

FA 237 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, NEGOTIATION AND CLIENT RELATIONS

Faculty: Peter Forster forsterpeter@hotmail.com 773-388-9315

Competencies offered: H-2-X, H-3-D, L-7, F-X

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

At the individual, organizational and societal levels, we are all interconnected and interdependent. We can only meet our goals and address our problems at any of those levels if we work at them with one another. Therefore now, as never before, we need to learn how to communicate and learn together.

(Michael Skelley, Ph.D.)

What exactly are the elements of successful communication?

How can the idea of conflict be dismantled so that the elements of clear communication can be appropriately and productively applied?

Conflict is essential to, ineradicable from, and inevitable in human life; and the source, cause and process of conflict can be turned from life-destroying to life-building ends.

(Augsburger, David W. *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures*, p. 5)

How can conflict serve as a force for positive change rather than as an impediment to progress and a barrier to communication?

- This course will examine several aspects of **communication**. We will examine perception, assumption, language and sensitivity in the workplace and beyond, applying strategies drawn from theory to actual work-place situations.
- Successful **collaboration** and teamwork are the result of clear interpersonal communication. Done well, collaborative problem solving stimulates new ideas and more sophisticated approaches. To this end, we will consider the issues of empathy and personal style in the workplace and beyond.
- The question of **conflict** will be examined from several angles, and defined in several practical ways. We will analyze the differences and similarities between (among others) status-based, ego-based and issue-based conflicts in the workplace and beyond, and apply the theory of **principled negotiation** to identify and resolve these conflicts.

COURSE COMPETENCIES:

H-2: Institutions and Organizations

Institutions and organizations are an important part of everyday life that change over time in the intensity and nature of their influence. This section emphasizes abilities that will help individuals understand and interact with institutions and organizations.

H-2-X: Can understand principles of effective communication and apply them in organizational settings.*

H-3: Individual Development

Knowledge of self is critical as one strives to function effectively in the world. Self-awareness is an important factor in personal growth and change, and is a prerequisite for understanding and interacting with other people. This section focuses on comprehension of the dynamics of individual behavior and development, independent of and in relationship to others.

H-3-D: Can employ the skills of negotiation, mediation, or interpersonal communication in the resolution of a problem.

1. Identifies the components of a specific interpersonal relationship and describes the problem that exists within that relationship.
2. Applies principles of mediation, negotiation, or interpersonal communication to resolve the problem.
3. Evaluates the effectiveness of the intervention and of the theoretical model underlying it.

Students demonstrate this competence by applying principles of negotiation, mediation, or interpersonal communication to an actual situation. Students need to articulate their reasons for employing a given approach and to evaluate the effectiveness of that approach.

L-7: Collaborative Learning

L-7: Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge, and values that contribute to such learning.

1. Participates in a learning project with others.
2. Applies collaborative learning skills, such as communication skills, skills of group dynamics, etc.
3. Reflects on one's ability to contribute to the collaborative learning process as characterized in at least one model or theory.

Students demonstrate this competence by working with others to develop common understandings around a shared agenda that leads to an assessable outcome. Collaborative learning is characterized by a willingness to explore the ideas and insights of others in an atmosphere of mutual respect, encouragement, and challenge. Essential to this competence is an understanding of the distinctions among collaboration, cooperation, and strategies of group dynamics.

F-X: Can understand systems and models of effective workplace interaction, and create a customized plan for a variety of situations.*

**These are rough drafts of these competence statements, to be refined and developed through discussion between student and instructor to meet the specific needs of the student.*

THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE:

a. Learning Strategies:

Significant examples of communication, conflict identification and problem-solving theory will be presented, but the emphasis of this course will be on applying these theories to the students' own situations. Using small-group discussions, student presentations, role-playing exercises, situational improvisation and weekly journals, we will examine and refine the relationship between communication and conflict resolution skills.

b. Suggested Learning Tools

Texts:

Fisher, Roger and William Ury. *Getting to Yes*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

Handouts:

These include, but are not limited to, readings from the following texts:

Augsberger, David W. *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992.

Cloke, Kenneth and Joan Goldsmith. *Resolving Personal and Organizational Conflict: Stories of Transformation and Forgiveness*. Indianapolis: John Wiley and Sons, 2001.

Edelman, Joel and Mary Beth Crain. *The Tao of Negotiation*. New York: Harper-Business, 1994.

Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point*. New York: Back Bay Books, 2000.

