



## **ACOM 7323: Conflict Analysis & Intervention**

ACOM 7232-01 65244

---

**Fall 2018**

**Fridays from 5:00 – 9:00 PM**

**Saturdays from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM**

**September 7-8; October 5-6; October 19-20**

**Speech Bldg., Room 210**

---

3 Credit Hours

*\*\*Syllabus subject to change\*\**

**Instructor:** Dr. Bailey M. Oliver

**Email:** bmoliver1@ualr.edu

**Office:** Speech Bldg., Room 230

**Business Hours Contact:** (501) 683-7264

**Weekends Contact:** via email

**Office Hours:**

T - from 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Th - from 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

And by appointment

### **Course Objectives**

This course was carefully designed alongside and in conjunction with the goal of the Department of Applied Communication to “foster the co-creation of better social worlds through positive communication”. As such, this course will help you:

- Define conflict and the diverse elements of conflict transformation according to theorists
- Explain the various perspectives of conflict and understand the potential for altering them
- Develop a greater awareness of the role of power in conflicts
- Identify the influence of emotions in your conflicts
- Manage your conflicts more effectively and avoid destructive conflict patterns or cycles
- Describe how conflict occurs in different relationships and contexts
- Understand and apply psychological and communication theories to explain how and why conflict occurs in your own experiences and to others through case studies
- Design a consulting workshop to demonstrate your knowledge of constructive conflict practices to help others manage conflict in productive ways

### **Catalog Course Description**

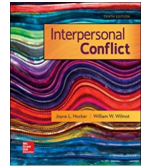
An introduction to conflict dynamics with an emphasis on communication intervention skills; covers different frames for analyzing conflict analysis tools, opportunities for conflict self-assessment, and skill-building in difficult conversations.

## Required Texts

### **Textbook**

Hocker, J. L., & Wilmot, W. W. (2017). *Interpersonal Conflict* (10<sup>th</sup> Edition). McGraw-Hill Education, New York: NY. ISBN: 978-0-07-352394-1

*Note: There is also an earlier version from 2014 that may be used as well, although page numbers and all content may not correspond correctly.*



### **Required Online Readings**

(Articles will be available on Blackboard or searchable through Google Scholar)

### **Blackboard/UALR Email**

A required part of this course is accessing announcements, updates, and grades through Blackboard. The Blackboard website provides vital announcements, assignment descriptions, rubrics, and a course calendar—information that may not be discussed during class time. Because it is more up-to-date, website information supersedes lecture information, so check it before each class. You should access the ACOM 7323 Blackboard website within the first week of class and access it frequently throughout the semester.

In order to get key course announcements, you **MUST** regularly access your UALR-sponsored email address. If you want to use an alternate email, you must redirect your UALR email address. Furthermore, students must regularly clean out their email accounts so that they are able to receive course announcements.

### **Assignments**

Grades will be calculated based on the following assignments. There are 300 total possible points for this course with the following grade breakdown:

<b>Conflict Style Reflection Paper:</b>	<b>30 points</b>
<b>Case Study Leader:</b>	<b>40 points</b>
<b>Group Consulting Project Handout:</b>	<b>20 points</b>
<b>Group Consulting Project Presentation:</b>	<b>60 points</b>
<b>Final Application Paper:</b>	<b>100 points</b>
<b>Attendance/Class Participation:</b>	<b>50 points</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>/300 points</b>

### **Conflict Style Reflection Paper: 30 points.**

In our first weekend of the course, we will discuss conflict styles. You will take an assessment in class that weekend determining your conflict style. Based on lecture and the readings on conflict styles, you will write a short, informal, 2-3-page reflection on the conflict style the assessment listed you as. Your paper will include: a short introduction, a discussion and definition of your conflict style using literature and readings from the course, your opinion on if you were surprised or shocked by your results, and a short conclusion including future implications for what this conflict style means to you and your future conflict with relational partners.

