

# Transforming Conflict and Violence

PJCS 210

Goshen College, Spring 2015

## Course Info

Instructor:	Matthew Chandler
Contact:	<a href="mailto:mjchandler@goshen.edu">mjchandler@goshen.edu</a> ; 503-901-3348 (cell)
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 4:00 – 5:00 pm; Wyse 308
Class Meetings:	Tuesdays 5:30 – 9:30 pm; Jan. 6 – Feb. 17; Administration 20

## Course Description

Conflict is a natural result of human interaction. When conflict turns violent, it is a powerfully negative force, wreaking havoc on those it touches. When conflict is embraced and handled with care, it can be an equally powerful source for positive change, within and between individuals as well as within and between systems. Violence, however, is not natural; it is a negative, destructive response to conflict.

This course will explore conflict and conflict transformation, as well as an overview of violence. We will investigate the roots of the violence in culture, including structural injustices. We will examine conflict patterns and what is needed for positive transformation, including constructive communication and nonviolent direct action. Students will reflect on their own conflict styles, examine their personal temptations for violence, and build personal skills and capacity for peacemaking.

## Course Objectives

1. To engage in a process of self-reflection that will increase awareness of one's own conflict style, beliefs about conflict and violence, strengths and assets in nurturing relationships, challenges and temptations for violence, personal sources of power, and the nature of one's own cultural context.
2. To explore several frameworks for understanding the complex nature and opportunities of interpersonal conflict, the roots and effects of various forms of violence, the relationship between conflict and violence, and effective ways to respond to both.
3. To analyze and understand the elements of constructive versus destructive conflict and the choices of attitude and action that lead to each.
4. To understand the components of healthy, non-reactive communication and to increase personal peacemaking skills such as listening, speaking, negotiating, and problem-solving.
5. To investigate the biblical mandate and potential power of nonviolence, the wide range of nonviolent options, and the ways in which nonviolence can be a practical lifestyle choice.
6. To examine the breadth and complex nature of structural violence, privilege and oppression and to identify practical ways of contributing to the dismantling systems of privilege and oppression.
7. To explore and analyze the nature of power, ways to responsibly use power and one's one sources of power in US society and at Goshen College.

## Course Texts

### *Required*

- Gilmore, S.K. and P.W. Fraleigh. 2004. *The Friendly Style Profile for People at Work: A Guide Through Calm and Storm*. Eugene, OR: Friendly Press.
- Kriesberg, Louis and Bruce W. Dayton. 2012. *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution*. Fourth Edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Lederach, John Paul. 2003. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation: Clear Articulation of the Guiding Principles by a Pioneer in the Field*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

\*Additional digital readings posted on Moodle.

### *Recommended*

- Johnson, Allan G. 2006. *Privilege, Power, and Difference*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing.
- Lederach, John Paul. 2005. *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. New York: Oxford University Press.

## Learning Activities, Course Requirements, and Grading

- 1) Evaluation and final course grade will be based on the following learning activities (details below):

- 30% – Activity A: Attendance, participation, and readings
- 10% – Activity B: Weekly journals (5)
- 20% – Activity C: Self-reflection papers (2)
- 40% – Activity D: Final project

- 2) Grading scale:

Grade	Percentage	Quality Points
A Excellent	93-100	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B Very good	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C Satisfactory	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D Unsatisfactory but Passing	64-66	1.0
F Failing	Below 64	0

- 3) Your grades will be posted on Moodle, and I will do my best to update them weekly.
- 4) All work is due at the beginning of the class period for which it is assigned. I strongly prefer digital copies of all assignments, submitted through Moodle before class starts, but I will accept hard copies

in class. Late work will decrease your grade proportionally, unless it has been pre-arranged with me (legitimate reason required). No work is accepted after the last class.

- 5) Writing assignments (with the exception of journals) should be double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt font, with 1" margins. Bibliographies should be correctly and consistently formatted. (*PJCS prefers Turabian, but it's your choice as long as you're consistent and accurate.*) Don't forget an appropriate header (name, date, course, assignment, etc.).
- 6) A good paper—one which fulfills the entire assignment and is written well—will typically receive a “B” grade. A grade of “A” is reserved for exceptional papers: those which are interestingly written, flesh out new insights, and push the reader to think about the subject in a new way.

