

ST. EDWARD'S UNIVERSITY

**SYLLABUS
P-COMM 4341
CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN ORGANIZATIONS
Spring 2005**

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Office Hours: I'll be available before and after class and by appointment

Required Reading: Hocker, Joyce & William Wilmot, Interpersonal Conflict, Sixth Edition.

Course Packet that includes various readings. This will be available on Blackboard through St. Ed's website.

This syllabus is representative of the syllabi for this course. Contents may vary somewhat from semester to semester.

Course Description:

This course will present theories of conflict and conflict resolution with an emphasis on interpersonal and group conflict in formal organizations. In particular, the course will emphasize how communication and negotiation are critical aspects of conflict resolution and address techniques which relevant research shows are most effective in reducing absenteeism, turnover, and work-related stress in formal organizations.

Conflict occurs in all organizations and all levels of organizations. Certain communication skills can serve to minimize, work through and facilitate understanding of the sources of disagreements. Too often, conflicts escalate beyond the abilities of those involved to disentangle the "people from the problems" and to find collaborative solutions.

This class is extremely participatory. Certain communication skills will be taught and practiced each week. You will receive ongoing feedback from your instructor, as well as input from your classmates. The classroom setting should serve to encourage you to take risks in practicing these skills.

Objectives:

- Be able to identify one's own predominant conflict management style and the range of styles used by others, and specify conditions under which each style is appropriate

- Demonstrate knowledge and effective use of communication skills necessary to effectively manage conflict within organizations
- Identify and explain different techniques for resolving conflicts in organizations and under which circumstances varying methods would be used
- Identify barriers to effective communications and effective, interest-based outcomes
- Demonstrate familiarity with principles of interest-based negotiation
- Demonstrate familiarity with the major ethical issues surrounding the uses of conflict resolution techniques in organizational settings
- Recognize conflicts and facilitate solutions found in managing the diversity of modern organizations

Course Expectations:

1. Students are expected to attend every class and be ready to begin at 6:50p.m.
2. Students are expected to turn in work on time. In case of emergent situations, the student should discuss the late assignment with instructor prior to due date. Late assignments will not receive full credit: a 10% penalty will be assessed. Assignments more than 7 days late will not be accepted at all, except for exceptional situations.
3. Incompletes are granted only in extreme circumstances and when at least 75% of the work has been completed.
4. The reading material should be read prior to class.
5. Email correspondence is integral to this course and most courses at St. Edward's. An account in your name is set up each semester you have registered. It is your responsibility to access this account for important information.
6. Attendance Policy: Due to the extremely limited amount of class time, attendance is required. Each student may miss one class for any reason. Any more absences will result in losing the class participation points for that class. Excused absences are granted in the following cases: Doctor's note, a significant family emergency (funerals, hospitalizations). If an absence is in question, please contact the instructor to discuss it.

Academic Integrity

The St. Edward's University *Undergraduate Bulletin* and the *Student Handbook* state that a student who is dishonest in any work may receive the maximum penalty of a mark of F for that course. Withdrawal from a course is not allowed when an F in the course for academic dishonesty has been imposed. Students caught committing academic dishonesty in this course will be subject to the full range of penalties as described in the *Undergraduate Bulletin* and in the *Student Handbook*."

Special Circumstances

If you have a medical, learning, or psychiatric disability and require accommodations in this class, please let the instructor know early in the semester or as soon as you are eligible for accommodations. You will first need to present documentation of your disability to the Disability Coordinator located in Academic Planning and Support on the first floor of Moody Hall. In addition, APS provides tutors

to assist you with study techniques and master of course content. Call 448-8660 for an appointment.

Computer Competencies

All Undergraduate and New College students who entered St. Edward's University under the Fall 1999 catalog and later are required to satisfy the Computer Competency Requirement (CCR). The CCR modules comprise Introduction to Computers, Introduction to Email, Introduction to Netscape and the World Wide Web, Basic Library Research, Introduction to Word Processing, and Introduction to Spreadsheets. Students must satisfactorily complete a web-based test over each module in order to fulfill this requirement. For more information about the Computer Competency Requirement, go to: www.stedwards.edu/it_dept/competency or call 464-8816.

Schedule

Note: Some reading assignments may have the notation (Skim.) In these cases, you are not required to read the text thoroughly, however, you should have read all information prior to class. The most important points will be discussed in class. This syllabus may be changed at the discretion of the instructor.

Class 1, January 26

Introduction- Class Overview

"Paradise Lost"

Historical aspects of conflict and humankind

Communication Skills – Neutral Language
Effective Listening

Assignments: Written Assignment #1 (Due Wednesday, February 2)
 READ: (from course packet)
 "Four Skills of Reflective Listening" (*Bolton*)

Wilmot & Hocker:

Chapter 1(Skim) "Perspectives on Conflict"

Chapter 2 "The Nature of Conflict"

Class 2, February 2

"Don Quixote - To Slay a Dragon"

The truth on perspectives
Picasso's artistic representation

Communication Skills – Questioning Techniques

Assignments:

Read from packet "*Three Approaches to Solving Disputes*"
From *Wilmot & Hocker*

Chapter 3 “Interests and Goals”
Chapter 8 (Skim) “Moderating Your Conflicts”

Class 3, February 9

“You Don’t Make Peace With Your Friends”, Yitzhak Rabin

What is really at stake?

Communication Skills – Positions and Interests

Assignments: Written Assignment #2 – Due Wednesday, the 16th
Read: (from course packet)
“Developing Three-Part Assertion Messages”, Bolton
Wilmot and Hocker
Chapter 4 “Power: “The Structure of Conflict”

Class 4, February 16

“Winning Isn’t Everything, It’s the Only Thing”, Vince Lombardi

Power and how it affects conflicts

Communication Skills – 3-Part Messages
Brainstorming

Assignments: Read: *Wilmot and Hocker*
Chapter 5 “Styles and Tactics”
Chapter 6 “Assessing Conflicts”

Class 5, February 23rd

“Et Tu, Brute”, Julius Caesar

Analysis of the larger conflict situation

Communication Skills – Conflict Resolution Assessment
Interest-Based Negotiation

Assignment: Read: *Wilmot and Hocker*
Chapter 7 “Negotiating for Mutual Gains”
Chapter 9 “Third-Party Intervention”

Take home Written Final will be given out at this class. It is due at the beginning of the last class, February 26th.

Class 6, March 2

“The Wisdom of Solomon”

Creating Win-Win situations
Managing Workforce Diversity

Communication Skills – Conflict Resolution Methods

Assignment: Read: *Wilmot & Hocker*
Chapter 10(skim) “Transcending Transgression:
Forgiveness And Reconciliation

Class 7, March 9

“Return of the Prodigal Son”, by Rembrandt

The end? Blood, sweat and tears

Final Oral Assessment – This will be given in class

Grading

Class Participation: 125 points (25%)
Each student will be awarded 18 points per class for active participation

Written Assignments: 125 points (25%)
There are 2 papers; the 1st is worth 50 points and the 2nd is 75.

Written Final: 150 points (30%)
This will be a take- home final

Oral Final: 100 points (20%)
This assessment will cover all the communication skills learned in the course

Due Dates

Written Assignment #1: Wednesday, February 2nd

Written Assignment #2: Wednesday, February 16th

Final Exam: Wednesday, March 9th

When handing in assignments, please bring a hard copy to class. If you are unable to attend class that evening, I will accept the assignment sent via email. However, I will send you an email confirming receipt of the assignment. If you do not receive an email confirmation from me, do not consider your assignment turned in.