PACS 3700: Communication and Conflict Management

Course Syllabus and Policies

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Michael English

I am the Associate Director of the Peace, Conflict, and Security Program (PACS) for the University of Colorado Boulder.

Office Location

My office is located in Norlin Library, room S423. My office is in suite S436 with the Special Undergraduate Enrichment Programs (SUEP). Follow the signs for SUEP if you do not see signs for PACS.

Office Hours

My office hours are by appointment only and will be held through Zoom. Please schedule an appointment here (Links to an external site.). I am always happy to meet with you!

Email

You can reach me at michael.d.english@colorado.edu

Course Information

Description

This course aims to provide students with an introduction to the theories and practices associated with contemporary study of conflict analysis and resolution (or CAR). CAR offers a diverse range of analytical tools and intervention strategies designed to address contemporary forms of conflict, ranging from interpersonal disputes to interstate warfare. In this particular course, we will focus on conflicts ranging from the interpersonal to the intergroup and community levels. As such the goal is to give you the skills to analyze conflicts in your own life, be it a conflict between roommates, coworkers, or even those occurring between members of a community.

Throughout the semester we will engage with the writings of foundational thinkers and current innovators in an effort to develop our skills as conflict analysts and potential conflict intervenors. We will explore the underlying sources of conflict and its dynamics, as well as consider modes

of intervention related to the practices of facilitation, negotiation, mediation, and other group processes. Students will learn core theories, analytical techniques, models, and modes of practice essential to resolving conflict without recourse to violence and for building more peaceful and resilient communities.

*This course is part of the Peace, Conflict, and Security Certificate Program offered through CU Boulder. If you are interested in the certificate, please check out the website and schedule an appointment to meet with me. Students do not need to complete the certificate to take this course. If you are interested in conflict at the international level, PACS 3850: International Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding is offered spring semester in person and regularly online through Continuing Education.

Prerequisites

It is recommended that you have taken PACS 2500, but not necessary.

Format

This course will be run as a combination of lecture and seminar. Students and the instructor will embark on a collaborative learning experience, partaking in a range of activities and discussions designed to deepen our understanding of the assigned materials. This includes working in small groups, role plays, possible guest speakers, and other experiential activities that might take place inside or outside of the classroom. Student participation and preparedness are crucial to making the class a successful learning experience.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Identify key terminology, concepts, and theories, associated with conflict analysis and practices of peaceful intervention;
- Compare the strengths and limitations of core theories used to analyze contemporary conflicts;
- Relate theories, concepts, and frameworks of conflict analysis to past situations, as well as those episodes of violence occurring in the world today;
- Deconstruct conflict situations in their personal lives;
- Evaluate the relationship between the analysis of a conflict and the methods of intervention

Textbooks

There is one required text for this course.

- Bernard S Mayer, *The Dynamics of Conflict: A Guide to Engagement and Intervention* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012).

- This text is available through the University of Colorado's library system for you to use an e-book. You can find instructions on how to access it here. However, I cannot guarantee its availability. The library has three copies and when they are checked out they are checked out. There are currently 100 students taking this class this semester.
- As such, I recommend you obtain a personal copy of the text for your own use through the campus bookstore or through an online retailer of your choice.

Additional readings and web material for this course are available through Canvas in the Modules.

Assignments

Overview of Assignments (1000 possible points)

- Reading and Lecture Quizzes - 37.5% of your final grade
  - 3 take home quizzes completed through Canvas, 125 points each.
  - Due 9/19, 10/17, and 11/14
- Personal Conflict Assessment Video Essays- 22.5% of your final grade
  - 5 video essays, Video 1 is worth 25 points, Videos 2-5 are worth 50 points each.
  - Must complete all videos to earn credit for this assignment.
  - Due 8/29, 9/5, 9/19, 10/17, 11/14.
- Conflict Case Study: Group Project Work - 30% of your final grade
  - 5 parts, 300 points total.
  - Due 9/16, 10/3, 10/24, 11/16 or 11/18, 12/9
- Conflict Case Study: Individual Work - 5% of your final grade.
  - Evaluation of Self and Group Participation, 50 points.
  - Due 12/10.
- Final In-Class Conflict Facilitation
  - Must be present in person on 12/9.
  - Final conducted during class session.

A full discussion of the course assignments can be found: Assignment Details

Schedule

There are four units in the course.

1. Unit One: Dynamics of Conflict
2. Unit Two: Sources of Conflict and Conflict Assessments
3. Unit Three: Intervening in Conflict
4. Unit Four: Conflict Skill Development

A full version of the course reading schedule and bibliographic information can be found: Course Calendar and Reading Schedule

Grading Scale

Your final grade for this course is determined by the number of points acquired through exams and assignments. There are 1000 total points possible. The grading scale is as follows:

1000-940=A	869-830=B	699-650=D
939-900=A-	829-800=B-	649-below=F
899-870=B+	799-700=C	

Course Policies

Attendance (Mandatory)

Class attendance and participation are mandatory. You do not get points for attendance and participation, but failure to attend class and/or disruption can be grounds for your final grade to be reduced or, in extreme cases, you to be dropped from class.

