CONF 713 - Reflective Practice in Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Faculty

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Course Description and Objectives

Reflective practice is the process of exploring a pattern of action, making adjustments during the action, or thinking about past action. In an elemental sense, most of us perform some form of reflective practice virtually every day. To the extent that reflective practice incorporates theory and experience, even the most mundane of activities engages aspects of experiential learning and nascent theory.

Conflict resolution is frequently a process that involves emotional intensity and relational complexity. This can be a factor in dyadic disputes, but is significantly present in deep-rooted multiparty conflicts. Because of this, it is critical that practitioners be skilled at integrating theory and experiential learning into practice at three stages of an intervention: (i) in analyzing or assessing the conflict in preparation for intervention; (ii) during the intervention itself; (iii) and post intervention reflection. In this way, reflective practice is a form of "meaning making"—attempting to make sense of phenomena occurring around you through an interdependence of theory, experience and practice.

Utilizing discussion, laboratory and simulation work, you will have the opportunity to engage aspects of reflective practice as noted above. The objective is to build an understanding of integrative practice that can be utilized in a variety of conflict settings.
Course Requirements

Along with class attendance, students are expected to participate fully in all exercises and complete all weekly required readings in preparation for class discussion. Throughout the course there will be various learning experiences. Mediums will include videos, guest speakers, impromptu vignettes, lectures, simulations and role-plays, journaling, structured observation, class exercises and discussions.

A. Class Discussion and Exercises (simulations and role-plays)
During the course of the semester, there will be opportunities for students to engage in discussion and brief exercises to test the application of reflective practice at various points of a conflict cycle. Students will assume various parties, intervention and observation roles designed to test the application of reflective practice. (20 %)

B. Reflective Practice Log and Paper
Throughout the class students will keep a reflective practice log recording reflections and tasks on class assignments, readings, discussions and exercises. The log is meant to help students develop their own skills as reflective practitioners and you will explore your own skills and abilities to be a conflict resolution practitioner while integrating class assignments and readings. The log will culminate in a research paper integrating readings, practice and own reflection on these. A short log summary (3-5 pp) is due on October 6, and the final paper (~ 15 pp) is due on November 17. (40 %)

C. Reflective Practice Product Presentation
Building on all class requirements and activities, teams of students will develop their own key theory of reflective practice and present it in a capstone product that integrates classroom exercises and discussions, and simulation/role plays. Presentations will take place the last two weeks of classes. (40 %)

Class Policies and Procedures

Students are responsible for completing individual and group assignments on time. You will be penalized the equivalent of a full letter grade for each day the assignment is late.

Some class assignments and readings will be sent via e-mail and students are responsible for checking GMU email and keeping up-to-date with these. Incomplete grades will not be granted save in cases of personal or immediate family illness or emergency.

University Resources and Assistance

Writing Center: The Writing Center provides tutors who can help you develop ideas and revise papers at no charge. It can sometimes accommodate walk-ins, but generally it is best to call for an appointment. The services of the Writing Center are also available online.
**Location:** ARL212 (in the main SPP suite)
**Contact:** (703) 993-1200 or [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu)

**Disability Resource Center:** The Disability Resource Center assists students with learning or physical conditions affecting learning. Students with learning differences that require special conditions for exams or other writing assignments should provide documentation provided by the Disability Resource Center. Please see one of the instructors the first week of classes.
**Location:** SUB I, Room 222  **Contact:** 703-993-2474 [www.gmu.edu/student/drc/](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/)

**Electronic Reserves**
Adobe Acrobat must be installed on your computer to view and print some E-Reserves Readings. E-Reserves permits students to access Course Readings remotely from home or office, and allows students to view and print materials using Adobe Acrobat Reader. All users of the E-Reserves must comply with the University Policy and Copy Right Law (Title 17, United States Code)

**Accessing E-Reserves:**
1. Go to [http://oscr.gmu.edu](http://oscr.gmu.edu)
2. Click on the magnifying glass (Search electronic reserves)
3. Using the drop-down boxes, select the course [CONF 713-001] and instructor [Warfield]
   a. The section and faculty are opposite of what is on the schedule
   b. Be sure it says “Fall 2006”
4. Enter in the password (peace) and click submit to view the item
5. To view and print an article click on the small PDF button or the Link button if available

If you experience problems with an electronic reserve item or need additional help please contact the E-Reserves Coordinator at 993-9043. If you need additional assistance please e-mail [ereserves@gmu.edu](mailto:ereserves@gmu.edu).

**Required Readings**

**Books and Instruments**


Articles and Chapters Available on E-Reserve


Optional Readings


Weekly Class Structure and Assignments

WEEK 1  AU GUST 30, 2006  COMBINED CLASS

Reflective Practice and Experiential Learning – Part 1

Themes:
- Background on reflective practice, where and how it’s being used; role in conflict analysis and resolution
- Tension between (and integration of) theory, research, and practice in conflict resolution

Class Activities:
- Introductions, review of syllabus, course requirements and structure
  Handouts: syllabus, course competencies, journal techniques & notes on final project
- Presentation: theory, research and practice in conflict resolution, levels of reflection.

