

LEADERSHIP STUDIES 650: Conflict Management (Transformation)
Syllabus – January 6-17, 2014: 1.00-5.00 pm
Room L200 (Tuesdays – L1)
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Office: Gault 240 – by appointment

Purpose

Conflict is inevitable in personal relationships as well as organizations. How one manages oneself when living in either acutely or chronically conflicted situations can determine how effective one ultimately is as a leader. Therefore, the purpose of this course is to understand conflict as potentially transformational in the context of leadership.

Content

Various theories, philosophies and styles will be introduced in this course, along with conflict management/transformation skill-development. Theological reflection on conflict's potential to do harm or good will accompany all work in the course.

Method

The primary approach to analysis and skill-development will occur through improvisational role play, based on readings and discussion for the day.

Outcomes

Students should learn about their own styles for managing conflict and develop competency in interaction with other styles. Articulating conflict in theologically transformative frameworks for self and community in ministerial contexts will be an essential outcome from the course.

READING

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Discover Your Conflict Management Style. Speed B. Leas. Alban Institute, 1997.
Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory. Mitchell Hammer, 2012. (Dr. Withrow will distribute.)
Cross-Cultural Servanthood. Duane Elmer. Intervarsity Press, 2006.
Promise and Peril: Understanding and Managing Change and Conflict in Congregations.
David R. Brubaker. Alban Institute, 2009.
Antagonists in the Church. Kenneth C. Haugk. Augsburg Fortress Press, 1988.
Managing Polarities in Congregations. Roy Oswald and Barry Johnson. Alban Institute, 2009.

Supplemental Texts:

Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution. Louis Kriesberg. Rowman and Littlefield.
Management of the Absurd. Richard Farson. Simon & Schuster.
Churches, Cultures & Leadership. Mark Lau Branson and Juan F. Martínez. IVP Academic.
God's Tapestry: Understanding and Celebrating Difference. William M. Kondrath. Alban Institute.
Challenging the Church Monster: from Conflict to Community. Douglas J. Bixby. Pilgrim Press.
Angry People in the Pews: Managing Anger in the Church. Leroy Howe. Judson Press.
Competence in Interpersonal Conflict. William R. Cupach and Daniel J. Canary. Waveland Press.
Dealing with People You Can't Stand: How to Bring Out the Best in People at Their Worst. Rick Brinkman and Rick Kirschner. McGraw-Hill.

Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights. Charles Cosgrove and Dennis Hatfield. Abingdon Press.

Difficult Conversation. Katie Day. Alban Institute.

Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry. Duane Elmer. Intervarsity Press.

The Toxic Congregation. G. Lloyd Rediger. Abingdon Press.

Making Peace with Conflict: Practical Skills for Conflict Transformation. Carolyn Schrock-Shenk and Lawrence Ressler, eds. Herald Press

Conflict Management in Congregations. David B. Lott, ed. Alban Institute.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Read all texts required for class as outlined by syllabus. Be prepared to analyze texts thoroughly in class. Class attendance and active participation in all discussions/role plays is essential. Be prepared to lead a small, informal group conversation about a biblical conflict on **January 17**, with attention to the list found under January 6. (10%)
2. Submit on Sakai (Drop Box) a weekly response to readings or exercises designated for each week: Discuss how the author's concepts have or have not applied to your life. 300-450 words. (15%) **Due January 10 and 17 (Fridays) at 1.00 pm.**
3. Case study of conflict in an organization where you found yourself to be one of the "conflictees." 1200-1400 words total. (10%) **Due January 9 at 1.00 pm.**

Outline for case:

Background – 100-200 words (describe context)

Scenario – 250-300 words (describe conflict situation)

Theological Reflection – 250-300 words

(what theological issues are implicit or explicit in this situation and context?)

Transformative opportunities – 600-800 words

(what might have been transforming if the situation was played out differently? What do authors that you've read have to say to this situation?)

