Conrad Grebel University College  
University of Waterloo  

PACS 327.001: Cultural Approaches to Conflict Resolution  
Fall 2021

Class Time: Wednesday 11:30 a.m.-2:20 p.m.  
Location: CGR 1302  

Instructor: Nathan C. Funk  
WebEx Office Hours: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Tuesday (Webex meeting link) and by appointment  
Phone: 519-885-0220 x24295  
Email: nfunk@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description:  
Cultural differences enrich our world, and also provide fault lines for conflict among individuals, social groups, and nations. Though often celebrated as a source of meaning and identity, culture sometimes goes unnoticed until situations of tension prompt the realization that many of our convictions about what is “normal” and “appropriate” – including our assumptions about conflict resolution – are not universally shared. To shed light on major patterns of human difference and their implications for contemporary peacebuilding practice, this course applies a cultural lens to the study of conflict and conflict resolution. A range of topics will be explored, including 1) the impact of cultural norms and worldviews on approaches to conflict management, 2) ways in which cultural difference can become a

Territorial Acknowledgement: The meeting place for this class is on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.
source of conflict, 3) the development of cross-cultural awareness and competence among peace practitioners, 4) culture-sensitive approaches to conflict resolution training and social change, and 5) contributions of cross-cultural learning to the development of the conflict resolution field.

Learning Objectives:
Upon completing PACS 327 students should be able to:
- describe some major patterns of cultural difference;
- provide informed commentary on how cultural differences can correlate with differences in value priorities, worldviews, and forms of human expression;
- critique common misconceptions about culture that ought to be avoided by peace practitioners;
- offer examples of how aspects of culture (including values, practices, narratives, and worldviews as well as symbolic markers) inform collective identities, shape conflict management practices, and affect relations between members of different groups;
- analyze conflict scenarios to discern ways in which cultural differences (including cultural identities and practices) influence dynamics and outcomes;
- articulate ways in which their own cultural background has shaped their assumptions about conflict and peacemaking;
- describe stages of cross-cultural adjustment and adaptation;
- discuss cultural aspects of conflict and peacemaking in Canada as well as abroad, noting ways in which cultural issues can intersect with issues related to race, historical injustice, and marginalization;
- explain differences between “prescriptive” and “elicitive” approaches to conflict resolution training and capacity development;
- explain how culture can be a resource for peacemaking;
- discuss potential benefits and challenges associated with efforts to tap and strengthen traditional, indigenous, and local approaches to peacemaking;
- identify criteria for cross-culturally effective and culturally empowering forms of conflict resolution practice, and evaluate peacebuilding efforts in accordance with these criteria; and
- construct an argument concerning the value of cultural competence and cross-cultural learning/research for peace practitioners.

Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria
1. **10% Participation:** Ten percent of your final grade will be based on the quality of your participation in class. Participation presupposes not just attendance but also preparation. It manifests through thoughtful engagement with discussions of readings and lecture topics (including comments and questions addressed to specific issues raised in course materials), as well as through substantive contributions to small-group activities. Respectful attentiveness to student and guest presentations is another measure of participation.

The PACS 327 policy for attendance and participation acknowledges the unusual circumstances surrounding our return to campus this term. “Proof-of-illness” forms will only be expected in the event of a sustained absence from the classroom experience, associated with a serious health issue. As the official UWaterloo guidelines for Fall 2021 stipulate, “Students shall not attend class if they are experiencing influenza-like illness, have been in close contact with someone who is ill, or have travelled outside of Canada within the past 14 days.” If you start to feel ill during class, you may simply leave and then follow up with the instructor later. Please monitor your personal health carefully, and if you feel sick take a cautious approach – for your own sake and for that of your classmates. In the event of an influenza-like
illness, do not hesitate to self-declare your illness and contact the UW Health Services’ Testing & Assessment Centre.

Participation is graded because we can all learn much more when we are present together and engaged in a shared, term-long conversation. That said, absences caused by legitimate personal health complications will not be punished. Please communicate actively with the instructor (in advance of absences whenever possible) about any issues that will affect your ability to attend class and participate.

