

**CONF 330: Community, Group and Organization  
Conflicts Analysis and Resolution**

Mason Korea, Fall 2019

Room: TBD

Thursday, 1:30 – 4:10 pm

Professor: Dr. Borislava Manojlovic

Office Hours: Thursday, 12 pm - 1.30 pm

Office: Room 618

E-mail: [bmanojlo@gmu.edu](mailto:bmanojlo@gmu.edu); [borislavam@gmail.com](mailto:borislavam@gmail.com)

Skype: borislava.manojlovic

**Course Description:**

Welcome to Mason Korea and CONF 330. Groups, organizations and communities are powerful entities that shape the ways we think about ourselves, the ways in which we see others, and how others see us. In terms of building sustainable peace, an understanding of group dynamics can illuminate productive ways to prevent or transform destructive conflict and to build on existing resilience and strength in communities. This course will provide opportunities for students to examine a variety of social conflicts and explore theories of conflict resolution that are grounded in analysis of group dynamics. It also seeks to explore a range of methods for engaging constructively with group, organizational and community-level conflicts and to sharpen student's skills for critical thinking when embedded within or entering live conflict dynamics. It draws on a broadly interdisciplinary approach to understanding group dynamics and includes literature from the fields of conflict analysis and resolution, social psychology, global studies, management, and sociology. Through class discussions, films, case studies, academic readings and exercises, you will further develop the ability to analyze social group conflicts and consider a wide range of contingencies when formulating conflict interventions.

**Course Objectives:**

Students will:

- Explore both problem-solving and strengths based approaches to CAR practice in group contexts
- Engage with theoretical and conceptual resources for examining group dynamics
- Deepen their awareness of the stages and variety of social conflicts

- Examine social and cultural variables that are pervasive in social conflicts including the role of power and systemic context
- Explore constructive approaches to conflict escalation and de-escalation
- Further develop critical thinking skills and the ability to communicate in writing those thoughts
- Strengthen collaborative learning skills and the ability to work effectively in groups
- Reflect more deeply on their own reactions, assumptions and tendencies when directly engaging with social conflict dynamics
- Become more familiar with conflict analysis and resolution strategies that focus on group dynamics

### **Required Books:**

Students are expected to bring extended notes of the readings to class. The following texts are required for the course (e-books available):

1. Kriesberg, Louis, and Bruce W. Dayton. 2012. *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution*. 4th Edition edition. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
2. Coleman, Peter T., and Robert Ferguson. 2015. *Making Conflict Work: Harnessing the Power of Disagreement*. Reprint edition. Mariner Books.
3. Block, Peter. (2008). *Community: the structure of belonging*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

The following texts are available online through the University Library at the web addresses provided:

4. Bordens, Kenneth S. and Horowitz, Irwin A. Social Psychology L. Erlbaum. 2001  
<http://mutex.gmu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=63031&site=ehost-live>
5. Korostelina, K. V. (2007) Social identity and conflict. Palgrave  
<http://magik.gmu.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=3089685>
6. All other readings will be accessible through E-Reserve, Blackboard or online.

### **Course Policies and Information:**

***Diversity Statement:*** George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected. Please see <http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement/> for the full GMU diversity statement.

***Participation and Attendance:*** Like many social science and humanity classes, this is a very interactive class and will be run in a seminar style format with an emphasis on discussions, participation and group work. Please be to class and in your seat *prior* to the start time. Participation in this class includes: completing readings and assignments on time; actively engaging course materials; coming to class regularly and on time; and listening and engaging attentively to discussions made in class. Active participation based on thoughtful consideration of the literature and experience in class discussions will be expected. Some of 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? How will these theories help you understand and analyze various conflicts at different levels of society?

Unexcused and excessive absences will adversely affect your final grade and you will not be able to make up work, quizzes or other assignments due to these unexcused absences. An absence is excused when it is due to serious illness, religious observance, participation in university activities at the request of university authorities and approved by the professor, or compelling circumstances beyond your control. To claim an excused absence, you must provide proper proof within three calendar days of your return from that absence. In cases where you know you will be missing class, please let me know as soon as possible. You are responsible for all announcements, group work, assignments, materials and date changes covered or made in class while you are absent. If you have an excused absence and missed a quiz on that day, **you**, and not the professor, are responsible for setting up a time to make-up the quiz. Do not ask to make up work in the final three weeks of class, please plan ahead.

During each class session, **TAKE NOTES!** As needed, I will also provide brief outlines or PowerPoints on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to be alert and aware in order to benefit from this class. I also **highly** urge you to bring detailed notes of your reading assignments to class each day and to be ready to actively discuss them.

