Intergroup Dynamics and Conflict Management

SPRING SEMESTER 2016 COURSE SYLLABUS

Preliminary Syllabus 10/31/15

Instructor: Professor Russ Watts
ww39@georgetown.edu

Offered:

- Saturday, January 16th, 10am – 12noon (2hrs)
  (Blackboard webinar. Login information to follow)

- Saturday & Sunday, March 19th – 20th, 10am-6pm (16hrs)
  (26th at the 640 Massachusetts Ave Campus and 27th at the main GU Georgetown Campus)

- Saturday & Sunday, April 2nd & 3rd
  Departing Georgetown University Main Campus (24hrs)
  at 8am Saturday, returning by 8pm on Sunday. We will be spending the weekend in Ohiopyle, PA or in the DC metro area depending on class size and weather. Transportation is included.

- Saturday April 23rd, 10am – 12noon (2hrs)
  (Blackboard webinar. Login information to follow)

COURSE CONTENT

Overview:
Managing interpersonal and intergroup conflict is a critical leadership challenge. Frameworks to understand the sources and dynamics of simple and multilevel conflict, including trust and distrust dynamics, will be the focus of this course. The course will focus on interpersonal and organizational strategies for identifying and managing intergroup conflict (e.g. mediation, facilitation).

Learning Objectives:
After completing this course, students should be able to:
1. Identify the five dangerous beliefs that propel groups towards conflict.
2. Describe what conflict resolution within their organization looks like. Identify what work behaviors are destructive. See why people do the things they do based on equity, justice and just being human.
3. Understand your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to conflict. How to manage conflict in organizations by reducing destructive responses. Create a deeper understanding of self and others in response to conflict. (Becoming a Conflict Competent Leader)

4. Identify what drives and directs conflict; perception, actions, values, goals and interests and how.

5. Know what the difference is between interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup and inter-organizational conflicts are.

6. Create a list of examples on how unresolved conflict can cause hostility, decreased quality of work, waste, absenteeism, and higher rates of turnover.

7. Identify how conflicts are helpful for organizations. Learn techniques to deal with E-Conflict. (Ch 1 & 6. “Goliaths”)

8. Identify how conflicts are destructive with current examples that can be both personal and business related.

9. Define how a leader’s poor communication style can lead to misunderstandings. (Ch 7-8 “Trust”)

10. Understand how trust is an organization’s equity, how to invest to create more social capital and alignment. (Ch 2-4, “Trust”)

11. Create a solid definition of what it means to be a trusted leader. (Ch 12 “Trust”)

12. Understand the principles of mediation and how an organization can use them effectively.

13. Appreciate and learn from the complexities and compromise of outdoor group activities and the leadership lessons learned from doing them.

Required Readings:


Instructor: Russ Watts  
Course: Intergroup Dynamics and Conflict Management  
Spring 2016  


**Supplemental Readings:**


**GRADING SCALE**
- Undergraduate course grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, & F.
  
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
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**COURSE GRADE**

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<tr>
<td>4 Journal Entries</td>
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<td>Reflection Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Journal Entries:
- The **first journal entry** will be a minimum of four pages and a maximum of six pages. The entry will discuss the Robert Sutton’s book: The No Asshole Rule. Reflect on each of the 7 chapters with a personal story or anecdote.

- The **second journal entry** will be a minimum of three pages and a maximum of five pages. The entry will discuss the following questions: How can a leader’s poor communication style lead to misunderstandings? Why is trust an organization’s equity, and how to invest to create more social capital and alignment? How can a leader create a solid definition of what it means to be a trusted leader? (“Trust”)

- The **third journal entry** will be a minimum of three pages and a maximum of five pages. The entry will discuss the following questions: What are your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to conflict? How can you manage conflict in organizations by reducing destructive responses? How can you create a deeper understanding of self and others in response to conflict? (“Becoming a Conflict Competent Leader”)

- The **fourth journal entry** will be a minimum of three pages and a maximum of five pages. The entry will discuss the following questions: What does conflict resolution within your organization looks like? What work behaviors are destructive? Explain why people do the things they do based on equity, justice and just being human. (“Bad Apples” Ch. 1-3) What lessons did you learn about conflict during the transportation, river rafting, community meals, etc. from our weekend together?