Further details and a rubric for this assignment will be provided on the first meeting day and posted to Blackboard

### **Case Study Leader:**

#### **40 points.**

For this assignment you will create a case study to explain a topic area of conflict. A case study is a pedagogical technique that allows students to examine critical incidents, apply knowledge (including theory) to actual situations, and develop their own communication practice. Starting our second weekend, students will be asked to provide a case study to present to the class that will enhance our discussions and lectures on a particular conflict topic. There are actually some case studies at the beginning of some of your readings. (See, for example, the chapter in *Close Encounters* we discuss on the first day of the course, which starts with a scenario involving a couple and their teenage daughter). Your case study must be related to a topic we are discussing that day you signed up to present. You will create an opening scenario (case) that will illustrate one of the types of conflict we are discussing that day. After discussing this case, you will present concepts and/or theories that are relevant to your case study, explain what is happening based on the research/literature, and present practical advice that would be helpful to the people in your case study. The goal is for you to connect theory and research in a way that shows how people dealing with a particular conflict situation might better understand their conflict communication and cope in a more productive manner. Your pragmatic recommendations should be an extension of the literature rather than personal opinion. You will have 8 to 10 minutes to present the case study to the class. Present the scenario and then discuss how the literature is related to your case study and the recommendations you would give. Each case study presentation should end with two discussion questions for the class related to a reading from class that day. Further details and a rubric for this assignment will be provided on the first meeting day and posted to Blackboard.

### **Group Consulting Project:**

#### **Handout: 20 points.**

#### **Presentation: 60 points.**

#### **80 points total.**

For this assignment, you will work in groups of 3 to present material that you could use if you were hired as a consultant to present a workshop or seminar on a particular conflict topic. Your PowerPoint or Prezi presentation should be from 40 to 60 minutes in length and may include activities, video clips, and any other material you believe would be beneficial to teach an audience about your selected topic. Aim your presentation at a particular audience (and the class will pretend to be that audience!). For example, are you presenting to new parents at school orientation on how to manage conflict with their young children? Are you presenting at a relationship seminar about how to have difficult conversations with a future spouse? To a company who is dealing with workplace bullying? To a Greek organization dealing with conflict amongst their sorority or fraternity members? Are you a group of counselors helping siblings undergoing conflict-ridden times in their family as they cope with a divorce or separation? You will use concepts you learned in our course and additional research you conduct on your own to provide both theoretically-ground and practical advice on how to cope with conflict. In addition to presenting your “consulting workshop” presentation during our last day of class, your group will also submit a handout or worksheet to aid in your presentation. This handout will include necessary and needed information for those who “attended” the workshop. Think of this as a worksheet they take home with them after the workshop. You should be both creative and academic in this handout and may include: helpful conflict management techniques, necessary definitions, exercises to use outside the workshop, next steps or websites to go to for further information on your topic, etc. This 1-2-page handout should be uploaded by one group member to Blackboard by 11:59 PM on Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. It is up to your group to print copies of this handout for your presentation earlier that day if you wish. Further details and a rubric for this assignment (both the presentation and handout) will be posted to Blackboard.

## **Final Application Paper:**

### **100 points.**

This final paper will work alongside your group consulting project. However, this is an *individual paper* and should not be created with any group members. In this 8-10 page APA-style paper, you will discuss your consulting project, and apply the concepts and theories that were utilized in your presentation. Your paper should include: a clear introduction, a discussion of your topics and target audience (including a rationale for extending your chosen conflict topic to this particular audience), your goals or objectives for the session (i.e. what did you want your audience to learn?), a detailed discussion summarizing the literature/research that informed your session, future directions for this conflict topic, and a clear conclusion that summarizes the contributions that your consulting project could make to the literature on your particular conflict topic. You should have a minimum of 8 citations from academic journal articles throughout the paper and at the end in a references page. Three of these citations must not be from existing course content. This paper is due to Blackboard a few weeks after our last course meeting and is due by 11:59 PM on Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. Further details and a rubric for this assignment will be posted to Blackboard.

## **Attendance/Class Participation:**

### **50 points.**

Class activities, discussions, and in-class presentations will be a central component of this class, as they are useful for understanding and applying concepts in conflict and conflict transformation. Students are not only encouraged but expected to participate in all discussions and in-class activities. When students share their experiences, the course material often becomes more interesting and comprehensible. As such, part of your overall grade is determined based upon your attendance and participation in in-class activities and discussions. Remember, *attending* class does not guarantee you are *participating* in class.

