

Communication, Conflict & Negotiation – COM 312

Summer 2011 UK Program – Arizona State University – SLN 45305

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In this course, we analyze real-life strategies and scholarly explanations of communication used in the management of conflicts and the conduct of negotiations. The material presented is both theoretical and practical in nature. We analyze theories that explain *how* and *why* conflicts and negotiations proceed in the way they do, and in doing so, we learn tools to become better in managing conflicts and negotiations in our own lives. By the end of this course students will be better equipped to deal with conflict in romantic relationships, friendships and families, will feel more confident in negotiating for salaries, cars, houses or souvenirs. We will also study conflict and gender, bullying and abuse, work-life balance and mediation. Class time will include lecture, discussion, student presentations, role play, analysis of case studies, and group activities. Students are encouraged to bring their personal insights into the class, and use class concepts to evaluate their own conflict experiences.

Course Readings

Wilmot, W. W., & Hocker, J. L. (2007). *Interpersonal conflict*. 7th edition. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Additional Readings – Available from the instructor or Blackboard

Assignments and Grading (out of 500 points total)

Class participation / mini-assignments (50 pts – 10%)

You can earn points toward participation through attendance and focused attention for the full class period, thoughtful and appropriate verbal participation (more does not always = better), listening alertly and taking notes, concentrating on course material rather than external distractions, and providing enthusiastic and supportive interaction with other class members (which fosters collective focus on the course material). I will make notes about participation earned after every course session.

You can also participate by accessing and reading an auxiliary article related to the topic and providing the class with an overview (verbally or written). Points awarded depend on breadth of the article and the overview. Touch base with me first if you're engaging this activity mostly to earn points and not just for the joy of learning more about conflict and negotiation. ☺

Assignments are explained in class, and many activities/mini-assignments are completed during class. Being in class is integral to fulfilling and getting credit for these activities.

Exams (Midterm at 150 pts and Final at 100 pts for a total of 250 pts – 50%)

You will have two formal exams in this course. Exams are composed of a combination of true / false, multiple choice, short-answer, application and essay questions. Exams test your synthesis and application of concepts covered in class, as well as those covered in your text and outside readings. Students who are successful on exams are those who have carefully read and understood the assigned readings, take integrative course notes, and then are able to synthesize and provide examples for concepts covered (going beyond a concept's textbook definition).

Course Reflection Papers / Presentations (200 pts – 40%)

A primary goal of this course is to facilitate critical thinking and discussion about course concepts as well as encourage application of these concepts to real-life interactions. Rather than having one long term paper at the end of class, in this course a standard assignment for each class period is completing the course readings for that day and writing a 2-page reflection that includes a mix of the following:

- personal applications of reading concepts to one’s own personal, family and professional life
- a response to questions or issues assigned the class period earlier (in class and/or blackboard)
- creation of 2-3 discussion questions for other class members (consider the type of questions the readings generate that you would be interested in hearing others talk about).

Each paper should be ~500 words (this is ~2 pages typed double-spaced Times Roman font). Discussion questions can be in a bulleted format if desired. ***Please have a print or electronic version available during class as you will be asked to directly read and reference from it (and not having it will adversely affect your grade). This must be available even in contexts without electricity or Wi-Fi Access.*** We as a class will discuss whether it makes sense to email these to the instructor *before class* or to turn in a hard copy. ***Each student will lead several presentations/discussions where they expand upon the issues raised in their reflection paper.***

Points will be awarded on the basis of your ability to do the following: a) synthesize, analyze and apply a *variety* of *specific* concepts from that week’s reading to your own experiences; b) think critically to questions posed in class, in readings or on blackboard; c) provide thoughtful discussion questions that the class would profit by talking about (go beyond yes-no questions to probing queries that ask why and how); d) write/present in a clear, concise, interesting and organized fashion; e) use appropriate style, good grammar, spelling, style and formatting; f) provide an original application and avoid plagiarism.

Outstanding – above expectations	Good – above average	Satisfactory – meets min. requirements	Unsatisfactory	Failing or academic dishonesty
A+ 485 – 500 pts	B+ 435 – 449 pts	C+ 385 – 399 pts		
A 465 – 484 pts	B 415 – 434 pts	C 350 – 384 pts	D 300–349 pts	E below 299 pts
A- 450 – 464 pts	B- 400 – 414 pts			XE - academic dishonesty

Course Policies

Norms of Civility:

Let’s create an oasis of civility in this class by: arriving on time and staying for the entire class period, keeping an alert and enthusiastic presence, paying attention to course material rather than other distractions, listening supportively and attentively—speaking one at a time and helping others stay focused. When we speak about sensitive, personal or painful issues, I hope we can ensure a safe and supportive classroom environment by respecting each others’ confidences.

Due Dates, Late or Incompleted Work:

Written assignments will be marked down 10% each day and will not be accepted more than a week past their due date. In-class work (including presentations and class activities) will receive credit on the day they are due.

Unique Academic Needs: Students with special academic needs who desire special accommodations should contact me in the first couple sessions to discuss options.

Plagiarism/Cheating/Academic Dishonesty:

Strong assignments are written at the collegiate level, with clear and appropriate organization, full sentence structure, grammar and spelling. When referring to material from the text, class notes, or any other source (including Internet webpages), using quotation marks and appropriate citation is ethically and stylistically required.

Students are strongly warned against cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment, large or small. Plagiarizing includes copying from other students, the Internet, the text, or other published sources without proper citation. It also includes excessive “help” or “editing” on assignments from others (if in doubt, ask first). Students found to be in violation of academic dishonesty guidelines will face disciplinary action which may include being suspended or expelled from the summer abroad program, the College or University, given an XE on the transcript, referred to Student Judicial Affairs and/or having his/her name kept on file. Student assignments are routinely checked against plagiarism-detection websites and files of past student papers, so do your own work and cite all sources.

Course Schedule--Subject to Change via an announcement
PR=Packet Reading; W=Wilmot book; MA=Mini-Assignment

Wk/Date	Topic	Readings / Assignments Due
1	Introduction to Conflict	W Ch 1 pp. 2-28, “The nature of conflict” [We will cover material from this chapter during class, please catch up reading this chapter for week 2] MA: “How have your conflicts been influenced”
2	Personal histories and perspectives	W Ch 2, pp. 29-61 “Perspectives on Conflict”
4	Interests, goals and power	W Ch 3, pp. 63-94, “Interests & Goals” MA: Application 3.3 W Ch 4, pp. 95-129, “Power: The structure of conflict”
5	Conflict styles & destructive patterns (aggression & bullying)	W – Ch 5, pp. 130-176, “Styles & Tactics”; Ch 11, pp. 326-339, “Preventing Destructive Conflict” MA – Complete conflict style assessment before class (p. 132-133)
6	EXAM #1	Based off all readings, class activities and lectures during classes 1-5
7	Assessing & Moderating Conflicts	W – Ch 6, pp. 178-209 – “Assessing conflicts” and Ch 7, pp. 210-242 – “Moderating your conflicts”
8	Overcoming fear and asking for what you want	PR - Babcock & Laschever – Ch 1 - “Women Don’t Ask” pp. 1-16; Ch 5 - “Fear of Asking” pp. 112-129; “Low Goals and Safe Targets” pp. 130-147 W – Ch 8, pp. 243-269, “Negotiating for mutual gains”
9	Mediation & 3 rd party intervention	W - Ch 9, pp. 270-296, “Third-party intervention”
10	Communication, perception & forgiveness	W – Ch 10, pp. 297-325, “Transcending transgression: Forgiveness & reconciliation”
11	Exam #2	Based off all readings and lectures in classes 9-14