

CONF 709
WAR, VIOLENCE, AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Semester: Fall 2007
Class Time: Thursday, 4:30-7:10 pm
Location: Arlington Campus, Original Bldg., Rm. 268
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to examine the theoretical and empirical literature on the causes and conditions of violence and violent conflict at all levels; e.g., interpersonal, intergroup, interorganizational, and international. Course objectives are, among others:

[a] To evaluate the "*nature-nurture debate*" on the causes of human violence, with implications for violent conflict prevention, management, settlement, resolution, and transformation at all levels; and

[b] To explore to what extent this information, plus theoretical and practical insights from other disciplines, can be used as a basis for better understanding and either *preventing, managing, settling, resolving* and/or *transforming* violent conflicts at any level -- in the United States and worldwide (e.g., ethnic, racial, and religious conflicts, including their terrorist expression).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Prerequisites:** Acceptance into ICAR's MSc. or Ph.D. program and successful completion of CONF 501 or 801, or permission of the instructor.
2. **Class Format:** Classes will follow an *interactive seminar format*. Hence, class attendance, participation, and the *completion of relevant readings prior to class* are highly recommended.
3. **Assessment:**

[a] A *mid-term paper* will be due on 1 November 2007. The assignment is:

Based upon your course readings, lectures and class discussions (and if you wish, any other readings as well), discuss and attempt to resolve the "*nature-nurture debate*" on the sources of human aggression. In other words, what does the literature say about the impact of "nature" and "nurture" on the development of human violence and violent conflict behavior at all levels? And *despite what the literature says*, where do you stand in this regard (and why), given your religious, cultural, and other "identities"? (15-20 double-spaced pages: worth 40% of the final grade.)

[b] A *final paper* will be due on 13 December 2007. The assignment is to select **either of TWO** options:

[1] Using the *three pillar framework (3PF)* and/or any other analytical scheme, and all of your course readings (plus, if you wish, other readings as well), assess the *Iraq Study Group Report*; i.e., from a *conflict analysis and resolution (CAR)* perspective, (a) What does the *Report* say; (b) What does it *not* say; and (c) What should it say in order to be a more effective blueprint for further international interventions into Iraq that leave the country and the region *more peaceful, secure and stable*?

Or

[2] Using the *three pillar framework (3PF)* and/or any other analytical scheme, and all of your course readings (plus, if you wish, other readings as well), analyze the shootings committed in April 2007, by Seung Hui Cho at Virginia Tech that left 33 dead; i.e., from a *conflict analysis and resolution (CAR)* perspective, (a) What were the likely causes of the shooting; and (b) what "lessons" have (or should have) been learned in terms of what can be done to prevent further outbursts of violence at university, workplace, and other "normal" settings of daily life?

(Either option should lead to a paper of 15-20 double-spaced pages, which will be worth 40% of the final grade.)

NOTE: Since these two papers are meant, among other things, to demonstrate that students have been in the course, the papers should contain appropriate references to course concepts and the corresponding readings. For further clarification -- including about the GMU Honor Code (e.g., avoiding any hint of plagiarism at all costs) -- please feel free to consult with the instructor.

[c] Student *presentations*: Each student will be invited to lead a discussion on one or more chapters from the readings by Abbott, Rogers and Sloboda; Baker and Hamilton; Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff; Gilligan; Garbarino; Hedges; Mack; Moghaddam; Pinker; Sandole; and/or Wrangham and Peterson (see "Required Readings," below). **In each case, the rest of the class will be expected to have read the same material to facilitate a rich discussion.** Please consult with our course assistant Maneshka about your preferences and the order and dates on which you want to make your presentations (which may be done jointly, i.e., involving more than one student per presentation). Presentations should be aimed at distilling from the readings their relevance to the themes of the midterm and final papers; e.g., the "nature-nurture debate" and its implications for dealing with violence and violent conflict, including post-9/11 terrorism (worth 20% of final grade).

Overall in-class *participation* will determine whether a "borderline" final grade of, for example, B+/A- remains in the B or A category.

Office Hours: 7:20 - 8:30 pm in the lobby of the Original Building following each class and by appointment.

Withdrawal: The last day to drop the course without academic liability is 28 September 2007.