**Readings:** Students are **required** to read everything assigned for that day/week prior to class. Some weeks have additional suggested readings; they are not required but encouraged. Your quizzes and tests will be based on the required readings, and class discussions only.

**Class Discussion:** Students will lead many discussions in this class, especially on assigned readings. All questions and vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. In our classes we deal with sensitive and sometimes controversial and provoking materials, images and ideas. I expect you to approach our class with seriousness, critical thinking, cultural awareness and sensitivity, and respect for everyone. Above else, have fun and enjoy the interaction and vigorous debates. These discussion are also part of your participation grade!

**Writing Guidelines:** Your written assignments for this class will be graded according to the following criteria. The relative weight given to each of these categories will vary depending on the nature of the assignment, and separate rubrics will be given as needed. (*Note: Everyone needs help from time-to-time. If you need writing/grammar assistance, do not wait until after an assignment is submitted to make an appointment with the writing center. I will not excessively fix any grammar issues.*)

1. Clear and sound content and clarity of argument including: a well-stated thesis, related points to support that thesis, and applicable, logically presented, and specific evidence.
2. Depth of engagement with ideas, originality, seriousness of thought, and conceptual complexity.
3. Well-organized structure including: text that “flows” with coherent and effective transition between and among ideas; and appropriate voice, tone, and style for audience (e.g. no slang or contractions).
4. Sufficiently and consistently cited and documented; Chicago style citation used throughout the paper; references adequate number and appropriate type of sources; and proper use of indirect and direct quotations and references.
5. Correct mechanics including grammar, syntax, spelling, and punctuation.

All papers should be thoroughly proofread and spellchecked before being handed in, and will be marked down for excessive typographical errors. Quality of writing is critical because if the writing is poor, then you are likely to be unable to communicate clearly an argument that is clear and carefully supported. Note: When asked to go to the writing center, you must do so. A note from the writing center on what was done to assist you on the paper **must** be submitted to me. Failure to seek the help you need will reflect on your grade.

All papers **must** be in Microsoft Word format and double spaced; have one-inch margins on all four sides; be **left aligned**; use 12in Times New Roman Font; and use Chicago style in-paragraph citations with bibliography. **Online dictionaries, Naver and Wikipedia** are not academic sites to do research at: do not use them! In addition, an excellent source on how to write papers, properly site and use a bibliography is at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>. I also highly suggest you download and use Zotero citation software (<https://www.zotero.org>) with

Firefox web browser in order to help you properly save and cite sources. You are required to submit all papers and other work electronically via blackboard by the due date on the syllabus. (More details to follow.) All presentations must also be in PowerPoint format (not Prizio) with note pages and proper citations and references.

**Communication:** My door is always open to talk with and assist you. However, please bring any questions and concerns you may have to me in a timely manner. Do not hesitate to ask for guidance and clarification, whatever the issue is. If you need additional assistance for assignments, or are having any other issues, let me know, I am here to help mentor you. I will assume that the class is comfortable and satisfactory and the material I present is clear **unless I hear from you otherwise**. Do *not* wait until the day an assignment is due to ask for assistance, or contact me late at night, unless it is an emergency.

**Electronic Devices:** Before each class, please remember to silence or turn off (not vibrate!) any electronic devices, especially cell phones. No calls or texting during class. If you must use your cell phone during class time for a personal emergency, please leave the room without disturbing the class. You may use your laptops or tablets to take notes and look up information pertinent to our class topics. However, you may NOT use this opportunity to complete tasks that are not related to our classroom, play games, surf the internet or chat with your friends on social media or elsewhere. In the event that this opportunity is abused, you will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. During all quizzes and exams, you *will* leave your cell phones and all other electronic equipment and bags at the front of the classroom.

**Email Policy:** In compliance with a University-wide initiative, our correspondence will be only through GMU assigned email accounts. Please check your email account regularly for updates and important announcements. This also means that you must use blackboard. Please check the syllabus before emailing me regarding course matters, and contact a classmate or a group member for notes if you miss class. I will not respond to email inquiries that arise from a lack of attention to the syllabus (i.e. office location, office hour times, due date for assignments, etc.) or class absences. I am happy to respond to clarification requests on assignments, though I strongly prefer to address these matters during class time.

***Notice: Mandatory Reporting***

As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per George Mason University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, for GMU Fairfax's main campus, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing [cde@gmu.edu](mailto:cde@gmu.edu). For GMUK Psychological Services, you may call 032 626-6142 or visit the multi-complex building, room 3052. For GMUK's Title IX Coordinator, you may contact Professor Zimmerman by calling 032 626-5110 or emailing [dzimmer2@gmu.edu](mailto:dzimmer2@gmu.edu).

***Academic Accommodations:*** If you are a student with a documented disability and need academic accommodations or assistance, please see me at the beginning of the semester. Even if the disability is not documented, speak with me right away so I can get you the assistance you need.