Attendance

You are expected to attend class on time and be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities. To record attendance, the instructor will call out attendance at some point during the class session. Students are **allowed to be late or absent three times** without a deduction to their final grade.

Students are allowed three unexcused absences without a deduction to their final grade.

- A fourth unexcused absence will result in a ½ letter grade deduction of your final grade for this course.
- A fifth unexcused absence will result in a full letter grade deduction off your final grade for this course.
- Students with six or more unexcused absences will receive an F in this course.

Students are allowed to be partially present (tardy) for class three times without a deduction to their final grade.

- I consider you to be tardy if you are more than 5 minutes late to the start of a session.
- If you are tardy four times, it will result in a ½ letter grade deduction of your final grade for this course.
- You will lose a ½ letter grade off your final grade for each time you are tardy thereafter.

What is the difference between an unexcused and an excused absence?

Unexcused absence: Students get three free unexcused absences in this course. An *unexcused absence* is any absence that does not meet the excused criteria discussed below. What this means for you is that if you need a day off for whatever reason, you can take a day off. Examples of this include if you overslept, wanted to go skiing, need a you day, or just had other things you wanted to accomplish. **Please do not email me regarding unexcused absences.** Taking an unexcused absence for these days is your prerogative. However, use your three wisely, because your fourth will cost you per the grade deductions described above.

Excused absence: An *excused absence* is any instance that a student is unable to attend class for a medical, mental health, religious, or family emergency reason. Students are required, when requested by the instructor, to provide documentation for this absence, such as a doctor's note from the Wardenburg Health Center or medical provider. You should email me at the earliest opportunity to let me know you missed class for a health or family reason. Please do not come to class if you are sick to tell me that you are sick. Stay home and get healthy! *However, students with more than 3 excused absences over the semester will be required to conduct a make-up assignment equivalent to the amount of class time lost.*

Covid-19 and absences: In these times, your health and the health of your family is what matters most. If you or a family member you need to care for comes down with Covid-19, the priority is on getting better. Since this course is remote, you may be able to still participate in our regular sessions. However, if you cannot, please let me know at the earliest opportunity and we will develop a contingency plan.

Technology problems and absences: This course requires access to functioning technology and a reliable internet connection. Regardless of our preparations, sometimes technology fails us. If you are unable able to attend class due to a technology reason:

- Your first technology related absence will be counted as excused so long as you email me and you provide an explanation for what the problem is and how you plan to fix it.
- Additional technology related absences will be counted as unexcused, unless approved by the instructor ahead of time.
- OIT has provided remote learning guidance for students and may be able to help with technology and internet needs.
    - See their website: https://oit.colorado.edu/covid-19-resources/remote-guidance-students

Participation

Participation in class can take many forms. I know not all students are comfortable with speaking in front of a large group, which is why I will employ a number of strategies to allow for various participation types.

However, there is a difference between discomfort and distraction. Distraction takes away from our ability to learn together as a group. Students will lose points for participation if they are

engaged in any of the following behaviors that distract from the learning environment, such as working on materials for other courses, surfing the web or watching tv on their devices, or having conversations not related to the material under discussion.

Students will receive a warning for a first offense. A second offense will result in 10% deduction off your final grade. A third offense will be grounds for administrative action as per CU Boulder policy.

Group Participation and Grades

Typically, all group members will receive the same grade for assignments submitted as part the conflict case study. As this is a class on conflict and its resolution, making you work as part of a team is intentional. I recognize that group work can involve struggle and that individual group members may have different expectations as to what constitutes necessary and effective participation.

To a large extent, these issues can be avoided and managed if each group member accepts responsibility for their role in contributing to group success. Specific traits and behaviors here include (but are not limited to): prioritizing group needs in scheduling meetings; reliably attending meetings; contributing to plans; volunteering for and/or accepting assignment of reasonable tasks in completing projects (including delivery of presentations); completing designated tasks; keeping other group members informed about the status of your participation; and identifying and contributing to the group's socioemotional needs. Finally, as needed, you may be called upon to put into practice the insights from our materials on how to manage and resolve difficult issues. I am confident that you can produce excellent projects and I am equally confident that you can work together to do this.

