

Conflict Resolution & Transformation

INTS305, Fall 2019

When: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:10pm-4:30pm

Where: Fairfax Campus, Room Robinson B102

Who: Derek Sweetman, Adjunct Professor

Contact: dsweetma@gmu.edu, 703-389-1677 (text)

Office hours: by appointment

Introduction

This course is intended to help you develop a nuanced understanding of conflict on the interpersonal, intergroup, and international levels; to appreciate and understand the methods of conflict resolution; to pursue the transformation of conflicts; and to use the analytical resources and skills you will have developed to engage conflict in your own life. This course earns 1 credit of experiential learning and students must successfully complete the experiential learning components to pass the course.

Learning Objectives

- To understand the role and practice of conflict analysis in conflict resolution and transformation
- To appreciate the transformation critique of conflict resolution activities and the techniques developed to promote transformation beyond resolution
- Appreciate the role of individuals and institutions in conflict
- Deal more constructively with conflict in your own life
- To develop a critical understanding of conflict in the contemporary world
- Demonstrate college-level oral and written communication skills.
- Apply skills that will facilitate collaborative learning.

Pedagogical Approach

This course uses a hybrid format, where we will focus on readings and academic discussion about conflict resolution on Mondays and workshops involving skills and application of ideas on Wednesdays. Both of these are important and your participation in both is vital to your success.

Inclusive Learning

Your success in this class is important to me. We all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let

me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

I encourage you to visit the Office of Disability Services to determine how you could improve your learning as well. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. There are also a range of resources on campus, including the Writing Center, Tutoring Center, and Academic Advising Center.

Similarly, I see our class as an *intentionally* inclusive community where we will work together and respect each other in order to create the best learning environment. This respect extends to refraining from plagiarism and other behavior that is prohibited by the GMU Honor Code. If you have any questions about whether something constitutes plagiarism or another violation, reach out to me before you turn in the assignment.

Course Assessment

Your grade will be calculated out of 100 points, with the following grade divisions:

93-100 = A
90-92 = A-
87-89 = B+
83-86 = B
80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+
73-76 = C
70-72 = C-
60-69 = D
0-59 = F

Texts and Resources

There are five books required for this course:

- Burns, Anna. *Milkman*. Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2018.
- Lederach, John. *Little Book of Conflict Transformation: Clear Articulation of The Guiding Principles by A Pioneer in The Field*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2014
- Pranis, Kay. *The Little Book of Circle Processes: A New/Old Approach to Peacemaking*. Original ed. edition. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005.
- Schirch, Lisa, and David Camp. *The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects: A Practical, Hands-On Guide*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2007.
- Zehr, Howard. *The Little Book of Restorative Justice: Revised and Updated*. 2nd edition. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2015.

There will be a few additional readings that will be available on Blackboard.

Assignments

Discussion participation: 100

Workshop participation: 100

Journaling/experience: 200

Questions and answers: 100

Film reflections (3): 200 + option for 50 points of extra credit

Milkman analysis: 100

Simulation participation/response: 25 points for each session + 50 for the response

Course reflection: 100

This is a six-hour course, so the workload is likely greater than your other classes. As long as you stay organized you should be good.

Discussion participation: Between the beginning of class and November 11th, we will have ten discussion sessions on Mondays about our readings. You will receive 10 points for each you attend.

Workshop participation: We will have 10 workshop sessions. Nine of these will be on Wednesdays and one will be on Tuesday, October 15th. You will receive 10 points for each workshop for your participation.

Journaling/experience: After the end of class Wednesday, I will post a description of something I want you to try over the weekend. This will usually be related to the skills we have studied that week. You are to do what is asked and write a short (500-word) reaction to that, which will be due before class the following Monday. There will be 10 total exercises, worth 20 points each.

Questions and answers: To help develop our class dialog, you will participate in an online discussion about the readings every week, in the form of posting questions and answers. You are expected to post one question directly about the reading and a second one about the application of the ideas to our lives before class on Monday. Before class on Wednesday, you will post one answer to someone else's reading question and another answer to someone else's life question. You will receive 10 points for completing this each week and 5 points if you only complete part of the assignment.

Film reflections: We will watch three films in class. You must write on two of these (100 points each) and have the option of writing on all three for an additional 50 points of extra credit. Details about the writing assignment will be handed out in class.

***Milkman* analysis:** The details for this writing assignment will be handed out in class.

Simulation participation/response: We will have an in-class conflict simulation that will take place October 15th and 16th. You will receive 25 points for attending each day and turn in a 750-word reflection on your experience, worth 50 points.

Class reflection: You will write a course reflection of at least 1,000 words about what you have learned in the course. Follow a What?, So What?, Now What? format for these papers:

- **What?** Describe your experience. This may include some summary, but should be focused more on your experience as a viewer/reader/actor/participant. Do not simply summarize a text.
- **So What?** Incorporate the concepts and ideas from class into your experience. Did you see examples of these? Did the experience encourage you to think differently about them? What can these ideas and concepts tell us about the subject of your experience? What connections do you see?
- **Now What?** Contextualize the experience. How does it relate to your other work in the class, your other classes, or your future plans? Where are you going to take this knowledge?

Reflective writing should always be in an I voice, since you are writing about yourself. Do not simply summarize the course. The reflection is about you and your learning experience.

Assignment Policies

All assignments, unless otherwise noted, should be turned in on Blackboard. Late work will be accepted, but the grade for the assignment will be reduced by 10% each day it is late. After five days, work will only be accepted if approved and then for a maximum of 50% credit. If you have a problem meeting a deadline, contact me **before the assignment is due**. Arrangements made after the due date are subject to the grade penalty.

Types of Writing Assignments

Reflective writing assignments give you a chance to work with ideas and concepts from class in the context of another experience. In general, it is best to follow a What?, So What?, Now What? Format for these papers:

- **What?** Describe your experience. This may include some summary, but should be focused more on your experience as a viewer/reader/actor/participant. Do not simply summarize a text.
- **So What?** Incorporate the concepts and ideas from class into your experience. Did you see examples of these? Did the experience encourage you to think differently about them? What can these ideas and concepts tell us about the subject of your experience? What connections do you see?
- **Now What?** Contextualize the experience. How does it relate to your other work in the class, your other classes, or your future plans? Where are you going to take this knowledge?

Reflective writing should always be in an I voice, since you are writing about yourself. You can introduce the text or film you are discussing, but do not simply summarize it. The reflection is about you and your learning experience.

Informal writing assignments are just for the class. These could include discussion posts or in-class writing. You are writing so that your fellow students will be able to understand, but without formal requirements. This is not an excuse to avoid proofreading or citing your sources.

Schedule

See Blackboard