Reflection Paper:
The **reflection paper** should be at least seven pages in length. A minimum of three sources should be used (in addition to the assigned readings which also should be used), and a Works Cited page must be included. The following questions should be answered: How is communication at the core of workplace conflict? How can listening and compromise serve you as a leader? Create a realistic and strategic plan to manage conflict in your present work/life situation. Explain some of your strengths and weaknesses and how various techniques found in the supplemental readings can help you overcome your weaknesses and at the same time build trust. Identify what they are and find techniques and tools to mindfully alter some of the negative consequences.
Group Project:
For the group project (2-3 people/group) students will analyze one of the supplemental readings. Students will create a 10 minute creative presentation (theatre/skit, panel discussion, movie, etc.) that covers the main elements of this book. The group will also facilitate a 5-15 minute Q & A following the presentation.

Class Participation:
Class participation is an essential part of the learning process in this course. Students will be evaluated on their contributions and participation in activities and discussions. Students will spend time both in the classroom and outdoors; their engagement, curiosity, and desire to learn in both environments will be considered. Positive contributions may be similar to one of the following:
- Offer a unique and relevant insight to an issue or situation;
- Generate discussion with a meaningful and honest appreciation of the concept, experience, or prior comment; and
- Include references to assigned readings.

Late Work Policy:
If students don’t have their assignment printed out or turned in by the start of the class meeting (or assigned deadline), half of a full letter grade will be subtracted from their assignment grade. If their assignment is a day late, a full letter grade will be subtracted from their assignment grade. If their assignment is one week late, two full letter grades will be subtracted from their assignment grade (two weeks late, 3 full letter grades; three weeks late, 4 full letter grades). No assignments will be accepted three weeks post assignment due date.

Attendance Policy:
Students’ attendance will affect their participation grade and overall learning. Additionally, more than one absence (longer than 2 hours) will be grounds for failure in this course.
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Spring 2016  

Class Calendar  
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Review Supplemental readings  
Journal 1 due  
Journal 2 due  
Journal 3 due  
Group Project due  
Journal 4 due  
Reflection Paper due  
January 16th  
January 27th (Email to Prof. Watts AND send to Blackboard Assignment page)  
February 24th (Email to Prof. Watts AND send to Blackboard Assignment page)  
March 16th (Email to Prof. Watts AND send to Blackboard Assignment page)  
April 2nd on weekend trip  
April 20th (Email to Prof. Watts AND send to Blackboard Assignment page)  
April 27th (Email to Prof. Watts AND send to Blackboard Assignment page)  

Students with Disabilities Policy  
-Students with documented disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Some accommodations might include note taker, books on tape, extended time on tests, and interpreting services among others. Students must present Professor Russ Watts with an official letter from the Academic Resource Center listing the exact accommodations needed.  
-Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (Leavey Center, Suite 335; 202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm) before the start of classes to allow their office time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended,
you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

Georgetown Honor System
-We expect all students within SCS to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred.
-Submitting materials in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge: *In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System; to be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

Classroom and Outdoor Etiquette
-Students should turn off all cell phones, pagers, or other communication devices while in class and outdoors. No communicating via computer with others: no emailing, chatting, instant messaging, etc. Class discussions should be respectful and considerate of others’ views and opinions.

Policy Accommodating Students’ Religious Observances
-Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes. The Office of the Provost, in consultation with Campus Ministry and the Registrar, will publish, before classes begin for a given term, a list of major religious holidays likely to affect Georgetown students. The Provost and the Main Campus Executive Faculty encourage faculty to accommodate students whose bona fide religious observances in other ways impede normal participation in a course. Students who cannot be accommodated should discuss the matter with the Associate Dean for the B.A.L.S. program.
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University Resources  
- Georgetown University Writing Center (Lauinger Library, 217A; 202-687-4246; http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/)  
- Academic Resource Center (Leavry Center, Suite 335; 202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; http://ldss/georgetown.edu/)  
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services (One Darnall Hall; 202-687-6985; http://caps.georgetown.edu/)

Instructional Continuity  
During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university’s Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means such as online videoconferencing; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings.  
The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

*This document is subject to revision. Last revised on 10/31/15.