

CRES 4840 – Managing Organizational Conflict  
Winter 2013, Thursdays, February 14<sup>th</sup> – March 14<sup>th</sup>  
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Instructor:

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Required Text:

Working Through Conflict (7<sup>th</sup>) by Joseph P. Folger, Marshall Scott Poole, & Randall K. Stutman. Pearson.

Course Description:

This course provides an overview of conflict in organizations employing a variety of perspectives from which to view conflict in order to develop successful interventions. Conflict in organizations is inevitable. However, the consequences of poorly managed conflict can be very costly to individuals, groups, and entire organizations. Those who are able to identify conflicts and who understand conflict dynamics are able to implement solutions in a wide range of conflict situations. This course addresses conflict in organizations including intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflict which may include issues of gender, race, age, disabilities, and other dimensions of identity. Using lectures, case studies, large and small group dialogue, and individual projects, this course prepares participants to effectively identify and manage organizational conflict and to implement corrective procedures.

Course Outcomes:

Students completing the course will be able to:

1. Define organizational conflict and its various dimensions
2. Differentiate between reports, inferences, and judgments when examining conflicts
3. Demonstrate an understanding of primary conflict theories
4. Analyze organizational conflict situations to develop interventions
5. Develop effective conflict management techniques

### Assignments:

#### Mini-case Analysis

You will be given three mini-case studies to analyze in terms of theories or concepts that we have discussed in class. Analyzing these cases will allow students to objectively analyze conflict issues and to develop interventions. Each analysis paper: 3-4 pages.

#### Second Class Conflict Case

Each student will prepare a paper describing an ongoing conflict in which he or she is a party. The paper will be 2-3 pages in length, will describe the conflict, the parties to the conflict (using made-up names to protect the guilty), critical statements parties have made, critical events in the conflict, and current status of the conflict. No attempt should be made to analyze the conflict or to provide a summary of it. This is a pass/fail grade contributing to the participation grade.

#### Final Insights Paper

This paper will be a summary and synthesis of what you have learned in the course. It will include your insights regarding conflict and conflict theory. Paper length: 4-5 pages.

### Grade Components:

Participation: 30%

Mini-cases: 45% (15% each)

Final paper: 25%

### Tentative Class Schedule:

Class 1: Conflict defined; reports, inferences, judgments; goals and power, social influence.

Class 2: Psychodynamic, verbal aggression, and balance theories. Attribution theory.

Class 3: Face saving and defensiveness. Field theory. Climate theory.

Class 4: Confrontation episode theory, coordinated management of meaning, social exchanges and game theories. Reciprocity.

Class 5: Phase theories. Escalation and avoidance. Strategies, tactics, and styles. Conflict assessment. Systems theory and intervention.

(More schedule details will be provided at the first class meeting)