

**CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT – LAW 5450 – SPRING 2021**  
**COURSE INFORMATION AND SYLLABUS**

Prof. Christina Wells  
321 Hulston Hall  
TR 2-3:15 Rm 4/Async (See Below for Details)

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**COURSE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

This course explores the nature and sources of conflict. At the end of it, students should be able to:

- Understand the nature and sources of conflict, strategies and tactics involved in conflicts, the conditions under which conflicts escalate, how to effectively manage conflict, and the effect of group dynamics or third-parties on conflict;
- Apply the above knowledge to specific conflicts with which they are presented;
- Use this knowledge in actual negotiations or conflict situations;
- Advise others as to these concepts associated with conflict and conflict management.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

**Mayer, Bernard, *Staying with Conflict: A Strategic Approach to Ongoing Disputes.*** (Jossey-Bass, 2009). ISBN 978-0-7879-9729-8. (hereinafter “M”)

- There are also articles and book chapters posted or linked to on the CANVAS site for the course. Read them on dates as indicated in the syllabus below.
  - **Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*,** (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., McGraw Hill, 2004). ISBN 978-0-07-285535-7. (hereinafter “P&K”)
    - This book is currently out of print so I have put relevant excerpts on the Canvas site. We will read from this nearly every week so please make sure you access them.
  - Brown, J., *Deeply Contacting the Inner World of Another: Practicing Empathy in Values-Based Negotiation Roleplays*, 39 Wash. U.J.L. & Pol’y 189 (2012) (Brown, “Empathy”)
  - Itzchakov, G. & Kluger, A., *The Power of Listening in Helping People Change*, Harv. Bus. Rev., May 17, 2018 (Itzchakov & Kluger “Power of Listening”)
  - Seppala, E. & Stevenson, J., *In A Difficult Conversation, Listen More than You Talk*, Harv. Bus. Rev., Feb. 9, 2017 (Seppala & Stevenson “Listening”)
  - Heaney, K., *The Apology Critics Who Want to Teach You How to Say You’re Sorry*, The Cut, June 8, 2017
  - Wong, K., *No You Don’t Have to Stop Apologizing*, N.Y. Times, April 22, 2019
  - Grant, A., *How Not To Apologize in Quarantine*, N.Y. Times, May 8, 2020

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:**

Your grade will be based on the following:

- Attendance/Class Discussion (10%)
- Discussion Forum/Pin Boards (20%)

- Short Reflection Papers (30%)
- Final Essay (40%)

**Attendance and Class Discussion (10%):** The success of this course depends upon your preparation, attendance and participation in all classes. However, I am not going to set a rigid attendance policy. If students miss classes on a routine basis or if they fail to participate in the simulations, I reserve the right to remove them from the class or adjust their participation grade accordingly. I will warn students prior to their possible removal from class and when their absences are becoming excessive.

**Discussion Forums, Pin Boards Other Small Papers (20%):** Several modules have online discussion or pin boards regarding that week's readings. A discussion board entails a prompt posted by the professor to which students must respond. The discussion boards also require responses to other student's posts. A pin board requires students to find and post examples that illustrate certain conflict scenarios as requested in the instructor's prompt. These also require students to comment on other students' posts. I will hand out more detailed criteria regarding the content and grading criteria for postings in a separate memo. Discussion boards and pinboards are together worth 20 percent of your grade.

**Reflection Papers (30%):** There are three simulations involved in the class. Each will involve a short reflection paper. I will deliver instructions regarding the scenarios to you early in the semester. One simulation scenario/simulation runs through the entire class and may have a few additional small assignments. The reflection papers associated with the simulations are worth 40 percent of your grade.

**Final Essay (40%):** For your final project you will analyze a recent public conflict (one from the last few years). Your analysis must describe how you would apply insights and strategies from this class to manage the conflict. I'm happy to discuss potential topics, scope, etc., as you decide on your paper topic. Your paper should be 12-15 pages, typed, double-spaced (excluding cover page). Final essays are **due by May 14, 2021 at 11:59 pm**. More technical details about the papers will follow.

### **CLASS MEETINGS AND OFFICE HOURS:**

This class is a "hybrid" class. In this instance, the course meets partly asynchronously and partly during the regularly scheduled class time.