***Important Dates:*** <http://masonkorea.gmu.edu/academic-calendar/>

***Honor Code:*** You are expected to abide by George Mason University's Honor Code while preparing all work for this class. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely.

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 <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the University and Honor Committee for review. Plagiarism means using the exact words (even with a few word changes), opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Plagiarism includes copying paragraphs of information from other sources and putting them in your paper as if they are your own words (even if the source is cited). Writers MUST give full credit through

accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. All material used from other authors must be cited, using in-paragraph Chicago format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me before submitting something. No more than 25-30% of your paper should be materials used directly and indirectly from another source (direct and indirect quotes). With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are: (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. **DO NOT** copy and paste from the internet or submit papers from other classes. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with me before submitting any work.

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

Students participating in the course will be graded based on the following:

**1. Attendance and Participation (15%).** Attendance is extremely important because the course will be interactive in nature. Participation in the class discussions and exercises is critical to student learning and to exhibit that the required material is being read. Students should read and reflect on the readings ahead of time in order for class sessions to have the most value. Students can also participate by asking questions, circulating emails, organizing study groups, exchanging writing or introducing new ideas and resources. **One student will be assigned to lead the discussion about readings for each class. The student needs to prepare highlights from the readings, prompts and questions that s/he will share before the class.**

**2. Midterm Paper (25%).** This will be 10-page paper in which you will be asked to: 1) Conduct research on a group, community or organizational conflict of your choice; 2) Critically assess the conflict processes, parties and dynamics using concepts learned in the class; and 3) Provide recommendation on how you would address the selected conflict. You will submit the paper to

the instructor via Blackboard and email. The paper should be double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 1'-margin, Word doc format. The paper should include references to the readings and outside sources with bibliography in the end. More details will be discussed in class.

**3. Quizzes (20%).** Two quizzes will be administered to test students' understanding and knowledge of the readings and other covered materials.

**4. Group Research Project and Presentation (20%).** Students in this class will be divided into small groups of 2-3 people. Each group will conduct a research project to explore the communal, intergroup or organizational conflict of your choice and suggest an intervention. In this project, you should try to apply conflict analysis and resolution concepts and theories on the case that you have chosen. Each group will present the group's findings outline in writing to the instructor (up to 3 pages, double space) and through an oral presentation to the class.

**4. Final in-class exam (20%)**

The final exam unites all theoretical and practical approaches of the course. You will be asked to choose one out of three questions and reflect critically on it using materials covered in the class. You will submit the exam to the instructor via Blackboard. The final exam should be no less than 4 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 1'-margin. The paper should include references to the readings and outside sources with bibliography in the end. More details will be discussed in class.

**Grading scale:**

Points Accumulated	Grade	GPA	Points Accumulated	Grade	GPA
97-100	A+	4.0+	80-82	B-	2.67
93-96	A	4.0	78-79	C+	2.33
90-92	A-	3.67	74-77	C	2.00
87-89	B+	3.33	70-73	C-	1.67
83-86	B	3.00	60-69	D	1.00
			0-59	F	0.00

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Session 1: Introduction**

Welcome, overview of the class, class norms, syllabus, grading policy and initial exploration of group, organization and community dynamics; sign up for group presentations

### **Session 2: Introduction to social conflicts**

Kriesberg: Ch 1, 2

### **Session 3: Divided and integrated communities**

Block: Ch. 2, 3

Hromadzic, Azra. 2008. "Discourses of Integration and Practices of Reunification at the Mostar Gymnasium, Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Comparative Education Review* 52, no. 4 (November): 541–63 (Blackboard)

### **Session 4: Group processes and conflict**

Bordens: Chapter 7. Pp. 251 - 267 (library e-book)

Video on Milgram's experiment

### **Session 5: Group identity and prejudice**

Korostelina: 15-31, 59-67 (library e-book);

Bordens: Chap. 4 (library e-book)

Video

### **Session 6: Quiz**

**Session 7: Dealing with conflict in organizations**

Coleman and Ferguson: Chapters 1, 2

**Session 8: Mason day**

**Session 9: Mediation and de-escalation of organizational conflict - Simulation**

Kriesberg: Ch 8

Coleman and Ferguson: Chapters 7

**Session 10: Introduction to social movements and collective action for social change**

Chenoweth, Erica, and Maria J. Stephan. 2011. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Columbia University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 3 (Blackboard)

Video and discussion

**Session 11: Restoring communities after the conflict**

Kriesberg: Ch 7

Block: Ch 4

Video and discussion

**Session 12: Quiz**

**Session 13: Group presentations**

**Session 14: Group presentations**

**Session 15: Final exam**