

Violent and Nonviolent Social Conflict

University of Notre Dame, Spring 2015
SOC 40058 / IIPS 40808

Course Info

Instructor: Matthew Chandler

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Office Hours: W 2:00 – 4:00 pm; Flanner 840

Class Meetings: MW 11:00 am – 12:15 pm; Hesburgh Library 1000

Course Description

This course is designed for advanced undergraduate students who want to explore the complexities of social conflict in depth. We will critically engage direct and indirect manifestations of coercive power at multiple levels in society, focusing especially on the differences between violence and nonviolence. While the lessons students learn will be broadly applicable to conflicts at the interpersonal and global scales, we will devote our attention to the social levels between these extremes—that is, inter-group, inter-ethnic, inter-cultural, and class conflicts. Resting on the assumption that conflict can be either destructive or constructive, we will investigate not only the causes of conflict, but also the methods and purposes of waging different forms of conflict.

Course Objectives

Through the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the patterned processes of social conflict from beginning to end;
2. Identify and analyze these processes in diverse case examples;
3. Compare and contrast differing types and levels of social conflict, especially along the violent/nonviolent divide;
4. Evaluate approaches to waging and managing conflict in contexts of uncertainty, intractability and/or high risks; and
5. Design a viable research project to advance the scholarly understanding of social conflict, or a feasible practical program for either waging or managing social conflict.

Course Requirements

Readings

Students must complete all required readings before the class sessions for which they are assigned. Many of the readings come from the texts listed below, but I will also distribute several digital items via Sakai. If you are not keeping up with the readings, it will be apparent to me through your oral participation and written assignments, and I will grade you accordingly.

Required Texts (in Bookstore)

We will read all or most of the following books. Please purchase them.

1. Arendt, Hannah. 1970. *On Violence*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
2. Bondurant, Joan. 1988. *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*. New Revised Edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
3. Kriesberg, Louis and Bruce Dayton. 2012. *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution*. Fourth Edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Recommended Texts (in bookstore)

We will read significant portions of the following books. I will provide electronic copies of the required passages, but it would not hurt to purchase these as well.

1. Alinsky, Saul. 1989. *Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals*. Vintage Books Edition. New York: Vintage Books.
2. Varshney, Ashutosh. 2003. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. Second Edition. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

More Recommendations (not in bookstore)

1. Gamson, William. 1990. *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Second Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.
2. Moyer, Bill, with JoAnn McAllister, Mary Lou Finley and Steven Soifer. 2001. *Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers.
3. Sharp, Gene. 2005. *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential*. Boston: Porter Sargent.

Attendance & Participation

I expect every student to attend (on time) and participate in every class session. As important as it is to complete the assigned readings on your own time, independent reading is insufficient to master the subject. Students must engage the content, articulate questions and comments about it, listen to and evaluate the contributions of other students, and, of course, garner information, synthesis and evaluation from me as the instructor. I will tolerate excused absences within reason, but each unexcused absence will result in a proportionate reduction in your grade. Chronic lateness will also result in a proportionate reduction in your grade. Any more than five unexcused absences could result in your dismissal from the course altogether. Your complete attendance is worth 20% of your final grade.

Minor Assignments

I will assign several short assignments throughout the course, and you will have a degree of flexibility for how you handle most of them. The purpose of these assignments is to keep you engaged with the readings and provide frequent feedback on your work. The options and relative weight for these assignments are described under the “Students’ Choices for Grading” section below, and the due dates are listed in the “Course Schedule” section at the end of the syllabus. Some assignments will require further explanation, to be given in class well in advance of their due dates.

Mid-Term Examination

This course includes only one examination, which you will take after we complete the major conceptual components during the first half of the course. The format is short essay, and since I want thoughtful, polished responses from each student, it is a take-home exam. I will provide more information about the content and my expectations during week 7, and it is due March 4.

Final Project

This course culminates with a final project, due May 6. I call it a “project,” as opposed to a term paper, because (a) it is meant to be a springboard for work you do related to social conflict beyond this course and (b) you have a couple options, neither of which fits the format of a standard term paper.

The first option is a research design, which is geared more toward students who have taken at least one research methods course and are interested in graduate school or a research-oriented career. Your task is to review the relevant literature, identify a research question that is not yet fully answered by scholars, and propose a way to arrive at a concrete (even if only partial) answer to the question. I expect both sophistication and parsimony, and I encourage students to strive to obtain some preliminary findings. The final product will be a 12- to 18-page (double spaced) document, not including references (which should be a substantial list).

The second option is a consultant report, which is geared more toward students who plan to be practitioners (e.g., social workers, law enforcement agents, civil servants, military

personnel, aid workers, etc.). Your task is to play the part of a professional consultant advising either a party to conflict or an institution charged with managing a conflict. The two main components of your report are conflict analysis (about 60% of the content) and recommendations (about 40% of the content). The report must be concise—no more than 5 pages (single spaced), including references, figures and tables—but packed with as much substance as possible. I will be evaluating the report mainly for content and construction, but I will also factor in your design/presentation.