REQUIRED READINGS

Abbott, Chris, Paul Rogers, and John Sloboda (2007). *Beyond Terror: The Truth About the Real Threats to Our World*. Oxford Research Group. [London: Rider (Random House)].

Baker, James A., III and Lee H. Hamilton (2006). *The Iraq Study Group Report: The Way Forward - A New Approach*. [New York: Vintage Books (Random House)].

Dougherty, James E. and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. (2001). *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey*. 5th Edition [New York and London: Addison Wesley Longman].

Garbarino, James (2000). *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them*. [New York: Anchor Books (Random House)].

Gilligan, James (1996). *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*. [New York: Vintage Books (Random House)].

Hedges, Chris (2002). *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* [New York: Public Affairs (Perseus Books)].

Mack, Andrew, et al. (2005). *Human Security Report*. Human Security Centre, Liu Institute for Global Issues, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. [New York and London: Oxford University Press (www.humansecurityreport.info)].

Moghaddam, Fathali M. (2006). *From the Terrorists' Point of View: What They Experience and Why They Come to Destroy*. [Westport (Connecticut) and London: Praeger Security International].

Pinker, Steven (2002). *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* [London and New York: Viking (Penguin Books)].

Sandole, Dennis J.D. (2002a). "Virulent Ethnocentrism: A Major Challenge for Transformational Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in the Post-Cold War Era." *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, vol. 1, no. 4, June, pp. 4-27 (www.ethnopolitics.org, then "archive" [on left side] followed by "volume I" and "issue 4." "Sandole" article is the first one listed).

Sandole, Dennis J.D. (2002b). "The Causes of Terrorism," in R. Scott Moore (ed.), *Terrorism: Concepts, Causes, and Conflict Resolution*. A publication of ICAR's Working Group on War, Violence, and Terrorism, published by the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), Fort Belvoir, Virginia (www.gmu.edu/departments/icar. Under "Search the ICAR site or web" on the left side, below the blue globe, type in title of article, then scroll down to "Publications -- September 11, Crisis

Resolution" for "Book Chapter - 'Causes of Terrorism'").

Sandole, Dennis J.D. (2007). *Peace and Security in the Postmodern World: The OSCE and Conflict Resolution*. [London and New York: Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group)].

Wrangham, Richard and Dale Peterson (1996). *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence*. [Boston and New York: Mariner Books (Houghton Mifflin)].

COURSE SYLLABUS

- 30 Aug I. Introduction: Course Overview.
- 6 Sep II. The Problem: Conflict, Violence, and War.
- A. The Subject Matter.
1. *Latent Conflict (LC)*.
 2. Manifest Conflict.
 - a. *Manifest Conflict Process (MCP)*.
 - b. *Aggressive Manifest Conflict Process (AMCP): Postmodern Warfare*.
 - [1] Post-Cold War Ethnic Conflicts.
 - [2] Post-9/11 Terrorism.
- B. Why is a Course on Violent Conflict Necessary?
1. Violent Conflict Trends in the United States.
 2. Violent Conflict Trends Worldwide.
 - a. Domestic: The *spillover potential* of intranational conflicts.
 - [1] *Functional Spillover*.
 - [2] *External Intervention*.
 - [a] Ethnic Kin Intervention.
 - [b] Humanitarian Intervention.
 - [3] *Multiplier-Effect Systemic Contagion*.
 - b. *International/Trans-societal* (including post-911 terrorism and the "Clash of Civilizations").
- C. Three Theoretical and Practical Questions:
1. How Can **MCPs** be Prevented from Becoming **AMCPs**?
 2. What are the Causes of **AMCPs**? [Status of the "Nature-Nurture Debate"?)
 3. How Do We Conduct Research on **AMCPs**? (CONF 610)
- READ: Gilligan, Prologue (pp. 1-26);
Garbarino, Preface (pp. ix-xiii) and Ch. 1;

Mack; and
Sandole, 2007, Chs. 1, 4 and App. A.