4. Describe a cross-cultural conflict either experienced or observed (personally or in the news). Analyze the assumptions, reactions and results of the conflict. Re-frame the conflict in ways that would make it transformative for all parties involved (which may require some imagination). 2400-2600 words. (20%) **Due January 15 at 1.00 pm.**

Outline for paper:

Description of context: 100-200 words

Description of conflict: 300-400 words

Analysis (assumptions in the conflict, reactions and results of assumptions and reactions): 1000-1200 words

Reframing: 800 – 1000 words

5. BYOC – Bring Your Own Conflict. Set up an “actable” scenario for the class and recruit 1-4 classmates to play out the scenario you have in mind (you are not one of the actors). After enactment, lead discussion, then invite volunteers from the class to “reframe” the scenario by acting it out differently. 30 minutes per scenario/discussion/reframe. Rehearsals for the original scenario help. (15%) **Due January 14, 15, 16 during class.**
6. Final Paper. Discuss the role of conflict in leadership. **Due January 29 at 1.00 pm.**

Outline for paper:

Why is conflict theologically and behaviorally important in any community or organization?

How can conflict be changed from “life-denying stuckness” to transformative energy?

What does cross-cultural conflict teach you about a community and its context?

How do the above three questions apply to cross-cultural discord (integrate your thinking)?

How can you become more at ease with conflict?

How has class material affected your understanding of transformational leadership theologically and behaviorally? Cite at least 4 course sources. 2500-3000 words. (30%)

NOTES

Please see Student Handbook for sections providing policy details on the following:

ADA—MTSO seeks to remove barriers to inclusion in its learning communities. Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs at the beginning of the semester. Please contact the Director of Student Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Any accommodation must be agreed upon prior to the due date of the affected course requirement.

Class attendance—Regular attendance is expected in all classes. During unavoidable absences, students are responsible for missed work. An excessive number of absences may result in grade reduction or course failure, despite successful completion of all assigned work. In most cases, a student will not be allowed credit for a course if he or she is absent for 25% of the class sessions.

Electronic Devices—Turn mobile devices off or “vibrate only” during class. Browsing the Internet or engaging in email or social network conversations during class is discouraged. Instructors have the right to impose grading penalties for disruptions due to electronic devices.

Human Subjects Research—Research by MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel that collects non-public information from and/or about living individuals or contemporary organizations/groups for purposes of publication or public presentation (including class assignments) must be approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee. MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel should err on the side of caution and apply for committee approval of any activity that may fit this description.

Inclusive Language—In accordance with MTSO’s policy on inclusive language, all students are expected to use gender inclusive or gender neutral language in their writing and in the classroom discussions when referring to human beings.

Incompletes—To receive a course grade of Incomplete, students must submit the petition form from the Registrar with all signatures to the Dean’s Office before the last day of regularly scheduled classes. See Student Handbook for intensive term deadlines. Any petition submitted without a due date for outstanding work will be denied. If work is not complete by the due date the Registrar will record the grade of F for the course.

Pass/Fail—The decision to exercise this option must be made before the end of the second day of the course by completing the appropriate form available through the Registrar. To receive a grade of "pass" the student must do at least the equivalent of C minus work in the course.

Plagiarism—Plagiarism is a serious matter of academic, professional, and personal integrity. All students at the master’s level are expected to understand the requirement to provide attribution when the work of others is used. Students are also expected to be familiar with and understand the school’s policy on Academic Misconduct found in the Student Handbook. If a student has questions about attribution, citation, and how to avoid plagiarism they should consult the course instructor, the school’s writing instructor, or library staff. When in doubt it is better to provide attribution even if one is uncertain about the proper citation form. Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct that results in disciplinary actions per the Student Handbook that may range from failing an assignment or course to expulsion.

Additional Notes

1. Use the *Turabian* manual for information about citations and research as necessary. When quoting authors used from the required texts list in this course, you should cite them in footnotes in the Turabian style.
2. Please turn in papers via Sakai in Drop Box folders that are available for each assignment. <https://sakai.mtso-tls.org> under the LS650 tab.
3. Papers should be submitted in Cambria or Calibri font, 12 pt., with 1-inch margins left/right.
4. Pay attention to grammar. You will be writing in your career after MTSO and grammar usage reflects on your competency as a leader.

