

*Eastern Mennonite University/ Center for Justice and Peacebuilding*

**Summer Peacebuilding Institute**

**Analysis: Understanding Conflict**

**PAX 533**

*Session 1: May 5 – May 13, 2008*

(Final syllabus)

**Instructor**

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**Course Description**

This course draws from social science disciplines to review the broad interdisciplinary theoretical bases for conflict transformation. The course focuses on the initial analysis as a necessary step toward transformative intervention in any conflict. Participants will build a vocabulary for talking analytically about conflicts and conflict intervention strategies. They will practice using various tools to analyze conflicts at different levels of social organization.

*(This course satisfies a core course requirement for MA students)*

**Course Objectives**

Provide students opportunities to learn about conflict analysis through joint analysis of a diverse set of case studies and to gain an understanding of the nexus between theory and practice. The course is designed to:

- Create a learning community through shared readings, research, class discussions and interactive exercises;
- Provide a forum to discuss, analyze and critique the application, integration and evaluation of a broad range of conflict resolution and transformative approaches;
- Learn from each other's valuable experiences as individuals, professionals, students and more importantly members of the global community;
- Provide you with the opportunity to analyze, reflect and gain practical experiences in critiquing conflict resolution and transformation approaches through case study analysis.

**Course Philosophy**

Discussing conflicts is not an easy task. The issues can be divisive and the rhetoric is sometimes inflammatory. The challenge is to think and reflect on multiple sources of data. I, the faculty, acknowledge that our personal experiences, ethnic and cultural heritage and religious identity impact the way we understand the issues and the way we will present them. In light of this acknowledgement, I would like to commit and have you commit to the following:

- a) Respect all points of view regardless of where you stand on these issues
- b) Listen to understand and make every effort to hear what the other person is trying to communicate;
- c) Accept that we are here as a Learning Community—in which each person is a teacher and a learner;
- d) Acknowledge our commitment to issues of social justice and the health of society at large;
- e) Discussion of these issues often stirs strong emotions within and between people. I encourage each student to take care of her/him self in light of this reality.

As faculty for this course, I make the following assumptions: a) change is possible; b) as practitioners and people who work with conflict, we have something to offer by forming partnerships and outreach to others; c) to be effective, and we must work with the parties as they are and not as we like them to be.

### **Special Needs**

I would like to invite you to bring to my attention any special needs. I will be more than happy to discuss them with you to facilitate your participation in class.

### **Course Dates and Location**

The course will be conducted as part of the Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI) of the Center for Justice & Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. It will start on Monday May 5 and end on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008. With the exception of the first and last days, classes will be held between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., with a two-hour break for lunch. In addition, there will be one evening session for students taking the class for academic credit. There are no classes scheduled on the weekend.

### **Course Assignments (for all students)**

#### Pre-class assignment:

- A) Identify a conflict that you are either part of or are interested in. Write up 10 questions that someone who is seeking an understanding of the conflict might ask you to gain insights into its sources, dynamics and/or outcomes. Come to class prepared to share the questions.

#### Class assignments:

1. Group Project: As a group, you have the opportunity to select an on-going conflict (community, national, international, organizational, environmental, ...) that is of interest to you and other members of your group. In this role and to complete this assignment, you are to:
  - o Research, explore, and analyze the conflict. Identify any efforts that may have been initiated to address the conflict.
  - o Prepare a group presentation. The purpose of your presentation is to educate your peers on the conflict, its sources, dynamics and current outcome. You are encouraged and will be rewarded on the interactive nature of your group presentation. Each group member should have a role during the

presentation. Tie your presentation to class materials and theories of practice discussed during class.

- For the class presentation, please prepare a handout (and/or PowerPoint slide) about the conflict. Prepare one or two slides to include a) list dilemmas that you encountered as a group in analyzing the conflict. Present any recommendations for future practitioners engaging in similar research and activities.

*Class time will be allocated for joint research and preparation.*

### **Course Reader (to be handed out on the first day of the class)**

Paul Salem. “A Critique of western conflict resolution from a non-Western Perspective. In Conflict Resolution in the Arab World: Selected Essays. American University of Beirut Publications, 1997. 11-24

Volpe, M. & Strobl, S. (2003). Dispute resolvers in a post-September 11th world. *Practical Dispute Resolution*, 3, (1), (pp. 1-15)

Wing, L. and Rifkin, J. “Racial Identity Development and the Mediation of Conflicts.” In C. L. Wijeyasinghe and B.W. Jackson (eds.), *New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: A Theoretical and Practical Anthology*. New York: New York University Press, 2001.

Christison, Kathleen and Bill. “Meeting the Other in Israel and Palestine.” Retrieved 1/14/08 from: [http://mostlywater.org/meeting\\_the\\_other\\_in\\_israel\\_and\\_palestine](http://mostlywater.org/meeting_the_other_in_israel_and_palestine)

Sweetman, D. (2001). “*Peace and conflict resolution in the face of terror.*” Retrieved 2/2/2002 from <http://www.trinstitute.org/ojpcer/pterror.html>

Kevin Avruch, “Type I and Type II Errors in Culturally Sensitive Conflict Resolution Practice” , *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* , Volume: 20, Number: 3, Spring, 2003. Page(s): 351-371.

Ronald J. Fisher and Loreleigh Keashly, “The Potential Complementarity of Mediation and Consultation within a Contingency Model of Third Party Consultation,” *Journal of Peace Research* 28:1 (1991): 29-42.

### **Course Assignments (graduate students only)**

1. Group Project: (Total 50 percent)
  - a. Your active participation in the class group project. (30 percent)
  - b. Write a 5-7 pg reflection paper on your participation in the group project. What did you learn about yourself, others, how did you contribute, what key learning did you gain from this group exercise. (20 percent).