However, I do recognize that even under the best of circumstances and with the best of intentions, a group member might not meet a minimum standard of required contribution. **In those cases, groups are to contact me and inform me if a group member fails to participate.** Members who do not contribute to group assignments at a reasonable minimum level will have their grades individually reduced to a level that matches their actual participation. If you do not participate, you will receive a 0 even if your group gets a perfect score. If you want to pass this course, you need to work with your group!

Participation Guidelines (Zoom)

Participation in class can take many forms. I know not all students are comfortable with speaking in front of a large group, which is why I will employ a number of strategies to allow for various participation types.

General Participation Guidelines:

- Students are required to attend all lectures through Zoom.

    - **Please know in advance that I will take attendance and do have access to time data for your presence in a meeting. You should treat these Zoom sessions the same as you would an in-person course.**
- Your audio will be muted upon entering the session.
    - To speak during the session, you will need to unmute yourself. To do this, select the unmute option from the bottom right hand corner of your screen. This is the button located next to the video on/off button.
- The decision to turn on your video is optional. It would be wonderful to see your faces, but given various challenges and internet connectivity issues, I am not mandating this.
    - If you do not turn your video on, you should upload a picture of yourself.
- In all cases, you must have your preferred first name and last name displayed on your video feed - do not use your CU ID as your name.
    - Please make sure to do this before you log-in to the session.

Asking Questions:

Given the challenges of trying to manage Zoom, I will stop periodically to check for questions. To ask a question, you can do one of two things:

- First, type your question directly into the chat field. Please only do this if you have a short question otherwise it gets a little too difficult for me to track the flow in conversation field.
- Second, type in the chat field, "I have a question." I will then call on you. You can unmute your volume and ask your question or questions. This is preferred mode if you have a long or complicated question and/or something that you will want to ask follow-up questions on.

Discussion Groups (Breakout Rooms):

At certain points in the course, I will break you up into small groups. This will be done using the breakout feature in Zoom which will assign you to a group with other students from the course. The breakout sessions are designed to give you an opportunity to discuss course material or work through simulations.

- When you get into a breakout room, please introduce yourself to your group members and take note of which breakout room you are in. Your room number will be your group number.
- Select a reporter. This is the person that will share with the class when we return from the breakout rooms. I will call on each group to share an answer or talk about their experience, so please be prepared to respond. If you cannot decide on a reporter, the person with whose first name comes first alphabetically will be the reporter.
- Allow each person an opportunity to answer and/or participate in the exercise. One easy way to make sure this happens is to go group member by group member until everyone has spoken. Then open the conversation up for further discussion and responses.
- You will see a countdown clock letting you know that there is one minute before you rejoin the class and the breakout window closes.

Zoom Etiquette

Using tools such as Zoom make it even more critical that we are patient with and respectful of each other. If poor communication is a major factor in conflict, conducting discussions about real life issues over the internet raises the potential for conflict and misunderstanding to the next level. To address some of these potential issues, I'm going to ask that you do a few things.

- Speak from your own experience.
    - We want to hear about what you've been through and how you've dealt with an issue.
- Do not generalize about groups or persons.
    - If you find yourself saying "All _____ people are this way," you are generalizing and should attempt to figure out what is driving you to make this generalization.
- If you don't know how to say something or are afraid of saying something that people might misinterpret, start by acknowledging that difficulty.
    - See if your group can help you work through the idea. We're going to talk about difficult issues and it's easy to say things we don't mean or to state thing poorly. Part of our work is figuring out how to have better conversations that bring people in, rather than exclude them.
- On the flip side, be kind to one another.
    - Again, we are going to say things we don't mean, and in some cases, do not realize are offensive or hurtful. In these cases, and if you are comfortable, ask the person who made the comment to explain what they meant. Share with them that the way you interpreted what they said. See if this is a moment for building mutual understanding.
- Please make the instructor aware of any conversations or comments that are intentionally hurtful or violate CU Boulder protected class status.
    - It is one thing to work through difficult issues and make mistakes. We will do a lot of this. It is another to harass people and intentionally make them feel uncomfortable or unwelcome. Such behavior will not be tolerated and will be reported to OIEC.
    - Since I am not in the chatroom with you, please send me an email to make me aware of these situations and I will follow up.

Waitlist

<u>What if I join the class late?</u>

Students who register for the course after the term has already started are responsible for making up work they have missed and obtaining any lecture notes from peers. Late work should be completed within 7 days of joining the course. The attendance policy for missed sessions and tardiness comes into force on the first day a student joins the class. It is recommended that you introduce yourself to me after your first class so that you are not accidentally penalized.

<u>What if I'm on the waitlist?</u>

If our classroom capacity allows, I will try my best to admit students listed on the waitlist. I am restricted by university policy to follow the fire marshal's posted room occupancy limits, regardless of the number of desks or chairs. If, for example, the capacity states 50, that's the cap. If you are on the waitlist, I encourage you to attend class, since there will no doubt be a few drops during the first week. However, I cannot guarantee you a place, nor can I adjust the order of the waitlist to prioritize admission.