Readings:

Optional:

WEEK 2  SEPTEMBER 6, 2006  COMBINED CLASS

Reflective Practice and Experiential Learning – Part 2

Themes:
- RP models and degrees of adaptability to conflict analysis and resolution
- Tension points in the model (illustrated generically and via case exp.)
- Kolb’s LSI and implication of reflection on LSI
- Complete Kolb’s Learning Style Inventory PRIOR to class

Class Activities:
- Review and applications of LSI instrument for reflective practice

Readings:
Reflective Practice and Decision-Making – Part 1

Themes:
- Theory, research and practice as it relates to decision-making
- Normative decision-making and its relationship to RP model (illustrated via one of more brief simulated vignettes)
- Complete Kraybill's Conflict Style Inventory PRIOR to class

Class activities:
- Exercise: Roommate in dormitory
- Kraybill’s Style Matters

Readings:

Reflective Practice and Decision-Making – Part 2

Themes:
- Decision making Part II: Normative decision-making and its relationship to RP model (illustrated via one or more brief simulated vignettes)
- How does reflective practice lend itself—what is the theory in action with these parties?

Class activities:
- TVA and Dams Exercise (multi-party) [Are we keeping this exercise?] 

Readings:
**WEEK 5  SEPTEMBER 27, 2006  COMBINED CLASS**

Integration Module

Themes:
- Evidence of single loop vs. double loop learning

Class activities:
- In class movie: “Gang-Banging in Little Rock” video.
- Small group activity: Where were the intervention points? Who were the interveners?

Readings:

**WEEK 6  OCTOBER 4, 2006  COMBINED CLASS**

Reflective Practice and Appreciative Inquiry – Part 1

Themes:
- Working with the Appreciative Inquiry Process
- Theoretical overview

Class activities:
- Practice the 4 stages of IA
- Exercise: Family vacation [Are we keeping this?]

Due:
- Log summary paper

Readings:
WEEK 7  OCTOBER 11, 2006  SECTIONS ONLY

Reflective Practice and Appreciative Inquiry – Part 2

Themes:
- **AI module** wrap-up with reports from students on assignment

Class activities:
- Role play: The Great Lakes Scenario [*Are we keeping this?*]
- GSCS Mid-term evaluations

Readings:

WEEK 8  OCTOBER 18, 2006  SECTIONS ONLY

Reflective Practice and Facilitation

Themes:
- Facilitation models
- Facilitation styles

Class Activities:
- Observation of facilitation techniques: Sections of video: dialogues for the workplace re: facilitation examples and critique
- Conducting a facilitation: Student Protester Arrested

Readings:

WEEK 9  OCTOBER 25, 2006  COMBINED CLASS

Reflective Practice and Narrative and Positioning Theory

Themes:
- Guest Lecture: Dr. Sara Cobb, Director ICAR
- Narrative practice as a theory of relational knowledge
- Positioning theory
Class activities:
- Role-play

Appreciative Inquiry Due (in logs)

Readings:

**WEEK 10  NOVEMBER 1, 20056**

Reflective Practice and Culture – Part 1

Themes:
- Ways of knowing
- Understanding cultural diversity

Class Activity:
- Exercise: [Need to decide exercise]

Readings:

**WEEK 11  NOVEMBER 8, 2006**

Reflective Practice and Culture – Part 2

Themes:
- Cultural awareness
- Intervention roles in cultural conflicts
- Prescriptive and elicitive models of practice
Class activities:

- Exercise: Design culturally sensitive interventions. Case Study: ICC and the Acholi people in Northern Uganda [Look for alternative case studies, e.g. immigration reform]

Readings:


- Chapter from Hofstedter
- Other?]

WEEK 12        NOVEMBER 15, 2006        SECTIONS ONLY

Reflective Practice and Ethics

Themes:

- Ethics and Reflective Practice
- Tensions between personal and professional ethics

Class Activities:

- Exercise: Role-play consulting firm
- Ethics scenarios practice

Due:

- Final Research paper

Readings:

Optional:


**Week 13  November 22, 2006  Thanksgiving Holiday—No Class**

**WEEK 14  NOVEMBER 29, 2006  SECTIONS ONLY**

Integration – Reflective Practice Product Presentations - Part 1

**Theme:**
- Class Wrap up

**Class Activity:**
- Student presentation of RP models [5 groups a 20 min.]

**WEEK 15  DECEMBER 6, 2005  SECTIONS ONLY**

Integration – Reflective Practice Product Presentations - Part 2

**Theme:**
- Case practice; celebration, course evaluation

**Class Activity**
- Student presentation of RP models [5 groups a 20 min.]