

**American University**  
**School of International Service**  
**International Peace and Conflict Resolution Program**

**PEACEMAKING IN INTRACTABLE CONFLICT**  
**SIS 496.006/696.002, Fall 2008**

Instructor: Dr. Ron Fisher

Time and Location: Monday, 5:30 - 8:00 PM; Room TBA

Office: Room 201 Clark Hall; Tel: 202 885 1547; Email: rfisher@american.edu

Office Hours: Monday 2:00 - 5:00 PM; Wednesday, 5:00 - 6:00 PM  
Other times by appointment

Course Description:

This course will provide an in-depth analysis of both official and unofficial third party, peacemaking interventions in intractable conflict, as represented by various forms of mediation and by problem-solving methods captured under the approach of interactive conflict resolution. The focus of interventions is primarily on applications of mediation and third party consultation, both separately and in combination, to violent and protracted ethnopolitical conflicts with international ramifications. In addition to discussing current issues in mediation and interactive conflict resolution, the course will assess the potential for complementarity between official (Track I) and unofficial (Track II) diplomacy through an evaluation of selected cases.

Required Texts:

Bercovitch, J. (ed.) (2002). Studies in International Mediation: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey Z. Rubin. New York: Palgrave.

Crocker, C.A., Hampson, F.O. & Aall, P. (2004). Taming Intractable Conflicts: Mediation in the Hardest Cases. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Fisher, R.J. (1997). Interactive Conflict Resolution. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Fisher, R.J. (ed.) (2005). Paving the Way: Contributions of Interactive Conflict Resolution to Peacemaking. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Optional Sources:

Mitchell, C. & Banks, M. (1996). Handbook of Conflict Resolution: The Analytical Problem-Solving Approach. New York/London: Pinter. (out of print; revised edition available through the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University)

Burgess, H. & Burgess, G. (2003). What are intractable conflicts?, Kriesberg, L. (2003). Nature of Intractability, Bercovitch, J. (2003). Characteristics of intractable conflict, and 350 other related essays available at [www.beyondintractability.org](http://www.beyondintractability.org) (a free knowledge base on more constructive approaches to destructive conflict)

## Course Design:

This class is an advanced seminar in which members are expected to participate actively, both in presenting and commenting on assigned readings and engaging in the discussion that builds on the readings. Please read the Seminar Discussion handout carefully for information and direction (available on Blackboard). Each session will cover a designated topic based on a set of readings. In addition to the Instructor and guest speakers, a number of sessions will engage two class members as 'Reading Partners' working as co-presenters in bringing forward some of the basic ideas and themes in the readings and raising questions and issues for consideration. The objective in the ensuing discussion is not only to identify the learnings in the readings, but also for each class member to develop personal meaning of the material through active participation.

To further our understanding of third party intervention, class members will also form small 'Learning Teams' of four or five members who will choose a particular case to work on based on their common interests and aspirations. The case will be analyzed in terms of the nature of the conflict and a third party, peacemaking intervention that was carried out on the conflict, including the effects of the intervention. The objective is to add greater meaning to the readings through a sequenced, in-depth case analysis of a specific situation represented in the literature. As an alternative to the team case study, class members may choose to form a workshop facilitation team that will complete selected planning exercises in the Mitchell and Banks Handbook, and will carry out some of these exercises with other members serving as participants, that is, role playing members of conflicting groups. The objective here is for class members to gain understanding and experience in facilitating informal third party interventions of a problem-solving nature.

Both the Reading Partners and the Learning Teams will be formed with flexibility in the amount of collaboration that will be necessary, in order to take account of members' constraints in terms of study and work schedules, geographical location, transportation requirements, etc. In concert with the Reading Partners and Learning Teams, more traditional elements of the design will include a term paper and a take home exam. The term paper may be a traditional library research paper or it may be a combined conceptual and reflective paper based on participation in the Dialogue Development Group program or a comparable experience, such as a training workshop or other participative engagement.

## Course Requirements:

Please note that all assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point font, with one inch margins, and are to be submitted on time, unless extenuating circumstances preclude this. Please discuss any difficulties in completing assignments with the Instructor before the deadline passes. Mark penalties will be assigned for inappropriate format or length and for lateness.

