



DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED COMMUNICATION
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

ACOM 7323: Conflict Analysis & Intervention

ACOM 7323 991 - 64557 – **Fall 2020, Online**

Synchronous Virtual Meetings using Zoom on:

Friday, September 11 from 6 to 8 PM
Saturday, September 12 from 10 AM - Noon
Friday, October 16 from 6 to 8 PM
Saturday, October 17 from 10 AM – Noon
Friday, November 13 from 6 to 8 PM
Saturday, November 14 from 10 AM - Noon

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 or via email

Weekends Contact: via email

Office Hours:

Online virtually - by appointment (email to setup)

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

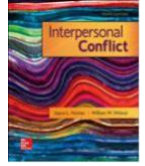
An introduction to conflict dynamics with an emphasis on communication intervention skills; covers different frames for analyzing conflict analysis tools, opportunities for conflict self-assessment, and skill-building in difficult conversations.

Required Texts

Textbook

Hocker, J. L., & Wilmot, W. W. (2017). *Interpersonal Conflict* (10th 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)

Assignments

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

Conflict Styles Reflection Paper	30 points
Case Study Leader Presentation	40 points
Discussion Board Answers (5 at 10 points each)	50 points
Group Consulting Project	60 points
Group Consulting Handout	20 points
Final Paper	100 points
Total:	300 points

Conflict Style Reflection Paper:

30 points.

In our first few weeks of the course, we will discuss conflict styles. You will then take an assessment online, determining your conflict style. Based on lecture and the readings on conflict styles, you will write a short roughly 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, a rubric, and an assignment overview video for this assignment will be 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 fourth week, students will be asked to provide a case study to the class (via Google Slides) 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* by Guerrero, Anderson, & Afifi we discuss early on in the course, which starts with a scenario involving a couple and their teenage daughter). Each student will be assigned one (1) article to create a case study presentation on.

Your case study must be related to a topic discussed in your assigned article. You will create an opening scenario (case) that will illustrate one of the types of conflict we are discussing that week/within your assigned article. 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. Present the scenario and then discuss how the literature is related to your case study and the recommendations you would give. Your pragmatic recommendations should be an extension of the literature rather than personal opinion. Lastly, each case study presentation should end with two discussion questions for the class related to your assigned article reading. Please note you will not be contributing audio to this presentation, but your slides will have to stand alone. As a result, make sure you are including all information needed for your readers (your fellow classmates) within the slides. Your case study presentation template will be made for you in advance using Google Slides, although you can edit and add to the presentation – as making the presentation unique and visually appealing is your responsibility. Please also note that case study presentations are **due on Thursdays by 11:59 PM**. Further details, a rubric, and an assignment overview video for this assignment will be posted to Blackboard.

Discussion Board Answers:

5 at 10 points each; Total 50 points.

As mentioned above, each case study will end with a set of discussion questions. In addition to being the case leader once during the semester, you will also be required to answer the discussion questions posted by your classmates during their case studies. Starting with Week 4, you are required to answer (1) discussion question posted by a classmate each week. Your answers should be thorough, detailed, reference course content and readings, and should contribute academically to the conversation started by your classmate. Each answer to a discussion question should be at least one paragraph in length (5 – 8 sentences). Be sure to answer the discussion board question of your choosing originally posted and not merely reply to someone else's reply. Please note you are only required to answer a discussion board a total of 5 times. This means you can skip two weeks. The two weeks you choose not to contribute a discussion board answer are up to you. You can answer one of your own discussion questions posted within your case study as well, which will count toward the five. Discussion board answers are **due on Sundays by 11:59 PM**. Further details, a rubric, and an assignment overview video for this assignment will be posted to Blackboard.

Group Consulting Project:

Handout: 20 points.

Presentation: 60 points.

80 points total.

For this assignment, you will work in groups to present material that you could use if you were hired as a consultant to present an online workshop or seminar on a particular conflict topic. Your group will lead this consulting workshop on our last weekend of virtual class and will utilize a Google Slides presentation during our Zoom call. Your 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 as a group 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 weekend of virtual 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 Thursday of that week. Further details, a rubric, and an assignment overview video for this assignment 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 virtual class meeting. Further details, a rubric, and an assignment overview video for this assignment will be posted to Blackboard.