I will provide more details about both options, including examples and answers to your questions, during week 8. You must submit a written, one- to two-page (double spaced) proposal by March 25. The proposal is a pass/fail component amounting to 2.5% of your grade on the final project, and I will provide you with both written and verbal feedback on it. To facilitate additional verbal feedback on the final project throughout the course, each student must schedule at least one appointment to discuss his/her project proposal with me one-on-one. This is also a pass/fail component amounting to 2.5% of your grade on the final project. Appointment scheduling begins during week 2.

Assessment and Grading

Students' Choices for Grading

I recognize that students have varying interests and plenty of commitments outside this course. Therefore, I have designed the structure of assignments with flexibility based on the decisions of students. Some assignments are fixed by necessity (i.e., not at all negotiable). I will give instructions for these in class well before they are due.

Fixed Assignments

1. Encyclopedia Entry: “Social Conflict” (due January 28)
2. Mid-Term Exam (due March 4)
3. Final Project Proposal (due March 25)
4. Final Project (due May 6)

Flexible Assignments

These minor assignments are flexible. By “flexible” I do not mean you can choose whether to complete them or not, but just that you have some flexibility in what you do and when. Each student must choose one of the following two paths:

1. Comparing, Contrasting, and Synthesizing the Readings

Write two out of four optional short essays to review and assimilate the readings. See the schedule below for the content and sequence of these short essays; they are due in intervals of three or four weeks. Each essay is 3-5 pages (double-spaced), not including references. No outside research is required. These are designed to help you study for the mid-term exam and/or prepare a literature review for the first option on the final project.

OR

2. Personal Vision Statement

Write a 5-10 page (double-spaced) essay outlining your outlook with regard to waging, managing, or resolving conflicts. No outside research is required. Citations of course readings is encouraged but not required. This is designed to help career-oriented students especially, and it should be a useful primer for the second option on the final project. It is due March 18. I will grade you based on thoughtfulness and clarity, and not based on your particular opinions and how well they align with mine.

You are free to choose among the options as the course progresses, but I strongly encourage you to set a personal work plan by week 3.

Grade Calculation Options

I recognize that students vary in learning styles and personal goals for a given course. Thus, in addition to options for the minor assignments and final project, I am giving you some choices about how to calculate your final grade in the course. I will grade each component based on a consistent rubric, but weight them according to the scheme you select. In other words, you get to decide how to prioritize the assignments based on your strengths, weaknesses and personal goals for this course.

The following assignments have fixed weights:

- Attendance and participation: 20%
- Encyclopedia entry: 5%

Everything else has some wiggle room, as follows:

- Flexible Minor Assignments (collectively): 10% to 25%
- Mid-Term Exam: 20% to 30%
- Final Project (including proposal): 30% to 45%

These three variable-weight items must total 75%. Please keep the weights as convenient numbers, such as increments of 5% or 10%. You must indicate your particular grading scheme before Spring Break. (I might consider revisions within reason.)

Final Grade 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	63-66	1.0
F	Failing	below 63	0

Writing Standards

All written assignments should meet several basic criteria: saved as a MS Word document or PDF and submitted through Sakai (not email); include your name, the assignment name, the course title, and the date of submission on the top of the first page; one-inch margins all around; 12-point Times New Roman or similar font; and proper citations using either in-text or footnote standards (not endnotes).

So long as you are consistent, I am flexible with which academic formatting standard you use in your papers (e.g., ASA, APA, Chicago, MLA). If you don't know which to use, my personal preference is Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. The 8th and latest edition (2013) is very thorough and helpful.

Late Assignments and Re-writes

Submit all assignments via Sakai before class starts on their due dates. To avoid technical difficulties, don't wait until the last minute.

Assignments submitted within 24 hours after the due date will be marked down by 5 percentage points. Those submitted between 24 and 72 hours after the due date will be marked down by 10 percentage points. I will not accept assignments beyond 72 hours after the due date (i.e., you will have to switch to an alternative option, if available for that assignment, or take a grade of zero).

I allow students to re-write of any of their graded assignments, with a penalty of 3 percentage points off the grade on the revised version (down to a minimum grade equal to the original grade)—provided the revised version is submitted within 72 hours after I issue you a grade. In the event of serious deficiencies or a reversal of progress, I will request a personal meeting with a student to discuss corrective measures, regardless of his/her decision about re-writing.

