COM 527/798
Seminar in Organizational Conflict Management
Summer 2012
Syllabus

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Course Description

The goal of this course is to examine the processes and outcomes of organizational conflict through theoretical, critical, and practical lenses. Analysis will include multiple texts including activities, a textbook, and academic journal articles. Emphasis is placed on workplace conflict and outcomes at the individual, group, and organizational levels. Evaluation is based on student participation in online forums, application cases and responses, a research project, and an online presentation. Theoretical, critical and practical analysis of sources, process and outcomes of organizational conflict.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. recognize the causes of conflict and conflict escalation, leading to greater ability to alter nonproductive responses to conflict
2. recognize the advantages, disadvantages, and potential outcomes of a variety of conflict management strategies
3. analyze the roles of identity, culture, emotion, and power on the conflict process
4. improve their own conflict performance through attention to the basics of effective dialogue and negotiation
5. improve their ability to facilitate conflicts as a third party through attention to the basics of effective mediation and other intervention strategies
6. make suggestions for organizational dispute system design or conflict management policies and procedures
**Required Text**


**Required readings (articles and book chapters) for each module are available on the Moodle site.**

**Graded Components**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Application Case</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written Application Case Response</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moodle Forum Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities &amp; Reflections</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research/Application Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation of Paper for Class</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<td><strong>Total points:</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale**

- 400-390 = A+
- 359-348 = B+
- 319-308 = C+
- 279-268 = D+
- 389-370 = A
- 347-332 = B
- 307-292 = C
- 267-252 = D
- 369-360 = A-
- 331-320 = B-
- 291-280 = C-
- 251-240 = D-

**Written Application Case (50 points) & Response (50 points)**

Students will be responsible for writing one case that integrates ideas from course readings with their experience or an area of interest. Each student may choose to develop their case based on the readings in any given module. The student will upload their case to a designated Forum created for cases. Each student should read ALL cases that are posted, but must choose ONE case to develop a written response to. Students should draw from real conflict experiences (your own or others’) when possible to create these cases. Cases should be related to course readings, but may draw from other sources as well.

*These cases may be incorporated into your final paper if applicable.*

**Moodle Forum Participation (100 points)**

One of my primary goals is to create a sense of community online. This requires that we engage in forum discussions on each module. My expectation is that we will cover two modules a week to achieve course goals, this you should be posting at least twice per week, and in reality, more than two posts since you should be responding to others’ posts. Your participation in posting and reading items on the discussion board will be graded throughout the term and assessment will be based on the quality of postings (insights, critical analysis, presenting new information, see “Key Features of Analysis” and “Critical Thinking Rubric”). Note that quality is more important to me than quantity, but there is a delicate balance there and “excellent” participation will consist of both presenting new ideas and responding to those of others.
Term Paper (100 points) & Presentation (50 points)

Students have two options for completing a term paper on organizational conflict management. Option one involves conducting primary and/or secondary research on a specific topic of interest to develop implications for practice. (For example, perceptions of employee confrontation; conflict strategies of effective supervisors, etc.) Option two involves choosing a specific organizational context and using course materials to develop a conflict management “manual” that would provide diagnostic questions, suggestions for conflict de-escalation in specific situations and recommendations for conflict management system design. Regardless of the option chosen, students will come up with a format for sharing the final project with the class that is most appropriate for an online course. It could be, for example, a video, narrated power point presentation, prezi, etc. I am open to suggestions on this, but the point is that this should be in a format that you would use if presenting your findings or ideas with a practitioner rather than an academic audience.

Recommended readings for those choosing option two (all available in our “resources” section on Moodle):


Course Policies & Expectations

This course conforms all policies for electronically hosted courses, available at http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/informationtechnology/REG08.00.11.php

Make-up work. Per University regulations, students are allowed to make-up work when absences are anticipated sanctioned events or documented emergency situations. Anticipated situations (participating in an official university function, court attendance, religious observances, or military duty) must be submitted in writing at the beginning of the semester or within one week of the anticipated absence. Emergency absences (student illness, injury or death of immediate family member) must also be documented by Student Development or an attending physician within one week following the emergency. See me during office hours or make an appointment to get any missed assignments
A word on plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. NC State’s policy on academic integrity can be found in the Code of Student Conduct. When turning in any assignment or exam I assume you are acting in accordance with the pledge: "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment."

