

**Communication and Conflict  
CMST 3600**

**Instructor:** Jennifer Peeples

**Office:** Old Main 213

**Office hours:** Wednesday 12-2 and  
by appointment

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**Course Description:** This course introduces skills and materials that are useful for conflict management and consensus building. The class will discuss contemporary theories on conflict and communication and present skills and concepts to improve conflict outcomes. It also will analyze the role of culture, gender, and power in conflict. Finally, the class will engage in discussion and application of negotiation and mediation skills.

**By the end of this course you will:**

Gain factual knowledge

- Explain common topics and use the language of conflict management.
- Articulate the relationship between communication and conflict.
- Explain the different parts of a conflict and how they influence conflict outcomes.

Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories

- Explain how power, gender and culture influence conflict.
- Explore your own conflict style and how that style influences conflict outcomes.

Learn how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems.

- Use library resources to find credible and useful information.

Learn to apply course materials:

- Inside and outside class, apply conflict concepts and ideas to a variety of situations and examples.

Develop specific skills, competencies and points of view needed by professionals in conflict management

- Comprehend and practice negotiation and mediation skills for consensus building.
- Adapt and explain conflict skills and ideas to various audiences.
- Experience the process of communication consulting.

**My Expectations:**

I am at my best as a teacher in situations where students are consistently present, engaged with the class content, and actively participating in the learning process (this includes work done outside the classroom). Our satisfaction with the course depends largely on the extent to which you honor these expectations to the best of your ability.

**Your Expectations:**

I believe my responsibilities as a teacher include starting and ending class on time, being prepared to teach, attending office hours, returning your work promptly, grading fairly and fostering a respectful open learning environment. If at any time you feel I have not met these expectations or if you have additional concerns, please relate them to me so that your needs as a student can best be met.

**Required Materials:**

Wilmot, W. & Hocker, J. (2014). *Interpersonal Conflict*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2014 (assigned by chapter in the schedule).

**Additional Readings: TBA****Evaluations:**

Exam 1	180
Exam 2	180
Service learning project:	
Literature review (individual)	150
Interview report (group)	90
Report (group)	150
Report presentation (group)	50
Quizzes	<u>200</u>
Total	1000

**Grade distribution:**

100-93% = A	82-80% = B-	69-67% = D+
92-90% = A-	79-77% = C+	66-63% = D
89-87% = B+	76-73% = C	62-60% = D-
86-83% = B	72-70% = C-	59-0% = F

**Assignments:**

**Quizzes:** Unscheduled quizzes will take place during the first 5-10 minutes of class. Quiz material will come from the previous day's discussion and the reading assigned for that day. No makeup quizzes or extra credit will be given for absences or late attendance. Please come to class on time. Quizzes may be on in-class activities on days without reading assignments. On presentation days, your attendance will count for one quiz grade. Expect at least one quiz a week.

**Exams:** There are two exams in the class. Both class discussion and course readings will be on the exam. The exams will be definitions and essays. Review sheets will be given out in class one week before the test.

**Service learning project:****Goals:**

- Learn the process of communication consulting.
- Practice information acquisition as a consultant (as opposed to a student).
- Learn to adapt materials/information to different audiences.
- Introduce concepts and skills to others in order to help them reduce unwanted conflict as well as have more productive conflict outcomes.

**Steps in the project:**

1. Choose an age group
2. Research credible and factual information on the type of conflict common for that age
3. Write a literature review (individual)
4. Conduct interviews
5. Brainstorm opportunities for improvement (potentially engage in more research)
6. Create an interview report, problem statement, and goal
7. Create a product for the group explaining what you found during the interviews and research, apply class materials, and provide information for improving conflict
8. Present the project to the class

**Service learning assignments:**

- 1) **Literature Review:** Each of you will individually write a 4-5 page research paper on peer mediation.

*Unlike other research papers in which questionable sources or faulty understanding of the material does not affect anything other than your grade, this research would influence what you decide to present to your audience and how valuable your presentations is to them. Please choose your sources with this in mind!*

- 2) Interview Report. This is a short report that summaries what your group found in your interviews, what problems you found in your group and what goals you have for organizational improvements. Please note: the information in the report should be entirely *anonymous*.
- 3) Final project. The report will present to your audience information and concepts you believe are useful in addressing the problem or goal revealed during research/interviews. The final project can be a short (5 minute) video, a website or a report.
- 4) Final Project Presentation. The report will be presented during the last two weeks of class. The presentation will be evaluated on its clarity of information, correctness of information, professionalism (both your spoken content and in visual aids), and presenter charisma.

## SCHEDULE

1. *This schedule is subject to change if the demands of the course require it.*
2. The reading assignment will be **discussed** the day it is listed.
3. Graded assignments are written in **bold type**.

