

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

Course Hosting & Computer Requirements

The course is hosted on moodle at NCSU, and you will need your unity ID and password to access all course materials. I will hold online office hours each Thursday from 12:00-1:00 using Collaborate. Students will receive an invitation from Collaborate that will include instructions for configuring your computer if you wish to participate. You will also need a headset and a computer with a microphone. A video camera is nice but not critical. I am also available via email or skype. If we interact via email, I expect a 24-hour response time on weekdays (and you should expect the same from me). There may be

times when you ask a question via email that is relevant to the whole class, and I may respond via “announcements” in moodle rather than to you individually.

Required Text

Jones, T. S., & Brinkert, R. (2008). *Conflict coaching: conflict management strategies and skills for the individual*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

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

Graded Components

Written Application Case	50 (12.5%)
Written Application Case Response	50 (12.5%)
Moodle Forum Participation	100 (25%)
Activities & Reflections	50 (12.5%)
Research/Application Paper	100 (25%)
Presentation of Paper for Class	50 (12.5%)
Total points:	400 (100%)

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. Students will be placed into peer groups and read the cases of everyone in their group. Each student will prepare a written response to ONE of their peers’ cases that includes your critical analysis of the case and another perspective on how it escalated and might be e-escalated or managed. 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” or procedure 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):

Harvey, G. (2008). Designing procedural instructions: 5 key components. *Information Design Journal* 16(1), 19–24 © 2008 John Benjamins Publishing Company doi: 10.1075/idj.16.1.03har

Kolb, D. M. (1986). Who are organizational third parties and what do they do? *Research on Negotiation in Organizations, Volume 1*, pp 207-227. JAI Press.

Sander, F. A., & Bordone, R. C. (2005) Early intervention: How to minimize the cost of conflict. *Negotiation*, 1-5.

Course Policies & Expectations

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

Assignment Deadlines. Due to the interactive nature of a seminar course, you cannot completely go “at your own pace,” although there is obviously more flexibility than in a traditional classroom. To help you stay on track I have provided weekly deadlines for each module, which are either Sunday or Thursday nights at 11:59pm. All assignment deadlines are on our moodle calendar. Per University regulations, students are allowed to make-up work when “absences” are anticipated for University 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. Please email me as soon as possible if you need to miss a deadline for a University excused reason. Obviously it will not be possible to make up forum discussions once time on a given module has ended.

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. Remember that any time you get an idea from another source (journal article, newspaper, web site, etc.) you must provide a citation (even if it is not a direct quote!). If you have ANY question about whether you should cite something, cite it! 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."

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. Since many of our course materials are in power point format, they may not be compatible with all document readers. Please contact me as soon as possible to discuss any such accommodations you will 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 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 contact me as early as possible. 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.

Course Content

Date	Topic	Readings to be discussed
Module One	Introductions, theoretical frameworks, definitions & assumptions	Jones & Brinkert, Ch 1 Jameson, 1999 Trudel & Reio, 2011
Module Two	The nature and process of conflict, conflict escalation & de-escalation	Jones & Brinkert, Ch 2 & 9 Jehn, 1997 Kolb & Putnam, 1992
Module Three	Identity & Conflict	Jones & Brinkert, Ch 3 & 4 Domenici & Littlejohn, 2006 (pp1-59)
Module Four	Culture & Conflict	Jones & Binkert, Ch 8 Nagda & Zuniga, 2003 Chaisiri & Flax, 2004
Module Five	Emotion & Conflict	Jones & Brinkert, Ch 5 Jameson et al, 2009 Poblet & Casanovas, 2007
Module Six	Power & Dissent	Jones & Brinkert, Ch 6 Volkema, Bergmann & Farquhar, 1997 Kassing & McDowell, 2008
Module Seven	Negotiation	Fisher & Ury, 1991 (Ch. 2) Jones & Brinkert, Ch 10 Steinel, Van Kleef, & Harinck, 2008
Module Eight	Third Party intervention	Jones & Brinkert, Ch 11 Rifkin, 2001 Harrison & Morrill, 2004
Module Nine	Mediation	Bush & Folger, 2005, Ch 2 Poitras, et al., 2005 Jacobs, 2009
Module Ten	Dispute System Design	Jones & Binkert, Ch 13 & 14 Blancero & Dyer, 1996 Bingham & Pitts, 2002

Bibliography of Readings by Module

Module One: Introductions, Theoretical Frameworks and Definitions & Assumptions

Jones, T. S., & Brinkert, R. (2008). *Conflict coaching: conflict management strategies and skills for the individual*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. CHAPTER ONE

Jameson, J. K. (1999). Toward a comprehensive model for the assessment and management of intraorganizational conflict. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 10*(3), pp. 268-294.

Trudel, J., & Reio, Jr., T. G. (2011). Managing workplace incivility: The role of conflict management styles. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 22*(4), 395-423.

