

# Conflict Negotiations

TESC MPA Course, 2 Credits

May 17<sup>th</sup> Fri. 5-9pm, May 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> Sat/Sun 9am-5pm

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## Overview:

This course will introduce students to core concepts and theoretical frameworks that enhance our ability to analyze and successfully manage conflict. It will include skill building and communication practice aimed at expanding our conflict negotiation repertoire and our capacity for collaborative problem-solving. We will focus on research, theories, and practices that cut across contexts, and give some additional attention to cross cultural conflict, public forum facilitation, and third part mediation.

## Required texts:

Folger, Joseph P., Marshall S. Poole and Randall K. Stutman. *Working Through Conflict: Strategies for Relationships, Groups, and Organizations* (6<sup>th</sup> edition). New York: Pearson, 2008. [Note: This is not the current edition. I have chosen an older edition to keep the price down; however, you may need to use online sources to find it.]

A few additional short readings will be posted on the class Moodle web site.

## Recommended texts for additional reading on specific frameworks:

Rosenberg, Marshall. *Non-Violent Communication: A Language of Life*. Encinitas, CA: Puddle Dancer Press, 2003.

Ury, William. *Getting Past No: Negotiating in Difficult Situations*. New York: Bantam Books, 2007.

Atlee, Tom. *The Toa of Democracy: Using co-intelligence to create a world that works for all*. Eugene, OR: World Works Press, 2003.

## Course Objectives:

- learn how to use multiple communication and conflict theories to analyze conflict interaction and construct appropriate intervention strategies
- understand the role of power, face-saving, social climate, framing, needs and interests in conflict dynamics
- recognize common obstacles to mutually satisfactory conflict resolution
- develop communication skills to aid differentiation and integration, de-escalation, empathy, empowerment, and collaborative problem solving
- increase communication competence in cross-cultural contexts
- gain an introductory familiarity with formal dispute resolution structures, third-party mediation skills, and group facilitation techniques

## Assignments to be completed by May 16th:

1) Think of two difficult, unsatisfactorily resolved or unresolved, conflicts that you have experienced and are willing to revisit during this course. These could be conflicts that you were (or are) involved in as a primary party or conflicts that you observed at close range as a secondary stake holder (work, family, or community conflicts would all be appropriate). Briefly describe these two conflicts in a 1-2 page paper. Please change names and any other details that might violate the parties' confidentiality. Post your 1-2 page description to the class Moodle Site drop box by May 16<sup>th</sup>. You will draw on these examples, along with other case studies, as we explore a variety of strategies for managing conflict and reaching collaborative solutions to problems. You may also choose to use one of these examples for assignments 4 & 5.

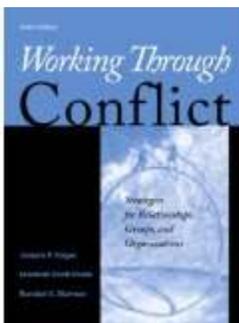
2) Read all of *Working Through Conflict* prior to the first day of class. For EACH CHAPTER take written notes that include the following:

a) brief (2-4 sentence) references to at least two ideas that may be particularly useful for the kinds of conflicts you typically encounter or expect to encounter in the future (be sure to include page numbers)

b) at least two brief comments or questions that you would like to discuss related to the chapter.

Please post your notes to the class Moodle Site drop box by May 16<sup>th</sup> and bring a hard copy of the notes to each class.

Note: *Working Through Conflict* is a theory-driven text with a particularly useful emphasis on communication frameworks and practices. If you find the authors' description of a particular conflict theory difficult to follow, try applying it to your own experience. When the authors discuss the history of ideas and multiple, competing theories, think about how a conflict might "look different" depending on which theoretical framework is used to analyze it.



**Assignments due after May 17th:**

3) For Saturday's class read short articles posted on the Moodle Site and handed out in class, including *Managing Intercultural Conflict Effectively* by Stella Ting-Toomey.

4.) For Sunday's class give a 5-7 minute oral presentation analyzing a conflict you've experienced or observed using at least two different theoretical lenses introduced in class. Make an argument for one especially useful intervention or change of behavior that could have had a positive impact on the conflict.

5) Write a 6-7 page analysis that elaborates on your oral presentation and incorporates feedback from the class. Use at least 2 distinct theoretical lenses in your analysis and include a recommendation for at least 2 specific communication strategies that might have helped resolve the conflict in more constructive ways than actually occurred. Carefully explain your reasoning and include sample dialog as needed throughout the paper. Papers are due Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup> (posted to the class Moodle Site).

6) A self-evaluation and a faculty evaluation are also due by Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup>. These documents can be posted to the class Moodle Site, or alternatively, given to the MPA Program Secretary, or given directly to Lori at an evaluation conference. Evaluation Conferences are optional and will be held May 27<sup>th</sup> and May 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Additional information about daily activities will be posted on the class Moodle Site and handed out in class.**

Please feel free to contact Lori Blewett if you have any questions about the course.