Contingency Plan: If university and/or provincial authorities determine that in-person class meetings are no longer desirable due to public health considerations (or if the instructor needs to self-isolate), we will revert to an online-synchronous course format (with asynchronous elements) as detailed below under “Public Health Considerations (and Contingency Plan).”

2. 30% Two Short Writing Assignments: Thirty percent of your final grade will be derived from two short writing assignments (800-1,200 words – approximately 3-4 pp., double-spaced, 12-point font) that encourage you to interpret and integrate course material. References to course readings and lecture materials are expected. Topics and more specific instructions for each assignment will be provided at least one week before it becomes due in the relevant LEARN dropbox (on Oct. 22 for the first assignment, and on Dec. 3 for the second).

3. 20% Application Exercise: Twenty percent of your final grade will be based on an assignment that asks you to directly apply major concepts from the readings and lectures. There are three ways of completing this assignment. Please note that while Option 3 is simply a written book review, Option 1 and Option 2 require both a written component and an oral or prerecorded video presentation (note also that masks are required while giving in-person presentations). The due date for the two components in Option 1 and Option 2 will be arranged in consultation with the instructor during the first three weeks of class. Use the following Google Doc to record your preferred option, your intended topic, and your top three or four preferences for timing (if you are choosing Option 1 or Option 2): Application Exercise Form.

It is your responsibility to choose one of the following options and meet the relevant deadline by uploading the relevant materials to a dropbox in LEARN.

- **Option 1:** Prepare a written and oral report on the role of culture in a conflict that is currently in the news. Find a current news story that relates to themes explored in the readings and in class. Drawing on at least two credible news sources and making clear connections to course content, write an 800-1,200-word (3-4 pp.) analysis of this story (being sure to provide exact bibliographical details), and then share your most important insights with the class in a crisp report (just 3-4 minutes, given live in class or through a video that will be uploaded to LEARN). Due date negotiated with instructor during first three weeks of class; maximum of three different student reports per week.

- **Option 2:** Prepare a written and oral report making connections between course concepts and one of the following: themes of a television show or movie, themes explored by an artist or musician, content presented in a (presumably online) public lecture or event. Write an 800-1,200-word (3-4 pp.) review that 1) provides exact details concerning the timing and nature of the event/program/etc., 2) briefly summarizes key points and themes, 3) analyzes cultural and conflict-related themes in light of course concepts, and 4) evaluates the quality of the effort and its impact on the audience (including you). You will then share your most important insights with the class in a crisp report (just 3-4 minutes, given live in class or through a video that will be uploaded to LEARN). Due date negotiated with instructor during first three weeks of class; maximum of three different student reports per week.

- **Option 3:** Book review on an issue related to culture and conflict/justice/peacemaking. Write a 1,400-1,700-word (5-6 pp.) book review that 1) provides exact bibliographical information, 2) briefly summarizes key points and themes, 3) analyzes cultural and conflict-related themes in relation to key
PACS 327 course concepts, and 4) evaluates the quality of the book and its contribution to knowledge. **Due in LEARN by Nov. 19; consult handout in LEARN for further details.**

4. **40% Major Project:** Forty percent of your final grade will be based on a major course project. There are two options for completing this assignment. Using the Google Doc at [Major Project Form](#), commit to one of the following two options by the second week of class:

- **Option 1: Research Paper.** Write a research paper exploring a theme related to culture, conflict, and peace. Many topics are possible – for example, you could examine bases for peacemaking in a particular cultural tradition, analyze a case of intercultural conflict, or study the manner in which a particular non-governmental organization attempts to work cross-culturally. The text of the paper (not including the bibliography) should be between 3,000 and 4,000 words (approximately 11-15 double-spaced pages in a 12-point font with 1-inch margins). **Due in LEARN on Monday, Dec. 13.**