1. Class Participation (20%): Evaluation of participation will be based primarily on the presentations of the readings undertaken by the Reading Partners, who are expected to consult with each other and discuss how to present the main ideas and their comments from their set of readings to the class and engage class members interactively. Members will choose their Reading Partner early in the class, and will make one brief presentation (15-20 minutes) on a session topic of their choice during the term. Guidelines for the presentation are available on Blackboard. The presentation is not intended to be a repetition of what is in the readings (handouts can be used for this if desired), but is to identify and raise themes, issues, realizations, learnings, comments and questions from the readings. Feedback from the Instructor will be given following the class session. This component of participation is worth 15% of the grade, and will be assigned to the Reading Partners as a unit. The remaining 5% will be assigned individually and will be based on attendance, in that 1% will be deducted from the final mark for each session missed without a medical or compassionate reason being provided.

2. Learning Team Analyses or Exercises (40%): **Option A:** The case study Learning Teams will each make two brief (20 minute) presentations during the term, one on the causes and manifestations of the conflict, and one on the nature and effects of the third party intervention carried out to address the conflict. Teams will have the option of making one combined presentation if they prefer. This sequential and collaborative case analysis is designed to sensitize members to the challenges and benefits of working in a professional team, and to deepen members understanding of the course material by application to a concrete situation. A brief written report (10 to 12 pages) is required following the final presentation, and the mark will be based on the combination of the presentations (20%) and the report (20%). The mark will be assigned to the Learning Team as a unit, unless members negotiate to take individual marks based one component of the analysis (i.e., conflict or intervention). The Instructor will provide references for possible cases of both official and unofficial interventions, usually involving mediation and third party consultation. In addition, guidelines for each phase of the case analysis are available on Blackboard, so that the analyses of the different Learning Teams will provide for case comparisons. The deadline for the submission of the final report will depend on the schedule of presentations, but will usually be one week after the final presentation. Presentations will be assessed on clarity, organization and creativity. Reports will be assessed on clarity and organization, plus the application of concepts and models from the course to the case. **Option B:** The workshop facilitation Learning Teams will complete a number of analyses based on the exercises in the Mitchell and Banks Handbook, and will make several presentations during the term. Brief written reports will be required for some exercises, while others will engage the Team as facilitators of workshop sessions in which other class members will be briefed to play the roles of workshop participants from parties engaged in conflict. Class sessions and brief reports will be assessed on clarity and organization, and will be worth 20%. A final report is required at the end of the class to describe and evaluate the work of the Team as a learning experience. The marks will be assigned to the Learning Team as a unit, unless members negotiate to take individual marks based on selected components of the exercises and the reports. The final report of 12 to 15 pages (20%) will be assessed on clarity and organization, plus the degree to which it demonstrates understanding of the theory of practice that underlies problem-solving workshops as represented in the Mitchell and Banks Handbook and other relevant class readings.

Please note that for class presentations (such as Powerpoint) using the projector in the classroom and requiring audiovisual support from the Center for Teaching Excellence, you must call AV at 202 885 2296 at least 24 hours in advance. Note that if audio is needed beyond the speakers in your computer, you need to arrange for a separate cable and speaker. Please check out your computer for the presentation in advance so you know how to get the video output to the projector. Mac users need to bring their own video adapter as AV has only a limited supply for loan. Also note that AV does not have adaptors for the new Macbook Air.

3. Term Paper (Optional) (20%): A traditional research and analysis paper of 15 pages (undergraduates) or 20 pages (graduate students) is to be completed by class members who choose this option. The topic should relate to and build on some segment of the class readings, and should not overlap substantially with the Learning Team work, although the case of conflict for that analysis may be used to illustrate the concepts or methods being discussed. Topics should be identified in consultation with the Instructor with the goal of advancing the professional development of the class member. Example term paper topics are available on blackboard. A brief outline (1 to 2 pages) is to be submitted for the Instructor's approval, and the paper is due late in the term (see Course Schedule). Papers will be assessed on clarity, organization, and substance. A specific option for class members who want to participate in the Dialogue Development Group (DDG), which organizes once a week dialogue sessions on a number of controversial issues for seven weeks, is to complete a term paper that reflects on and integrates their dialogue experience with conceptual material on the role of dialogue in conflict resolution. Participants are encouraged to keep a weekly journal on which to base their reflections.

4. Midterm Exam and Final Exam (Final Optional) (20% to 40%): Take home exams will be used to assess class members' comprehension of and ability to apply the ideas represented in the class readings and discussions. The midterm exam is required of all class members and is worth 20%. The final exam is required only of those who do not elect to complete a term paper and counts 20%. Thus, all class members will complete the midterm exam and one of either the final exam or the term paper. Each exam will consist of three, essay-style questions, of which two must be answered within a one week completion period. Each question is worth 10% and must be answered within the designated number of three pages. Example exam questions are provided on Blackboard. The final exam will be due the last week of the term and class members will have one week to complete it (see Course Schedule).

