

COMX 412.01 Conflict and Communication

Blended (online and on campus), Tuesday 3:30 – 6:20 PM, Fall 2018

- Instructor: Dr. Phyllis Ngai
- Office: LA 415
- Office Hours: 2:30 – 3:30 PM (every other Tuesday)
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Course Description

Conflict is a common feature of personal, professional, and public life that has a variety of potential consequences. Although conflict can be a disruptive force, it can also lead to innovation, improved adjustment, and better decisions. By studying conflict, we hope to gain competency at managing conflicts and to move them in a productive direction. This course is designed to introduce you to the basic principles of effective communication and conflict interaction. Topics covered include the basic elements and nature of conflict, styles and strategies, the roles of power, the influence of culture, emotions in conflict, interpersonal negotiation, and third-party intervention. Throughout the course, we will explore conflict in a variety of contexts and analyze examples of interpersonal, environmental, organizational, family, intergroup, and intercultural conflicts. We will build from a primarily interpersonal focus on communication to investigate how conflict occurs and is handled in a number of broader contexts. Both theory and application are stressed, and, thus, both conceptual and practical discussions will take place throughout the semester. This is a blended course that includes both online and on-campus components designed to address diverse learning needs.

Course Outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Define the elements of a conflict and understand the potential for altering them in a given condition;
- Apply various internal and interactive theories that explain how and why conflict occurs;
- Analyze conflicts based on an understanding of how concepts such as power, face, and reconciliation influence the conflict process;
- Understand emotions involved in conflict;
- Conduct culture-based analysis of conflicts; and
- Determine when a third party should be brought in to a conflict situation, and which form of third-party intervention is appropriate.

Texts

- *Interpersonal Conflict (9th edition)* by Joyce Hocker and William W. Wilmot, 2014. McGraw Hill. [Required] [9]
- *The Sage Handbook of Conflict Communication* edited by John G. Oetzel and Stella Ting-Toomey, 2013. Sage. [Optional]
- *Working Through Conflict* by Joseph Folger, Marchall Scott Poole, and Randall K. Stutman, 2013. Pearson. [Optional]
- *Creating High Performance Teams: Applied Strategies and Tools for Managers and Team Members* by Ramon Aldag and Loren Kuzuhara, 2015. Routledge. [Optional]

Assessment

| Assignments/Assessments | Points Earned |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Reading Journal x 6 | 180 points (30 points each) |
| Group Discussion Facilitation | 50 points |
| Reading Club Facilitation | 50 points |
| In-class Participation x 6 | 120 points (20 points each) |
| Quizzes x 6 | 180 points (30 points each) |
| Mid-term Report | 150 points |
| Final Paper/Take-Home Exam | 230 points |
| Final Presentation and Assessment | 40 points |
| Total | =1,000 points |

Grade Distribution

| Points | Letter Grade |
|------------|--------------|
| 933 – 1000 | A |
| 900 – 932 | A- |
| 866 – 899 | B+ |
| 833 – 865 | B |
| 800 – 832 | B- |
| 766 – 799 | C+ |
| 733 – 765 | C |
| 700 – 732 | C- |
| 666 – 699 | D+ |
| 633 – 665 | D |
| 600 – 632 | D- |
| < 600 | F |

Course Policies

- You are responsible for submitting your assignments by due dates and completing the six quizzes in class as scheduled. Late written work receives a 5-percent deduction per day from the grade earned (up to 40%).
- Quizzes and in-class participation cannot be made up unless you provide a note from a healthcare provider or evidence of an emergence indicating that you were not able to come to class.
- You should be aware that as a student at the University of Montana, you must practice academic honesty and are bound by the following [Code of Academic Conduct](http://www.umt.edu/studentaffairs/sccAcademicConduct.htm):
<http://www.umt.edu/studentaffairs/sccAcademicConduct.htm>
As the code explains, academic misconduct includes plagiarism, cheating, and deliberate interference with the work of others. It is the intellectual equivalent of fraud—a crime against the codes of the academy. *As an academic crime, plagiarism merits academic punishment, ranging from an F on the assignment or for the course, to suspension or expulsion from the University.*
- Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations in this course. To request course modifications, please contact me as soon as possible. I will work with you and [Disability Services](#) in the accommodation process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at <http://www.umt.edu/dss/> or call 406.243.2243 (Voice/Text).
- If you want to add/drop or change your grading option, please note the university deadlines on the Registrar's Office website.