

Prof. Sophia A. McClennen
Spring 2014
INTAF 597
Mondays 9:30-12:30
112 Katz

Conflict Resolution in Cross Cultural Contexts

Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.

--UNESCO Constitution

Since the end of the Cold War, ethnocultural conflicts have become the most common source of political violence in the world, and they show no signs of abating.

--Will Kymlicka

Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.

--Albert Einstein

Course Description

Across the globe there are more laws and provisions in place to protect human beings from discrimination than at any other time in history and yet there are more incidents of conflict, intolerance, bias, and violence than ever. How are we to make sense of these two competing realities? How can we become ethical leaders in the face of such contrasts and complications? This course combines perspectives from communications, psychology, sociology, political science, law and legal studies, human rights, identity-based studies, media studies, and cultural studies to engage questions of how cultural difference and discrimination play a role in conflict and resolution.

Topics to be covered are 1) how societies create categories of identity that are not given the same rights, protections, and respect as the dominant group, 2) How those divisions create conflict, and 3) How those divisions hinder conflict resolution. The course will look at a variety of ways that societies come to categorize forms of human life including religion, nationalism, patriarchy, ethnic identity, media stereotyping, and other forms of social division. One key area we will address is the development of law and other instruments that both protect and disenfranchise vulnerable populations. We will also look at strategies for cross-cultural community development and peace building. The topics will be studied in a cross-cultural context allowing students to consider these issues from a range of global perspectives.

This course is organized around the idea that understanding cross-cultural conflict and resolution depends on a complex, interdisciplinary learning model. Most courses that study cross-cultural, intercultural, and culturally diverse communication focus on building cultural sensitivity and practical skills for rapport building. But workshops and role plays will not have lasting impact and can, in fact, backfire, if students don't understand the history, psychology, and social development of discrimination. Similarly, most courses that study international conflict, mediation, and resolution study the history of human conflict and violence and analyze specific cases where resolution has been extremely difficult to attain, often offering models for mediation and peace building. Those courses use the tools of political science and/or cultural theory, but they don't always require students to role-play in ways that help them understand why these conflicts can be so difficult to mediate. In yet another example sociological and psychological approaches to these issues look at building empathy and self-reflection through a method that understands the history of and human inclination towards discrimination and how it functions in both large and small ways to shape human experience. This course combines these three approaches and depends on a specific educational model that attends to the insights of each model. We will combine theory, knowledge of real life events, and experiential learning in order to understand how conflict between groups develops and can be mediated. Students will learn that the most effective means of resolving cross-cultural conflict depends on critical thinking, knowledge of how discrimination works, and practical skills. In order to achieve these goals we will analyze a range of scholarly works on the topic, study specific events, while also engaging in simulations, case studies, team exercises, and self-reflection.

Course objectives

Students in this course will

- Recognize, identify, and evaluate conflicts that involve human beings from different cultures;
- Study the history of discriminatory practices and the impact of these on human development;
- Understand the connection between laws that protect human life and laws that facilitate the partitioning of society into discrete groups;
- Practice self-reflection, dialogue, and constructive debate;
- Research cases of cross-cultural discrimination;
- Use constructive communication skills to facilitate resolution of conflicted conversations; and apply theory to practice for conflict resolution;
- Use simulations to develop best practices of dispute resolution across cultures and communities;
- Practice skills of ethical leadership in instances of cross-cultural conflict.

Assessment

Grades will be calculated based on the following:

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| 1) Participation/Preparation | 20% |
| 2) Self-reflection Journal | 15% |
| 3) Discussion Board Activity | 15% |
| 4) Performance in Role-Plays, Simulations, Group Work, and Presentations | 20% |
| 5) Written work associated with cases and simulations | 20% |
| 6) Participation in two World in Conversation sessions | 10% |

Participation/Preparation

Students need to come to class on time, prepared, and ready to participate. Technology should only be used to enhance participation.

Self-reflection Journal

Students will write 2-page self-reflections on each of the **seven** sections we cover. The key will be to reflect on the issue covered and think deeply about how it connects in a personal way to your life. These thoughts can be shared with class, if desired, but can also be kept private. These papers need to be written throughout the term, but will be turned in together in a drop box for your dossier at the end of the semester.

Discussion Board Activity

Students should post on Angel for each topic covered. Posts can be further thoughts, topics for discussion, or critical commentary on the issues.

Performance in Role-Plays, Simulations, Group Work, and Presentations

Students will do a number of group activities throughout class. Grades will be based on active engagement, commitment, respect, and the ability to incorporate readings and course materials.

Written work associated with cases and simulations

There will be writing assignments connected to the cases and simulations that will be turned in throughout the term. These will then be bundled into a complete dossier turned into an Angel dropbox for a final grade at the end of the term.