Statement on Academic Integrity:

All students are governed by American University's Academic Integrity Code, which details specific violations of ethical conduct that relate to academic integrity. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. All of your work (whether oral or written) in this class is governed by the provisions of the Code. Academic violations, particularly plagiarism, have been increasing in recent years, partly due to web sites and other sources that offer information or papers that students can submit as their own work. Defined by the Code, plagiarism is using the work, ideas, or words of someone else without attribution. Other violations include inappropriate collaboration (working on a project with another person but not acknowledging her or his contribution), dishonesty in examinations, whether in class or take-home, dishonesty in papers (not submitting original work), work done for one course and submitted to another, deliberate falsification of data, interference with other students' work, and copyright violations. The adjudication process and possible penalties are listed in American University's Academic Integrity Code booklet, which is also available on the American University web site. The Instructor has the responsibility to monitor course assignments for violations of academic integrity, and the right to submit any suspicious assignments for electronic analysis to detect such violations. Submitting your assignment electronically indicates your acceptance of this policy. Being a member of this academic community entitles each of us to a wide degree of freedom in the pursuit of scholarly interests; with that freedom, however, comes a responsibility to uphold the ethical standards of scholarly conduct.

Course Schedule:

<u>Session</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
1. Aug. 25	Introductions, Course Outline Discussion Statements of Interests and Learning Goals Formation of Reading Partners	
Sept. 1	Labor Day Holiday: No Classes	
2. Sept. 8	Overview of Intractability and Methods of Intervention Formation of Learning Teams	

Text Readings:

Crocker et al, Introduction: Mediation and Intractable Conflicts, pp. 3-17.  
Fisher, Introduction, in Fisher (1997), pp. 1-15.

Reserve Readings:







- Fisher, Introduction: Analyzing Successful Transfer Effects in Interactive Conflict Resolution, in Fisher (2005), pp. 1-18.
- Nan, S.A. (2005). Track One-and-a-Half Diplomacy: Contributions to Georgian-South Ossetian Peacemaking, in Fisher (2005), pp. 161-174.
- Saunders, H.H. (2005). Sustained Dialogue in Tajikistan: Transferring Learning from the Public to the Official Peace Process, in Fisher (2005), pp. 125-140.
- Williams, A. (2005). Second Track Conflict Resolution Processes in the Moldova Conflict, 1993-2000: Problems and Possibilities, in Fisher (2005), pp. 141-160.
- Kaufman, E. & Sosnowski, S. (2005). The Peru-Ecuador Peace Process: The Contribution of Track Two Diplomacy, in Fisher (2005), pp. 175-201.

12. Nov. 17

Transfer and Contingency: Evaluation

Text Readings:

- Fisher, Conclusion, in Fisher (1997), pp. 253-270.
- Fisher, Conclusion: Evidence for the Essential Contribution of Interactive Conflict Resolution, in Fisher (2005), pp. 203-230.

Reserve Readings:

- Fisher, R.J. (2007). Assessing the Contingency Model of Third Party Intervention in Successful Cases of Prenegotiation, Journal of Peace Research, 44, pp. 311-329.
- Rouhana, N.N. (2000). Interactive Conflict Resolution: Issues in Theory, Methodology, and Evaluation, in P.C. Stern & D. Druckman, (Eds.). International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, pp. 294-337.
- Chataway, C. J. (1998). Track II Diplomacy from a Track I Perspective, Negotiation Journal, 14, pp. 239-255.

13. Nov. 24

Conclusion

**Term Paper Due  
Final Exam Out**

Text Readings:

- Bercovitch, Conclusion: Some Thoughts on the Process and Potential of Mediation, in Bercovitch, pp. 258-265.

Reserve Readings:

- Coleman, P.T. (2006). Conflict, Complexity, and Change: A Meta-Framework for Addressing Protracted, Intractable Conflicts—III, Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 12, 325-348.
- Kelman, H.C. (1999). Interactive Problem Solving as a Metaphor for International Conflict Resolution: Lessons for the Policy Process, Peace and Conflict, 5, pp. 201-218.
- Saunders, H.H. (2000). Interactive Conflict Resolution: A View for Policy Makers on Making and Building Peace, in P.C. Stern & D. Druckman (Eds.), International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War. Washington, DC: National Academies Press, pp. 251-293.

14. Dec. 1

Closure and Evaluation

**Final Exam Due**