American University

School of International Service

International Peace and Conflict Resolution

Culture, Peace and Conflict Resolution: alternatives to violence

sis 606-01

Fall 2017

Wednesdays 2:30 PM-5:20 PM

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**Course Objectives and Learning outcomes**

This course explores two important questions:

What roles do cultural values; norms and practices play in conflict and in its resolution? How is conflict resolution practiced in cultural contexts around the world?

Informed practitioners of conflict resolution should be able to translate their knowledge, attitudes, and skills in diverse settings. Students need to work hard at implementing cross-cultural knowledge in crises, project management, conflict interventions and other related activities.

**Cultural competence:** It is extremely important to gain perspective on how people resolve conflicts in different cultures. **Are there any similarities between different cultures and what exactly are their origins?** Conflict resolution practitioners need to be competent in analyzing alternative ways of looking at the world as observed in processes of communication, decision making, disputes, agreements, reconciliation and compromise. Throughout the course, students are expected to confront the similarities and differences as we explore each other's cultural orientations and gain an understanding of the complexity of our own cultural identities using the course materials and concepts.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Increased appreciation of the role of culture in communication, conflict and conflict resolution
2. Ability to employ frameworks that enrich understanding of culturally embedded individual and social behaviors in conflict and its resolution.
3. Increased awareness of different religious and cultural traditions and their potential for conflict resolution.
4. Ability to effectively apply cultural know-how to peacemaking, peacebuilding, development and other field-based activities.

##### Course Requirements

##### Class Participation (20%): Your participation in the class discussions is essential. You need to come to the class prepared having done the assigned readings. You may be called upon randomly to share your thoughts on the readings or to apply it on a practical case.

1. **Mid-Term Exam (40%):** The Mid-Term Exam is a take-home exam. You are expected to respond to essay questions or analyze a case provided. **Your exam will be emailed.** You are expected to submit your responses electronically via email within a week. Your responses should be your own and integrate a clear assessment of the course materials.
2. **Case Study Paper (40%):**  Students will either write an individual research paper or a group paper (2 to 4 people). The first step is to identify a specific conflict. As part of your analysis, the specific role of culture and identity in the evolution of the conflict or in its resolution should be documented. Conflict resolution efforts undertaken by the parties or by outside actors should also be critiqued for their cultural competency and relevance. **You should prepare a one-page proposal for your papers, meet me individually and get my approval before you proceed by Week 9**. Individual papers should be no more or less than 15 pages (double-spaced, 12 point fonts). Add five pages for each additional co-author (i.e. a three student group paper needs to be 25 pages). Case studies may be historical or current. Papers should be properly proof-read and need to have good citation form (bibliography and footnotes/endnotes), and demonstrate that you used the course platform to launch yourselves into independent inquiry beyond the classroom. Group papers should read like a single paper, but should also identify authors of particular sections.

#### course materials

Required course books can be found both at the American University Library Reserve Desk and the American University Bookstore. They can be obtained from Abebooks.com (a used book web marketplace), as well as Amazon, etc. Other than the required texts, our readings will also be available as electronic Reserves that you access via Blackboard.

**Required Texts**

1. Kevin Avruch, Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution: Culture, Identity, Power and Practice (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2013)
2. David Augsburger, Conflict Mediation Across Cultures (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992)

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community.  Should the university close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students.  This may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods.  Specific strategies will vary depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency.  Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform faculty immediately of any absence due to illness.  Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping informed of emergencies.   In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site ([www.prepared.american.edu](http://www.prepared.american.edu)) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for university-wide information, contact faculty and dean’s office for course and school/college-specific information.

Academic Integrity Code

All students must adhere to the Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>).   As the code states, "By enrolling at American University and then each semester when registering for classes, students acknowledge their commitment to the Code. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and their responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, examinations of whatever kind, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Students are responsible for learning the conventions of documentation and acknowledgment of sources. American University expects students to complete all examinations, tests, papers, creative projects, and assignments of any kind according to the highest ethical standards, as set forth either explicitly or implicitly in this Code or by the direction of instructors."

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

**Week 1 (Aug 30)- Introductions**

Syllabus review, course expectations, participant introductions, overview of Conflict Resolution field

**Week 2 (Sep 6) Defining Culture and Conflict**

Avruch Ch 1, 6

Augsburger Ch. 1

Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall, *Understanding Cultural Differences* (Intercultural Press, 1990), pp. 3-31

Johan Galtung, “Cultural Violence,” *Journal of Peace Research* vol. 27, no. 3 (1990): 291-305

B. Crawford, “The Causes of Cultural Conflict: Assessing the Evidence,” in B. Crawford and Ronnie D. Lipschutz, eds. *The Myth of “Ethnic Conflict: Politics, Economics and “Cultural” Violence* (UC Berkeley, 1998)

