

American University  
School of International Service  
International Peace and Conflict Resolution Program  
FALL 2008

## **SIS-609-001 Conflict Analysis and Resolution: Theory and Practice**

**TUESDAYS 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM WARD 103**

**Instructor: Christos Kyrrou Ph.D.**

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**Office Hours: Tuesdays 12-5PM BY APPOINTMENT-**

This class overviews the interdisciplinary field of conflict analysis and resolution in terms of theory, research and practice. Current perspectives, assumptions and models are covered as well as contending approaches to conflict intervention. The analysis of conflict includes consideration of underlying sources, the multiplicity of causes and dynamics leading to manifest expression and escalation, and the strategic choices made by adversaries. The resolution of conflict considers the intractability of intense conflict, especially of an ethnopolitical nature, and the methods of prevention, negotiation and third party intervention that can support accommodation, de-escalation, settlement and transformation. A number of major issues facing the field will be discussed, including the role of culture, gender, power, and the insurgency component.

The course uses a combination of readings, case studies, presentations, seminars and team projects to engage class members as apprenticing conflict analysts and practitioners. Case analyses of selected conflicts will be completed and recommended interventions for de-escalation and resolution will be developed and presented in class sessions.

**Required Texts (Available in the bookstore unless otherwise noted.)**

Allison, Graham and Philip Zelikow, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (New York: Longman, 1999)

Miall, H., Ramsbotham, O. & Woodhouse, T. Contemporary Conflict Resolution. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005)

Pruitt, D.G. & Kim, S.H. Social Conflict, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004)

Yin, Robert K, Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003)

Crocker, C., Hampson, F., Aall, P., Grasping The Nettle: Analysing Cases of Intractable Conflict. (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2005)

O'Neill, B. Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare. (Dulles, VA: Brasey's, Inc. 2005)

## Course Design:

To increase understanding of conflict analysis and resolution, class members will form small **CONTEXT ANALYSIS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION TEAMS (CACR)** of four or five members each who will choose a particular case of active violent conflict to work on based on their common interests, experiences and aspirations.

Students will develop their own conflict analysis framework throughout the semester. They will discuss it with the rest of the class every week and elaborate its content, efficiency, and degrees of rigor, validity, and reliability. They will compile a contextual analysis map for review and grading in two parts. Finally they will use this tool for an Analysis and Policy Recommendations Paper.

The class will engage in a variety of activities including simulations, exercises, movies, and the participation of distinguished visitors for person-to-person interaction and in depth conversations.

## Course Requirements:

Please note that all class assignments must be typed, double spaced in twelve 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. You are strongly encouraged to visit and consult with the AU writing aid facilities.

### 1. CLASS PRESENCE AND PARTICIPATION (25%):

Classroom presence and participation is required.

This course is a graduate seminar in which members are expected to participate actively both in reacting to assigned readings and engaging in the integrative discussion that builds on the readings. Students who do not speak up or participate *in meaningful ways* should see the instructor before October for advice and a tentative plan; if there is no improvement, such students should not expect an "A" at the end of the course.

### 2. WEEKLY CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS PRESENTATIONS (25%):

#### WEEKLY CLASS ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE:

##### BEFORE THE CLASS:

###### Group:

Do the Readings

Select Concepts and Definitions from the Readings

Distribute the Concepts to each member of your group.

###### Individuals

Operationalize the concepts you have been handed by your group

Send me questions in case you are confused.

Apply your concepts to your group adopted conflict

##### DURING THE CLASS

### **Group/Individuals**

**Present concepts and how they apply to your conflict. Generate questions with your presentation.  
Discuss the concepts with the class  
Keep notes from the discussions on contextual analysis and policy implications**

### **AFTER THE CLASS**

**Update your Conflict Analysis Record  
Add comments in regards to your conflict (contextual analysis and policy implications)  
Do the Reading for the next class.**

**Each group-presentation will last approximately 30-45 minutes.**

**On Tuesday Oct. the 28th you will present a selected NGO conflict analysis tool.**

### **4. DRAFT PAPER PRESENTATION (10 + 10 = 20%):**

**Each Group will Present a Draft of their Final in the Last Class of the Semester.**

### **5. FINAL EXAM/PAPER – ANALYSIS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS PAPER (30%):**

**An Analysis and Policy Recommendations Paper is to be completed both in group and an individual basis. The Analysis and Policy Recommendation will be assessed on the criteria of clarity of expression, organization of information, and quality of substance. You will receive detailed directions on the structure of this assignment in a later version of this syllabus.**

**Sequence: Maintain and Update a Context Analysis Concepts' Record - Apply your Record to produce an Analysis Paper and Policy Recommendations for your adopted conflict.**

### **Class Contract:**

**There will be no extensions, exceptions to deadlines or to class requirements during the course of the semester unless the entire class approves of the exception. If a student wants an extension or exception, he or she must ask the instructor in enough advance time so that the instructor can present an anonymous request to the class as a whole. If granted, this becomes a “contractual extension” or “exception.” Genuine emergencies are, of course, excused, though later documentation must be provided. Otherwise, any late work, exception or extension will result in an automatic loss of one grade. This insures that everyone is treated equitable unless the entire class agrees to an exception.**

**(Tentative) Course Schedule:**

**Tuesday, August 26**

**Introductions, Discussion of Course Syllabus – OUR READINGS  
Statements of Interests and Learning Goals  
CONFLICT AND STUDY GROUPS – SCOPE OF ANALYSIS  
Theories as maps  
Blackboard**

**Tuesday, September 02**

**CONFLICT CLASS EVENT!!! Make sure you are in on time!  
Read the Conflict Assessment Maps for this class - decide which one you will use.  
Finalize Groups**

