



ACOM 3323: Conflict Management

ACOM 3323-01 14911

Spring 2020

Tues/Thur 1:40 – 2:55 PM

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 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

And by appointment

Course Objectives

This course was carefully designed to help you:

1. Increase your ability to take others' perspectives
2. Understand the role of goals in conflict
3. Develop a greater awareness of the role of power in conflicts
4. Be able to identify the influence of emotions in your conflicts
5. Expand your understanding and use of a range of conflict strategies
6. Be able to manage your conflicts more effectively

Catalog Course Description

Development of the student's ability to manage conflict in organizations, groups, and personal relationships effectively. Topics include theories, styles, patterns, and systems of conflict as well as conflict management techniques of negotiation and mediation. The course uses in-class activities to understand the factors and dynamics of conflict resolution better and to develop effective conflict management skills that include forgiveness and reconciliation.

Course Rationale

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". Conflict is a natural and common part of our everyday lives. Conflict is often inevitable and is encountered when we interact with other people, whether it is our family, relational

partners, coworkers, bosses, clients, or even strangers. By understanding the various ways of managing interpersonal conflict, we can help promote understanding and civil communication in our relationships. Overall, this course examines the nature of interpersonal conflict, how it occurs, and how to manage it. This is an applied communication class: it combines lecture, some discussion, and some activities to focus on how you can translate communication research into knowledge and skills that will influence the quality of your relationships now and in the future. This course introduces students to the basic principles of effective communication and conflict interaction. In order for this course to be of value to you and your classmates, you need to read the assigned readings, regularly attend lectures, and participate actively in the course.

Required Texts

- Cahn, D.D., & Abigail, R.A. (2014). *Managing conflict through communication* (5th Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
 - ISBN: 978-0205862139
 - **Please feel free to rent this book instead of purchase!**
- Required Supplemental Readings (will be available on Blackboard)

Blackboard/UALR Email

A required part of this course is accessing announcements, updates, and grades through Blackboard. The Blackboard website provides vital announcements, online lectures, readings, and the course calendar—information that may not be discussed in lecture. Because it is more up-to-date, website information supersedes lecture information, so check it before each class. You should access the ACOM 3323 Blackboard website within the first week of class. 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.

Do not send emails to me through Blackboard. The only way to contact me is by emailing bmoliver1@ualr.edu

Exams and Assignments

Grades will be calculated based on the following assignments. There are 400 total possible points for this course with the following grade breakdown:

Discussion Board Posts & Responses:	(5 at 20 points each)	100 points
Exams:	(3 at 50 points each)	150 points
Conflict Analysis Paper:		100 points
Attendance/Participation:		50 points
Total:		/400 points

Discussion Board Posts & Responses:

5 at 20 points each: 100 points total.

You will engage in five discussion boards, intermittently displaced throughout the semester. (See the calendar at the end of this document for specific due dates). Both your original post and your peer response will be due by Friday (no later than 11:59 PM), but feel free to complete them up to a week before they are due. You will receive up to 15 points for your original post and then 5 points for responding to a peer.

Typically, the discussion question (DQ) will require that you respond to a concept, claim, or issue discussed in the readings or lectures. Your original post should include references (at least one) to the textbook or article readings we have covered thus far in the course. A few DQs may expect you to engage in an activity or experience **before** you post your response to the discussion board. For example, you may be asked to watch a short film, take an assessment to reveal your conflict style, or read an article and provide a response. **Some of these DQs will require that you engage in the activity/experience during the week prior to the date of your post.** These DQs will be disclosed early on, but it is important that you read all DQs a week ahead so that you have time to complete the assigned activity before the posted due dates. All DQs will be posted exactly one week before their due date.