2. Compare and contrast the work of two lead practitioners of your choice. Report your findings and analysis in a 17 - 20 page paper (double space). The paper should highlight the reasons behind your selection of these two practitioners, differences and similarities with regard to their practice and work. Please submit a list of the two practitioners to me for approval and a proposed outline for areas of comparison. (30 percent)
3. Class Participation: (20 percent)

### **Required Books (graduate students only)**

Jeffrey Z. Rubin and Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

Beth Roy. (1994) *Some Trouble with Cows: Making Sense of Social Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

John Paul Lederach (1997) *Building Peace; Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington DC; USIP Press.

Ury, William L. (2000) *The Third Side*. New York: Penguin Books. John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Hizkias Assefa and Paul Wahrhaftig. (1990). *The MOVE Crisis in Philadelphia: Extremist Groups and Conflict Resolution*. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press.

### **Course Assignments (graduate students only)**

2. Group Project: (Total 50 percent)
  - a. Your active participation in the class group project. (30 percent)
  - b. Write a 5-7 pg reflection paper on your participation in the group project. What did you learn about yourself, others, how did you contribute, what key learning did you gain from this group exercise. (20 percent).
4. Compare and contrast the work of two lead practitioners of your choice. Report your findings and analysis in a 17 - 20 page paper (double space). The paper should highlight the reasons behind your selection of these two practitioners, differences and similarities with regard to their practice and work. Please submit a list of the two practitioners to me for approval and a proposed outline for areas of comparison. (30 percent)
5. Class Participation: (20 percent)

## Course Schedule

### Day 1: Monday, May 5, 2008

Introductions meet and greet.  
Course Overview: student and faculty expectations  
**I. Conflict Analysis: Defining conflict and the field of conflict resolution**  
Conflicts: what are they? Characteristics? What do we know about conflict from research?  
Levels of Conflict, sources of conflict.  
Interactive group exercises (TBD)  
*Group assignment working session*  
Readings Jeffrey Rubin et al – Chapters 1, 2, 3  
Lederach, Part 1  
Ury, Part I

### Day 2: Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Sources of Conflict Cont.  
**II. Conflict Approaches and Strategies / Dynamics**  
Approaches to Conflict  
Interactive group exercises  
Guest speaker (TBD)  
*Group assignment working session*  
Readings Jeffrey Rubin et al – Chapters 5, 6,  
Assefa and Wahrhaftig, The Move

### Day 3: Wednesday, May 7, 2008

Approaches to Conflict (Cont.)  
**III. Interventions**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Party Roles (Intro)  
Group Exercise (TBD)  
*Group assignment working session*  
Readings Jeffrey Rubin et al, Chapters 7, 8  
Beth Roy, Some Troubles with Cows  
Reader: Salem

### Day 4: Thursday, May 8, 2008

3<sup>rd</sup> party Roles (Cont.)  
Variables impacting 3<sup>rd</sup> party roles  
What we know from practice – voices from lead practitioners  
Group exercises (TBD)  
Guest Speaker (TBD)  
*Group assignment working session*  
Readings Jeff Rubin, Part III  
Ury, The Third Side, Part II  
Reader: Wing and Rifkin, Avruch, Fisher and Keashley,

**Day 5: Friday, May 9, 2008**

Interventions and role of intervenors.

Stories from the Field

**III. Conflict Resolution / Transformation**

Group exercises (TBD)

*Group assignment working session*

Readings Lederach Part II

Reader: Sweetman, Volpe

**May 10-11, 2008 Weekend (ENJOY!)**

**Day 7: Monday, May 12, 2008**

Conflict Resolution / Transformation (cont.)

Group Presentations

Reader: Christison

**Day 8: Tuesday, May 13, 2008**

Group Presentation (cont.)

**IV. Review and Integration**

What does it all mean: Lessons learned, potential solutions, new areas of focus, issues requiring further analysis and consideration.

Course evaluation

CELEBRATION!!!

## **Bibliography**

**(You may also enjoy the following contribution by lead practitioners)**

- Abdalla, A. (2000-2001). Principles of Islamic interpersonal conflict intervention: A search within Islam and western literature. *Journal of Law and Religion*, 15, 51-184.
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- Avraham, Burg. "A Failed Israeli Society Collapses While Its Leaders Remain Silent." The Forward. August 29, 2003.  
<http://www.arabworldbooks.com/arab/avraham.htm>
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- Curle, Adam *In the Middle; A Non-Violent Mediation in Violent Situations* (1986)(Berg Publishers/ St. Martins Press; 1986).
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- Dukes, E. Franklin. "What we know about environmental conflict resolution: an analysis based on research." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, vol. 22, 1-2, p. 191-220.
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- Jayne Seminare Docherty. (2005) *The Little Book of Strategic Negotiation*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books
- John Paul Lederach and Janice Jenner (2002) *Into the Eye of the Storm: A Handbook of International Peace building*. San Francisco; Jossey Bass.
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- Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Miall. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press 2005 2nd edition) ISBN 0-7456-3213-0
- Ronald J. Fisher. (1997) *Inter-Active Conflict Resolution*. Syracuse, University Press.
- Rouhana, N. & Kellman, H. (1994). Promoting joint thinking in international conflict: An Israeli- Palestinian continuing workshop. *Journal of Social Issues*, 50, 157-178.
- Schirch, Lisa. (2004) *The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books
- Peacebuilding: A Field Guide. Edited by Luc Reyhler & Thania Paffenholz (Boulder, CA; Lynne Reinner; 2001)
- Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Mennonite Conciliation Services (Akron, PA; MCC Resources; 2001)
- Usher, Graham. (1995) *Palestine in Crisis. The Struggle for Peace and Political Independence after Oslo*. Connecticut: Pluto Press.