

Hamline University School of Law • Dispute Resolution Institute

Theories of Conflict
Syllabus, J-term 2009

“There is nothing so practical as a good theory.” – Kurt Lewin

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| Professor | Dr. Timothy Hedeem, tkhedeem@yahoo.com, 770-423-6879 |
| Class meetings | January 2 nd , 3 rd , 5 th and 6 th , 9:00am – 4:30pm |
| Course description | <p>This two-credit course introduces students to important conflict theories drawn from a range of academic disciplines. This class provides the necessary foundation for understanding the dynamics of conflict interaction and intervention through the application of relevant theoretical lenses.</p> <p>The course meetings will be highly interactive, employing a combination of presentation, dialogue, and exercises to facilitate learning. Class participation—especially informed participation—is essential, so students should complete assigned readings in preparation for each day’s meeting.</p> |
| Course texts | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Pruitt and Kim (“PK”), <i>Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement</i> (3/e)2. Course reader <p><i>Please note that readings and class meetings are designed to be complementary. Readings will inform class presentations and discussions, in-class material and exercises will expand upon readings.</i></p> |
| Grading, Basis of Evaluation | <p>The grade for this course will be based on preparation and participation (10%) and two papers (30% for reflection paper, 60% for research paper).</p> |
| <u>Preparation, participation</u> | <p>Preparation, attendance and participation are key to learning in any context, especially in courses designed around in-class exercises and discussion.</p> |
| <u>Reflection paper</u> | <p>In a paper of 1,500-1,800 words (show word count at end of paper), focus on a discussion, reading, or exercise from class and relate the insights and lessons gleaned to a personal conflict experience. Please keep your presentation of the experience brief (less than 500 words). This paper does not require research or citations. Due: _____</p> |
| <u>Research paper</u> | <p>In a paper of 2,500-3,000 words (show word count at end of paper), apply three or more theories of conflict to a case of your choosing. Cases may be drawn from any context, from the interpersonal to the international, so long as multiple parties are involved. The goal is to demonstrate your mastery of conflict theories through integration and application; that is, the paper will reflect your critical thinking through the selection of case, choice of theories, and presentation of relevant research concerning both the case and theories. Students should consult with the professor to determine the ‘fit’ of their topic with the assignment, to ensure adequate treatment in terms of depth and breadth. Due: _____</p> |

Course agenda

Before Jan 2nd

Read as many of the readings as you can, preferably in the order they appear here

Friday,
Jan. 2nd

Course overview, conflict overview, strategy (five readings)

PK, Ch.1: Overview

PK, Ch.2: Nature and Sources

PK, Ch.3: Strategic Choice

Deutsch, "Justice and Conflict," pp.43-68 of *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (2/e), Jossey-Bass, 2006 (in reader)

Folger, Poole, and Stutman, "Theories of Conflict Interaction," pp.64-103, Ch. 3 of *Working Through Conflict* (5/e), Addison Wesley Longman, 2005 (in reader)

Saturday,
Jan. 3rd

Biology, power, contention (three readings)

PK, Ch.4: Contentious Tactics

Opatow, "Aggression and Violence," pp.509-532 of *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (2/e), Jossey-Bass, 2006 (in reader)

Wilmot and Hocker, "Power: The Structure of Conflict," pp.95-128, Ch. 4 of *Interpersonal Conflict* (7/e), McGraw Hill, 2007 (in reader)

Monday,
Jan. 5th

Escalation, culture (four readings)

PK, Ch.5: Escalation

PK, Ch.6: Structural Change

PK, Ch.8: Persistence of Escalation

Kimmel, "Culture and Conflict," pp.625-648 of *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (2/e), Jossey-Bass, 2006 (in reader)

Tuesday,
Jan. 6th

Identity and groups, stalemate, de-escalation (four readings)

PK, Ch.9: Stalemate and De-escalation

PK, Ch.10: Problem-solving

Petonito, "Racial Discourse and Enemy Construction," pp.19-40, Ch. 2 of *Social Conflicts and Collective Identities*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2000 (in reader)

Feminia, "Emotional Actor: Foreign Policy in the Falkland/Malvinas War," pp.41-65, Ch.3 of *Social Conflicts and Collective Identities*, 2000 (in reader)