- **Option 2: Weekly Journal.** Writing a detailed weekly journal provides you with an opportunity to articulate a personal and intellectual response to the course experience that ties together major themes from readings, lectures, discussions, and activities. Here are the overall guidelines for this option:
  - Write an entry each week. Even if you do not have time to complete polished journal entries on a weekly basis during the academic term, do your best to compose draft entries on a week-by-week basis. You can of course go back and polish things up later.
  - Start each entry with at least one paragraph providing your analysis of course content. Tease out central concepts in the readings, lectures, presentations, video content, discussions, etc., and be sure to make connections and comparisons across sources.
  - After offering your analytical statement about the content for the week, write at least one paragraph of personal reflections on this material. This is the more open-ended part of the assignment, in which you can relate the material to your own experiences, offer critical/evaluative commentary, and/or make broader connections to world events and/or to issues that may not have been covered in course content.
  - Criteria for evaluation include thoroughness (integration of different readings and themes, responsiveness to the overall class experience including presentations, video content, discussions), thoughtfulness (depth of analytical insight, critical engagement with multiple perspectives, creativity, ability to connect key concepts with personal experiences or world events), and clarity of expression (language usage, readability, mechanics).
  - The final installment of your printed journal should be 4,000-7,000 words in length (approximately 15-25 double-spaced pages in a 12-point font with 1-inch margins). **Due in LEARN on Monday, Dec. 13.**

**Public Health Considerations (and Contingency Plan):**

In our weekly classroom meetings, we have been instructed to **wear masks** and stay at least 1 meter apart. In the event that we engage in small-group activities that include “break-out rooms” beyond the classroom, the relevant spacing interval is 2 meters (still using masks as long as we are indoors, of course). Even outdoors, a 2-meter social distancing rule still applies.

If you feel unwell, do not come to class. Contact your instructor, however, so that an excused absence can be recorded. When symptoms warrant, contact UW Health Services and arrange for Covid-19 testing.

One thing we have all learned during the last few terms is that guidelines for daily activities change with the overall public health situation. All plans are therefore to some degree tentative. If (at any point during the term) relevant provincial or university authorities determine that it is no longer safe for our
class to meet in person at Conrad Grebel University College, our weekly course sessions will transition to a fully online format with 90 minutes of live videoconferencing per week starting at our regularly scheduled time (11:30 a.m. on Wednesday). In addition, lecture material and presentations that would normally be shared within a physical classroom will start to be provided asynchronously through LEARN, with the expectation that you will view this material before our meetings (creating a “flipped” classroom experience). Similar adjustments will also be made if the instructor needs to self-isolate. See the announcements in LEARN for relevant details concerning any new scenario, including Zoom or WebEx links to synchronous class sessions. While we are all hoping for a term that will be free of disruptions, both long-term and short-term suspensions of in-person class meetings are possible. For regularly updated information about campus guidelines and plans, see the official UWaterloo Covid-19 website.

Required Readings

- PACS 327 Electronic Readings. (Marked with a “*” below.)

Shaules and Jones texts are available for purchase through the W Store on campus (wstore.ca). In addition, inexpensive Kindle editions of both texts can be obtained at amazon.ca. PACS 327 Electronic Readings will be made available in UWaterloo electronic reserves and in LEARN.

Web Page:

This course will make use of the WATERLOO LEARN website. This site will provide general information for the course as well as electronic readings, lecture outlines, course handouts, assignment dropboxes, and grades for term assignments. Important announcements such as the cancellation of class due to illness or inclement weather (or a change in the public health situation) will also be posted there, so please try to check the site before each class, just in case.

To access LEARN, enter your WatIAM username and password. If you encounter difficulties, you are welcome to contact learnhelp@uwaterloo.ca. After you have successfully logged in, click on the PACS 327 link in the yellow “Courses and Communities” menu. Be sure that the email address listed under your name in LEARN is an address that you check on a regular basis.