13 Sep/
20 Sep/
27 Sep

III. An Enhanced Basis for Understanding *and* Dealing with the Problem.

A. Three levels of Conflict Reality.

1. *Conflict-as-Symptoms* (Perceptible/Measurable Indicators of Underlying Problems and Causes).
2. *Conflict-as-Process* (Underlying Conflicted Relationships).
3. *Conflict-as-Start-up Conditions* (Underlying Deep-Rooted Causes and Conditions of the Conflicted Relationships).

B. A Comprehensive Mapping of Conflict and Conflict Resolution: A 3-Pillar Approach (**3PF**).

READ: Sandole, 2007, Chs. 2, 5 and App. B.
(Review Mack.)

1. *Pillar 1: Conflict (Dependent Variable)*.

- a. Parties.
- b. Issues.
- c. Long-term Objectives.
- d. Means.
- e. Conflict-handling Orientations.
- f. Conflict Environments.

4 Oct/
11 Oct

2. *Pillar 2: Conflict Causes and Conditions (Independent Variables)*.

READ: Sandole, 2007, Ch. 6.

a. *Individual Level (Image I)*

- [1] Biological.
- [2] Physiological.
- [3] Learning.
- [4] Dissonance.

READ: D&P, Chs. 2, 6, 11;
Hedges;
Moghaddam, Chs. 1-9;
Pinker; and
Wrangham & Peterson, Chs. 1-9.
(Also review Garbarino and Gilligan).

18 Oct

b. *Societal/National level (Image II)*.

- [1] Domestic-Foreign Conflict Nexus.
- [2] Crisis Decisionmaking.

- [3] Action-Reaction Dynamics.
- [4] Power Distance.
- [5] Imperialism (and "Lateral Pressures").

READ: D&P, Chs. 4, 7, 9;
Gilligan, Chs. 1-10; and
Garbarino, Chs.

25 Oct/
1 Nov

c. *Trans-societal/International level*
(**Image III**).

- [1] [Endogenous vs. Exogenous Systems.
- [2] Bi- vs. Multipolar Systems.
- [3] Tendencies toward the "Unit Veto" System.
- [4] International Distribution of Wealth ("Marxist Delight").

d. *Global/Ecological Level* (**Image IV**).

- [1] Environmental Degradation.
- [2] The "Malthusian Nightmare" Revisited.

READ: D&P, Chs. 3, 8, 10 and pp. 172-174; and
Abbott, Rogers and Sloboda, Chs. 1-5.

Mid-Term Papers Due (1 November)

8 Nov

3. *Pillar 3: Conflict Intervention.*

a. 3rd Party Objectives.

- [1] Violent Conflict *Prevention*
[= **Preventive Diplomacy**].
- [2] Conflict *Management*
[= **Peacekeeping**].
- [3] Conflict *Settlement*
[= **Coercive Peacemaking**].
- [4] Conflict *Resolution*
[= **Noncoercive Peacemaking**].
- [5] Conflict *Transformation* [*Provention*]
[= **Peacebuilding**].

b. 3rd Party Approaches for Achieving Goals.

- [1] *Competitive* and/or *Cooperative*
Processes.
- [2] *Negative* and/or *Positive Peace*
Orientations.

[3] *Track-1* and/or *Multi-Track* Actors and Techniques.

- 15 Nov/
22 Nov IV. Integration: Theory as a Basis for Enhanced Practice.
- A. Generic Theory or Disparate Bits and Pieces?
B. Resolution of the "Nature-Nurture Debate"?
C. The Need for a "Paradigm Shift": From a One-Dimensional (*Realpolitik-only*) to a Multidimensional (e.g., "4+2") Orientation?
- READ: D&P, Ch. 12.
- 29 Nov V. Application of Theory: Dealing with Violence and Violent Conflict in the U.S., and *Postmodern Warfare* Globally.
- READ: Abbott, Rogers and Sloboda, Ch. 6;
Baker and Hamilton;
Gilligan, Epilogue (pp. 241-267);
Garbarino, Chs. 6-8 and Appendix (pp. 239-250);
Moghaddam, Ch. 10;
Sandole, 2007, Chs. 3, 7-10;
Sandole, 2002ab;
Wrangham & Peterson, Chs. 10-13.
- 6 Dec Course Review and Evaluation.
- 13 Dec **Final Papers Due**