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 6

Due today: Leas

Devotions

Introduction to course

The notebook idea

Conflict: the good, the bad and the ugly (ethics of conflict: values, methods, power)

Review of Family Systems and conflict

Conflict management styles and practical skills – Leas inventory

Origins of conflict based on social location and ethics:

- Theological Worlds (theological differences)
- Economic Worlds (class differences)
- Myers-Briggs Worlds (self-management differences)

- Gender (role differences)
- Sexuality (orientation differences)
- Generational (age/value differences)
- Interreligious (belief differences)
- Intercultural (racial-ethnic differences)

Classroom conflict exercises

Due tomorrow: Haugk, Parts I-II

January 7

Due today: Haugk, Parts I-II

Devotions

Competence in interpersonal conflict

Discussion: Haugk

Classroom conflict exercise

Due tomorrow: Haugk, Parts III-IV

January 8

Due today: Haugk, Parts III-IV

Devotions

Discussion: Haugk (Dealing with people at their worst)

Skills for managing conflicted meetings – agility and tools

Classroom conflict exercise

Due tomorrow: Oswald/Johnson, chapters 1-4; case study (see description under requirements)

January 9

Due today: Oswald/Johnson, chapters 1-4; case study.

Devotions

Discussion and exercises: Oswald/Johnson

Case studies and theological reflection exercises

Classroom conflict exercise

Due tomorrow: Oswald/Johnson, chapters 5-9; weekly written response to readings

January 10

Due today: Oswald/Johnson, chapters 5-9; weekly written response to readings

Devotions

Discussion and exercises: Oswald/Johnson

Polarity management work

Class conflict exercise

Due Monday: Brubaker (all); (note – begin preparing for BYOC next week)

January 13

Due today: Brubaker (all)

Devotions

Discussion: Brubaker

Introduction to cross-cultural conflict (ICS – Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory)

Intercultural Development theory – its significance for ministry (Mitchell Hammer)

Class conflict exercise

Due tomorrow: Elmer, Parts I-II; first set of BYOCs

January 14

Due today: Elmer, Parts I-II; first set of BYOCs

Devotions

Discussion: Elmer

BYOCs

Due tomorrow: Elmer, Part III; cross-cultural conflict paper (description under requirements); second set of BYOCs

January 15

Due today: Elmer, Part III; cross-cultural conflict paper; second set of BYOCs

Devotions

Cross-cultural papers (be prepared to discuss informally)

Discussion: Elmer

Domestic Violence as the cradle for violence – conflict and theological/spiritual response

BYOCs

Due tomorrow: Third set of BYOCs

January 16

Due today: Third set of BYOCs

Devotions

Management of the Absurd (Elmer)

Friedman's Fables

BYOCs

Due tomorrow: Biblical example of conflict for class discussion; weekly response paper

January 17

Due today: Biblical example of conflict for class discussion; weekly response paper

Devotions
Class discussion: scripture conflicts
Class conflict exercise
What have you learned?
Next steps

Due January 29: Final paper

January 29

Due today: Final Paper at 1.00 pm. (See description under requirements.)

GRADING

Grades for each assignment can be found on Sakai as they are posted. Final grade calculations will be based on percentages via Sakai's program.

A range: written and oral work is superior, with attention to detail, clarity and depth of thought, good flow and excellent grammar. Appropriate and mature participation in class is necessary.

B range: written and oral work is good, with solid thinking processes, good grammar/flow and obvious quality of time spent on the assignments. Appropriate and mature participation in class is necessary.

C range: written and oral work is adequate, though there are significant problems with clarity, argument and grammar. Appropriate and mature participation in class is necessary.

F range: written and oral work is not completed as assigned, or the work indicates that the student is not giving attention to or is incapable of completing requirements in this course.

Inappropriate or lack of participation may also be a factor in a lower grade.

There will be no extensions granted in this course.

There will be no extensions granted on assignments or final paper.