

# CONF 695: Identity and Conflict

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T: 4.30 pm - 7:10 pm

## Overview

This course is designed to explore complex interrelations of social identity and postmodern conflicts in society with the emphasis on the role of identity in processes of conflict resolution and transformation. Critical rethinking of ethnic, national and religious identities as both generators and outcomes of conflict will be important part of the course. Course aims to extend knowledge on structure and dynamic of identity-based conflicts and to develop a framework for their resolution. Course includes lectures, simulations, and case studies. The final assignment of the course requires students to conduct case study and design an intervention into a conflict of their choice.

### **Assessment of Students:**

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

1. Active participation in the class activities is worth 20 % of the final grade.
2. Students are required to write 4 papers on multiple identities, ethnic identity, national identity, and religious identity. The papers should be 3-5 pages in length and each paper is worth 15% of the final grade.
3. Students are required to conduct a case study of conflict of their choice and design an intervention. The case study can be drawn from the organizational, communal, national, or international level and should involve identity conflict in any form. The research paper should be 15 pages in length and is worth 20% of the final grade.

### **Required reading:**

Ashmore, Richard D., Jussim, Lee, and Wilder, David (Eds). (2001) *Social identity, intergroup conflict, and conflict reduction*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.

Brewer, M. B. (2003). *Intergroup relations*. Buckingham [England] ; Philadelphia, PA : Open University Press.

Tilly, C. (2005) *Identities, boundaries and social ties*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers

Rothman, J. *Resolving identity-based conflict in nations, organizations, and communities*. - San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997

Volkan, Vamik (1997). *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux

### **Additional reading:**

Horowitz, Donald (1985). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkely, CA: University of California Press

Helmick , Raymond G. & Petersen, Rodney L. (Eds). (2001). *Forgiveness and reconciliation: religion, public policy & conflict transformation*. Philadelphia : Templeton Foundation Press.

Brubaker, R. (1996). *Nationalism reframed: nationhood and the national question in the new Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cockburn, C. *The space between us*. London, New York: Zed books, 1998

Kelman, H. C. Nationalism, patriotism, and national identity: Social-psychological dimensions// D. Bar-Tal & E. Staub (Eds.), *Patriotism in the lives of individuals and nations*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1997.

Kriesberg, Louis (2002). *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield

Korostelina, Karyna.(2003) The Multiethnic State-Building Dilemma: National and Ethnic Minorities' Identities in the Crimea. *National Identities*, 5, N 2, p. 141-159

Smith, Marc A. and Kollock, Peter (Eds). (1999). *Communities in cyberspace*. London ; New York : Routledge. <http://mutex.gmu.edu:2085/Reader/>

### Weekly Schedule

- August 29: Introduction to Course. Introduction to Social Identity  
Reading: Reading: Brewer: 4-16; Volkan: 19- 29;
- September 5: Theories of Social Identity  
Reading: : Brewer: 32-41; Volkan: 36- 49, 81-100; Tilly: 3-10; 60-67
- September 12: Identity, prejudice, and discrimination  
Reading: Ashmore: 3-42; Brewer: 43-67, 112-123
- September 19: Identity and conflict  
Reading: **Kriesberg: 2- 24, 55-64**; Rothman: 5-12
- September 26: Identity, Moral Denigration, and Violence  
Reading: Ashmore: 133-187, Korostelina & Rothbart (TBD)
- October 3: Ethnic Identity.  
Reading: Ashmore: 42-71; **Horowitz: 51-88**; Volkan: 101-116
- October 10: Break
- October 17: Ethnic Identity And Conflict.  
Reading: Volkan: 157-167; Brewer: 20-32
- October 24: National Identity  
Reading: Tilly: 171-198; Ashmore: 71-133; Korostelina (TBD)
- October 31: National and Ethnic identity: Case Study  
Reading: Tidiane Sy, Waseem, Buadaeng, (TBD)
- November 7: Religious Identity and Conflict  
Reading: **Helmick & Petersen: 3-25, 97-116: Volkan (Blind Trust): 113-171**
- November 14: Identity-Based Conflict Resolution: Shared and Multiple Identities  
Reading: Brewer: 88-109, Rothman: 5-52, Ashmore: 187-213;

November 21 : Conflict Transformation: Building Relationship  
Readings: Volkan: 203-227, Brewer: 88-109, Rothman: 53-87 **Azar: 18-29**

November 28: Identity management

December 5: Paper presentations and discussion

## Assignments

### 1. Multiple identity paper.

Write a paper about your own social identity system using the following structure:

- a) List all social groups you involve in.
- b) List and briefly describe your social identities.
- c) Describe the most salient identities and give examples how they influence your attitudes, values, behavior.
- d) Show interrelations within system of social identities: which identities are very interconnected.
- e) Describe changes in identity salience and give examples when your non-salient identity became the most salient one.

You can choose one of the following forms:

- I. Write a letter for your friend about your social identity.
- II. Write a scientific self-report about your social identity.

The papers should be 3-5 pages in length, double space, 12. Due date is: **September 26**

### 2. Ethnic identity paper.

Write a paper analyzing ethnic identity of your choice (identity of your own ethnic group or any other ethnic group) based on theoretical ideas of Volkan, Horowitz, or Eriksen. Use his notions of chosen trauma and glory, phenomenon of minor differences and other notions to describe features of particular ethnic identity, give examples and provide conclusion about relevancy of the theoretical approach. For this paper you can use interviews with representatives of ethnic group, examples from literature, art, and history. The papers should be 3-5 pages in length, double space, 12. Paper due date: **October 24**

### 4. Religious identity paper

There are a lot of different opinions about the role of religion in conflict expansion and resolution. Write a paper to show your own opinion about the impact of religion on process of conflict development, transformation and mitigation. Put your main statements in the beginning and develop them using multiple examples. The papers should be 5-7 pages in length, double space, 12. Due date is: **November 14**

### 5. Final paper on case study and intervention.

The case study can be drawn from the organizational, communal, national, or international level and should involve identity conflict in any form. Be sure to analyze conflict based on theoretical ideas and notions you studied during the course. Show how theoretical analysis can help to understand identity conflict and can serve as a basis for the intervention. Suggest your methods for conflict resolution, based on social identity theory. Plan to present your paper for seven minutes during last two classes. The research paper should be 10 pages in length double space, 12. Due date for draft is: **December 5**. **Due date for final paper is December 12.**