- **Guidelines for Original Discussion Posts**

- Your discussion posts should be clear, and free from spelling and grammar mistakes. It is highly suggested that you write your posts in a Word document FIRST, and then copy them into the DB. This allows you to appropriately proofread.
- Original posts should be a minimum of 250 words.
- Each original post should include at least one *academic* reference. Your citation will most likely be from a textbook chapter or from assigned readings posted on Blackboard. You must use correct APA citations and include the full reference at the end of your original post. Feel free to use outside references as well. You should have both an in-text citation (within your writing) and a full reference at the end.
- Do NOT attach your response as a document. Write it directly in the field provided.
- Posts should be submitted on time, or they will not be graded.

- **Guidelines for Peer Responses**

- Be sure to respond to at least one peer's post. You must respond to their original post and not to a *comment* on an original post. Responding to comments on your own post is encouraged but does NOT count towards your response.
- Peer posts should be a minimum of 150 words.
- Your response should be intelligent and thoughtful. You **MUST ACADEMICALLY ADD SOMETHING TO THE DISCUSSION**. You will not receive points if you merely repeat what is said in the original post.
- Do NOT attach your response as a document. Write it directly in the field provided.
- Please use tact: be respectful to each other in the discussion board. Remember that we are all entitled to our opinions. This is not a platform for rhetoric, personal attacks, being on a soapbox, or condemning another person's perspective.
- You should avoid replying to posts that have already been commented upon until every post receives at least one comment.
- There are NO citation/reference requirements for peer responses, although encouraged

Exams:

3 exams at 50 points each: 150 points total.

Exams are based on assigned reading content, lectures, and other class materials. Generally, exams are constructed with multiple choice questions and short essays or brief applications. Study guides will be provided, but be warned they are more of an outline of topics instead of answered questions. Please note we will not hold class on Exam days, as the exams will be administered online. Online exams will have time restrictions. Safe Assign (anti-plagiarism software embedded within our Blackboard page) notes patterns in similar answers across multiple student answers and if content used on an exam is used from course presentations or outside websites. Be warned that this constitutes academic dishonesty and will result in a failure of the assignment. Exams should be completed individually and not with other students. *No exams will be accumulative.*

Conflict Analysis Paper:

100 points.

You have two options for this assignment (see below). Papers should be a minimum of 5 pages in length, NOT including references, figures, charts, etc. APA style is expected: 1 inch margins all around, 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, in-text citations, and a full reference page. This paper will be submitted via Blackboard and checked with anti-plagiarism software known as “Safe Assign”.

- **Option A: Movie Analysis.** This assignment requires that you select a movie or television show (at least 40 minutes in length) that depicts conflict (in the workplace, in a relationship, family conflict, etc.). Your paper will analyze how characters dealt with conflict, responded to conflict, and/or their use of negotiation or mediation. A minimum of 5 references will be required (academic journal articles), beyond the course material. More information on this option will be distributed in class.
- **Option B: Research Review.** This assignment requires that you select a context of conflict (e.g., parent-child, friendship, organizations, etc.) or a specific type of Alternative Dispute Resolution (e.g., mediation, arbitration, etc.) and review the most relevant literature that has been most recently published. A minimum of 5 references will be required (academic journal articles), beyond the course material. You should *synthesize* the literature in order to make valid conclusions regarding your context or ADR technique of choice.
- Further instructions on the paper assignment will be provided closer to the due date (see calendar).

Attendance/Participation:

50 points.

Class activities will be a central component of this class, as they are useful for understanding and applying concepts in conflict and negotiation. As such, there is always the possibility of in-class activities and/or quizzes throughout the semester worth points towards your overall attendance/participation grade. This grade (50 points possible) is determined based upon your attendance and participation in in-class activities/discussions and possible pop quizzes. Missing more than 4 days (excused *or* unexcused) will also result in the deduction of points from this grade. 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	360-400 Points
B –	80-89	Percent	320-359 Points
C –	70-79	Percent	280-319 Points
D –	60-69	Percent	240-279 Points
F –	0-59	Percent	0-239 Points

Course Policies

Participation:

We will be engaging in a number of in-class activities for which participation is REQUIRED. Your participation in this class includes every assignment from in-class discussions, to online discussion boards, and in class activities. Your participation grade will reflect each of these areas. Students who are not present or who are tardy for those activities will not receive credit for the activities.