DATE	TOPIC/ACTIVITY	READING/ASSIGNMENT	SERVICE PROJECT
<b>Week 1</b> Aug 30, Sept. 1	Thurs: Introduction to course  Tues: Nature of conflict	Tues: Chapter 1	
<b>Week 2</b> Sept. 6, 8	Tues: Nature of conflict  Thurs: Perspectives on conflict	Tues: Chapter 1  Thurs: Chapter 2	Choose an age group.
<b>Week 3</b> Sept. 13, 15	Tues: Perspectives on conflict  Thurs: Research	Tues: Chapter 2  Thurs: <b>Meet at the library</b>	Research for literature review
<b>Week 4</b> Sept. 20, 22	Tues: Interests and goals  Thurs: Interests and goals	Tues: Chapter 3  Thurs: Chapter 3	Research for literature review
<b>Week 5</b> Sept. 27, 29	Tues: Power  Thurs: Power	Tues: Chapter 4  Thurs: Chapter 4	Research literature review
<b>Week 6</b> Oct. 4, 6	Tues: <b>Exam 1</b>  Thurs: <b>Presentation software introduction</b>	Tues:  Thurs: <b>Weebly, iMovie and Microsoft video editor</b>	
<b>Week 7</b> Oct. 11, 13	Tues: Styles and Tactics  Thurs: Styles and Tactics	Tues: Chapter 5 <b>Lit review due.</b>  Thurs: Chapter 5	<b>Turn in literature review</b>
<b>Week 8</b> Oct. 18, 20	Tues: Interviews  Thurs:	Tues: reading TBA  <b>Thurs: Attend Friday classes</b>	Interview preparation

<b><u>Week 9</u></b> Oct. 25, 27	Tues: Analyzing your conflicts (other's too!)  Thurs: Analyzing your conflicts (other's too!)	Tues: Chapter 7  Thurs: Chapter 7	Conduct interviews
<b><u>Week 10</u></b> Oct. 1, Nov. 3	Tues: Negotiation  Thurs: Negotiation	Tues: Chapter 8  Thurs: Chapter 8	
<b><u>Week 11</u></b> Nov. 8	Tues: Negotiation practice  <b>Thurs: Professor Peeples will be at a conference</b>	Tues:  Thurs: Finish conducting interviews and write your interview report.	Conduct interviews and write your interview report
<b><u>Week 12</u></b> Nov. 15, 17	Tues: 3 <sup>rd</sup> party intervention  Thurs: 3 <sup>rd</sup> party intervention	Tues: Chapter 9  Thurs: Chapter 9	<b>Interview report due.</b>  Prepare final project
<b><u>Week 13</u></b> Nov. 22	Tues: Mediation practice  Thurs:	Tues:  <b>Thursday: Happy Thanksgiving</b>	Prepare final project
<b><u>Week 14</u></b> Nov. 29, Dec. 1	Tues: <b>Exam 2</b>  Thurs: Forgiveness and reconciliation	Tues:  Thurs: Chapter 10	Prepare final project and presentation
<b><u>Week 15</u></b> Dec. 6, 8	Tues: Presentations  Thurs:	Tues: <b>All projects due at the start of class.</b>  Thurs: Present projects	<b>Present final project</b>
<b><u>Final Exam</u></b>	December 15, 1:30-3:20	<b>Present projects?</b>	

**Please keep in mind the following****Assignments:**

- All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of the class period that they are due or else they will receive 05% off the final grade each day the assignment is late including the due date. The paper must be turned in three days after the due date (including weekends) or I will not accept it. We move too quickly in here to fall behind!
- All presentations must be performed on the due date in class in order to receive full credit. Exceptions will be made for extreme documented circumstances or if arrangements are made with me prior to the presentation due date.
- Plagiarized work will receive an F for assignment and may, depending on the severity of the infringement, receive a failing grade for the course and/or expulsion from the university.
- Students may not use a paper written in another class for credit in this one, or vice versa, without instructor consent.
- Please refer to the university honesty/honor code for further policies pertinent to this class.
- All work is to be typed, double spaced and free of grammatical and spelling errors.

**In the classroom:**

- If you have a disability, I strongly encourage you to contact the Disability Resource Center (<https://www.usu.edu/drc/>) or myself so that the classroom environment can be made conducive to your learning style.
- I also encourage all students to take advantage of my offices hours or e-mail if you have any concerns or questions over any aspect of the course. I am here to help you learn!
- Feel free to bring food and drink. Make sure you have one hand to write with and please clean up after yourself.
- Finally, I try to create a comfortable classroom environment that contributes to learning. For that reason I ask that you turn off your phones and absolutely no text messaging! (Yes you, with your hands in your lap. You're not sneaky.). Please refrain from bringing anything else to class that may be a distraction for you or any of the other students.