

**CONF 340**  
**GLOBAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS & RESOLUTION**  
**Semester: Fall 2009**

**Class Time:** Friday, 10:30am — 1:15pm  
**Location:** GMU Fairfax Campus, Robinson A249  
**Instructor:** David Alpher  
**Office Hours:** Thursday 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm, ICAR offices Module II; or by appointment  
**Contact:** (703) 380-5755; Email dalpher@gmu.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces students to theories of international violence and conflict with particular reference to globalization, transnational and international processes. It covers the analysis of conflicts as they are addressed by or ought to be addressed by the international community, and how theory and practice are evolving in light of the significant changes in the political and social landscape in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>. It visits the definitions of conflict and diverse views of its resolution with particular reference to those conflicts whose causal factors and context do not fit within “classical” definitions or structures. It is designed to help students to improve practice through understanding of theory, and reflectively improve theory through practical experience; critical thinking, analysis and hands-on practice will be core themes throughout the course.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Familiarize students with terminology and concepts associated with conflicts that are addressed by the international community, including the UN system and regional organizations
- Help students to think critically, systematically and analytically about conflict in different regions and in a variety of contexts.
- Connect theory to practice through discussion, research and application to real events and interventions.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**1) Class participation (20%):** Active participation during class time is expected—it should go without saying, but while missed attendance will hurt your grade, simply attending does NOT equal participation. I expect you to arrive at each class with questions and commentary on the readings, and to involve yourself actively in class discussion.

**2) First paper (25%):** A 4-5 page essay (double-spaced, Times New Roman font, one-inch margin) will ask you to choose an ongoing conflict or sub-area of an ongoing conflict and analyze based on the introductory sections of the class. For this as with all papers I will be looking for critical and logical thought; for this paper specifically I will be looking for awareness of what you DON'T know, based on the limited information you'll have at this point, as well as what you CAN know given what you've learned. Will be discussed in prior class. Due week 5

**3) The group presentation (20%)** Students will be assigned randomly to a group and jointly select one conflict case to analyze. They will be in charge of identifying sources and

bibliographic references. A template of the analytical structure will be provided by the instructor. The students in each case study group will be asked to meet (time will be provided during class hours but additional meetings or coordination by email, phone, or other means may be necessary as well). The group will develop a plan to present its understanding of the case. This may represent a consensus among the group or alternative perspectives may be present. The group presentations will be of equal time for all groups (time will be strictly enforced), followed by a general discussion in the class. Presentations are in units 14 and 15

**4) In class quiz (10%)** This exam will be handed during Unit 8. It will cover all subjects covered in the prior sessions.

**5) The final paper (25%)** will cover materials from throughout the class. A 10 page essay (double-spaced, Times New Roman font, one-inch margin) will ask you to reflect critically on the themes, theories, or cases covered by the class, utilizing the theories of conflict analysis and resolution, expanding on the first paper theme, discussed two weeks prior and again one week prior to ensure students are on track. Due 5pm on the day of unit 16.

### **CLASS POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

- Students are responsible for completing individual and group assignments on time.
- Students will be penalized the equivalent of one letter increment for each day the assignment is late. In other words, a paper I would otherwise have graded “A” will become an A- on the first day late, a B+ on the second day, and so on. Anything over three days late will need to be discussed personally with me. *Assignments that are overdue by more than one week will not be accepted.*
- If something comes up that will prevent you from attending class, let me know ahead of time when possible and contact a group member to find out what was missed. Students are responsible for all announcements, assignments, and date changes made in class and for all material covered in class even if they are not there. I urge you to make every effort to attend no matter what the situation—your group members and your grade are depending on it.
- Delays, deferrals, or a grade of “incomplete” for the course will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family crisis. Due to the interestingly sharp increase in familial death rates often noticed around paper deadlines, take note that while I will be sympathetic to any such situation, I will also expect backup.
- In this modern age, the use of the Internet for discussion and dissemination has become commonplace. Some class announcements and readings may be posted to the class website or sent via email. Students are responsible for keeping up to date with announcements and assignments placed on the site or sent via email.
- Any cases of plagiarism (from published or unpublished work) or turning in work not written by the student him or herself, will be punishable as per the university honor codes. You should all be familiar with the relevant honor codes, and I expect rigid adherence to them. If you have any questions about these codes, read ICAR’s Academic Standards and the University’s Honor Code; if you have further questions, come see me.

## **TEXTS: REQUIRED READINGS:**

Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall. (2005, Second Edition). Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The prevention, management, and transformation of deadly conflicts. Cambridge, UK, and Malden, MA: Polity.

Kriesberg, Louis. (1998). Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution, Rowman & Littlefield, Maryland.

