

CONF 601

THEORIES OF CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Semester: Spring 1996

Class Time: Monday 4:30-7:10 pm

Instructor: Dr. Richard Rubenstein

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to the course! In this class we will investigate a wide range of theoretical frameworks for interpreting conflict. The purposes of this study are:

- to present and critique theories that students may find useful in analyzing various types of social conflict;
- to evaluate the usefulness of the theories studied by applying them to specific conflict situations;
- to assist students to become better critics of conflict theory and more acute conflict analysts; and
- to help them to develop their own abilities to construct useful theories of conflict and conflict resolution.

The course is taught by Richard Rubenstein, whose office is Room 304 at 4103 Chain Bridge Road. He can be reached at 993-1307 and is available to students on M, 2:00-4:00, and after class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Grades in this course will be based on two exercises: a take-home midterm examination (40% of grade) and a final examination or term paper (60%). There will also be two ungraded do-it-yourself theory exercises (in class). Students have the option to submit a term paper in lieu of sitting for the final exam, but the topic and bibliography for the final paper must be approved by the instructor on or before the date stated below.

In order to receive a passing grade in this course, it is necessary to attend classes prepared to discuss the week's reading. Late exams or papers will be graded down one full grade for each day or part of a day that the paper is late, unless the student furnishes written documentation of the medical or family emergency which made timely completion of the work impossible. Please note that it is ICAR policy to refuse to grant grades of Incomplete for reasons other than documented medical or family emergencies.

REQUIRED READINGS

Rubenstein, Dukes, Botes, and Stephens, Frameworks for Interpreting Conflict (1994), at GMU Bookstore

John Burton, ed., Conflict: Human Needs Theory (1990), at GMU Bookstore

ICAR, Readings in Conflict Theory, distributed in class

ICAR, Materials on Algeria, in ICAR Student Resources Room.

COURSE SYLLABUS

WEEK 1 Introduction to the course. What is doing theory? Why do it?

READ: Rubenstein, et al., Frameworks for Interpreting Conflict, Chs. 1 and 2; ICAR, Readings in Conflict Theory: A, Koestler, "The Act of Creation."

WEEK 2 The problem (or non-problem?) of human aggression.

READ: Readings in Conflict Theory: S. Freud, "The Ego and the Id"; H. Marcuse, "Eros and Civilization."

WEEK 3 Frustration, relative deprivation, and revolt.

READ: Frameworks, first part of Ch. 4. Readings in Conflict Theory: Ted R. Gurr, "Why Men Rebel."

WEEK 4 Basic human needs and conflict resolution.

READ: Frameworks, complete Ch. 4. Conflict: Human Needs, Introduction and chapters by Clark, Galtung, Roy, Rubenstein, and Sites.

WEEK 5 Do-it-yourself theory exercise (first half of class).
Political realism and conflicts of interest.

READ: Frameworks, first part of Ch. 3. Readings in Conflict Theory: Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, "Power and Realist Theory." Recommended: Richard E. Rubenstein, ICAR Working Paper, "Political Power and Conflict Resolution."

WEEK 6 Marxist theory and class conflict.

READ: Frameworks, Ch. 5. Readings in Conflict Theory: C.W. Mills, "The Marxists." Recommended (see instructor for copy): David McLellan, "Karl Marx."

WEEK 7 Modernization theory and social transformation.

READ: Frameworks, complete Ch. 3. Ch. 3. Readings in Conflict Theory: C.E. Black, "The Dynamics of Modernization." Recommended: Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy.

WEEK 8 Critical theory and postmodernism.

READ: Readings in Conflict Theory Wallace and Wolf, "Critical Theory: The Frankfurt School and Jurgen Habermas"; M. Foucault, "Discipline and Punish." Recommended: Martin Jay, The Dialectical Imagination.

MIDTERM EXAMS DISTRIBUTED AT END OF THIS CLASS.

WEEK 9 MIDTERM EXAMS RETURNED AT BEGINNING OF THIS CLASS.
Guest lecture; no assigned reading.

WEEK 10 Ethnicity and conflict.

READ: Readings in Conflict Theory: A.D. Smith, "The Ethnic Origins of Nations"; Samuel Huntington, "The

Clash of Civilizations"; Rubenstein and Crocker, "Challenging Huntington." Recommended: Donald Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict.

WEEK 11 Gender and conflict.

READ: Readings in Conflict Theory: Riane Eisler, "The Chalice and the Blade"; Nancy Fraser, "Struggle Over Needs." Recommended: Susan Faludi, Backlash.

WEEK 12 Race and conflict.

READ: Readings in Conflict Theory: Feagin and Hahn, "Ghetto Revolts." Recommended: Winthrop Jordan, White Over Black.

WEEK 13 Religion and conflict.

READ: Conflict: Basic Human Needs, chapter by Oscar Nudler. Readings in Conflict Theory: O. Nudler, "On the Western Modes of World Order." Mark Gopin, ICAR Working Paper, "Religion and Conflict Resolution." Recommended: Richard Rubenstein, "Religious Conflict and Human Needs."

WEEK 14 Final do-it-yourself theory exercise. Review of theories and discussion of state of the field.

WEEK 15 Please check examination schedule for date of final examination. TERM PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED ON OR BEFORE THIS DATE.