Participation in two *World in Conversation* sessions

The *World in Conversation* (WinC) hosts, 90-minute one time dialogues and you are required to attend two dialogues for this class. WinC employs Penn State undergraduates to lead small group discussions about a range of relevant cultural issues. Because their mission is simply to have open dialogues, the facilitators will not tell you what you should think; instead, they will ask you to express what you actually think. Then you will discuss your views with the other participants. This Socratic process is intended to enhance your critical thinking skills.

WinC programs occur outside of our regular class meeting times. The dialogues you will participate in will take place in a video conference room in Pond Lab, where you will have the opportunity to dialogue with students from other countries including Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China. **The email explaining how to register will be sent to your PSU account.** Your attendance will be recorded while you are there. But keep in mind: You will NOT be able to attend the program (or receive credit) if you are more than 5 minutes late or if you leave early.

There are a limited number of dialogues that take place throughout the semester. Sign up immediately after you receive the registration e-mail. There are **NO** makeup dialogues. In the instance that your dialogue is cancelled, you will still need to register and participate in another.

All students in this class are required to do **two** dialogues—ideally one near the start of the term and one near the end.

PARTICIPATION IN THE WinC IS WORTH 10% TOWARD YOUR GRADE IN THIS CLASS.

Direct all questions to the WinC staff, not the professor:

814.689.9581 or global@worldinconversation.org

Feel free to visit the Facebook page or our web site for more information:

www.worldinconversation.org

Books

Required:

1. *Racism: A Short History* by George M. Fredrickson
2. *Ethnic Conflict: Causes, Consequences, and Responses* by Karl Cordell and Stefan Wolff
3. *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* by Maurianne Adams, et. al.
4. *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community* by Fred E. Jandt
5. *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* by John Paul Lederach
6. *Culture and Conflict Resolution* by Kevin Avruch
7. *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation* by Derald Wing Sue
8. *Racism and Ethnicity: Global Debates, Dilemmas, Directions* by Ian Law
9. *Negotiating Across Cultures: International Communication in an Interdependent World* by Raymond Cohen

To be purchased directly through the Program on Negotiation: Simulations on Guatemala and Northville.

Recommended:

1. *Privilege, Power, and Difference* by Allan G. Johnson

Course Plan

Introduction

January 13: Overview of forms of discrimination and othering

Practicum – Belly talk (students sit across from a classmate they don't know well and they try to guess as much about them as they can—afterwards they compare their assumptions with reality.)

Readings:

- *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication* Chapters 1, 2, 3
- *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* Section 1-Conceptual Frameworks
- *Law, Racism and Ethnicity: Global Debates*, chaps 1 and 2

January 20—No Class MLK day

1. Colonialism and its aftermath

January 27: Lecture/Discussion on Colonialism

Overview and history of the ways that colonialism depends on discrimination, racism, and a hierarchical view of the globe with special attention to Afghanistan. We will use the story of Afghanistan to understand the legacies of colonial systems for valuing life.

Readings:

- Edward Said, *Orientalism* (<http://postcolonialstudies.emory.edu/orientalism/>), Read the Introduction and Chapter 1, http://www.odsg.org/Said_Edward%281977%29_Orientalism.pdf
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, [Colonialism](#)
- [History of Colonialism](#) (From an EU view)

February 3: Simulation on Kashmir

We will delve further into these issues by analyzing the case of Kashmir. Students will research the effects of international agreements, NGOs, and humanitarian aid in the region and study it through the lens of postcolonialism.

After studying the various relevant agreements and accords in place, students will work in groups, representing the major stakeholders, to draft a peace agreement for the Kashmir region. This simulation is found [here](#). (9 participants—each to have additional “observers”)

Each participant will prepare a brief on their position prior to class. They will present their positions to Secretary Power, who will then ask questions, after which time there will be a break, time for small group negotiation, and a wrap up.

Readings:

- [Human Rights Watch: Behind the Kashmir Conflict](#)
- [Washington Post: The Kashmir Conflict](#)
- Simulation information (read all background material):
<http://alexandroffclass.iglooeducation.org/winter2007/simulati>

2. Faith and Intolerance

February 10: Lecture/discussion on Religious beliefs and intolerance, politics and religious freedom

Readings:

- *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* Section 4 Religious Oppression
- [*The Role Of Faith In Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution*](#)
- [Violence and Terrorism: Feminist Observations on Islamist Movements, State, and the International System](#) (On Muse)
- [Religion and Global Affairs: Political Challenges](#)
- [Religion and Global Affairs: Disregarding Religion](#)
- [Religion and Global Affairs: Religious "Militants for Peace"](#)

February 17

Case study: Tibet—religion—Chinese law on religious tolerance (Debate– 6 participants, 2 China, 2 Tibet, 2 UN Peacekeeping Commission), Each group presents position, rebuttal, response, audience questions, conclusion. Break—discussion of conflict resolution challenges to the case.

