

TS690-02 Conflict in Congregations & Faith-Based Organizations

Conrad Grebel University College @ University of Waterloo

Spring Semester 2019 (June 3 - 14, 2019 *mornings and some afternoons*)

Instructor: Betty Pries

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Classroom: CG4224 (Fretz Seminar Room)

Office Hours: Noon - 1pm on each day of class, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Relationship can be rich, rewarding - they can also require us to tackle tough conversations! Relationships are the bridge across which conflict and communication travel and across which conciliation can take place. This course considers the themes of conflict, communication and conciliation in the congregational and workplace context. Conflict theory, practices of conflict transformation, spirituality and theology will all be considered as we dive into this rich and challenging topic.

COURSE and EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Following this course the student will be able to...

1. Assess and identify conflict indicators as they emerge in various contexts
2. Identify and use key third party skills for transforming conflict situations
3. Plan a conflict resolution and/or change process
4. Engage questions of conflict transformation from a theological, spiritual and Biblical perspective

TEXTBOOK AND OTHER RESOURCES

- Bernard Mayer, *The Dynamics of Conflict: A Guide to Engagement and Intervention*, 2nd Edition, Jossey-Bass, 2012.
- Beatrice Bruteau, *Radical Optimism: Practical Spirituality in an Uncertain World*, Sentient Publications, 2002.
- Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*, Abingdon Press, 1996.

- John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class Participation: Students are expected to attend class, come prepared for class and participate in class discussions / class exercises.
2. Assignments: Assignments must be submitted through LEARN by 9am on each due date. Late assignments are penalized 5% (in total, not per day). All assignments must be submitted by midnight, Monday, July 14, 2019 to be considered for grading.
 - Assignment 1: Conflict Summary
 - *Due June 3, 2019*, submitted through LEARN
 - Write a 1500-word conflict summary regarding a conflict you have been a part of in some way (as a participant or as an observer). Choose a conflict you will want to reflect on throughout the duration of this course. Questions to consider in your case study include the following:
 1. In what context did the conflict occur?
 2. What happened in the conflict and how did it escalate?
 3. Why did the conflict start or escalate?
 4. What was your role in the conflict?
 5. What attempts were made to resolve the conflict?
 6. What was the outcome, and why did the steps taken produce the outcome?
 7. What did this experience teach you about conflict?
 - Assignment 2: Conflict Haiku and Explanation
 - *Due June 6, 2019*, submitted through LEARN
 - Read pages 65 - 112 from *The Moral Imagination* by John Paul Lederach. In the spirit of that reading and based on Lederach's definition of a Haiku, write one or more Haikus based on your conflict summary and/or the course material.
 - Write 250 - 500 words explaining what led you to construct your poem the way you did.
 - Assignment 3: Theological Reflections
 - *Due June 11, 2019*, submitted through LEARN
 - Choose one theme from Volf with which you would like to engage. Write 750 - 1000 words regarding this theme. Do you

agree/disagree? What wisdom do you see in Volf's perspective? What challenges do you observe?

- Assignment 4: Spirituality of Conflict Transformation
 - *Due June 13, 2019*, submitted through LEARN
 - Reflect on your experience of conflict as per your conflict summary and your strengths and challenges with respect to conflict. Review the material provided by Bruteau. How can her approach to spirituality influence your personal engagement with conflict? How does her understanding of spirituality challenge, expand or inspire your own understanding of spirituality? Write a 1500-word reflection on these reflections/questions.

- Assignment 5: Final essay
 - *Due July 7, 2019*, submitted through LEARN
 - Students are expected to prepare a major research essay on a conflict related topic. More information regarding possible topics will be made available on the first day of class. Essay details are as follows:
 1. 3500 - 5000 words
 2. Title page (essay title, your name)
 3. Introduction (thesis statement that clearly, succinctly, and comprehensively explains the nature of the problem you are addressing, supporting commentary and an overview of what you will cover with your essay)
 4. An overview of the theme you are addressing
 5. A clear analysis regarding your thesis
 6. Commentary driven by your conclusions on the theme
 7. Conclusion
 8. Footnotes (not endnotes or in-text citations)
 9. Bibliography (Turabian Bibliographic Citation Style)

GRADING

1. 20% - Class Participation
2. 10% - Conflict Summary
3. 10% - Haiku and Explanation
4. 10% - Theological Perspectives Assignment
5. 15% - Spirituality and Transformation Assignment
6. 35% - Research Essay

LIST OF ASSIGNMENT RUBRICS

1. In Class Participation

- A - Excellent preparation, offers analysis, synthesis and evaluation of material; contributes significantly to ongoing discussion.
- B - Good preparation, offers interpretation and analysis, contributes well to discussion in on-going fashion;
- C - Adequate preparation, but little evidence of interpretation and analysis; contributes moderately when called upon;
- D - Present, not disruptive; responds when called on but does not offer much; infrequent involvement.