Module Two: The Nature and Process of Conflict

Jones, T. S., & Brinkert, R. (2008). *Conflict coaching: conflict management strategies and skills for the individual*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. CHAPTERS TWO & NINE

Jehn, K. A. (1997). Affective and cognitive conflict in work groups: Increasing performance through value-based intragroup conflict. In C. K. W. De Dreu, & E. Van de Vliert, E. (eds.). *Using conflict in organization, pp. 87-101*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kolb, D. M., & Putnam, L. L. (1992). The multiple faces of conflict in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 13*(3), pp. 311-324.

Module Three: Identity and Conflict

Jones, T. S., & Brinkert, R. (2008). *Conflict coaching: conflict management strategies and skills for the individual*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. CHAPTERS THREE & FOUR

Domenici, K., & Littlejohn, S. W. (2006). *Facework: Bridging theory and practice, 1-59*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Module Four: Culture & Conflict

Jones, T. S., & Brinkert, R. (2008). *Conflict coaching: conflict management strategies and skills for the individual*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. CHAPTER EIGHT

Chaisiri, J., & Flax, J. (2004). Cross-Cultural Issues in a Life Sciences Company *Negotiation Journal, 20*(1), 79 – 86.

Nagda, B. A., & Zúñiga, X. (2003). Fostering meaningful racial engagement through intergroup dialogues. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 6(1), 111–128.

Module Five: Emotion & Conflict

Jones, T. S., & Brinkert, R. (2008). *Conflict coaching: conflict management strategies and skills for the individual*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. CHAPTER FIVE

Jameson, J. K., Bodtker, A. M., Porch, D., & Jordan, W. J. (2009). Exploring the Role of Emotion in Conflict Transformation. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 27, 167-192.

Poblet, M., & Casanovas, P. (2007). Emotions in ODR. *International Review of Law Computers & Technology*, 21(2), 145–155.

Module Six: Power & Dissent

Jones, T. S., & Brinkert, R. (2008). *Conflict coaching: conflict management strategies and skills for the individual*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. CHAPTER SIX

Kassing, J. W., & McDowell, Z. J. (2008). Disagreeing about what's fair: Exploring the relationship between perceptions of justice and employee dissent. *Communication Research Reports*, 25(1), 34–43.

Volkema, R. J., Bergmann, T. J., & Farquhar, K. (1997). Use and impact of informal third party discussions in interpersonal conflicts at work. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 11(2), 185-216.

Module Seven: Negotiation

Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (1991). *Getting to yes*. [Ch. 2: Separate the people from the problem]. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Jones, T. S., & Brinkert, R. (2008). *Conflict coaching: conflict management strategies and skills for the individual*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. CHAPTER TEN

Steinel, W., Van Kleef, G. A., & Harinck, F. (2008). Are you talking to me?! Separating the people from the problem when expressing emotions in negotiation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44, 362–369.

Module Eight: Third Party Intervention

Jones, T. S., & Brinkert, R. (2008). *Conflict coaching: conflict management strategies and skills for the individual*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. CHAPTER ELEVEN

Harrison, T. R., & Morrill, C. (2004). Ombuds processes and disputant reconciliation. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 32(4), 318-341.

Rifkin, J. (2001). Online dispute resolution: Theory and practice of the fourth party. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 19(1), 117-124.

Module Nine: Mediation

Bush, R. A. B., & Folger, J. P. (2005). *The promise of mediation: Responding to conflict through empowerment and recognition (2nd Edition)*, [Ch 2: A transformative view of conflict and mediation. pp41-84]. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Poitras, J., Belair, F., & Byrne, S. (2005). A reflection on unintended consequences in workplace mediation. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 23(1), 43-51.

Jacobs, T. (2009). The man who bridges troubled waters. *Miller-McCune*, 14-19.

Module Ten: Dispute System Design

Jones, T. S., & Brinkert, R. (2008). *Conflict coaching: conflict management strategies and skills for the individual*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. CHAPTERS THIRTEEN & FOURTEEN

Blancero, D. & Dyer, L. (1996). Due process for non-union employees: The influence of system characteristics on fairness perceptions. *Human Resource Management*, 35(3), 343-359.

Bingham, L. B., & Pitts, D. W. (2002). Highlights of Mediation at Work: Studies of the National REDRESS ®Evaluation Project. *Negotiation Journal*, 18(2),135-146.

Additional Resources (Optional)

Kurtzberg, T. R., Naquin, C. E., & Belkin, L. Y. (2009). Humor as a relationship-building tool in online negotiations. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 20(4), 377-397. DOI 10.1108/10444060910991075

Landry, E. M. (2000). Scrolling around the new organization: The potential for conflict in the on-line environment. *Negotiation Journal*, 16(2), 133-142.

Porter-O'Grady T. (2004) Constructing a conflict resolution program for health care. *Health Care Management Review*, 29(4), 278–283.