https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/EngPaper/

Here is some advice from Jack Lynch. A good thesis is:

- Argumentative. It makes a case. That's the biggest difference between a thesis and a topic — a topic is something like “Slavery in Huck Finn.” That's not a case, only a general area. A thesis, on the other hand, makes a specific case, it tries to prove something. One
way to tell a thesis from a topic: if it doesn't have an active verb, it's almost certainly still a topic.

- **Controversial.** That doesn't mean something like “Abortionists should be shot” or “George W. Bush's election was illegitimate” — it means that it has to be possible for an intelligent person to disagree with your thesis. If everyone agrees on first sight, your thesis is too obvious, and not worth writing about. It also has to be something you can reasonably argue about: it's not enough merely to give an unsupported opinion.

- **Analytical, not evaluative.** A college paper isn't the place to praise or blame works: theses like “Paradise Lost is an enduring expression of the human spirit” or “The Sound and the Fury isn't successful in its choice of narrative techniques” aren't appropriate. That's the business of book reviewers. No need to give thumbs-up or thumbs-down; evaluate the work on its own terms.

- **About the readings, not the real world.** Never forget that books are books and, if you're in a class, you're being asked to talk about them. Many books are actually unreliable guides to the real world outside, and it's dangerous to talk about, say, Muslim attitudes toward violence based only on your reading of one or two articles or books.

- **Specific.** It's not enough to deal in vague generalities. Some students want to write their paper on man and God, or on the black experience in the twentieth century. Both are far too nebulous to produce a good paper. Get your hands dirty with the text.

- **Well supported.** That's the key to the rest of the paper after those first few paragraphs.

Jeannine DeLombard and Dan White offer this advice for constructing a thesis:

- You do not need a refined thesis in order to start writing. If you begin with a provisional thesis and then do good and careful close readings, you will often find a version of your final thesis in the last paragraph of a first draft. Integrate that version into your first paragraph and revise from there. Do not worry too much about your thesis, therefore, until after you've written out your close readings! A good final thesis should emerge from, not precede, your analyses. ("Papers: Expectations, Guidelines, Advice, and Grading")

**Technology Policy**

Cell phones must be silenced while in class. Excessive text messaging and communicating via social media is not allowed, and will result in an “absence” from the course.

**Accommodations & Disability**

Any student who suspects she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the professor privately to discuss the student’s specific needs, and provide written documentation from Disability Services. If the student is not yet registered as a student with a disability, she can contact Disability Services. For more information, view the office’s website at http://ods.gmu.edu

**English Language Learners**

The English Language Institute offers free English language tutoring to non-native English speaking students who are referred by a member of the faculty or staff. For more information, please visit their website at http://eli.gmu.edu
Civility Code
This course will explore controversial and sensitive subject matter; it is, therefore, expected that students will engage with one another in a respectful manner even when they do not agree with one another.

Academic Conduct & Honor Code
Student are accountable to the following Honor Code: “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: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, and/or lie in matters related to academic work.”

Plagiarism & Honor Committee
Students are prohibited from: (a) knowingly permitting another student to plagiarize or cheat from one's work, and (b) submitting the same assignment in different courses without consent of the professor. Should you have any questions about what it means to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie, please consult the website: http://oai.gmu.edu/understanding-the-honor-code/ Students should review: “Student Strategies for Preventing Violations” link on the Office for Academic Integrity’s website: http://oai.gmu.edu/preventing-violations/student-strategies-for-preventingviolations/

Any student found violating the tenets of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.

Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination, and we are committed to a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. University Policy 1202 Sexual Harassment and Misconduct (http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy) speaks to the specifics of our process, our resources, and the options available to you.

Confidential student resources are available on campus at the Student Support and Advocacy Center (http://ssac.gmu.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (http://caps.gmu.edu), and Student Health Services (http://shs.gmu.edu).

All other members of the University community (including faculty, except those noted above) are not considered confidential resources and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator. For a full list of resources, support opportunities, and reporting options, contact Dr. Jennifer Hammat, Title IX Coordinator, at http://diversity.gmu.edu/title-ix, at 703-993-8730, or in the Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics office in the Aquia Building, Suite 373.
Schedule ¡Subject to Change!