Attendance:

Every student is allowed a total of 4 absences -excused or unexcused. Excessive absences (4+) will negatively affect your overall Attendance/Participation grade. An excused absence (note from physician, attorney, police, judge, religious holidays, official schedules for university sponsored events, an obituary/funeral program, etc.) **DOES NOT negate the absence and will only be necessary** if the student has missed an assignment due date. **Tardies of 15 minutes or more will count as an (1) absence.**

For an absence to be excused you will need to provide the instructor with appropriate documentation. If you are going to miss class for religious holidays or university-sponsored events, please notify me at least two weeks in advance so that appropriate accommodations can be made. Students who have some prior conflict with a due date have the responsibility of discussing the conflict and making alternative arrangements **in advance** with their instructor. **Again, excuses are only necessary if you missed an assignment due date.**

Makeup Polices:

Papers will **not** be accepted late for full credit. Assignments may be turned in the following class day for half credit (50% less credit) at most. Papers will not be accepted after two class days (one calendar week) 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, submitted correctly, and include your name for grading.

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: conducting in-class lectures, sending weekly emails, commenting on discussion board posts, and providing 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.

Assessment:

Please note that artifacts from this course (assignments, instructor completed rubrics, pre and post surveys, etc) may be used for programmatic assessment. However, student names will not be used in this process and no identifying information will be used in the reporting of findings.

Accepted Assignment File Types:

All assignments in this course must be submitted as .doc, .docx, or PDF files only. Blackboard will NOT accept links to Google Drive documents (Google Sheets or Google Docs) or .pages files. If you utilize Google Docs, you must download your assignment as a PDF or .docx first and submit that file. As a UALR student, you can also download Microsoft Word directly to your computer for free using the following link - <https://ualr.edu/itservices/applications/v/office365/>

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. You should also not be taking online exams with others – all work, including exam answers, should be original. If you have any questions about these policies, please contact me. All material in this course- exam answers, any discussion board comments and posts, and paper submissions will be reviewed for plagiarism. Recognized plagiarism will result in at least an immediate deduction of 20% of the assignment's points, and possibly a failure for the assignment.

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 (via discussion boards, submitted assignments, or in-class discussions). 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). A breach of any of these student conduct expectations may also result in being sent to an academic disciplinary dean.

Please note our physical classroom, my office, and our online spaces are all Safe Zones. Safe Zone spaces are locations where there is support and understanding, where bigotry and discrimination are not tolerated. I am a trained Safe Zone supporter and will not tolerate discrimination.



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.

Are you interested in grad school as a next step?:

Check out the MA in Applied Communication. Our alumni network can support your career development in an array of areas: internal and external communication, public health, conflict mediation, business leadership and management, consulting, human resources, training, organization development, intercultural/diversity initiatives, non-profit leadership, relational communication, health care, education, and public relations.

If you are currently an undergraduate, you may qualify to earn up to 12 hours toward an MA degree—saving over 30% off tuition—while also earning your BA! Check out the MA in Applied Communication Studies Early Entry Program! <https://ualr.edu/appliedcomm/ma-early-entry-program/>

Active Military Students:

Thank you for your service! As you navigate your courses as an active military student, we want you to be aware of resources offered to you via the UALR Office of Military Student Success. If and when needed, you can find a comprehensive list of resources available to you as a military student through this office at <https://ualr.edu/military/>. If applicable, please also note that as soon as you become aware of any *required/emergency* upcoming training or deployments, you should immediately reach out to your

instructor to communicate any barriers to your academic success and/or to discuss your enrollment in that instructor's course.