Kegan, Robert and Lisa Laskew Lahey. *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work*. Indianapolis: John Wiley and Sons, 2002.

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Kouzes, James M. and Barry Z. Posner. *Encouraging the Heart*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003

Ury, William. *The Power of a Positive No*. New York: Bantam Books, 2007.

c. Class Policies:

Attendance:

Student attendance is mandatory. See snl.depaul.edu/current/policies.asp#Attending

In this class, 1 absence is allowed.

The 2nd absence will lower your grade one full grade (from A to B).

The 3rd absence will lower your grade another full grade (from B to C).

The 4th absence will result in a failing grade (FX).

Homework:

In this class, all homework must be handed in on time.

Journals must be handed in (hard copy, double spaced, and proofread) on the due date. Only in the case of absence will emailed homework be accepted. It must be emailed before 9:00pm on the due date to be considered on time.

Failure to do so will lower your grade by one third of a grade (from A to A-).

Any journal more than 1 week late will not be accepted, and will be considered missing. This will lower your grade by one full grade (from A to B).

All 7 Journal entries must be handed in with the final paper. They will be returned to you with the final paper.

Incomplete grades:

These are for special circumstances. See snl.depaul.edu/current/policies.asp#Incomplete

Instructors are under no obligation to give Incomplete grades. In order to qualify for an IN, you must have regularly attended class, and you must have completed two thirds of assignments and have a signed copy of the Incomplete Contract form.

Please be aware that receiving an Incomplete does not expunge your class attendance record. It is against SNL policy for a student to attend class meetings of the course for which she has received an Incomplete during a previous quarter.
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DePaul University Incomplete Policy: Undergraduate and graduate students have 2 quarters to complete an Incomplete. At the end of the 2nd quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the Incomplete grade was assigned, remaining Incompletes will automatically convert to F grades. In the case of the Law School Incompletes must be completed by the end of the semester following the one in which the Incomplete was assigned. Ordinarily no Incomplete grade may be completed after the end of the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change Incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the Incomplete must be resolved within the 4 week grace period before final degree certification...Students who feel they may need accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with chronic illnesses should contact the Chronic Illness Initiative to discuss their options and should, of course, also consult the instructor.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of the course, students will have

- A heightened awareness of the elements of communication and conflict
- A deeper understanding of their own communicative processes
- An increased ability to facilitate clear communication and positive outcomes in conflicted situations
- A detailed knowledge of at least one model of negotiation and conflict resolution
- A heightened awareness of the skills, values and practices of negotiation and conflict resolution in a variety of settings
- An increased ability to apply these skills, values and practices in a variety of settings

EVIDENCE STUDENTS WILL SUBMIT:

Students are required, in addition to participating in in-class discussions and presentations, to submit the following:

- A 7-part, competence-specific Reflective Learning Journal

Each weekly entry should be a minimum of 450 words (30 lines; 15 words per line).

The most successful journal entries have demonstrated an understanding of the required reading material, and contained ideas for applying its principles to actual situations.

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This is a suggested (though not required) format for journal entries: Reflect on (a) the classroom exercises and activities and (b) the “writing prompt” extract (or an extract of your choice) from the weekly reading. Apply them to your own experience of conflict identification, management and resolution in or out of the workplace. How, if at all, does this information inform your approach to conflicted situations? Thinking back on previous conflicts and negotiations, how, if at all, would you change your approach? How, if at all, will your future negotiations be informed by the information you are gathering? Use examples.

Please understand that these Journal entries are very important in demonstrating your understanding of the relationship between your understanding of the readings and your demonstration of the Competencies for which you are taking this class.

- A competence-specific Final Paper

You may write 1 paper to address 2 Competencies. If you are writing the paper for 1 Competence, a minimum of 2, 400 words is required. For 2 Competencies, a minimum of 3,600 words is required. Papers must be formatted according to MLA specifications.

You are expected to cite a minimum of 3 authors. These may be the authors whose works are discussed in class (Augsbeger, Drucker, Edelman, Fisher, Ury).

Note: Plagiarism will result in a failing grade.

The DePaul Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: (a) The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else’s. (b) Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one’s own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency. (d) The paraphrasing of another’s work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

For correct citing of sources, consult the MLA Handbook.

- A competence-specific Final Presentation

This is a 5 to 8 minute oral presentation to the class about your final paper.