**Week 1 Introduction**
Tuesday, January 23
Introduction

Background reading:

Thursday, January 25
Pruitt and Kim, Chapter 1, pgs 1-14

**Week 2 What is Conflict?**
Tuesday, January 30
Lewis Coser, “The Functions of Social Conflict”

Thursday, February 1
ELA Exercise on Perceptions and Conflict

**Week 3 Constructive and Destructive Conflicts**
Tuesday, February 6
Morton Deutsh, The Resolution of Conflicts: Constructive and Destructive Processes

Thursday, February 8
Elise Boulding, “Vision and Peacebuilding”

*Paper 1 Due on Feb. 8.*
*Watch Documentary: A Force More Powerful*
Week 4 Nonviolence
Tuesday, February 13
Gene Sharp, “Nonviolent Struggle”

Thursday, February 15
Mohandas Ghandi, readings on blackboard
*The Radical King*, Palm Sunday Sermon on Mohandas Gandhi, pp. 23-39

Week 5 Nonviolence
Tuesday, February 20
Alice Schlegel, *The Hopi of Northern Arizona*

Thursday, February 22
Erica Chenoweth, “Why Civil Resistance Works”

*Paper 2 Due on Feb. 22*
*Watch Documentary: Bringing Down a Dictator*

Week 6 What is Violence?
Tuesday, February 27
Margret Mead, “Warfare is Only an Invention, Not Biological Necessity”

Thursday, March 1
*The Radical King*, “The Violence of Desperate Men,” pp. 5-22

Week 7 What is Peace?
Tuesday, March 6
Irvin-Erickson, INTRODUCTION & Cambodia Chapter on blackboard

Thursday, March 8

*Paper 3 Due March 8*
*Watch Documentary: A River Changes Course*

**SPRING BREAK MARCH 12-16**
Week 8 Vietnam War Case Study
Tuesday, March 20
Required (find them from the table of contents and read them in this order, 1 to 2 pages each):
2. Ho Chi Minh, “First Appeal to the United States” (1919)
3. Ho Chi Minh, “Founding of the Doc-Lap Dong Minh Hoi” (1941)
4. Bao Dai, “Imperial Abdication” (1945)
5. Vietnam Declaration of Independence (1945)
6. Ho Chi Minh, “Cable to Harry S. Truman: Second Appeal to the United States” (1945)
7. Pentagon Papers, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, “US State
8. Department Decision to Sponsor French Colonialism”
13. Pentagon Papers, CIA Operative Edward Landsale memo on US Cold War Tactic to subvert peace (1955)

Thursday, March 22
Carolyn Nordstrom, “Deadly Myths of Aggression”

Week 9 Vietnam War Case Study Part II
Tuesday, March 27
15. Ho Chi Minh, “The Path that Led Me to Leninism” (1960)
16. The Pentagon Papers, Blueprint for an Americanized War (1963)
17. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (1964)
20. Negotiating Positions: The NLF’s 10 points and Nixon’s 8 points
22. Jean Paul Sartre, On Genocide

Thursday, March 29
Skim Section 1 of The Trials of Henry Kissinger (reading, perhaps, the first few paragraphs of the section closely). PDF on Blackboard.

Barak Obama, Nobel Peace Prize Lecture


Paper 4 due March 29
Watch Documentary: The Fog of War
**Week 10 What is Power?**

Tuesday, April 3  
Hannah Arendt, “On Violence”

Thursday, April 5  
Peter Coleman, “Power and Conflict”

**Week 11 Gender & Gender and Power**

Tuesday, April 10  
Democracy Now special broadcast on women’s peace movements.  
Start watching at minute 10:30, and finish the episode

Here in the link:  
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom + Leymah Gbowee Interview

Elise Boudling, “Building a Culture of Peace: Some Priorities”

Thursday, April 12  
Sandra Cheldelin, “Women Waging War and Peace”

Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Prize Lecture  

*Paper 5 due April 12*  
*Watch Documentary: Pray the Devil Back to Hell*
Week 12    Martin Luther King, Jr. Case Study

Tuesday, April 17
   *The Radical King*, “The Radical King We Don’t Know” to end of Part 1 (pp. ix to 72)

Thursday, April 19
   *The Radical King*, “The Radical King We Don’t Know” to end of Part 1 (pp. ix to 72)

Week 13    Global Approaches to Human Rights

Tuesday, April 24
   *The Radical King*, Part Two (pp. 73-124)

Thursday, April 26
   Aung San Suu Kyi, “Freedom From Fear”
   Second Article on Myanmar TBD

Paper 6 due April 26
   Watch Documentary: Burma VJ
   **Apply the theory of Martin Luther King Jr, plus one other author, to analyzing the conflict in this film**

Week 14

Tuesday, May 1
   *The Radical King*, Part Three (pp. 125-120)

Thursday, May 3
   Conclusion

Final Exam Date

Final Exam on Martin Luther King, *The Radical King*, Part 4 (pp. 221-276)

Exam date: Tues. 5/15 10:30 am – 1:15 pm