

CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT – LAW 6932 – Fall 2021
COURSE INFORMATION AND SYLLABUS

Prof. Christina Wells
321 Hulston Hall
Online Course

Phone: 573-882-8375
E-mail: welisc@missouri.edu

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:

Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim, **Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement**, (3rd ed., McGraw Hill, 2004). ISBN 978-0-07-285535-7. (hereinafter “P&K”)

- This book recently went out of print. I have “recommended” it as a text because I will assign readings out of it. If you can find it for a reasonable price, I highly recommend buying it as it is really the “gold standard” of textbooks. But I will also find a way to make relevant excerpts available to the class. We will read from this book nearly every week so please make sure you have access to these readings one way or the other.

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 posted or linked to on the CANVAS site for the course. Read them on dates as indicated in the syllabus below.

- Mayer, B., *Culture and Conflict*, in **The Dynamics of Conflict** 92-120 (2012)
- 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:

- Discussion Forum/Pin Boards (33%)
- Short Papers (33%)
- Final Project (34%)

Discussion Forums and Pin Boards (33%): Each module there are online discussion boards or pinboards regarding the reading materials for that week. A *discussion board* will entail a question prompt posted by the professor to which students must respond. The discussion boards will also require responses to other student's posts. A *pinboard* 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 30 percent of your grade.

Group Work, Reflection Papers, Self-Assessments (33%): Much of the class involves a scenario/simulation that runs through the entire class. I will deliver instructions regarding that scenario to you early in the semester. There are various assignments regarding this simulation, including analytic papers, drafting requirements completed (in part) with other class members, short negotiations with reflection papers, etc. There are occasional reflection papers and self-assessments independent of this simulation as well. I will hand out relevant criteria for these projects as they arise. All of this material is worth 30 percent of your grade.

Final Project (34%): 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 December 6, 2021 at 11:59 pm**. More technical details about the papers will follow.

OFFICE HOURS:

Because this class meets online, I do not have formal office hours for meeting with students. I will schedule at least one meeting with each of you at the beginning of the semester and another as the semester progresses. I am also 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

Module	Dates	Topic	Assigned Reading/Activities
1	8/23-8/29	Introduction to Conflict	P&K Ch. 1 pp. 1-13 M Ch. 1, pp. 1-18
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload Introduction of Yourself • Upload Visual Representation of Conflict As You See It
2	8/29-9/5	Nature and Sources of Conflict	P&K Ch. 2 pp. 15-36, M Ch. 2, pp. 19-53
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive Conflict Scenario (Jaime/Pat) and Instructions • Write/Upload Short Analytic Paper Re Scenario
3	9/5-9/18	Conflict Responses – Strategies and Tactics	P&K Ch. 3 & 4 pp. 37-55, 63-84 M, Dynamics, Ch. 4 “Culture and Conflict” M Ch. 3 pp. 55-86
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict Response Self-Assessment • Discussion Board re Conflict Strategies & Tactics Involved in Jaime/Pat Conflict Scenario • Pinboard re Cultural Influence on Conflict
4	9/19-10/2	Conflict & Escalation	P&K Ch. 5-8 pp. 87-168
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict Scenario – Letter to a Friend • Pin Board - Escalation In Real Life • Discussion Board – Escalation Models in Jaime/Pat Conflict
5	10/3-10/16	Conflict and Communication	M Ch. 4, 5 and 8 pp. 87-150, 215-26 Brown “Empathy” Article Itzchakov & Kluger “Power of Listening” article Seppala & Stevenson “Listening” article
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Paper - Analyzing Letter to A Friend • Discussion Board – Dysfunctional Communication
6	10/17-10/30	Power and Conflict	M Ch. 6 pp. 151-180
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the movie “<i>Selma</i>” (or student choice) – write reflection

			paper on various uses of power and effectiveness
7	10/31-11/13	De-Escalation, Problem Solving and Dealing with Enduring Conflicts	P&K Ch. 9 & 10 pp. 171-225 M Ch. 7 pp. 181-206 Heaney, Wong & Grant "Apology" articles
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Group Work & Paper – students negotiate using de-escalation and problem-solving– short paper describing results • Pinboard re Apologies
8	11/14-11/21	Third-party Interventions	P&K Ch. 11 pp. 226-258 M Ch. 9 pp. 237-259
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board – intervention tools for various scenarios
Final Project Due by December 6, 2021 at 11:59 pm. This is stop day before final exams.			

POLICIES:

Covid Syllabus Statement: Although this course is 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: Because this class is online, class attendance is not required. However, the class is asynchronous rather than self-paced, meaning that there are due dates within the semester for various projects. Success in this course thus requires timely participation in the course modules. Nevertheless, 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.

All course materials necessary for completion of the course will be available on CANVAS, other than the two textbooks, which are easily obtained via online purchase. You may always send me an email at schmitzaj@missouri.edu to schedule an online meeting.

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.