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 and Attendance:

We will be engaging in a number of in-class activities via Zoom (such as in small group work, live negotiations, and group discussions) for which participation is REQUIRED. Your participation in this class includes every assignment from your presence during synchronous Zoom meetings, virtual class discussions and activities, to online assignment submissions, and live virtual small group and whole class activities. Students who are not present during virtual meetings, do not contribute to class activities or discussions, or who are tardy for those virtual meetings or activities will not receive credit for them and their final grade will be negatively impacted as a result. In sum, you must be present for all virtual Zoom meetings *and* actively participate in them.

Makeup Policies:

All written assignments will be submitted online via Blackboard. As such, papers will **not** be accepted late for full credit or via email. Assignments may be turned in to Blackboard 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 virtual assignments and attendance cannot be made up (see above section on Participation and Attendance). If you miss one of these assignments or a virtual meeting 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. Live negotiations however cannot be made up.

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: posting video 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 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 also means you cannot take sections from previous papers you have written and drop them into papers for this course. 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, negotiation preparation materials, 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 other course work or outside materials, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text

messaging, social media, leaving the room instead of focusing and engaging the in virtual meetings, 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 virtual discussions). Further, students who are verbally or physically aggressive towards the instructor or another student before, during, or after class, or virtually will have their grade lowered by 25% *each time* they engage in this sort of behavior (and, if needed 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 that my office, our virtual classroom meetings, and all of 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 the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible to discuss 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 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.

As a fully online class, the above weather policy likely does not affect us as we are not meeting on campus nor face to face. However, if inclement weather prevents you from accessing the internet or power in general, please reach out to me and we can adjust deadlines that occurred during that time.

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/>

Class Rules

- All readings will be completed prior to the corresponding virtual class meeting day/time
- All students will be present during virtual synchronous meetings and engage in the class actively. This means you will not engage in distracting activities such as surfing the internet, engaging with others, talking on the phone, or leaving the room during a virtual meeting. Your video and microphone should be turned on during all virtual meetings unless the instructor manually mutes the class. It is suggested that you be in a private room when engaging in virtual class meetings. Please reach out if there are extenuating circumstances barring you from this class policy.
- 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 our virtual 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.
- Questions about grading will be asked during virtual office hours, not through email or during class time.

Tentative Course Calendar

OL = Watch Online Lecture; AOV= Assignment Overview Video

Week	Dates	Topic(s)	Readings	Assignments (due dates in red bold)
Week 1	Monday, Aug 24 - Sunday, Aug 30	Syllabus & Course Overview Defining Conflict Perspectives of Conflict	Chapter 1 and 2 in textbook (The Nature of Conflict and Perspective of Conflict in <i>Interpersonal Conflict</i> , Hocker & Wilmont) Article: Guerrero, Anderson, & Afifi, 2017. Conflict Chapter in the textbook <i>Close Encounters: Communication in Relationships.</i>	OL “Welcome Video 1 & 2” OL “Defining Conflict & Perspectives of Conflict” AOV “Case Study Presentations” AOV “Discussion Boards”
Week 2	Monday, Aug 31 - Sunday, Sept 6	Power Conflict Styles	Chapter 4 & 5 in textbook (Power: The Structure of Conflict, Conflict Styles in Conflict in <i>Interpersonal Conflict</i> , Hocker & Wilmont) Article: Roloff, 2009. In point of practice: Links between conflict management research and practice.	OL “Power in Conflict” OL “Conflict Styles” AOV “Conflict Styles Reflection Paper”

<p>Week 3</p>	<p>Monday, Sept 7 - Sunday, Sept 13</p>	<p>Emotions Preventing Destructive Conflict Cycles</p>	<p>Chapter 6 in textbook (Emotions in <i>Interpersonal Conflict</i>, Hocker & Wilmont)</p>	<p>OL “Emotions in Conflict” OL “Preventing Destructive Conflict Cycles” AOV “Consulting Project” AOV “Final Paper” Zoom Class – Fri., Sept 11 6-8PM Zoom Class – Sat., Sept 12 10-Noon</p>
<p>Week 4</p>	<p>Monday, Sept 14 - Sunday, Sept 20</p>	<p>Conflict in Romantic Relationships</p>	<p>Article: Caughlin & Vangelisti, 2006. Conflict in dating and marital relationships. Article: Roloff & Johnson, 2002. Serial arguing over the relational life course.</p>	<p>OL “Conflict in Romantic Relationships” Case Study Presentation due (if your turn) due by 11:59 PM on Thurs., Sept 17 Conflict Styles Reflection Paper due by 11:59 PM Sun., Sept 20 DB Answers due by 11:59 PM on Sun., Sept 20</p>
<p>Week 5</p>	<p>Monday, Sept 21 - Sunday, Sept 27</p>	<p>Conflict in Romantic Relationships Continued</p>	<p>Article: Spitzberg, 2013. Intimate partner violence.</p>	<p>OL “Intimate Partner Violence” Case Study Presentation due (if your turn) due by 11:59 PM on Thurs., Sept 24 DB Answers due by 11:59 PM on Sun., Sept 27</p>
<p>Week 6</p>	<p>Monday, Sept 28 - Sunday, Oct 4</p>	<p>Conflict in Peer/Friend Relationships</p>	<p>Article: Hartup, 1992. Conflict and friendship relations.</p>	<p>OL “Conflict in Peer/Friend Relationships” Case Study Presentation due (if your turn) due by 11:59 PM on Thurs., Oct 1 DB Answers due by 11:59 PM on Sun., Oct 4</p>

