

CONF708: Identity and Conflict

Faculty: Karyna Korostelina
George Mason University
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
ckoroste@gmu.edu
703-993-1304

Fall 2007
M: 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 3 papers on multiple identities, ethnic identity, and national 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 35% 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.

Korostelina, K. V. (2007) *Social identity and conflict*. Palgrave

Peacock, J. L., Thornton, P. M. and Inman, P. B. (2007). *Identity Matters: Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict*. Berghahn Books

Rothbart, D. and K. V. Korostelina (2007) *Identity, morality and threat*. Lexington

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

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

Weekly Schedule

August 27: Introduction to Course. Introduction to Social Identity
Reading: Korostelina: 15-21; 59-67; Rothbart and Korostelina: 147-176; Volkan: 19 - 29;

September 10: Theories of Social Identity
Reading: Korostelina: 21-32; Volkan: 36- 49, 81-100

September 17: Structure and Dynamics of Social Identity
Reading: Korostelina: 71-93; 113-121

September 24: Identity, prejudice, and discrimination.
Reading: Ashmore: 3-42; Rothbart and Korostelina: 129-146; Peacock: 34-48, 98-119

October 1: Identity and conflict
Reading: Korostelina: 127-154; Rothbart and Korostelina: 301-328;

October 9: Identity, Moral Denigration, and Violence
Reading: Ashmore: 133-187; Rothbart and Korostelina: 1-18; 29-58

October 15: Ethnic Identity. and conflict
Reading: Ashmore: 42-71; Volkan: 101-116; 157-167; **Horowitz: 51-88;**

October 22: National Identity
Reading: Ashmore: 71-133; Korostelina: 181-187; Peacock:15-33

October 29: National and Ethnic identity: Case Study
Reading: Peacock: 73-98, 157-170; Rothbart and Korostelina: 177-210

November 5: Religious Identity and Conflict
Reading: Rothbart and Korostelina: 211-240; Peacock: 171-234

November 12: Identity-Based Conflict Resolution: Early-warning and Identity management
Reading: Korostelina: 201-239

November 19: Conflict Transformation: Building Relationship
Readings: Volkan: 203-227, Ashmore: 187-213; Rothbart and Korostelina: 367-392

November 26: Paper presentation and discussion

December 3: 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 24**

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 29**

3. National Identity paper

You are working in a newspaper and received the following letter: "In current news people very often use words *nationalism* and *patriotism*. Are they similar or different? Do they describe the same processes and phenomenon or they have diverse meaning? What theoretical approaches describe them? How we can compare them?" Write the answer for this letter. The papers should be 3- 5 pages in length, double space, 12. Due date is: **November 12**.

4. 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: **November 26**. **Due date for final paper is December 10.**