These assignments will be discussed at regular intervals throughout the course.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1: Introduction

Introduction to the topic
Introduction to the Competencies
Explanation of the assignments (Journal, Final Paper, Final Presentation)

Premise: all communication is relational
Defining “communication”
Defining “relational”

Premise: conflict is caused by the desire for greater intimacy
Defining “conflict”
Defining “intimacy”

Homework:

Read *The Actual Skills of Communication and Conflict Management* (handout)

Read Edelman, *The Tao of Negotiation*, 234-258 (handout)

Journal writing prompt: “Once you’ve defined, as closely as possible, the nature of your relationship, you can then decide what to do about it.”

Week 2: Communication

Discussion of Edelman, 234-258

Small-group discussions and exercises in
Giving and getting criticism
Empathic/reflective listening and congruent talking

Journal (1) due

Homework:

Read Drucker, *Managing Oneself*, Harvard Business Review, 100-109 (handout)

Read Fisher, *Getting to Yes*, 3-39

Journal writing prompt: “Failing to deal with others sensitively as human beings prone to human reactions can be disastrous for a negotiation.”

Week 3: Communication

Positional bargaining
Separating the relationship from the problem

Small-group discussions of Fisher, 3-39

Journal (2) due

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Final Paper/Presentation check-in

Homework:

Read Augsberger, *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures*, 42-72 (handout)

Read Fisher, *Getting to Yes*, 40-80

Journal writing prompts: "In most negotiations there are four major obstacles that inhibit the inventing of an abundance of options: (1) premature judgment; (2) searching for the single answer; (3) the assumption of a fixed pie; and (4) thinking the 'solving their problem is their problem.'" AND/OR "Rather than make things difficult for the other side, you want to confront them with a choice that is as painless as possible."

Weeks 4 & 5: Conflict

Communication, conflict and the desire for positive change

Defining and analyzing conflict, intention and action

Linguistic strategies

"Options for mutual gain": small-group discussions of Fisher, 40-80

Small-group creativity and brainstorming exercises and presentations

"Creative dynamics": small-group discussions of Augsberger, 42-72

Journals (3) and (4) due

Homework:

Read Fisher, *Getting to Yes*, 81-106

Journal writing prompts: "It is the combination of openness to reason with insistence on a solution based on objective criteria that makes principled negotiation so persuasive and so effective at getting the other side to play." AND/OR "...the relative negotiating power of two parties depends primarily upon how attractive to each is the option of not reaching agreement."

Week 6: Conflict, Compromise and Creativity

Seeking objective criteria: small-group discussions of Fisher, 81-94

The importance of the BATNA: small-group discussions of Fisher, 97-106

Journal (5) due

Final Paper/Presentation check-in

Homework:

Read Fisher, *Getting to Yes*, 107-143

Read Augsberger, *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures*, 229-258 (handout)

Journal writing prompts: “...you can usually get the other side to play the game of principled negotiation with you, even if at first they appear unwilling.” AND/OR “Don’t be a victim.”

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Week 7: Troubleshooting

“Negotiation jujitsu” and “Taming the hard bargainer”

Small-group discussions of Fisher, 107-143

Journal (6) due

Homework:

Read Fisher, *Getting to Yes*, 147-187

Read Ury, *The Power of a Positive No*, 27-49 (handout)

Journal writing prompt: “Our behavior should be designed to model and encourage the behavior we would prefer and to avoid any reward for the behavior we dislike, both without compromising our substantive interests.”

Week 8: Ten questions about Principled Negotiation

Negotiate/debate/argue/quarrel

Discussion of Fisher, 147-187

Journal (7) due

Week 9: Wrap-up and review of reading materials

Weeks 10 & 11: Student final presentations

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT:

Assessment of student competence will be based on

- Attendance and intelligent, informed classroom participation 30%
- Journal 30%
- Final Presentation 10%
- Final Paper 30%

Written work will be evaluated as follows:

A Work of high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; reflects a clearly identifiable thesis and argument that demonstrates cogent and creative development and support of ideas.

B Work of good quality; reflects clearly organized and comprehensive understanding of issues at hand; presents substantive thesis and argument with evident development and support of ideas.

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C Work that minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas but develops argument in superficial or simplistic manner; may only address part of the assignment or be otherwise incomplete.

D Work of poor quality that does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment; demonstrates poor organization of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treatment of material is superficial/simplistic; may indicate that student has not read assignments thoroughly.

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others, and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal actions. Please refer to your Student Handbook for further details.