Breakdown of Evaluation Criteria, Key Assignments, and Due Dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due Date(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Assessed at end of term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Writing Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Oct. 22 and Dec. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Exercise</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>See pp. 3-4 above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Project (Research Paper or Journal)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Dec. 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assigned Letter Grades</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Average Calculation Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>53-56</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F+</td>
<td>42-49</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>35-41</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-</td>
<td>0-34</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late Policy:

Deadlines matter. They keep us on track, enable us to be productive, and help us to meet our educational goals. There are times, however, when even the most organized and disciplined person faces difficult obstacles and unexpected challenges. If this happens, it is your responsibility to take the initiative and demonstrate commitment to getting the job done in a timely manner. Students who contact Prof. Funk well in advance of a due date to discuss realistic complications that may postpone completion of work often receive favourable consideration.

A penalty will be applied to assignments that arrive late without prior clearance. The standard deductions for late work are as follows:

- One day to one week late: -5%
- Eight days to two weeks late: -10%
- Fifteen days to three weeks late: -15%
- More than three weeks late: -20%

Please do not make the mistake of failing to submit an assignment. The penalties for late work are not insignificant, but up until final exam time late truly is much better than never.

PACS Research Support:

The library has created a subject guide to help you carry out peace-related research. You can access this guide online. If you need more specialized assistance, the Peace and Conflict Studies liaison librarian, Laureen Harder-Gissing, is available for consultation. Laureen works with PACS faculty to order library resources and to create the subject guide. See the guide for research tips and ways to contact Laureen.

Appropriate Use of Laptops, Phones, etc.:

Laptops, iPads, smartphones and related devices are amazing tools, with impressive capabilities that can enhance our educational experience. Among other things, they allow us to maintain a portable work station, access LEARN, download PowerPoint slides, keep neatly typed lecture notes, monitor elapsed time during a presentation, and communicate with classmates. Unfortunately, these devices can also become a significant source of distraction, both for ourselves and others.
During class presentations and discussions, please give others the gift of your full attention and avoid activities that could divert us from the purpose of our meetings together (e.g., text messages, instant messaging, email, prepping for other courses, social media feeds). In all circumstances, consider the impact of extraneous electronic activities not just on your own learning, but also on those who are attempting to listen to presentations, watch class films, participate in discussions, or offer you their well-considered thoughts and opinions. All course participants are expected to comply with a simple principle: if it’s a non-urgent matter that might distract you or someone sitting near you, and does not relate directly to what we are covering in class, save it for later.

Additional Considerations:
As we progress through the course, please remember:

- In academics as in life more generally, what we get from an experience depends on what we put into it. **Preparation for class** (completing reading and writing assignments on time, tracking world events) is the basis for effective learning.
- When we come to class prepared to participate and pose questions, we transform the classroom environment, making active and collaborative learning possible. We discover that **learning is a communal rather than a solitary endeavor**, and that each one of us is a resource for everyone else in the learning process.
- The subject matter covered by this course is inevitably open to **multiple interpretations**. This means that you will not always agree with ideas presented in course readings, lectures, and discussions. In such cases, disagreement is often a good thing, so long as it motivates you to develop an enhanced understanding where you stand in relation to others. What matters most is not whether or not we all agree, but whether or not we are willing to engage one another with respect and integrity.
- Collaborative learning requires not only preparation and self-expression, but also a commitment to **active listening**. Active listening is a communication skill that we develop as we begin to hear not only words, opinions, and ideas, but also the experiences and the awareness behind them. When we practice active listening, we cease to merely debate and begin to sharpen the focus of our deliberations. We clarify divergent perceptions and develop deeper understanding of contrasting perspectives. We become a clear mirror, reflecting back what we have heard and asking questions to learn rather than to score rhetorical points. In the process, we test and refine our own ideas and those held by others.
- During the term we will be privileged to host at least one guest speaker. Please treat visitors to our classroom with the same respect you would extend to a guest in your home – for example, by maintaining eye contact as much as possible, by asking questions, and by following the basic rules of “electronic etiquette” described above.
Thinking about Our Region as a Global-Local Intersection, and as a Meeting Place of People from Many Cultural Traditions
Course Schedule:

**Weeks 1-6: Foundational Concepts**

**WEEK ONE (Sept. 8): Meeting One Another and Defining Our Goals**
Who are we? Why are we here? Where are we going? And what can we learn from one another?

