

## COMX 412.01 Conflict and Communication

Blended (online and on campus), Tuesday 3:30 – 6:20 PM, Fall 2019

- Instructor: Dr. Phyllis Ngai
- Office: LA 415
- Office Hours: 1:30 – 2:00 PM (Mon); 1:00 – 2:00 PM (Wed); by appointment
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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 (10<sup>th</sup> edition)* by Joyce Hocker and William W. Wilmot, 2018. McGraw Hill. [10<sup>th</sup> edition Required]
- *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]

## Tentative Schedule

Week 1 (Aug 27) On-campus

Introduction

Week 2 (Sep 3) Online

Nature and Perspectives

Reading: The Nature of Conflict, Hocker & Wilmot  
Perspectives on Conflict, Hocker & Wilmot

Assignments: Reading Journal  
Ongoing Informal Field Research

Week 3 (Sep 10) On-campus

Reading: Religion and Conflict: An Emerging Field of Inquiry, Croucher

Assignments: Reading Club preparation  
Group Discussion Preparation  
Quiz 1

Week 4 (Sep 17) Online

Goals, Interests, and Styles

Reading: Interests and Goals, Hocker & Wilmot  
Conflict Styles, Hocker & Wilmot

Assignment: Reading Journal  
Ongoing Informal Field Research

Week 5 (Sep 24) On-campus

Reading: Environmental Conflict Communication, Peterson & Feldpausch-Parker

Assignment: Group Discussion Preparation  
Reading Club Preparation  
Quiz 2

Week 6 (Oct 1) Online

Power and Face Saving

Reading: Power: The Structure of Conflict, Hocker & Wilmot  
Face-Saving, Folger, Poole, & Stutman

Assignment: Reading Journal  
Ongoing Informal Field Research

Week 7 (Oct 8) On-campus

Reading: Conflict Motivations and Tactics of Targets, Bystanders, and Bullies: A Thrice-Told Tale of  
Workplace Bullying, Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher

Assignment: Group Discussion Preparation  
Reading Club Preparation  
Quiz 3

Week 8 (Oct 15)

Mid-term Report due

Week 9 (Oct 22) Online

Negotiation and Intervention

Reading: Interpersonal Negotiation, Hocker & Wilmot  
Third-Party Intervention, Hocker & Wilmot

Assignment: Reading Journal  
Ongoing Informal Field Research

Week 10 (Oct 29) On-campus

Reading: Dealing with Team Problems, Aldag and Kuzuhara

Assignment: Group Discussion Preparation  
Reading Club Preparation  
Quiz 4

Workshop by Joyce Hocker

Week 11 (Nov 5) Online

Diagnosis and Culture-Based Analysis

Reading: Analyzing Your Conflicts, Hocker & Wilmot  
Culture-Based Situational Conflict Model, Ting-Toomey & Oetzel (pp. 772-783 only)

Assignment: Reading Journal  
Ongoing Informal Field Research

Week 12 (Nov 12) On-campus

Reading: Conflict in The Global Workplace, Stohl, McCann, & Baker

Assignment: Group Discussion Preparation  
Reading Club Preparation  
Quiz 5

Week 13 (Nov 19) On-campus

Individual consultation about final paper (sign up for a time on Moodle)

Week 14. (Nov 26) Online

Emotions, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation

Reading: Emotions in Conflict, Hocker & Wilmot  
The Practice of Forgiveness and Reconciliation, Hocker & Wilmot

Assignment: Reading Journal  
Ongoing Informal Field Research

Week 15 (Dec 3) On-campus

Reading: Building Cultures of Peace: The Role of Intergroup Dialogue, Broome

Assignment: Group Discussion Preparation  
Reading Club Preparation  
Quiz 6

Dec 5 (Thursday)

Paper due by 12 PM

Dec 10 (Tuesday) On-campus

5:30 – 7:30 PM

Presentation and final assessment

\*The schedule is subject to change. The instructor will inform you of any changes in class and/or via Moodle.

## Assessment

Reading Journal	30 points x 6 = 180 points
Group Discussion Facilitation	50 points
Reading Club Facilitation	50 points
In-class Participation	20 points x 7 = 140 points
Quizzes	30 points x 6 = 180 points
Mid-term Report	150 points
Final Paper/Take-Home Exam	210 points
Final Presentation and Assessment	40 points
Total	1,000 points

## 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.