- For the Tuesday class, we will NOT meet in class. Instead, I will post slides and the week's readings for you so that you can do them during this time. There will often be a short activity for that class as well.
- For the Thursday class, we will meet to discuss and apply the readings for the week.
  - Often there will be an in-class exercise associated with the readings, such as a negotiation related to the ongoing simulation, or an exercise illustrating power or escalation, etc.
  - At the **beginning** of the semester **we will meet via Zoom rather than face-to-face on Thursdays** until the COVID 19 situation calms down.

Because this class is partly asynchronous and meets online at the beginning of the semester, I do not have formal office hours for meeting with students. I am happy to schedule any appointment to meet with you at your request. You can always reach me at the phone number or email addresses above.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ACTIVITIES

<b>Module/Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assigned Reading/Activities</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>1/19 1/21</b>	<b>Introduction to Conflict</b>	<b>P&amp;K Ch. 1 pp. 1-13 M Ch. 1, pp. 1-18</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload Visual Representation of Conflict by 1/19</li> <li>• 1/21 Class - Discuss Conflict Visuals</li> <li>• Distribute Simulation #1 Instructions for Next Week's Assignment &amp; Paper</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>1/26 1/28</b>	<b>Nature and Sources of Conflict</b>	<b>P&amp;K Ch. 2 pp. 15-36,</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simulation Paper # 1 Due 1/28</li> <li>• 1/28 Class – Review Papers and Readings</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>2/2 2/4</b>	<b>Conflict Responses – Strategies &amp; Intro to Enduring Conflict</b>	<b>P&amp;K Ch. 3 pp. 37-62, M Ch. 2, pp. 19-53</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict Response Self-Assessment Due 2/2</li> <li>• Pinboard re Cultural Effects on Conflict Due 2/2</li> <li>• 2/4 Class - In-Class Exercise</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>2/9 2/11</b>	<b>Conflict Responses –Tactics (Contending and Avoidance)</b>	<b>P&amp;K Ch. 4 pp. 63-84 M Ch. 3 pp. 55-86</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pin Board on Contentious Tactics Due 2/9</li> <li>• 2/11 Class - In-Class Exercise re Sim. #1</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>2/16 2/18</b>	<b>Conflict &amp; Escalation</b>	<b>P&amp;K Ch. 5-6 pp. 87-118</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion Board Due 2/16</li> <li>• 2/18 Class - In-Class Exercise</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	<b>2/23 2/25</b>	<b>Conflict &amp; Escalation</b>	<b>P&amp;K Ch. 7-8, 119-168</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2/25 - In Class Discussion</li> </ul>

<b>7</b>	<b>3/2 3/4</b>	<b>Conflict Narratives</b>	<b>M Ch. 4, 5 and 8 pp. 87-118</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafting Exercise re Conflict Narratives in Sim. #1 Due 3/2</li> <li>• In Class Exercise on 3/4</li> <li>• Handout Simulation Roleplays for Next Week</li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	<b>3/9 3/11</b>	<b>Simulation # 2 – 5 Way Negotiation</b>	1.5 Hour Out-of- Class Negotiations - Schedule At Your Convenience Before 3/11
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection Papers Due 3/11</li> <li>• 3/11 Class: In-Class Discussion of Simulations</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>		<b>Conflict and Communication</b>	<b>M Ch. 5&amp;8 pp. 119-50, 215-26,</b> <b>Brown “Empathy” Article</b> <b>Itzchakov &amp; Kluger “Power of Listening” article</b> <b>Seppala &amp; Stevenson “Listening” article</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Class Discussion</li> </ul>
<b>10</b>	<b>3/23 3/25</b>	<b>Power and Conflict</b>	<b>M Ch. 6 pp. 151-180</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3/25 class - In-Class Exercise</li> </ul>
	<b>3/30 4/1</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
<b>11</b>	<b>4/6 4/8</b>	<b>De-Escalation</b>	<b>P&amp;K Ch. 9 pp. 171-188</b> <b>Heaney, Wong &amp; Grant</b> <b>“Apology” articles</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pinboard re Apologies due 4/6</li> <li>• 4/8 class – In Class Discussion</li> </ul>
<b>12</b>	<b>4/13 4/15</b>	<b>Problem-Solving</b>	<b>P&amp;K Ch. 10 pp. 189-225</b> <b>M Ch. 7 pp. 181-206</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4/15 Class - In-Class Exercise re Sim # 1</li> </ul>
<b>13</b>	<b>4/20 4/22</b>	<b>Third-party Interventions</b>	<b>P&amp;K Ch. 11 pp. 226-258</b> <b>M Ch. 9 pp. 237-259</b> <b>ANGRY PUBLIC</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4/22 Class – In class Discussion</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand Out Roles for Mediations</li> </ul>
<b>14</b>	<b>4/27</b> <b>4/29</b>	<b>Simulation #3 - Mediation</b>	2 Hour Out of Class Mediations – schedule at your convenience before 4/29
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection Papers Due 3/11</li> <li>• 4/29 Class: In-Class Discussion of Simulations</li> </ul>
<b>Final Project Due by <b>MAY 14</b> at 11:59 pm. This is the last day of final exams.</b>			