**Week 3 (Sep 13) - What is ancient? What is modern?**

**Read:**

Aaron Wolf, “Indigenous approaches to water conflict negotiations and implications for international waters” *International Negotiation* vol. 5, no. 2 (2000): 357-373

William Ury, “Conflict Resolution Among the Bushmen: Lessons in Dispute System Design,” *Negotiation Journal*, vol. 11, no. 3 (1995)

Stephen J. Lansing, John H. Miller. “Cooperation, Games and Ecological Feedback: Some Insights from Bali,” Santa Fe Institute Working Paper Series, January 13, 2004. http://www.santafe.edu/media/workingpapers/03-05-030.pdf

(skip subsection 3 if desired)

Avruch, Ch 2

**Week 4 (Sep 20) -Power and Inequality; Culture and Political Identity**

**Read:**

Avruch Ch. 4,9

Maalouf, Introduction, Sections 1 &2

Augsburger, Ch. 2

**Week 5 (Sep 27) -Individual and society; Shame and guilt and conflict mitigators**

**Read:**

Augsburger, Chs. 3, 4

**Week 6 (Oct 4) - Gender Roles**

**Read:**

Augsburger, Ch 6

Kimberly Theidon and Kelly Phenicie, “Gender, Conflict and Peacebuilding: State of the Field and Lessons Learned from USIP Grantmaking,” *Peaceworks* No. 76 (September 2011)

Hamid Khan, Manal Omar, Kathleen Kuehnast, and Susan Hayward “Fostering Synergies for Advancing Women’s Rights in Post-Conflict Islamic States: A Focus on Afghanistan, Egypt, and Libya”. *The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World U.S.-Islamic World Forum Papers,* November 2013.

**Week 7 (Oct 11) – Media, Social Media and Culture, Peace and Conflicts**

**Read:**

Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings by Mark Poster (Read Ch.1,2,5,7 and 9)

Jean Baudrillard: Hyperreality and Implosion, Andrew Robinson (2012)

Tadzie Madzima-Bosha, 2013, Harnessing the power of social media for conflict prevention

Kym Beeston , 2014,How social media is changing the way we see conflict

Ellie Mae O'Hagan, Does social media really bring us closer to the reality of conflict? Guardian, 10 March 2014

**Midterm question emailed**

**Week 8 (Oct 18) Human Rights and Culture**

**Read:**

Avruch, Ch.3

Agamben, Read the Homo Sacer Section (See if you can finish the part)

**Mid-terms due 11:59 pm**

**Week 9 (Oct 25) – Ethno-centrism vs. Ethno-relativism**

**Read:**

Milton Bennett, “Towards Ethno-relativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.” In *Education for the Intercultural Experience.* ed. M. Paige, (Intercultural Press, 1993). pp. 22-71.

Zizek, S. (2008). *Violence.* Picador Publishers

Read Ch. 4: Antinomies of Tolerant Reason and Ch. 5: Tolerance as an Ideological Category

**One-page Final Paper proposals due**

**Week 10 (Nov 1) Type I & Type II Errors**

**Read:**

Avruch, Ch.5

**Week 11 (Nov 8) -Cross-cultural Mediation**

**Read:**

Augsburger Ch. 5, 7

Avruch, Ch. 7

**Week 12 (Nov 15) -Religion, Conflict and Resolution**

**Read:**

Mohammed Abu-Nimer, “Conflict Resolution, Culture, and Religion: Toward a Training Model of Interreligious Peacebuilding,” *Journal of Peace Research*. vol. 38 no.6 (2001): 685-704

David Little, *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution.* (Cambridge University Press, 2007). Ch. 9 “Warriors and Brothers”

Susan Hayward, “Religion and Peacebuilding: Reflections on Current Challenges and Future Prospects” *Special Report #313* (United States Institute of Peace, August 2012)

Yehezkel Landau, “Healing the Holy Land: Interreligious Peacebuilding in Israel/Palestine,” *Peaceworks* No. 51 (United States Institute of Peace, August 2003)

**Week 13 (Nov 22)- Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 14 (Nov 29) -Indigenous Conflict Resolution and Transitional Justice**

**Read:**

Jannie Malan, “Traditional and Local Conflict Resolution,” in Paul van Tongeren et al., eds., People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society (Lynne Rienner, 2005), pp. 449-458

“Revitalizing Tradition to Promote Reconciliation: The Gacaca Courts in Rwanda,” in Paul van Tongeren et al., eds., *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society* (Lynne Rienner, 2005), pp. 466-471

Roger Mac Ginty, “Indigenous Peace-Making Versus the Liberal Peace,” *Cooperation and Conflict,* vol. 43, no. 2 (2008): 139-163

Howard Wolpe, “Making Peace After Genocide,” *Peaceworks*, March 2011, No. 70, USIP

Augsburger, Ch. 8, 9

Avruch, Ch.8

**Week 15 (Dec 6) – Looking back-looking forward**

Final papers due at 11:59pm EST of Dec 13, 2017