

COMM/DISPUT/SOC 390: Conflict Management

Fall 2015

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Boise State University

TEXTBOOK:

McCorkle, S., & Reese, M. (2010). *Personal conflict management*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

COURSE PURPOSE, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES:

This course will include the examination of the causes of conflict, conflict management theory, and conflict management techniques applied in interpersonal, intergroup, organizational, and community settings. Discussion and skill development through experiential learning will focus on such conflict management techniques as interpersonal management, mediation, arbitration, negotiation, and reconciliation.

Conflict Management 390 examines conflict between individuals. It blends theory and practice focusing upon the causes and dynamics of interpersonal conflict, as well as upon the tactics individuals may choose to manage conflict.

At the end of the semester, students will understand the **following general principles of interpersonal conflict:**

1. Conflict communicative processes
2. Conflict management theoretical perspectives
3. Causes of conflict
4. Variables and nonverbal dynamics of interpersonal conflict
5. Conflict analysis

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Quizzes are true-false essay (a true false question that you are encouraged to provide facts about the concept in the question or explain why you think the statement is true or false), essay questions, and/or multiple choice.

Individual or Personal Cases are one or two page (single spaced with a double space between paragraphs) descriptions of an interpersonal conflict that the writer(you) *personally* experienced (the case is about an interpersonal conflict you were/are “in” rather than a conflict in which you were not a party or one that you make up). One of the two personal cases you submit will be the subject of the personal case analysis. There are no citations required for a personal case as you are writing about your personal experience. Be sure and give your personal case a title for later reference for your personal case analysis.

Mini-Case Analyses are one (minimum) to two page (single spaced with a double space between paragraphs) analysis papers about a short conflict case. In the analysis paper, the

student will follow this organizational format:

- (1) A brief introduction that raises interest in the general topic (often you write this 1-2 sentence introduction last to avoid writer's block). It is not about the case study.
- (2) A statement of purpose for the essay that names the concept from a chapter that you believe best explains what is occurring in the case. The concept must have been discussed in a class session before it can be used. Some cases are from later chapters and concepts from those concurrent chapters may not be used unless previously discussed in a class session.
- (3) Analyze/argue how one concept of conflict management from the textbook helps to explain the case.

A basic unit of analysis has three parts:

- Facts or statements from the case (cited to the case).
- A name and definition of one concept from the text that you believe explains the case facts (cite it to the textbook).
- An explanation of how the concept sheds light on the case (your thoughts that tie everything together).

(4) A brief summary of what was accomplished in the paper. This would be your conclusion to the analysis.

Reminder: Analysis does **not** include offering a solution or trying to figure out a way to make a different outcome to the conflict. Nor is it an evaluation of a party's behavior, or speculation about different outcomes. For purposes of these analysis papers, analysis is how the concept you have chosen explains the interpersonal conflict that you are analyzing.

There will be 8 topical opportunities for mini-cases; you will write on 3. Each topic expires on its due date. **Bring 2 copies of the mini-case analysis to class on the day assigned as indicated* on the day plan class schedule.** One copy will be given to the instructor at the beginning of class; the other will be used during class. If only one copy is brought to class, a deduction may be taken from your score. If you arrive late to class on a mini-case day, points "may" be deducted at the instructor's discretion. Because you have many opportunities to write mini-cases, no late papers will be accepted for any reason.

Term Personal Case Analysis is an analysis using the same format as the mini-case analyses for one of the two personal cases you wrote and submitted. It is due at the week of the final.

Cross Cultural Conflict Discussion: A partner to participate with you will be selected during an early class session. You and your partner will present a 5-6 minute PowerPoint/public speaking presentation about the cultural differences between the two countries that you have been assigned, especially how it applies to interpersonal conflict. . You will examine the fundamental cultures of each country including, but not limited to their cultural view, motives, behaviors, styles, contexts, goals and communication preferences. An especially important part of your presentation will be you and your partner explaining what the members of those countries would do in handling an interpersonal conflict between the two different regions of the world.

You may, but it is not necessary, include a brief role play of how the individuals from your respective culture would handle an interpersonal conflict as a way to demonstrate the cultural differences.

At the time of your presentation you will be required to turn in an outline with key points about your cross cultural discussion. It should be authored jointly with both student's names on the paper. The outline should also list at least four references in proper APA format as your source material for this assignment. The textbook may be one of your citations. The PowerPoint presentation should be a brief examination of the two cultures under discussion and a thorough comparison of the two cultural differences especially as it applies to conflict management. Both members of your team should examine both countries assigned rather than one member doing one of the assigned countries and the other member the contrasting country.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Read before class</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
1	Course Introduction Why study conflict? Defining Conflict	Chapter 1	
2	Perception & Barnlund's 6 people Mini Case Analysis Demonstration	Chapter 1	Quiz 1, (Chapter 1)
3	Conflict Theory Mini-case discussion*	Chapter 2	Mini-case 1 Due
4	Worldviews Causes of Conflict	Chapter 3 Chapter 4	Quiz 2, (Chapter 2)
5	Mini-case discussion* Variables	Chapter 4 Chapter 5	Mini-case 2 Due Quiz 3 (Chapters 3-4)
6	Variables/Activity Listening	Chapter 5 Chapter 6	Mini-case 3 Due
7	Listening Activity Styles Mini-case discussion*	Chapter 7	Quiz 4 (Chapters 5-6) Mini-case 4 Due
8	Styles Personal Case discussion* Negotiation	Chapter 7 Chapter 8	Personal Case 1 Due Quiz 5 (Chapter 7)

9	Negotiation exercise Mini-case discussion	Chapter 8	Mini-case 5 Due
10	Negotiation Exercise #2 Conflict Assessment Mini-case Discussion*	Chapter 9	Quiz 6 (Chapter 8) Mini-case 6 Due
11	Assessment Activity		Quiz 7 (Chapter 9)
12	Bullies & Difficult People Personal Case discussion*	Chapter 10	Quiz 8 (Chapter 10) Personal Case 2 Due
13	Anger, Apology & Forgiveness Mini-case discussion* Conflict at Work	Chapter 12 Chapter 14	Mini-case 7 Due
14	Conflict and Work Mini-case discussion* Conflict and Society XCCD Presentations	Chapter 14 Chapter 15	Quiz 9 (Chapter 12) Mini-case 8 Due
15	XCCD Presentations Review and Course Evaluation		
16	Final Exam 7:30PM-9:30PM At usual classroom		Personal Case Analysis Due Quiz 10 (Chapter 14-15)

*Bring 2 copies of the case to class (due at the beginning of class)

**Schedule revisions, if any, will be posted on Blackboard.

***Chapters 11 and 13 are not assigned readings.