Theories Conflict Analysis and Resolution — CONF 210 – 002  Spring 2018
The School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University

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Class Hours: 1:30 pm - 4:10 pm T Robinson Hall B122
Office Hours: 12 to 1 pm T NE Module II, #108

Course Description:
This class builds on what we have learned in CONF 101, exploring a variety of theories and frameworks for analyzing conflict and understanding resolution possibilities.

The primary mission of our field is to analyze the preconditions, causes and consequences of protracted conflict. Our field also seeks as a primary goal to develop and implement methods of intervention that are intended to mitigate, terminate or prevent such conflicts from occurring or recurring. For both missions—analysis and resolution—theories are essential. Theories are needed to organize the knowledge gained about the nature of conflicts and lessons learned about promising and productive modes of intervention, towards the goal of positive change in the ways in which conflict parties settle their disputes, better through peaceful means than violence.

Theories are generalizations about how the world works and why and how behavior occurs under certain circumstances. The understanding and application of theory is essential to glimpsing the “big picture” of conflict and resolution. Course participants, therefore, 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.

Course Objectives
The major objective of this course is to dig beneath the surface of this or that protracted conflict and discover its meaning regarding how and why such a conflict occurred and how the conflict parties can change in pro-social ways. To achieve this goal we examine those architects of the field who developed valuable theories of conflict analysis and resolution. We learn how such theories emerged in reaction to the insights and limitations of theories from other disciplines and fields, such as international relations, sociology, social psychology, and the study of race/ethnic relations. Particular attention is given to the conflict dynamics, that is, the patterns of intergroup relations and the forces affecting those relations. We also rely on cases of those contemporary conflicts that served as prototypes for our understanding of the conflict dynamics.

1. To understand the primary theories of protracted conflict that seek to explain their causes, sources, and mechanisms.
2. To apply their theories to contemporary conflicts, recognizing that the complexity of conflicts calls for a multiplicity of conflict theories.
3. To critically evaluate the conflict theories, assessing their strengths and weaknesses for explaining contemporary conflicts and for understanding the conflict dynamics.
4. To demonstrate the currency of conflict theory to conflict analysis and practice.
Course Requirements
Each student is expected to come to each class session prepared to participate actively in both
the lecture and the class discussion that addresses central themes of the week’s topics.

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.

Course Readings:
All course readings will be posted on blackboard. Students are required to either print all
readings and bring them to class, or bring their laptops to class with readings already
downloaded to their computers.

Book to buy:
- Séverine Autesserre, *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of

Course Assignments and Grades:
20% Midterm Essay
20% Final Exam
30% Current Affairs Presentation and Essay
30% Short response papers (x3)

Critical Response Papers:
- Papers that summarize or describe the readings will receive an D
- Papers that present a thesis but do not defend the thesis will receive a C
- To get higher than a C, the paper must be built around a falsifiable thesis
- The paper’s thesis must be defended through well-reasoned arguments
- All arguments must be supported with evidence
- The paper must have follow the format posted on blackboard, with 1-inch margins, 12
  point Times New Roman font, no extra spaces between paragraphs, and page numbers
- The paper must have a title
- The word limit is 750 words

Reflections on Society:
- Students must pick an Op-Ed opinion piece, or a news analysis of a significant political
event, and analyze the issue using the theorists for the week.

- Students will write a 1,000-word essay, in which they will analyze the news story through
  the lens of the week’s course theorist(s).
- Students will present their findings to the class in a 20-minute presentation, then lead a
class discussions on the subject.
• “C” presentations demonstrate an awareness of the thesis and basic arguments and facts of the assigned reading, and clearly connect the reading to the current event.
• “B” presentations, in addition, demonstrate an ability to place the assigned reading into context with one or two previous readings, and use these theories to shed new light on the current event.
• “A” presentations, in addition, ask critical key questions and provoke critical conversations amongst your classmates. (Classmates, help your fellow classmates get an A, and be ready to talk intelligently about the week’s readings!)

Attendance policy: Students are allowed 1 absence this semester, with no questions asked. After that, every missed class will result a lowering of your final semester grade by 10 points.

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.
Course Schedule

¡Subject to change!

