OVERVIEW

This course provides students with the basic concepts needed to analyse, explain, manage, resolve and prevent social conflict. It will refer to elements in the field of conflict studies including classic works in social sciences and the humanities as well as recent texts in the field. The course will attempt to offer a perspective as inclusive and balanced as possible with regard to the different schools of thought in conflict studies.

This course is a basic course required of all students in conflict studies. It is also an option in the required course list for all students doing a bachelors degree in Human Sciences at Saint Paul University; this includes those studying Social Communications, Counselling, Mission studies and Interreligious Dialogue, and Animation.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

Each class session will be comprised of a combination of lectures, group processes, examinations and special presentations. Evaluation will be based on short assignments, in-class exams, and a combination of participation and reflections.

READINGS


Web links to resources and recommended readings from a variety of sources will be posted on Blackboard Learn.

CALENDAR
(An asterisk highlights when assignments are due.)

Part 1: Looking at Conflict in the Contemporary World

September 8 INTRODUCTION/ CONFLICT AS A CONCEPT
Course objectives/Academic study of conflict/Links with various disciplines/
Organization of the course/ Resources for the course/ Conflict in humanities and social sciences / Elements, aspects and levels of conflict / Negative and positive dimensions of conflict / Acceptance or rejection of conflict

Reading: Introduction and chapter 1

September 15

CONFLICTS IN THE MODERN WORLD
Conflicts at the local, national and international levels
Reading: chapters 2, 3, & 4

Part 2: Analyzing Conflict Theoretically

September 22

RATIONALIST AND BIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT
The rational actor / Cost-benefit analysis / Public choices / Game theory/ Survival, reproduction and conflict
Reading: Chapters 5 & 6

September 29*

PSYCHOLOGICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO CONFLICT*
Propensities to conflict and violence / Socialization and conflict / Culture, religion and conflict / Role of emotions and needs / Mimetic theory and scapegoating
Reading: Chapters 7 & 9
First Small Essay Due

October 6

POWER and CONFLICT: POLITICAL SCIENCE AND SOCIOLOGY
The nature of power / Machiavelli / Anarchy and conflict / Ethnicity / Nationalism / Gender / Religion
Reading: Chapter 8

October 20

Midterm Exam. STYLES IN CONFLICT
Reading: Chapter 10

Part 3: Dealing with Conflict

October 27

PROCESSES TO MANAGE, RESOLVE AND TRANSFORM CONFLICT
Traditional ways of managing conflict / Negotiation, mediation and facilitation / Community-Based Conflict Resolution / Systems design / Political systems as conflict management
Reading: Chapter 11

November 3

INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES
Conflict creation and escalation / Crises / Styles of and orientations to conflict / Concepts of justice and their relation to conflict and conflict management and transformation
Reading: Chapter 12
November 10  RECONCILIATION AND HEALING
*Impact of violent conflict / Genocide / Elements of reconciliation / Truth and reconciliation commissions / Relationship between conflict studies and trauma healing*
Reading: Chapter 13

Part 4: Normative Approaches to Understanding Conflict

November 17*  ETHICS AND JUST WAR
Reading: Chapter 14
*Long essay due*

November 26  JUSTICE AND PEACE
*The Nature of Justice / Peace as a concept / Peace research*
Reading: Chapters 15 & 16

December 1  MORAL PRINCIPLES FOR THOSE IN THE FIELD
Reading: Chapter 17

December 8  FINAL EXAM

EVALUATION

Short Essay (15%) – due September 30

The short essay should be 5 pages plus bibliography. In the text, students will develop a topic based on an insight that comes out of class sessions and readings. They will follow these steps:

- Identify their insight;
- Expand on the insight using additional sources to argue, question, or critique;
- Explain why it is important for understanding conflict or conflict transformation;
- Indicate what aspects of this insight they have personally appropriated and why.

Students are expected to refer to several sources for the essay. Due September 29.

Mid Term Exam (15%) October 20

There will be three questions based on chapters 1 to 9 in the textbook.

Longer Essay (35%) – due November 18

Similar to the short essay but in greater depth – 15 pages. Due November 18.

Final Exam (25%) December 9

Reflections (10 x 1 = 10%)
1-2 page reflections after each class will be composed of insights and questions; reference will be made to the chapter(s) in the textbook.
IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Essays, reflections, and the final exam will be submitted on-line.
- Late assignments that are not justified will be penalized 10% per day.
- Essays must utilize Chicago Manual of Style (citations, references, etc.). Problems with grammar spelling and style will result in 5 to 15 percent taken off the grade.
- There are severe sanctions for plagiarism: the first infraction means an E for the assignment; the second case results in a failing grade for the course.

WRITING EXPECTATIONS

1. Within the first two paragraphs there will be a thesis statement or question that will be addressed. This will be followed by a description of how it will be addressed—normally one sentence about each section.
2. There will be clear links made between the sections.
3. The Conclusion will offer a brief summary and make a statement about the significance of the findings.
4. Longer quotes will single-spaced and indented with no quotation marks.
5. The basic format for citations is (Name Date, page number) as in (Rioux & Redekop 2013, 56). For general concepts a page number is not needed; for quotes or very specific information it is.
6. The general format for references is

Family name, first name. date. Title in italics. City: publishing company.