Cellular phones. It is distracting and disrespectful to have your phone ringing during class. If you MUST bring these devices to class, please alert me in advance, make sure they are on a silent setting, and leave the room if you must take a call.

My Commitment to You

ADA accommodations. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss any such accommodations you may need for this course.

Equity. All persons, regardless of age, race, religion, gender, physical disability or sexual orientation shall have equal opportunity without harassment in Department of Communication courses and programs. Any harassment should be reported immediately to either the classroom instructor or the department head.

Accountability. As we proceed through this course, know I have high expectations for both of us. I will work to meet your expectations and I expect you to work to meet mine. If at any point during the semester you feel I am being unclear, please bring it to my attention. I will spend as much time as is necessary to be clear about course content, expectations, and my evaluation of your work.

If you are having difficulties with the readings or course assignments, please come talk with me. Do not wait until the last week of class. I value early and honest communication and welcome any conversations that will improve the learning context. I take very seriously the responsibility of being your teacher and I expect to be held accountable for my performance--just as I will hold you accountable for yours.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings to be discussed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module One</td>
<td>Introductions, theoretical frameworks, definitions &amp; assumptions</td>
<td>Jones &amp; Brinkert, Ch 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Jameson, 1999</td>
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<td>Trudel &amp; Reio, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module Two</td>
<td>The nature and process of conflict, conflict escalation &amp; de-escalation</td>
<td>Jones &amp; Brinkert, Ch 2 &amp; 9</td>
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<td>Jehn, 1997</td>
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<td>Kolb &amp; Putnam, 1992</td>
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<td>Module Three</td>
<td>Identity &amp; Conflict</td>
<td>Jones &amp; Brinkert, Ch 3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td>Domenici &amp; Littlejohn, 2006 (pp1-59)</td>
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<td>Module Four</td>
<td>Culture &amp; Conflict</td>
<td>Jones &amp; Binkert, Ch 8</td>
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<td>Nagda &amp; Zuniga, 2003</td>
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<td>Kolb &amp; Putnam, 1992</td>
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<td>Module Five</td>
<td>Emotion &amp; Conflict</td>
<td>Jones &amp; Brinkert, Ch 5</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Jameson et al, 2009</td>
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<td>Poblet &amp; Casanovas, 2007</td>
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<td>Module Six</td>
<td>Power &amp; Dissent</td>
<td>Jones &amp; Brinkert, Ch 6</td>
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<td>Volkema, Bergmann &amp; Farquhar, 1997</td>
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<td>Kassing &amp; McDowell, 2008</td>
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<td>Module Seven</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>Fisher &amp; Ury, 1991 (Ch. 2)</td>
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<td>Jones &amp; Brinkert, Ch 10</td>
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<td>Steinel, Van Kleef, &amp; Harinck, 2008</td>
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<td>Module Eight</td>
<td>Third Party intervention</td>
<td>Jones &amp; Brinkert, Ch 11</td>
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<td>Rifkin, 2001</td>
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<td>Harrison &amp; Morrill, 2004</td>
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<td>Module Nine</td>
<td>Mediation</td>
<td>Bush &amp; Folger, 2005, Ch 2</td>
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<td>Poitras, et al., 2005</td>
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<td>Jacobs, 2009</td>
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<td>Module Ten</td>
<td>Dispute System Design</td>
<td>Jones &amp; Binkert, Ch 13 &amp; 14</td>
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<td>Blancero &amp; Dyer, 1996</td>
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<td>Bingham &amp; Pitts, 2002</td>
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Bibliography of Readings by Module

Module One: Introductions, Theoretical Frameworks and Definitions & Assumptions


Module Two: The Nature and Process of Conflict


Module Three: Identity and Conflict


Module Four: Culture & Conflict


**Module Five: Emotion & Conflict**


**Module Six: Power & Dissent**


**Module Seven: Negotiation**


**Module Eight: Third Party Intervention**


**Module Nine: Mediation**


**Module Ten: Dispute System Design**


**Additional Resources (Optional)**