Readings:

- <http://www.savetibet.org/resources/all-about-tibet/>
- <http://www.savetibet.org/resources/all-about-tibet/history-politics-legal-situation/>
- Barnett, Robert J. "[Can China's Tibetan Crisis Be Resolved?](#)" *Council on Foreign Relations* (2010),.
- BBC.com. "[Inside Tibet](#)."
- <http://www.savetibet.org/policy-center/united-nations/un-general-assembly-resolutions/>
- <http://www.beyondintractability.org/casestudy/stokes-tibet>

3. Disposable Humans: Camps, Reservations, and Removal -- the Rights of Refugees, Immigrants, and Indigenous Peoples

February 24: Lecture/Discussion on outsiders in state systems

Overview of the ways that certain human groups have been left in the margins of the state system.

Guest speaker: Tamara Haken

Readings:

- *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication* Chapter 12
- Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*
- [International Biopolitics: Foucault, globalisation and imperialism](#)
- [Study Guide - The Rights of Refugees](#)
- *Law, Racism and Ethnicity: Global Debates*, chaps 3 and 4
- Background info for the Guatemalan role play

March 3

Simulation: Role Play Negotiation: Guatemala—indigenous rights
(<http://www.pon.harvard.edu/shop/guatemala-role-play-the-workable-peace-indigenous-rights-and-the-environment-in-latin-america/>) 6 participants

Readings:

- From sim packet
- [Indigenous Rights, Amnesty Int](#)
- [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [Introductory note by Siegfried Wiessner](#), on the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

March 10 No Class—Spring Break

4. The Second Sex: Women's rights across cultures

March 17: Women's Rights in the global System

Overview of cross-cultural examples of discrimination against women.

Example: <http://www.upworthy.com/that-awkward-moment-when-someone-proves-that-youll-only-ever-be-a-b-tch-3>

Readings:

- *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication* Chapter 10
- *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* Section 5 Sexism
- [Women's Rights — Global Issues](#)
- [Women's Rights | Amnesty International USA](#)

March 24

Practicum: Too vulnerable. Too powerful. Too objectified. Find examples of discrimination against women in the mainstream media of at least three nations of moments when women are treated as too vulnerable, too powerful, or as objects. Compare the depiction of women in the media to that of men. How often are women gendered when it is not necessary? How often are they objectified? **ALL class participates.**

Readings:

- <http://www.missrepresentation.org/resources/>
- [The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2013](#) (via Women's Media Center)
- [Leadership: Women's Leadership, Leadership Development and Media Advocacy](#)
- [Media: Consumption, Literacy and Advocacy](#)
- <http://www.womensmediacenter.com/pages/the-problem>

5. Genocide

March 31: Genocide

Background: History of genocide with special attention to the Holocaust and the other forms of discrimination that were a part of the context of WWII. Study of the UDHR and other instruments that have been developed to address and deter genocide.

- *Avruch Culture and Conflict Resolution*
- Cordell, *Ethnic Conflict* pp 1-99
- [What is Genocide? - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)
- [Acts of Genocide since World War II - Institute for Cultural Diplomacy](#)
- [UDHR](#),
- [UDHR History](#),
- [HR Law](#)

April 7: Strategies for peace building

Practicum:

Video games and other creative peacebuilding options

<http://www.darfurisdying.com/background.html>

Identifying strategies for putting yourself in the shoes of others. All students not presenting write summary papers. 2 creative proposals—10 participants.

Readings:

- Lederach, *Preparing for Peace*

- Cohen, *Negotiating Across Cultures*

6. The Freedom to Love/ The Fear of Love –Sexuality across cultures

April 14: Heterosexism, Heteronormativity

Background on intolerance of alternative sexualities with attention to discrimination in a cross-cultural context.

Readings:

- *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* Section 6 Heterosexism, Section 7 Transgender Oppression
- [Global gay rights | Homophobia | GlobalPost](#)
- [In Africa, Obama gets jarring reminder of global homophobia](#)
- Selections from *Global Homophobia* (ON MUSE)
 - Chapter 1 Political Homophobia in Comparative Perspective
 - Chapter 11 Conclusion: On the Interplay of State Homophobia and Homoprotectionism

April 21

Practicum: [Williams v. Northville](#)—a five person legal negotiation simulation involving the case of a family suing a school for exposing their children to the presentation of homosexual lifestyles claiming that this information violated their religious beliefs. 5 participants

Readings

- From Simulation packet.
- [Heterosexism in Contemporary World Religion](#)
- [What's the connection between religion and homophobia?](#)

7. Racism and Microaggression

April 28: Lecture/Discussion

Everyday racism and subtle versions of intolerance

- Background: Everyday racism and intolerance and how it manifests social divisions that lead to violence.
- Practicum: Students will reflect on at least one occasion where they have been the victim of everyday intolerance/ microaggressions and one where they have been the perpetrator. They will then connect these experiences with broader social consequences to these behaviors, connecting them to data on social equity.

Readings:

- *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*
- *Racism: A Short History*