2. Written Assignments

- Grading for written assignments will consider whether the student has answered the questions posed, the quality of the student's answers to the questions posed and the quality of the student's writing. The rubric for all written assignments is as follows:
 - 90 - 100% Truly outstanding and exceptional work
 - 80 - 89% Superior work demonstrating strong analysis and knowledge of the material, thoroughness, good composition and creativity.
 - 70 - 79% Passable work that would benefit from focusing, elaboration and/or editing.
 - 50 - 69% Weak work that is vague, poorly written and/or difficult to understand.
 - <50% Unacceptable work that provides little evidence of analysis, little knowledge of the material or does not follow instructions.

COURSE DESIGN

The following content schedule may change. Changes to this schedule will be announced in class and by announcement on Waterloo LEARN.

June 3, 2019, 9am - 12noon

- Introductions
- Review of Syllabus, Final Essay
- Conflict Analysis, Definition of Conflict
- Analysis of Biblical Texts
- Reading Assignment due: *Dynamics of Conflict* by Bernard Mayer
- Writing Assignment due: *Conflict Summary*

June 4, 2019, 9am - 12noon & 1pm - 4pm DOUBLE CLASS

- Systems Theory of Conflict & Case Study
- Communication Model I & Case Study

- Reading Assignment due: *Moral Imagination* by John Paul Lederach, pp 65 – 112.

June 5, 2019, 9am – 12noon

- Communication Model II & Case Study
- Writing Assignment due: *Haiku and Explanation*

June 6, 2019, 9am – 12noon

- Theological Understandings of Conflict
- Reading Assignment due: *Exclusion & Embrace* by Miroslav Volf

June 7, 2019, NO CLASS

June 10, 2019, NO CLASS

June 11, 2019, 9am – 12noon & 1pm – 4pm DOUBLE CLASS

- Transforming Polarized Thinking & Case Study
- Leading Groups, Transforming Group Dynamics
- Writing Assignment due: *Theological Understandings of Conflict*

June 12, 2019, 9am – 12noon

- Christian Spirituality, Images of Selfhood and the Transformation of Conflict
- Reading Assignment due: *Radical Optimism* by Beatrice Bruteau

June 13, 2019, 9am – 12noon

- Forgiveness & Apologies
- Writing Assignment due: *Spirituality of Conflict Transformation*

June 14, 2019, 9am – 12noon

- Tackling Tough Conversations

UNIVERSITY POLICIES THAT APPLY TO THIS COURSE

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. 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 professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate

Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, <http://www.adm.UWaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <http://www.adm.UWaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.UWaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

Academic Integrity Website (Arts): <https://UWaterloo.ca/arts/current-undergraduates/student-support/ethical-behavior>

Academic Integrity Office (University): <https://UWaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

Access Ability Services - Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

<https://UWaterloo.ca/disability-services/> The UW and Grebel share a commitment to support the participation and access to university programs, services, and facilities by persons with disabilities.

For students with disabilities: Contact the Office of AccessAbility Services at 519-888-4567 ext. 35082 or visit Needles Hall 1132. Book an appointment to meet with an advisor to discuss the available services and supports. The Office 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 the Office at the beginning of each academic term.

Accommodation Due to Illness: From time to time students become ill or have ongoing medical conditions that prevent them from meeting academic obligations. The University is committed to assisting students who are ill and has established the following policy.

Documentation: Students who are ill and unable to meet assignment due dates or write a term test or final examination should seek medical treatment and provide confirmation of the

illness to the instructor(s) within 48 hours by submitting a completed UW Verification of Illness Form to support requests for accommodation due to illness. The UW Verification of Illness Form is normally the only acceptable medical documentation and is available on line at: http://www.healthservices.UWaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html