### *Disability Accommodations from the Academic Support Center*

Goshen College wants to help all students be as academically successful as possible. If you have a disability and require accommodations, please contact Lois Martin, the Director of the Academic Resource & Writing Center early in the semester. In order to receive accommodations, documentation concerning your disability must be on file with the Academic Resource & Writing Center, Good Library 113, x7576, [lmartin@goshen.edu](mailto:lmartin@goshen.edu). All information will be held in the strictest confidence. The Academic Resource & Writing Center offers tutoring and writing assistance for all students. For further information please see <http://www.goshen.edu/studentlife/arwc> .

### *Need Help? Want to Talk?*

Because this class is interactive we'll learn to know each other well. Many of our topics can be difficult to talk about and there will be many possibilities for misunderstandings and disagreements. These are opportunities for conflict transformation and learning and we will work at them together. If you have questions about something that I or your colleagues said or what it might mean, please raise that in the classroom or with your colleagues or with me directly outside of class. You should always feel free to drop by during office hours, or email or phone me with any question you may have.

### **Activity A – Attendance, Participation, and Readings (30%)**

**1) Attendance:** Because this is an intensive course and much of the learning will occur during the interactive process in the classroom, each student is expected to attend every class session for the full time allotted. An unexcused absence will reduce your final grade by 5%, and an unexcused late arrival or early departure will reduce your final grade by 1% (there is a 10-minute grace period). For an absence, late arrival, or early departure to be excused, you must contact me by phone or email before class and provide a legitimate reason. Since we only have seven sessions, if you are absent for any reason for three classes, you could be dismissed from the course altogether.

**2) Participation:** This portion of your grade will be based on your actual participation in class. This does not necessarily mean the number of times you speak up in class (though I will expect you to do so multiple times every week), but also on the thoughtfulness of your contributions, your participation in small group work and class exercises, and your general attentiveness. We will often engage in structured exercises in class, and you should think of each of these as a graded assignment.

**3) Readings:** Readings serve as the foundation for our class work and are critical to your learning, so you are expected to complete all the readings assigned for each week before class. We will often discuss the readings in class, and your participation in these discussions should reflect your reading preparation. Even if we do not discuss a particular reading in class, you are still responsible for all the material. Therefore, I recommend that you spread the readings out over the week and take notes as you read. If you have questions or comments that you would like to bring to class, please do so and I'll happily take class time to work with them.

### **Activity B – Weekly Journals (10%)**

Write five journal entries—one each week from weeks two through six (see schedule)—in which you critically reflect on the readings and/or the previous class session, and submit them via Moodle no later than 5 pm on class days (but you are encouraged to submit them earlier). Each entry should be 200-400 words. If you are unsure what to write, consider responding to these questions: *What resonated with you and why? What challenged you and why? What needs further exploration and why?* Include at least one question of your own stemming from consideration of the reading that could be posed during class. I will read them before class, so come to class prepared to discuss what you wrote.

### **Activity C – Self-Reflection Papers – x2 (20%)**

One's ability to positively transform conflict begins with self-awareness. A goal of this class is to nurture introspection—a time when you can look into your conflict and relational mirror honestly and clearly. In addition to your classroom contributions and weekly journals, you will write two critical self-reflection papers—one near the beginning of the course and the other near the end (see schedule). In each paper, please provide specific examples from your life as much as possible in addressing the issues. I will treat these papers confidentially, but you do not ever need to share more than you feel ready to share. You should also apply course readings and class content to your own personal reflections.

*Grading for each paper:*

**8 points – Content:** thoroughness in addressing the topics; willingness to engage in honest self-reflection; congruency/applicability to readings/class discussions.

**2 points – Writing:** clarity; spelling; grammar.

*Reflection Paper 1 – “Conflict, Violence, and Me” – 5-8 pages (10%)*

#### **I. Experience, values, and faith - questions to consider:**

- What have been my experiences with conflict?
- What effect have these experiences had on my life and my relationships?
- What are my assumptions or beliefs about conflict?
- What are my related values?
- What is the relationship of my faith to these beliefs and values?

**II. Conflict style - questions to consider:**

- What is my style, general approach, or typical pattern in responding to conflict?  
\* Provide all of your Gilmore-Fraleigh scores
- In what ways do I agree and/or disagree with my Gilmore-Fraleigh scores?
- What are my strengths in conflict and communication?
- What are my challenges?
- In what areas would I like to grow? How will I work on these things?