## **Grading Policy**

Generally, in the course, ‘excellent’ work earns “A” grades, ‘good’ work earns “B” grades, ‘average’ work earns “C” grades, ‘below average’ work earns “D” grades, and ‘unacceptable’ work earns an “F” or “0” grade. [More specific guidelines as to what counts as ‘excellent’ and ‘good’ will be explicated in class or presented to you on a handout before each assignment.]

**Due to course policy, I cannot offer extra credit.**

A –	90-100 Percent	269-300 Points
B –	80-89 Percent	239-268 Points
C –	70-79 Percent	209-238 Points
D –	60-69 Percent	179-208 Points
F –	0-59 Percent	0-178 Points

## **Course Policies**

### **Participation:**

We will be engaging in a number of in-class activities (such as Case Study presentations, self-assessments, and class-wide discussions) for which participation is REQUIRED. Your participation in this class includes every assignment from in-class discussions, to online assignment submissions, and in-class activities. Your participation grade will reflect each of these areas. Students who are not present, do not contribute to class activities or discussions, or who are tardy for those activities will not receive credit for them.

### **Attendance:**

Regular, on-time attendance in any graduate-level class is mandatory. However, attendance is even more so significant in a shortened weekend course like this one. Missing one day or half a day of

class can set you multiple readings and chapters behind. New material will be presented in each class session and participation is expected from all attendees. Those who do miss class will be responsible for informing the instructor and attaining the notes and assignments missed during the class. If you do not inform me and are not in class, you will not be able to make up assignments unless serious extenuating circumstances exist.

### **Makeup Policies:**

All written assignments will be submitted online via Blackboard. As such, papers will **not** be accepted late for full credit. Assignments may be turned in the following day for half credit (50% less credit) at most. Papers will not be accepted after two days from the original due date. I do not accept papers via email, so please do not ask. Blackboard is the only acceptable place to turn in online assignments. All papers must be typed and include a name for grading. In-class assignments (such as activities, discussions, or Case Study or Consulting Project presentations) cannot be made up. If you miss one of these assignments and have an *excused absence* (note from physician, attorney, police, judge, or an obituary/funeral program), you will be provided with an alternative assignment and will have 1-week from the missed day to submit the assignment in full.

### **Regular and Substantive Contact:**

I am dedicated to interacting with my students to ensure their academic success. As such, I will remain in regular and substantive contact with you all throughout the semester by: in-class lectures, sending weekly emails, and providing online feedback and grades within two weeks of an assignment submission. I will also be available for virtual or in-person office hours and via email throughout the semester.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the deliberate use of another's work as your own. This means lifting passages from books, journal articles, or other scholarly material without proper citations. I read these types of articles regularly and recognize the type of writing. Please also be advised that all work for this class must be **original to this class**. You may not recycle papers or work from other courses you've taken, including if you are taking this course over again. This behavior is considered to be academically dishonest and/or plagiarism as well. If you have any questions about these policies, please contact me. All material in this course- discussion questions, journals, presentations, and paper submissions will be reviewed for plagiarism.

### **Student Conduct:**

I want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is *especially* important that we (1) display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students, (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities; (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is *not* an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents examples of the types of things that can have a dramatic impact on the class environment. Your final grade may be reduced by 1% *each time* you engage in these sorts of behaviors. Further, students who are verbally or physically aggressive towards the instructor, the TAs, or another student before, during, or after class will have their grade lowered by 25% *each time* they engage in this sort of behavior (and, students engaging in such behaviors will be permanently removed from the class and the proper authorities notified).

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students with Disabilities: Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s), and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501.569.3143 (V/TTY) or 501.683.7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the [DRC website](#).

### **Inclement Weather:**

During inclement weather, UA Little Rock will make a decision whether or not to close based on all available information. The chancellor will decide whether or not conditions warrant canceling classes and activities and closing the campus or whether classes and activities will be canceled but with specified campus offices open. Online or web-enhanced classes will continue as scheduled at the discretion of the faculty member. The [UA Little Rock website](#), UA Little Rock email, the university's main telephone number (501.569.3000), and the Rave campus alert notification system are the official means of communicating information concerning weather-related closings. When necessary, the university will announce a separate decision about canceling night classes (those classes starting at 4:20 p.m. or later) by 2 p.m., if possible. The Policy Advisory Council of the University Assembly will recommend to the chancellor if and when missed undergraduate and graduate class days should be made up. In the event that the university is closed during a final examination day, the provost, in consultation with the Faculty Senate president, will reschedule any missed graduate or undergraduate final examinations with the exception of online exams which will continue as scheduled. Weather and road conditions vary from place to place. Employees and students are expected to exercise good judgment regarding the safety of travel when road conditions are affected by the weather.