Week 1
Tuesday, January 23

Readings
These are what I’ll talk about in the second half of the first day of class. Read them before the semester begins:

- Plato, Republic, Book 8
  [http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html)

- Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War
  [http://classics.mit.edu/Thucydides/pelopwar.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Thucydides/pelopwar.html)

- Aristotle, Politics, Books 4, 5, 6
  [http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html)

- Edmund Burke, “The Tendency of Democracy to excess in the Exercise, and in the Desire, of Power” From An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs

- The Federalist Papers, 9, 10, 14, 15, 51 (1787-88); [https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers](https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers)

- Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. 1, Book 1, chap. 5 (1835).

Week 2
Tuesday, January 30

First half of class
- Immanuel Kant, What is Enlightenment?

Second half of class

Critical Response Group A goes today
Week 3  
Tuesday, February 6  

*First half of class*  
- Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*  
  - Book 1, Chapter 1 on the Division of Labor  
  - Book 1, Chapter 4 on the Origins and Use of Money  
  - Book 1, Chapter 6 on Wages and Profits of Labor and Commodities  
  - Book 4, Chapter 2 on the Invisible Hand  

*Second half of class*  
- John Locke, *Two Treatise on Government*  

**Critical Response Group B goes today**  

Week 4  
Tuesday, February 13  

*First half of class*  
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*  
  on blackboard  

*Second half of class*  
- Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*  

**Critical Response Group C goes today**  

Week 5  
Tuesday, February 20  

- Karl Marx, “Thesis on Feuerbach”  
- Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844”  
- Karl Marx, “The German Ideology”  
- Karl Marx, “Critical Notes on the ‘King of Prussia and Social Reform’”  
- Karl Marx, “Alienation and Social Classes”  
- Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louise Bonaparte”  
- Karl Marx, “Wage Labour and Capital”  
  find these from Marxists.org  

**Critical Response Group D goes today**
**Week 6**
Tuesday, February 27
- Max Weber, *Capitalism and the Spirit of Protestantism*
- Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*
- Max Weber, *On Legitimacy*

**Critical Response Group E goes today**

**Week 7**
Tuesday, March 6

*First half of class*

*Second half of class*
- Lewis Coser, “Functions of Social Conflict.”

**Critical Response Group F goes today**

**Midterm Paper Due In-class March 6**

Assignment will be handed out in class. You will be asked explain how these foundational theories of conflict (the social theories, the political theories) are at work in Galtung’s article, or discuss how his article follows in some of these traditions or breaks from them.

**SPRING BREAK MARCH 12-16**
Week 8
Tuesday, March 20
- Jane Addams, “Newer Ideals for Peace”
- Watch Democracy Now special broadcast on women’s peace movements. Start watching at minute 10:30, and finish the episode. Here in the link: https://www.democracynow.org/shows/2015/4/27?autostart=true
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom + Leymah Gbowee Interview

Week 9
Tuesday, March 27

First half of class

Second half of class
- Ida B. Wells, selections on blackboard

Week 10
Tuesday, April 3
- Albert Memi, The Colonizer and the Colonized (selections on blackboard)

Paper Due April 3: Critical Reflection on Week 8 and Week 9 readings

Week 11
Tuesday, April 10

First half of class

Second half of class
- John Burton, “Conflict Resolution as a Political Philosophy" George Mason University, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, [1988]: 55-64.

Week 12
Tuesday, April 17

First half of class
Second half of class
  • Johann Galtung, “Cultural Violence”
  • Elise Boulding, “Cultures of Peace”

Paper Due April 17: Critical Reflection on Week 10 and 11 readings

Week 13
Tuesday, April 24
  • Séverine Autesserre, *Peaceland* Part 1

Week 14
Tuesday, May 1
  • Séverine Autesserre, *Peaceland* Part 2

Paper Due May 1: Critical Reflection on Week 12 and 13 (&14) readings

Final Exam will be on Séverine Autesserre’s *Peaceland*. Like the midterm, you will be asked explain how these foundational theories of conflict (the social theories, the political theories) are at work in Autesserre’s book, or discuss how her book follows in some of these traditions or breaks from them. The exam is scheduled for Thursday 5/10, 1:30 pm – 4:15 pm.