**III. Other's perception - questions to consider:**

- How does a significant other describe your conflict style? For this, please ask the other person specifically about how you deal with conflict generally. Feel free to quote the person and then add your own comments about their responses. Don't forget to identify who the other person is to you.
- How does this person see you similarly as to how you see yourself? Differently?
- How might you account for the differences?

**IV. Violence (or destructive conflict) - questions to consider:**

- While this paper is primarily on conflict, I'd like you to include a short section on your experience with violence. What has your experience been?
- How has it affected your life?
- What are your current beliefs about violence, especially in light of your experiences?

*Reflection Paper 2 – "Power, Conflict, and Me" – 4-6 pages (10%)*

**I. Your sources of power - questions to consider:**

- What are your sources of power in US society? List several and discuss them.
- What additional or different sources of power do you have here at Goshen College?

**II. Power and relationships - questions to consider:**

- How have your sources of power (or lack of them) defined or affected your various relationships?
- In what ways have you, or those you relate to, both used power well and misused/abused it in relationships?

**III. Power, struggle, and opportunity - questions to consider:**

- How have you struggled against power imbalances in your relationships, studies, work, or social context?
- What opportunities have you encountered to improve power dynamics, and what opportunities do you see before you now?

### Activity D – Final Project (40%)

1) In lieu of a final exam, you will write a culminating paper and present your main points to the class. It requires some research beyond the course materials, but the point is not merely to relay information, but to demonstrate your understanding of the lessons drawn from the readings, lectures, and in-class exercises.

2) You will choose a topic to explore that:

- is current and considered political in some way
- is of direct interest to you
- is relevant to our course content

3) You are very welcome to come up with your own current issue relevant to our course content (but please check it with me before submitting). Some possible options to consider are:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Race relations in the US</i></li> <li>- <i>Discrimination and the use of force by police in the US</i></li> <li>- <i>Guns/gun control in the US</i></li> <li>- <i>Inequity of wealth in the US</i></li> <li>- <i>Use of drones</i></li> <li>- <i>Israel/Palestine conflict &amp; the US role</i></li> <li>- <i>The health care crisis and Obama-Care</i></li> <li>- <i>The role of religion in US politics</i></li> <li>- <i>The US role in Iraq – past, present, and future</i></li> <li>- <i>The Afghanistan War – past, present, and future</i></li> <li>- <i>PTSD and the current wars</i></li> <li>- <i>Economics of the current wars</i></li> <li>- <i>War effects on Iraqi and/or Afghani civilians</i></li> <li>- <i>Veterans and long term issues (homelessness, alcoholism, depression, suicide, divorce,</i></li> <li>- <i>Government services for veterans</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Soldiers and their families during deployment and return home</i></li> <li>- <i>Case study of a non-violent movement in history (not the civil rights movement)</i></li> <li>- <i>War resistance among enlisted soldiers</i></li> <li>- <i>Veterans for Peace</i></li> <li>- <i>The role/history of torture in the US</i></li> <li>- <i>Al Qaeda and ISIS</i></li> <li>- <i>Peace/peacemaking in Islam</i></li> <li>- <i>Immigration policy and attempts at reform</i></li> <li>- <i>Undocumented workers-their lives and their role in the US</i></li> <li>- <i>Partisan war in government and/or civilians (how did we get here, and how do we get out?)</i></li> <li>- <i>The current political/religious divide in the US</i></li> <li>- <i>NAFTA-its effect on the 3rd world and the US</i></li> <li>- <i>Nuclear weapons – history and current threat</i></li> <li>- <i>Global climate change – how to respond</i></li> </ul> |
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4) Project steps:

- a. Decide on a topic and submit it to me by week 4.
- b. Begin researching your topic as soon as possible. You should gather solid evidence from at least five outside sources. Sources can include books, journals, reputable Internet sources, interviews with experts or someone with insight into the issue, direct visits to a site, etc. (Besides the GC library, up-to-date resources can often be found in the Goshen public library. [www.goshenpl.lib.in.us](http://www.goshenpl.lib.in.us))
- c. Write a 10-15 page paper, due week 7.
  1. Introduce the topic and state your thesis. (1 pg.)
  2. Review course materials that illuminate the topic. (2-3 pgs.)