**Tuesday, September 09**

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF CONFLICT - Mapping the Nettle.  
An overview of some of the substantive theorizing, largely sociological and social psychological, about the nature of conflict and the developmental phases through which it goes from causation to termination. First touch with Intractability.  
Read: (for this day's class)  
From Pruitt and Kim, Chapter 1 (Overview), and Chapter 2 (Nature and Sources of Con.) (pp 3-36)  
From Crocker et. al. Introduction (Mapping the Nettle Field) (pp 3-28)  
From Ramsbotham et.al.: Understanding Contemporary Conflict (pp 78-105)**

**Tuesday, September 16**

**ANALYZING CONFLICT: STRATEGIC CHOICE AND TACTICS  
This session extends the coverage of the nature of conflict by deepening the analysis to include characteristics of the adversaries, the relations between them, and the social context in which they operate. The analysis is also extended to the ethnopolitical and international levels through an overview of current armed conflicts and the introduction of a complex range of possible causes, motives and expressions.  
Read: Pruitt and Kim, Chapter 3 Strategic Choice and Chapter 4 Contentious Tactics (pp.37-84)  
From Ramsbotham et.al.: Statistics of Deadly Quarrels (pp. 55-77)  
CONFLICT ASSESSMENT MAPS DUE FOR 5-10 MINUTE PRESENTATIONS !!!!**

**Tuesday, September 23**

**PROTRACTED SOCIAL CONFLICTS  
This session covers the phenomenon of seemingly intractable conflicts and the complex situations on the ground to which they give rise.  
Crocker et. al. Ch. 2, Comparative Studies of Long Wars and Ch. 3, Analyzing Intractability and Ch. 4, Nature, Dynamics, and Intractability (Mapping the Nettle Field) (pp 33-94)  
Singer, Corporate Warriors (Chapters: 1 and 2) (pp 1-39)**

## Tuesday, September 30

### **CONFLICT ESCALATION**

This session extends the coverage of the nature of conflict by deepening the analysis to include characteristics of the adversaries, the relations between them, and the social and political (power) context in which they operate. The analysis is also extended to the ethnopolitical and international levels through an overview of current armed conflicts and the introduction of a complex range of possible causes, motives and expressions.

Read: Pruitt & Kim: Ch. 5, Escalation & its Development, Ch. 6, The Structural Change Model, Ch. 7, Conditions that Encourage and Discourage Escalation. Ch. 8, Persistence of Escalation. (pp87-168)

## Tuesday, October 07

### **Conflict Analysis: Essence of Decision – ENTIRE**

This is a three-layer analysis of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis incident. The event was the most critical nuclear confrontation between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. superpowers during the Cold War.

Read: Allison and Zelikow, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis.

## Tuesday, October 14

### **INSURGENCY AND TERRORISM**

O'Neill, B. Ch. 1, Insurgency in the Contemporary World, Ch. 2, The Nature of Insurgency, Ch. 3, Insurgent Strategies (pp. 1-70)

Combs, C. From Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century – Handout.

## Tuesday, October 21

### **ANALYZING INSURGENCIES – UNDERSTANDING “TERRORISM”**

What makes and insurgency and how can we make sense of it systematically and rigorously. The Terrorism factor in Conflict Analysis Read: O'Neill, B. Ch. 4 – 9 (pp. 71 – 203)

From Ramsbotham et.al.: Chapter 11, (pp 249-264) Terror and Global Justice

From Robert Taber “War of the Flea” (Handout)

From Singer, Corporate Warriors (Chapters: 3 - 10) (pp 40-149)

## Tuesday, October 28

### **CASE STUDY RESEARCH AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS METHODS**

A closer look to case studies and other conflict analysis research methodologies.

Read: Robert Yin, Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Entire book)

### **CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND NGOs -**

A closer look on the actual methods that NGOs use today for conflict analysis on the field.

Read: RESOURCE PACK FROM BLACKBOARD - SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

## Tuesday, November 04

### **ANALYZING SOCIAL CONFLICT - Intro to RESOLUTION**

Some of the basic concepts of conflict resolution, will be examined including “win-win,” fractionating, reframing and principled negotiations. The most common diplomatic responses to conflict are

negotiations between the parties and mediation by third parties to assist the negotiation process toward settlement.

**Read: Pruitt and Kim: Ch. 9 Perceived Stalemate and De-Escalation. Ch. 10, Problem Solving and Reconciliation. Ch.11, The Intervention of Third Parties. Pp. 189- 258**

**Crocker et. al. Ch. 5, Mediation in the Most Resistant Cases. Ch. 6, Negotiating Intractable Conflicts (pp. 99-154)**

**From Ramsbotham et.al.: Chapter 1 and 2 (pp. 1-54)**

### **Tuesday, November 11**

#### **DE-ESCALATION SETTLEMENT & POST-CONFLICT PEACE BUILDING**

**This section describes the critical process of conflict de-escalation in terms of conditions that favour its occurrence and policies that can be pursued to bring about its initiation and continuation.**

**Read:**

**Crocker et. al. Selected Case Study and Ch. 16 From Intractability to Tractable (pp. 375-386)**

**From Ramsbotham et. al.: (pp 106-245).**

### **Tuesday, November 18**

#### **CULTURE, GENDER, AND POWER IN CONFLICT**

**Read: Selected Handouts Download and Read UN Gender Conflict Assessment from Blackboard and readings from Ramsbotham et. al Part II (pp. 265-331)**

### **Tuesday, November 25 NO CLASS**

**Tuesday, December 02**

#### **DAY OF PRESENTATIONS:**

**Class Schedule:**

**Group Presentations**

**Tuesday, December XX Papers (Subject to Change)**