DST5206: Identity and Conflict
Solon Simmons
Malta, March 12- March 23, 2012

George Mason University
The School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution (George Mason University)/
Master of Arts in Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean Security (University of Malta)
ssimmon5@gmu.edu

Overview

This course is designed to explore complex interrelations of social identity conflicts in society with the emphasis on the role of identity in processes of conflict resolution and transformation. Critical rethinking of ethnic, national and religious identities as both generators and outcomes of conflict will be important part of the course. Course aims to extend knowledge on structure and dynamic of identity-based conflicts and to develop a framework for their resolution. Course includes lectures, simulations, and case studies. The final assignment of the course requires students to conduct case study and design an intervention into a conflict of their choice.

Assessment of Students

Students participating in the full course will be graded based on the following:

1. Active participation in the class activities is worth 30% of the final grade.
2. Mid-term personal identity paper, worth 30% of the final grade
3. Final discursive identity paper, worth 40% of the final grade

Mid-term Paper 30%

Write a paper about your own identity using the following structure:
a) Consider the most salient features of your self concept.
b) Explore how these might be relevant for you and when and where they emerged as important features of your personal identity

Mid-term Paper 30%
In constructing your essay, you can choose one of the following forms:

I. Write a letter for your friend about your social identity.
II. Write a scientific self-report about your social identity.

The papers should be 6-8 pages in length, double spaced, Friday March 15

**Final Paper 40%**

Using data from an organ of the Maltese public sphere, write a paper about the uses of solidarity that opinion leaders use to frame the sense of what it means to be Maltese. Use data from a real news source to develop your argument and pay attention to the larger narratives used by journalists and politicians and the orienting codes that shape the kinds of narratives that are available for use in the context. Use the exercise to describe the central tendencies of what it means to be Maltese in the early twenty first century as well as the points of tension and variations on the central themes that you discover.

   a) Use and include in your paper data from a live source as raw material for your analysis (e.g. newspapers, television, magazines).
   b) Identify in your empirical texts the major axiological distinctions (the binary codes) used by authors and speakers to orient their arguments about Maltese identity
   c) Explore the particular configurations of binary codes that are used in the public sphere to generate coherent portraits of characteristic heroes and villains.
   d) Speculate about what insights you can draw about the root causes of conflict in Maltese society based on your analysis.

The papers should be 12-15 pages in length, double spaced, due the evening of Thursday March 21

**Course Schedule and Readings**

All of our readings will be made available on the web through the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution community website.

**Week 1**

Day 1 Monday March 12 **Genes of the Soul**


Day 2 Tuesday March 13 **Heavily Populated Solitude**

Day 3 Wednesday March 14 **Ethnic Comparisons**


Day 4 Thursday March 15 **Psychology vs. Sociology**


Week 2

Day 5 Monday March 19 **Civility and Solidarity**


Day 6 Tuesday March 20 **Rhetoric, Civil Repair and Communicative Practice**


Day 7 Wednesday March 21 **Multiculturalism**


Day 8 Thursday March 22 **Individuality and Diversity**

Mill, John S. “Of Individuality, as One of the Elements of Well-Being” from *On Liberty*

To be found at:

http://www.bartleby.com/130/3.html