Late Work

Please complete the required assignments and readings by the due dates listed on Canvas. All work must be submitted electronically through Canvas as a watchable video, Word document, or discussion post unless otherwise noted. **Late work will be docked 25% off per day it is past due.** All due dates and exam dates are available to you in advance for planning purposes. Students should contact me prior to the due date if they have a concern regarding an assignment and are seeking an extension. Exceptions for extended due dates and make-up exams are considered on a case by case basis, which requires a discussion with me.

Accommodations for students with disabilities must be handled by the office of Disability Services, which determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Please contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. More information on accommodations is listed below under the Accommodations Statement section. When your accommodations are approved, please schedule an appointment with me to present your letter(s) and to discuss how we can make sure your needs are met.

Technologies

We will use the Canvas and Zoom platforms as part of our course. Canvas works best in Firefox and Chrome. If you use another type of browser, please be warned that some things may not function properly. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the platform since you will need to do everything for this course on it, including submission of all your assignments. If you need help with technology, please contact the Office of Information Technology. I would love to be able to help you with all your tech needs, but I'm not that person. Information about Zoom and related policies on how we will use Zoom for remote learning can be found on the Instructions for Zoom page under Module 1.

In the classroom, the use of laptop computers and tablets for the purposes of note-taking and accessing readings is permitted as long as the user does not engage in activities such as emailing, searching the web, playing games, or anything that might be of distraction to the class and its members. Students violating this policy will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of that class session. The instructor reserves the right to revoke the use of laptops and tablets in the classroom at his discretion.

Mobile phones should be set to silent and kept out of sight for the duration of the class. Students who violate this policy will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of that class session. Please speak with the instructor before the start of class if there is an emergency situation that requires you to have your phone out during the session.

Email

I typically respond to emails within 24 hours during the work week (Monday through Friday). If you do not get a reply within 36 hours, please send me a follow-up email. The answer to most general questions can be found within the syllabus, so please double check it before sending your email.

Also, kindly remember that an email is not a text message. Make sure to include your full name, the course and section number you are taking with me, and a detailed explanation of the issue. You do not need to email me if you are going to miss class unless it is the result of a medical or family emergency.

Office Hours

I hold office hours by appointment only. This is in part to encourage students to be proactive in meeting with me and to make sure that we have the time to appropriately address your questions when we do meet. I am generally unable to stay very long after class because of my teaching schedule.

Office hours will be held remotely via Zoom due to Covid-19. You may schedule an office visit with me here.

Letters of Recommendation

At some point, you may need the dreaded letter of recommendation or professional reference. I know how difficult it can be to get these from faculty. I am always happy to support students in this way, but I do have some criteria that you must meet. Things to keep in mind:

- You have taken **at least two courses** with me;
- Maintain a B average in my classes;
- Did not have more than 3 unexcused absences;
- You should be able to describe the job, internship, or program you are applying for and your interest in it;
- Provide me with a current copy of your resume (or we can build one if you need it);
- Ask politely.

If this is something you require, please send me an email to get the conversation started.

University Mandated Policies

Accommodations for Disability

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities

in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see Temporary Medical Conditions on the Disability Services website.

Classroom Behavior

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on classroom behavior and the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution policies.

Covid-19

As a matter of public health and safety due to the pandemic, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements and all public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. Students who fail to adhere to these requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. For more information, see the policy on classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct. If you require accommodation because a disability prevents you from fulfilling these safety measures, please follow the steps in the "Accommodation for Disabilities" statement on this syllabus.

As of Aug. 13, 2021, CU Boulder has returned to requiring masks in classrooms and laboratories regardless of vaccination status. This requirement is a temporary precaution during the delta surge to supplement CU Boulder's COVID-19 vaccine requirement. Exemptions include individuals who cannot medically tolerate a face covering, as well as those who are hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled or who are communicating with someone who is hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled and where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication. If you qualify for a mask-related accommodation, please follow the steps in the "Accommodation for Disabilities" statement on this syllabus. In addition, vaccinated instructional faculty who are engaged in an indoor instructional activity and are separated by at least 6 feet from the nearest person are exempt from wearing masks if they so choose.

Students who have tested positive for COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for or had symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home. In this class, if you are sick or quarantined, please notify the instructor as soon as possible.

Preferred Name and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code academic integrity policy. Violations of the Honor Code may include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found on the Honor Code website.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by or against members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about OIEC, university policies, reporting options, and the campus resources can be found on the OIEC website.

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and reporting options.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If this applies to you, please speak with me directly as soon as possible at the beginning of the term. See the campus policy regarding religious observances for full details.