**WEEK TWO (Sept. 15): Conflict and Conflict Resolution as Cultural Activities**

*Assigned reading:*

*See declaration of intent form for final project (research paper or journal) required by Sept. 15.*

**WEEK THREE (Sept. 22): Diverse Starting Points and Worldviews**

*Assigned:*

*See declaration of intent form for application exercise (Option 1, 2, or 3) required by Sept. 22.*
WEEK FOUR (Sept. 29): Cultural Differences: Searching for Patterns

Assigned reading:

WEEK FIVE (Oct. 6): Engaging across Cultural Differences

Assigned reading:

No class Oct. 13 – Reading Week

WEEK SIX (Oct. 20): Personal Journeys through Culture: “There” and Back Again

Assigned reading:

First short writing assignment due in LEARN on Oct. 22.
Weeks 7-12: Applications

WEEK SEVEN (Oct. 27): Race, Equity, and Community in Diverse Societies

Assigned reading:


WEEK EIGHT (Nov. 3): Localizing Peace

Assigned reading:


Middle Eastern reconciliation meeting (left, from digital-culture.net) and a photo from the “Ubuntu Project” in South Africa (right). Ubuntu is a concept of interdependence that means (roughly) “a person is a person through other persons.”
WEEK NINE (Nov. 10): Tapping Cultural Resources in Peacemaking Initiatives

Assigned reading:


WEEK TEN (Nov. 17): Confronting Divides and Injustices

Assigned reading:


Application Exercise Option 3 due in LEARN by Nov. 19.
WEEK ELEVEN (Nov. 24): Working Cross-Culturally

Assigned reading:

WEEK TWELVE (Dec. 1): Integration

Assigned reading:

Second short writing assignment due in LEARN on Dec. 3.

Major project (Research Paper or Journal) due in LEARN on Dec. 13.

UWaterloo Policies and Information:

**Academic Policies**

**Academic integrity**: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.]

**Grievance**: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read **Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4**. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Discipline**: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to **Policy 71, Student Discipline**. For typical penalties, check **Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties**.

Japanese Origami Crane (Source: Wikimedia Commons)
Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit alternate assignment.

Academic freedom at the University of Waterloo: Policy 33, Ethical Behaviour states, as one of its general principles (Section 1), “The University supports academic freedom for all members of the University community. Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base teaching and research on an honest and ethical quest for knowledge. In the context of this policy, ‘academic freedom' refers to academic activities, including teaching and scholarship, as is articulated in the principles set out in the Memorandum of Agreement between the FAUW and the University of Waterloo, 1998 (Article 6). The academic environment which fosters free debate may from time to time include the presentation or discussion of unpopular opinions or controversial material. Such material shall be dealt with as openly, respectfully and sensitively as possible.” This definition is repeated in Policies 70 and 71, and in the Memorandum of Agreement, Section 6.

Mental Health Support
All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health support if they are needed.

On Campus:
Due to COVID-19 and campus closures, services are available only online or by phone.
- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext. 32655
- MATES: one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services

Off campus, 24/7:
- Good2Talk: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 ext. 6880
- Here 24/7: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- OK2BME: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online on the Faculty of Arts website.
Download UWaterloo and regional mental health resources (PDF).
Download the WatSafe app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

The Writing and Communication Centre (WCC)
The Writing and Communication Centre (WCC) works with students as they develop their ideas, draft, and revise. Writing and communication specialists offer one-on-one support in planning assignments, synthesizing and citing research, organizing papers and reports, designing presentations and e-portfolios, and revising for clarity and coherence. You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, or you can drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 25- or 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit uwaterloo.ca/wcc.
Group appointments for team projects, presentations, and papers are also available. Please note that communication specialists guide you to see your work as readers would. They can teach you revising skills and strategies, but will not change or correct your work for you.