<p>Week 7</p>	<p>Monday, Oct 5 - Sunday, Oct 11</p>	<p>Conflict in Family Relationships – Parent/Child</p>	<p>Article: Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006. Family conflict communication. Article: Canary & Canary, 2013. Family conflict.</p>	<p>OL “Final Perspectives of Conflict” OL “Conflict in Parent-Child Relationships” Case Study Presentation due (if your turn) due by 11:59 PM on Thurs., Oct 8 DB Answers due by 11:59 PM on Sun., Oct 11</p>
<p>Week 8</p>	<p>Monday, Oct 12 - Sunday, Oct 18</p>	<p>Conflict in Family Relationships – Siblings</p>	<p>Article: Whiteman, McHale, & Soli, 2011. Theoretical perspectives on sibling relationships. Article: Mikkelson, Myers, & Hannawa, 2011. The Differential Use of Relational Maintenance Behaviors in Adult Sibling Relationships</p>	<p>OL “Conflict in Sibling Relationships” Case Study Presentation due (if your turn) due by 11:59 PM on Thurs., Oct 15 Zoom Class – Fri., Oct 16 6-8PM Zoom Class – Sat., Oct 17 10-Noon DB Answers due by 11:59 PM on Sun., Oct 18</p>

<p>Week 9</p>	<p>Monday, Oct 19 - Sunday, Oct 25</p>	<p>Organizational Conflict</p>	<p>Article: Spaho, 2013. Organizational communication and conflict management.</p> <p>Online Report: Frick, 2015. What research shows about taking back to a jerk boss.</p>	<p>OL “Organizational Conflict”</p> <p>Case Study Presentation due (if your turn) due by 11:59 PM on Thurs., Oct 22</p> <p>DB Answers due by 11:59 PM on Sun., Oct 25</p>
<p>Week 10</p>	<p>Monday, Oct 26 - Sunday, Nov 1</p>	<p>Forgiveness</p>	<p>Chapter 10 in textbook (The Practice of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in <i>Interpersonal Conflict</i>, Hocker & Wilmont)</p> <p>Article: Merolla, 2017. Forgiveness following conflict: What is it, why it happens, and how it’s done.</p> <p>Article: Kloeber & Waldron, 2017. Expressing and suppressing conditional forgiveness in serious romantic relationships.</p>	<p>OL “Forgiveness”</p> <p>Case Study Presentation due (if your turn) due by 11:59 PM on Thurs., Oct 29</p> <p>DB Answers due by 11:59 PM on Sun., Nov 1</p>

Week 11	Monday, Nov 2 - Sunday, Nov 8		None	Group Work Week
Week 12	Monday, Nov 9 - Sunday, Nov 15		None	<p>Consulting Presentation due by 11:59 PM on Thursday, Nov 12</p> <p>Consulting Handout due by 11:59 PM on Thursday, Nov 12</p> <p>Zoom Class – Fri., Nov 13 6-8PM Zoom Class – Sat., Nov 14 10-Noon <i>(consulting presentations during Friday and Saturday virtual class)</i></p>
Week 13	Monday, Nov 16 - Sunday, Nov 22		None	Peer Evaluations due by 11:59 PM on Sun., Nov 22
Week 14	Monday, Nov 23 - Sunday, Nov 29	<i>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK</i>		
Week 15	Monday, Nov 30 - Sunday, Dec 6			Final Paper due by 11:59 PM Sun., Dec 6