The University of Montana-Missoula

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
**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 & Oetzeln (pp. 772-783 only)
Assignment: Reading Journal
  Ongoing Informal Field Research

Week 12 (Nov 12) On-campus
  Reading: Conflict in The Global Workplace, Stohl, MCann, & 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
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.