3. Develop 3-5 specific substantive points on the topic, drawing especially upon your outside sources. (4-6 pgs.)
  4. Weave your main points together to support your thesis and draw conclusions regarding conflict transformation on the matter. (1-2 pgs.)
  5. Reflect upon what you learned by writing this paper, how it serves as an appropriate culmination for this course, and what it means for your future aspirations. (2-3 pgs.)
  6. Include a bibliography of all sources used, including course readings (not included in page limits).
- d. Prepare a 10 minute presentation for the week 7 class period.
1. Time will be strictly kept to allow for some questions after each presentation.
  2. Your presentation should be research-based, informative, and interesting. Presenting quality, easily digestible information is much more important than quantity of information. As you present, I must be clear that you understand what you are presenting. Your goal is to then help your peers understand the issues.
  3. Be creative with your delivery of information. If you use PowerPoint, you must use it as an aid only; do not simply read the slides.
  4. Optional: provide a hard-copy handout for everyone in the class (including me), which should include at minimum an outline of the main points and a list of sources.
- 5) Project grading (40 points):
- 30 points – Content:** thoughtful application of course materials; solid research; clarity and appropriateness of thesis and main points.
- 5 points – Writing Style:** organization and coherence; insight; spelling and grammar.
- 5 points – Presentation:** poise; engagement with audience; creativity; time management.

**Course Schedule Overview (subject to revision—see Moodle for updates and details)**Week 1 (Jan. 6)

- Personal introductions
- Establish ground rules for classroom interaction
- Introductory lecture, reading, and discussion

*Readings*

- In-class handouts

*No Assignments Due*Week 2 (Jan. 13)

- Re-introductions and review of ground rules
- Lecture on the analysis of conflict, and the types and sources of violence
- Intensive group work on linking concepts and experiences

*Readings*

- Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research” (Moodle)
- Kriesberg-Dayton, chs. 1-2
- Pruitt & Kim, *Social Conflict*, ch. 1 (Moodle)
- Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution*, chs. 1-2 (Moodle)

*Assignments Due*

- Journal 1

Week 3 (Jan. 20)

- Discussion on styles of communication, work, and conflict
- Lecture on conflict management, resolution, and transformation
- Interactive classroom exercise on the actors in conflicts
- Mid-course evaluation

*Readings*

- Gilmore-Fraleigh (all)
- Johnson, *Privilege, Power, and Difference*, intro & ch. 1 (Moodle)
- Kriesberg-Dayton, ch. 3
- Lederach (all)

*Assignments Due*

- Journal 2
- Gilmore-Fraleigh Style Profile
- Reflection Paper 1

Week 4 (Jan. 27)

- Lecture on the dynamics of conflict, motivations of partisans, and structural factors
- Intensive group work on culture, injustice, and indirect violence

*Readings*

- Johnson, *Privilege, Power, and Difference*, chs. 2 & 6 (Moodle)
- Kriesberg-Dayton, chs. 4-6
- Ramsbotham, et al., *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, ch. 2 (Moodle)

*Assignments Due*

- Journal 3
- Final Project Topic

Week 5 (Feb. 3)

- Lecture on nonviolence, conflict intervention, and social change
- Interactive classroom exercise on waging nonviolent conflict

*Required Readings*

- Deming, *Of Revolution and Equilibrium* (Moodle)
- Kriesberg-Dayton, chs. 7, 8, & 10
- Lakey, *Powerful Peacemaking*, ch. 1 (Moodle)

*Optional Readings*

- Kriesberg-Dayton, ch. 9

*Assignments Due*

- Journal 4

Week 6 (Feb. 10)

- Lecture on constructive conflict and practical applications
- Intensive group work on synthesizing approaches to conflict transformation
- Open space for questions about the final project

*Required Readings*

- Johnson, *Privilege, Power, and Difference*, ch. 9 (Moodle)
- Kriesberg-Dayton, ch. 11
- Lederach & Appleby, "Strategic Peacebuilding" (Moodle)

*Optional Readings*

- Philpott, "Searching for Strategy in an Age of Peacebuilding" (Moodle)

*Assignments Due*

- Journal 5
- Reflection Paper 2

Week 7 (Feb. 17)

- Student presentations
- Final reflections

*Readings*

- Lederach, *Moral Imagination*, chs. 1, 2, & 15

*Assignments Due*

- Final Project