## **POLICIES:**

**Covid Syllabus Statement:** Although this course is mostly asynchronous and online, some of you are still participating in courses on campus in other ways or are accessing your computers on campus. Accordingly, you may be in campus buildings, where you should pay attention to safety. MU cares about the health and safety of its students, faculty, and staff. To provide safe, high-quality education amid COVID-19, the campus is following several specific campus policies in accordance with the advice of the Center for Disease Control and Boone County health authorities. You can find current university expectations regarding student safety activities at <https://renewal.missouri.edu/safety-expectations/>.

**Communication, Accommodation, and Pivot:** All course materials necessary for completion of the course will be available on CANVAS, other than the textbook, which is easily obtained via online purchase. After the first week or so, when I may use MYZOU, I will communicate with you through your email on CANVAS. All simulation materials that are not posted on CANVAS (and there will be some that are secret) will be distributed via these emails. You may always send me an email at [wellsc@missouri.edu](mailto:wellsc@missouri.edu) either directly or through CANVAS to discuss something through email or to schedule an online meeting.

I recognize that while the course is designed to give students' maximum flexibility, given the ongoing pandemic and generally unforeseeable events, students may find that they are not in a position to complete work as required. If you find that you are in such a situation, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss best to handle your circumstances.

**Mental Health:** The University of Missouri is committed to supporting student well-being through an integrated network of care, with a wide range of services to help students succeed. The MU Counseling Center offers professional mental health care and can help you find the best approach to treatment based on your needs. Call to make an appointment at 573-882-6601. Any student in crisis may call or go to the MU Counseling Center between 8:00 – 5:00 M-F. After hours phone support is available at 573-882-6601.

Visit <https://wellbeing.missouri.edu> to take an online mental health screening, find out about workshops and resources that can help you thrive, or learn how to support a friend. Download Sanvello, a phone app that teaches skills and strategies to help you maintain good mental health. Log in with your Mizzou e-mail to unlock all the tools available through Sanvello at no cost to you.

**Academic Honesty:** Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of the School of Law. All members of the law school community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given

to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The law school community regards breaches of the School of Law's Honor Code as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. I will follow university procedures on cases of academic dishonesty; in such cases it may be necessary not only to report such dishonesty to the Associate Dean but also to assign a failing grade for the assignment or even the entire course. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or whether something might be seen as a form of cheating, feel free to consult me.

**Statement for ADA-Students with Disabilities:** If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me and/or the Associate Dean know as soon as possible. If disability related accommodations are necessary please register with the Office of Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 882-4696 and then notify the Associate Dean of the Law School (Dean David Mitchell) of your eligibility for reasonable accommodation. For other resources for students with disabilities, click on "Students With Disabilities" under the Support and Policies Tab on this Canvas Site

**Audio/Visual Recordings in the Classroom:** Students may not record classes except in cases of special need with the instructor's express permission. To foster a safe environment for learning, the university prohibits redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course without the express permission of the instructor and any students who are recorded. In accordance with Executive Order #38, the unauthorized distribution of such materials is a violation of academic standards and may violate copyright laws and/or privacy rights. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with the provisions of Section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri.

**Statement of Intellectual Pluralism:** The University and this instructor welcome intellectual diversity and respect student rights. I encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression in this course. Student performance will be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students who have questions concerning the quality of instruction in this class may address concerns to either the Dean of the Law School or the Director of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (<http://osrr.missouri.edu>). All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor at the end of this course.