Other readings listed in each unit

## **COURSE READINGS/INTERNET/ELECTRONIC RESERVES:**

This course will use several methods for access to class readings: the library, the library's electronic reserves, and ICAR Ning shared space. Other readings may be indicated or distributed in class. All students are responsible for downloading and reading assignments before they are discussed in class. Several readings will be noted as "SUPPLEMENTARY" and are not required, but reading them will enhance your understanding of the course material. Technical difficulties, if any, will be discussed in class.

**If you have any questions not answered in this syllabus or have any concerns during the course, please feel free to ask in class or contact the instructor as soon as possible.**

## **CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Note:** Readings and assignments listed for a class should be prepared for and completed **before** that date, unless indicated otherwise.

### **Unit 1: 9/1**

**Introduction to global conflict analysis and resolution.**

**Reading: no reading assigned**

### **Unit 2: 9/8**

**History of Early Peace Efforts, and Understanding Contemporary Conflict; contrasting theories.**

**Readings:**

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, Chapter 1

John Burton, Conflict Resolution as a Political Philosophy, in Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice. Will email.

Laurie Nathan, The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Structural Causes of Violence in

Africa

[http://webworld.unesco.org/water/wwap/pccp/cd/pdf/educational\\_tools/course\\_modules/reference\\_documents/conflict/thefourhorsemen.pdf](http://webworld.unesco.org/water/wwap/pccp/cd/pdf/educational_tools/course_modules/reference_documents/conflict/thefourhorsemen.pdf)

Commentary on Hans Morgenthau, Chapter 1 “A Realist Theory of International Politics” from Politics Among Nations: The struggle for Power and Peace

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/morg6.htm>

**Assignment:** Form small groups for group presentations – discussion

### **Unit 3: 9/15**

#### **The United Nations System**

##### **Reading:**

Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice. New York: United Nations. <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/>

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, “An Agenda for Peace” – UN Secretary General Report  
<http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/agpeace.html>

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, Chapter 6

**Assignment:** Group update

### **Unit 4: 9/22**

#### **Diagnosing Conflict: frameworks for analysis**

##### **Readings:**

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, Chapters 2, 3 and 4;

Paul Wehr, Conflict Mapping

[http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict\\_mapping/?nid=6793](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict_mapping/?nid=6793)

### **Unit 5: 9/29**

#### **Who can do what, when? Regional Organizations**

##### **Readings:**

Carolyn Stephenson, What are Non-Governmental Organizations?

[http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/role\\_ngo/?nid=1123](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/role_ngo/?nid=1123)

Eric Brahm, Inter-Governmental Organizations

[http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/role\\_igo/?nid=1124](http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/role_igo/?nid=1124)

**Assignment:** Group update - First paper due

**Unit 6: 10/6**

**Escalation**

**Readings:**

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, Chapter 5

Kriesberg, Chapter 6

**Assignment:** Group update

**Unit 7: 10/13**

**De-escalation and Peacemaking**

**Readings:**

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, Chapter 7

Kriesberg, Chapter 7

**Assignment:** Group update

**Unit 8: 10/20**

**Peacemaking in context: Israel and Palestine**

**Reading:**

Familiarize yourself with [www.ipcri.org](http://www.ipcri.org), <http://nswas.org/>,  
<http://www.machsomwatch.org/en>, <http://www.womeninblack.org/>

**Assignment:** In class test

**Unit 9: 10/27**

**Conflict Resolution and Terrorism**

**Reading:**

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, Chapter 11

Alpher and Rothbart, "Good Violence and the Myth of the Eternal Soldier," in Identity, Morality and Threat. Will email

**Unit 10: 11/3**

**Peacebuilding I**

**Readings:**

Harold Saunders, "Prenegotiation and Circumnegotiation: Arenas of the Peace Process," in Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, *Turbulent Peace*. Will email.

Thania Paffenholz, "Designing Transformation and Intervention Processes" in Handbook of Conflict Management, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management at [http://www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/paffenholz\\_handbook.pdf?LANG=e&id=106](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/paffenholz_handbook.pdf?LANG=e&id=106)

**Assignment:** Group update

**Unit 11: 11/10**

**Peacebuilding II**

**Readings:**

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, Chapter 9

Kriesberg, Chapter 10

**Assignment:** Group update

**Unit 12: 11/17**

**Reconciliation**

**Readings:**

Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, Chapter 10

Lederach, John Paul. 2002. "Civil Society and Reconciliation," in *Turbulent Peace*. Washington, DC: USIP. Will email.

**Assignment:** Group update

**Unit 13: 11/24**

**Review** – wrap-up and final discussion on the concepts and theories covered during the semester.

**Unit 14: 12/1**

Group presentations

Unit 15: 12/8

Group presentations

Unit 16: 12/15

**Final Take Home is due at 5pm. Send it to dalpher@gmu.edu.**