Communication Skill Center

The Communication Skill Center (CSC) is a resource devoted to helping campus and online students in the various stages of preparing a presentation. Services include, but are not limited to, anxiety management, brainstorming, research, content organization, PowerPoint/Prezi design and integration, and providing presenters with balanced feedback. The CSC offers both onsite and online services.

Appointments are available and walk-ins are welcome; please feel free to stop by 201 speech building, call at [501-569-8208](tel:501-569-8208), or email: communication.skill.center@gmail.com. Book an appointment:

<http://ualrcommunicationskillcenter.setmore.com>

Class Rules

- 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 only, not through email or during class time. If you cannot make my office hours (listed above), send me an email to schedule a different meeting time.
- Cellphone use and/or taking pictures of slides or the board are prohibited in this course. You may use your laptop, but should only do so to access lecture slides and/or type out notes. *Each time* you are caught (by the instructor or by another student) using a cellphone or using a laptop for purposes outside lecture slides or note-taking, 1 point will be deducted from your overall participation/attendance grade.

Tentative Course Calendar

Please note, the assigned chapters must be read BEFORE the corresponding class meeting

Week	Dates	Topic(s)	Readings	Assignments
Week 1	Tuesday, Jan 21	Syllabus & Class Overview		
	Thursday, Jan 23	Introduction to Conflict	Chp 1	DB #1 Due by 11:59 PM on Friday, January 24 Optional Syllabus Quiz Due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, January 26
Week 2	Tuesday, Jan 28		Chp 1	
	Thursday, Jan 30	Comm Options in Conflict	Chp 2	
Week 3	Tuesday, Feb 4		Chp 2	
	Thursday, Feb 6	Managing Conflict Theoretically	Chp 3	DB #2 Due by 11:59 PM on Friday, Feb 7
Week 4	Tuesday, Feb 11		Chp 3	
	Thursday, Feb 13	Responding to Conflict	Chp 4	
Week 5	Tuesday, Feb 18	Review, SG Provided	Chp 4	
	Thursday, Feb 20	<i>Exam Available from Thursday, Feb 20 to Sunday, Feb 23</i>		NO CLASS – EXAM DAY Exam 1 (Chps 1-4) online due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, Feb 23
Week 6	Tuesday, Feb 25	Managing Violent Tendencies	Chp 5	
	Thursday, Feb 27	Conflict Climate	Chp 6	
Week 7	Tuesday, March 3		Chp 6	
	Thursday, March 5	Managing Face	Chp 7	DB #3 Due by 11:59 PM on Friday, March 6
Week 8	Tuesday, March 10		Chp 7	
	Thursday, March 12	Managing Stress & Anger	Chp 8	
Week 9	Tuesday, March 17	Review, SG Provided	Chp 8	
	Thursday, March 19	<i>Exam Available from Thursday, March 19 to Sunday, March 22</i>		NO CLASS – EXAM DAY Exam 2 (Chps 5-8) online due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, March 22

Week 10	March 23 – March 29	NO CLASS SPRING BREAK		NO CLASS SPRING BREAK
Week 11	Tuesday, March 31	Understanding Journal Articles, APA format, Paper Info		
	Thursday, April 2	Negotiation	Chp 10	DB #4 Due by 11:59 PM on Friday, April 3
Week 12	Tuesday, April 7		Chp 10	
	Thursday, April 9	Mediation	Chp 11	
Week 13	Tuesday, April 14		Chp 11	
	Thursday, April 16	Managing Conflict in the Workplace	Chp 12	DB #5 Due by 11:59 PM on Friday, April 17
Week 14	Tuesday, April 21		Chp 12	
	Thursday, April 23	Managing Social Conflict	Chp 13	Conflict Analysis Paper Due by 11:59 PM on Friday, April 24
Week 15	Tuesday, April 28	Forgiveness, Review, SG provided	Chp 9	
	Thursday, April 30	<i>Exam Available from Thursday, April 30 to Sunday, May 3</i>	Chp 9	NO CLASS – EXAM DAY Exam 3 (Chps 9-13) online due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, May 3