

Conflict 714

Practice of Community, Group, and Organizational Conflict

Semester: Spring 2005

Class Time: Section 1: April 18th, April 25th, and May 2nd; 4:30-7:10 p.m.
 Section 2: April 22nd, April 29th, and May 5th, 4:30-7:10 p.m.

Location: Room 555, Truland Building, Arlington Campus

Professor: Dr. Linda M. Johnston;

Office phone: 703.993.3653; email: ljohnst3@gmu.edu

Prerequisites: Conflict 501 or 801, Conflict 713, or permission of the instructor

Course Description:

This is the second in a series of courses designed to familiarize students with varying levels of conflict and forms of intervention. Community, group, and organizational conflicts are the focus of this practice course.

In this course, we will develop awareness of knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for intervention in conflicts at this level. Among these are:

- Conflict assessment
- Facilitation of the process
- Getting parties to the table and justifying a strategy for intervention
- Intervention design and strategy
- Intervention process skills
- Communication skills
- Understanding parties' positions, interests, values, and the role of human needs
- Understanding the impact of race, ethnicity, gender, and distinctive cultural characteristics at this level of conflict
- Understanding the role of power and worldview
- Framing, implementing, enforcing, and sustaining agreements
- Reflection on your own reaction to the conflict and resolution experience

This course builds on concepts learned in Conflict 713 and throughout the one-credit practice modules.

Course Requirements:

Evaluation for grading purposes will be based on performance in two areas:

1) Active participation in class discussions: 20%

Attendance is a must.

2) Participation in and completion of final in-class project: 80%

To be done in class as a group project. Final product to be turned in by May 13th, 2005.

Required Reading:

Schrock-Shenk, C., ed., *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual: Foundations and Skills for Constructive Conflict Transformation*, Mennonite Conciliation Service, Akron, PA, 2000.

Suggested books:

Carpenter, S., Kennedy, W.D.J. *Managing Public Disputes*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 1988.

Dukes, E.F., Piscalish, M.A., Stephens, J.B., *Reaching for Higher Ground in Conflict Resolution: Tools for Powerful Groups and Communities*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2000.

Forester, J., *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2001.

Weekly Schedule:**Week 1: April 18th or 22nd, 2005**

Course Introduction:

- Purpose of course, outline of activities, discussion of grading
- Explanation of readings
- Review of skills from 713 and the one-credit modules
- Defining community/group/organizational conflict
- Introduction of the case study

Week 2: April 25th or 29th, 2005

- Causes of community conflict
- Origins, responses, processes, and outcomes
- Analysis, getting started, process management, process design, constituency negotiations, and practicing decision-making skills
- Ethical issues in community conflict: values, trust and power
- Developing processes for community conflict intervention: knowledge and skills building

Week 3: May 2nd or 6th, 2005

- Ways of looking at organizations
- Kinds of organizations involved in community conflict
- Organizational roles
- Organizational decision-making
- The practice of transformation
- Intervention design exercise