### **Class Rules**

- All readings will be completed prior to the corresponding class meeting day/time
- All written assignments will be typed, free of grammar/spelling errors, composed in APA format, and submitted electronically through our course Blackboard page
- All students will be professional and considerate of others and act in an appropriate and mature manner within classroom *and* throughout online class interactions.
- Emails will be composed using proper language and grammar, and will include a proper greeting. **Failure to do so will result in the deletion of the email without a response.**
- Emails sent after 5 PM may not be responded to until after 8 AM the following morning.
- No tobacco use will be tolerated during class times and cigarette breaks will not be permitted.
- Questions about grading will be asked during office hours, not through email or during class time.

### Tentative Course Calendar

Assignment due dates are indicated in **bolded red** below  
All articles are linked and accessible within our Blackboard page.

#### Friday, September 7<sup>th</sup>

- *Readings due prior to class:*
  - Chapter 1 & 2 in textbook (The Nature of Conflict and Perspectives of Conflict in *Interpersonal Conflict*, Hocker & Wilmont)
  - Article: Guerrero, Anderson, & Afifi, 2017. Conflict Chapter in the textbook *Close encounters: Communication in relationships*.
- *Topics:*
  - Syllabus, assignments, and course overview
  - Major concepts in conflict
  - Defining conflict
  - Perspectives of conflict
  - Rule of Negative Reciprocity
  - Determine groups for consulting project
  - Sign up for Case Studies

#### Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup>

- *Readings due prior to class:*
  - Chapter 4, 5, & 6 in textbook (Power: The Structure of Conflict, Conflict Styles, and Emotions in Conflict in *Interpersonal Conflict*, Hocker & Wilmont)
  - Article: Roloff, 2009. In point of practice: Links between conflict management research and practice.
- *Topics:*
  - Power
  - Emotions in conflict
  - Conflict Styles
  - Preventing Destructive Conflict Cycles

#### Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup>

- **Conflict Style Reflection Paper due to Blackboard by 11:59 PM**

#### Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>

- *Readings due prior to class:*
  - Article: Caughlin & Vangelisti, 2006. Conflict in dating and marital relationships.
  - Article: Roloff & Johnson, 2002. Serial arguing over the relational life course.
  - Article: Spitzberg, 2013. Intimate partner violence.
  - Article: Hartup, 1992. Conflict and friendship relations.
- *Topics:*
  - Romantic Relationship Conflict
    - Serial Arguing/Violence

- Conflict in Peer and Friend Relationships
- Gendered Differences in Conflict
- **5 Student Case Study Presentations**

### **Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup>**

- *Readings due prior to class:*
  - Article: Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006. Family conflict communication.
  - Article: Canary & Canary, 2013. Family conflict.
  - Article: Whiteman, McHale, & Soli, 2011. Theoretical perspective on sibling relationships.
  - Article: Spaho, 2013. Organizational communication and conflict management.
  - Online Report: Frick, 2015. What research shows about talking back to a jerk boss.
- *Topics:*
  - Family Conflict
    - Parent-Child Conflict
    - Sibling Conflict
  - Workplace/Organizational Conflict
  - **7 Student Case Study Presentations**

### **Friday, October 19<sup>th</sup>**

- *Readings due prior to class:*
  - Chapter 10 in textbook (The Practice of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in *Interpersonal Conflict*, Hocker & Wilmont)
  - Article: Merolla, 2017. Forgiveness following conflict: What it is, why it happened, and how it's done.
  - Article: Kloeber & Waldron, 2017. Expressing and suppressing conditional forgiveness in serious romantic relationships.
- *Topics:*
  - Forgiveness & Reconciliation
  - **4 Student Case Study Presentations**
  - Group Work day

### **Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>**

- *Readings due prior to class:*
  - None
- *Topics:*
  - **Group Consulting Projects in class**
  - **Group Consulting Project Handouts due to Blackboard by 11:59 PM**

### **Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup>**

- **Final Application Paper due to Blackboard by 11:59 PM**