Academic Honesty

The University of Notre Dame takes academic honesty very seriously, and so do I. The work of each student must be her/his own and must include proper citations when referring to the work or ideas of others. All acts of plagiarism, cheating or other forms of academic dishonesty will be punished immediately and severely. As the instructor of this course, I will respond to all confirmed cases of academic dishonesty with two actions: (1) issuing a zero grade for the assignment(s) in question; and (2) referring the student(s) in question to the University of Notre Dame Honesty Committee. The Honesty Committee may at its discretion issue the student(s) in question a failing grade for the entire course, or even dismiss the student(s) from the University permanently (see <http://nd.edu/~hnr/code/docs/handbook.htm>). If you have any doubts or questions about your work with regard to the University of Notre Dame Academic Code of Honor, contact me before you submit it for assessment. I will not accept any excuses whatsoever once an assignment has been submitted.

Disability Statement

“Any student who has a documented disability and is registered with Disability Services should speak with the professor [or instructor] as soon as possible regarding accommodations. Students who are not registered should contact the Office of Disability Services – <http://disabilityservices.nd.edu/>.”

Course Schedule (subject to revision—see updates on Sakai)

WEEK 1 (Jan. 14) *Introduction and Primer*

Readings:

Pruitt & Kim, *Social Conflict*, ch. 1 (Sakai)

WEEK 2 (Jan. 19 & 21) *Experiencing and Understanding Conflict*

Readings:

Kriesberg & Dayton, *Constructive Conflicts*, chs. 1-3

Simmel, *Conflict* (Sakai)

WEEK 3 (Jan. 26 & 28) *Power, Obedience, and Struggle*

Readings:

Engels, “Anti-Dühring” (Sakai)

Oberschall, “Theories of Social Conflict” (Sakai)

Korpi, “Conflict, Power and Relative Deprivation” (Sakai)

Sharp, *The Role of Power in Nonviolent Struggle* (Sakai)

Assignment Due Jan. 28 (fixed):

Encyclopedia Entry: “Social Conflict”

WEEK 4 (Feb. 2 & 4) *Culture, Difference, and Contestation*

Readings:

Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, selections (Sakai)

Galtung, “Cultural Violence” (Sakai)

LeBaron, “Culture and Conflict” (Sakai)

Pescosolido, Grauerholz, & Milkie, “Culture and Conflict” (Sakai)

Assignment Due Feb. 4 (flex):

Comparing, Contrasting & Synthesizing, Weeks 1-4

WEEK 5 (Feb. 9 & 11) *Waging Conflict*

Readings:

Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, selections (Sakai)

Kriesberg & Dayton, chs. 4-6

WEEK 6 (Feb. 16 & 18) *Theories of Violence*

Readings:

Arendt, *On Violence* (all)
Clausewitz, *On War*, selections (Sakai)
Jackman, "Violence in Social Life" (Sakai)

WEEK 7 (Feb. 23 & 25) *Theories of Nonviolence*

Readings:

Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, chs. 1-2
Sharp, *How Nonviolent Struggle Works* (Sakai)

Assignment Due Feb. 25 (flex):
Comparing, Contrasting & Synthesizing, Weeks 5-7

WEEK 8 (Mar. 2 & 4) *Mid-Term Review and Exam*

No New Readings

Assignments Due Mar. 4 (fixed):
Mid-Term Exam
Grade Weighting Choices

SPRING BREAK (Mar. 7-15)

WEEK 9 (Mar. 16 & 18) *The Use of Violence*

Readings:

Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, selections (Sakai)
Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, selections (Sakai)

Assignment Due Mar. 18 (flex):
Personal Vision Statement

WEEK 10 (Mar. 23 & 25) *The Use of Nonviolence*

Readings:

Bondurant, chs. 3-4
Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, selections #1 (Sakai)

Assignment Due Mar. 25 (fixed):
Final Project Proposal

WEEK 11 (Mar. 30 & Apr. 1) *Comparing Violent and Nonviolent Social Conflicts*

Readings:

Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, selections (Sakai)
Stephan & Chenoweth, "Why Civil Resistance Works" (Sakai)

Assignment Due Apr. 1 (flex):
Comparing, Contrasting & Synthesizing, Weeks 9-11

EASTER BREAK (Apr. 3-6)

WEEK 12 (Apr. 8) *Conflict De-escalation*

Readings:

Kriesberg & Dayton, ch. 7

WEEK 13 (Apr. 13 & 15) *Interventions and Outcomes, Part I*

Readings:

Kriesberg & Dayton, chs. 8-10

WEEK 14 (Apr. 20 & 22) *Interventions and Outcomes, Part II*

Readings:

Ganz, "Resources and Resourcefulness" (Sakai)
Moyer, *Doing Democracy*, selections (Sakai)
Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, selections #2 (Sakai)

WEEK 15 (Apr. 27 & 29) *Conclusions*

Readings:

Kriesberg & Dayton, ch. 11

Assignment Due Apr. 29 (flex):
Comparing, Contrasting & Synthesizing, Weeks 12-15

READING WEEK (Apr. 30 – May 3)

FINAL PERIOD (May 6, 4:15 – 6:15 pm, Hesburgh Library 1000)

Assignment Due May 6 (fixed):
Final Project