MC634 SYLLABUS
Conflict Management in Life & the Church
Fall Semester 2018
WEDNESDAYS, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Instructor: Katherine Kyte Horvath, D.Min.
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I. Course Description
This course focuses on the dynamics of interpersonal conflict management, with principles broadened to the larger context of the church and its system. The course will provide an opportunity for reflection on a biblical survey of conflict scenarios as well as discussion of a variety of effective and ineffective interpersonal conflict styles. An interdisciplinary approach will include an introduction to systems theory whereby various patterns of relating will be identified and strategies for their management and/or resolution will be formulated.

As outcomes for the course, students will be able to identify their own conflict styles and those of others. They will reflect on various patterns of human behavior in the midst of conflict as well as study and devise strategies to deal with them in the most effective and God-honoring ways. Students will be able to craft their own strategies for creating a culture of peace within their personal relationships and their churches, acquiring skills in conflict prevention and management with the aim of ultimate interpersonal and group reconciliation.

II. Course Relationship to Curriculum
This course is offered as an elective course for all seminary majors.

III. Course Objectives:
1. To understand natural causes of conflict, and identifying biblical examples and options for addressing it.
2. Identify their own and various personal conflict styles and to identify unhealthy and/or unbiblical patterns in relating.
3. To develop conviction and courage in facing conflict interpersonally and in the church.
4. To grow in reliance on the Holy Spirit for biblical and God-honoring methods and results.
5. To develop patience and resilience in working with avoidant or attacking individuals (self & others) and other resistance to reconciliation efforts.
6. To dissect core conflicted relationships in their own lives and develop appropriate strategies for addressing them.
7. To identify, anticipate, and plan strategies for current and/or potential conflict scenarios in the church.
IV. Course Requirements

- Attend all class sessions (see below).
- Participation in class and small group/triad discussions.
- Take the online Wagner Enneagram Personality Assessment.
- Complete all Required Reading (see below).
- Analyze two Biblical Conflict Scenarios (one OT & one NT) and propose potential alternative responses (5 pages).
  - Write a 5-page Personal Conflict Case Reflection on a past conflict in your life, identifying contributors to the conflict, followed by outlining a better, alternate approach based on principles learned in class. Alternatively, students may choose a church conflict scenario with permission.
  - Write and submit a 10-page Conflict Resolution Plan paper, focusing either on interpersonal conflict, congregational conflict or both. Identify theoretical and biblical approaches and form them into a coherent plan and process for addressing future conflicts and pursuing reconciliation in these conditions.
- Option for Final paper: Propose a Research Paper on a relevant aspect of conflict management germane to your expected future ministry(ies). Present your one-paragraph proposal to Dr. Horvath via e-mail or in a personal appointment.

V. Required Reading & Assignments

**Required Texts:**

**Recommended Texts:**

**Assignments:**
- Complete the Enneagram online: [https://www.wepss.com/buy.asp](https://www.wepss.com/buy.asp) (Cost: $10; 30-50 minutes to complete). Complete and print this for our Sept. 26th class.
- Biblical Conflict Scenarios (1 from OT + 1 from NT) – 5 pages – Due October 5th
- Personal (or Church) Conflict Case Reflection – 5 pages – Due November 9th
- Personal Conflict Management Plan, or Research Paper on approved related topic; 10 pages, Due the Last Day for Written Work, Dec. 18th
  - Papers should be double-spaced, normal margins, standard title page (your name, professor’s name, course title and title of paper – not considered part of the page count), done in Chicago or Turabian style.
• **Annotated Reading Report**: 1000 pages of reading not including required books or books read for other classes.* However, the Annotated Reading Report should include the required texts. Due on the Last Day for Written Work, Dec. 18th.

*Books in the Bibliography read for other classes may only count *if fully re-read*, and the with professor’s permission.

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**Dr. Horvath’s Office (& “lending library”): Academic Center, Room 233.** Scheduled appointments available throughout the week. Drop by or e-mail Student Assistants, Janet Lee (mmcoordinator@gordonconwell.edu) or ______________________ (mmassist@gordonconwell.edu). Office phone: 978-646-4119. *Closed for lunch 12:00-1:00.*

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**CLASS SESSIONS**

**Session 1** – September 12th - **The Problem of Conflict.**
Personal History of Conflict
Causes of Conflict
Lessons from Intentional Communities
Triad Discussions (experience in conflict)
**Assignment:** Read *Life Together* (Bonhoeffer) by next week

**Session 2** – September 19th - **Biblical Foundations in Peacemaking**
Principles of Communication
Visions/Metaphors of the Church
Conflict in the Old Testament
Conflict in the New Testament
Discussion of *Life Together* book
Triad Discussions (experiences in community)
**Assignment:** Take the online Wagner Enneagram Personality Assessment. Cost = $10; takes 30-50 minutes to complete. Bring results to our next class session.
Begin reading *The Peacemaker* by Ken Sande
Reminder: Begin working on your Biblical Conflict Scenarios paper (due Oct. 5th)

**Session 3** – September 26th - **Mirror Gazing: The Enneagram & Personal Conflict Styles**
Personal Conflict Styles
The Enneagram
Approachability
Forgiveness
Triad Discussions (Enneagram styles)

**Session 4** – October 3rd - **Getting Along God’s Way: Practical Principles**
God’s Way to Address Conflict
Unpacking the Six Biblical Responses
Role Plays
Triad Discussions (application of principles in conflict)

Assignment: Begin reading VanYperen’s Making Peace.

Session 5 – October 17th - Systemic Understanding of Conflict
Introduction to Systems Theory
Bowen Family Systems Concepts
Understanding the Church as a System
Triad Case Discussions (conflicts experienced in a system)
Assignment: Read You’re a Snot-Nosed Young Pastor case study (handed out in class)

Session 6 – October 24th - Peacemaking in the Church
Strategies for Diagnosing & Addressing Conflict in the Church
Discussion of Making Peace book
Lg. Group Case Discussion: You’re a Snot-Nosed Young Pastor
Assignment: Read The Pastor’s Daughter is a Rebel case study (handed out in class)

Session 7 – October 31st - Window into Church Diagnostics
Signs of a Healthy Church
Church Crisis & Transition Consultants
Triad Case Discussion of The Pastor’s Daughter is a Rebel
Assignment: Read assigned case study for your Triad (handed out in class)

Session 8 – November 7th - Firestorms and their Prevention
Development of a Firestorm
Interventions
Triad Case Discussion of your assigned cases & share your Triad’s evaluation with rest of class
Assignments: Begin reading Cleveland’s Disunity in Christ.
Reminder: Personal (or Church) Conflict Case Reflection Paper due Fri., Nov. 9th (in 2 days)

Session 9 – November 21st - Peacemaking Pastors
Red & Blue Zone Leadership
Peacemaking Stance & Strategy
Triad Case Study Discussions (choose a personal case from among you to lead the whole class in discussion next week)
Assignment: Plan further for next week’s presentation with your Triad (as needed)

Session 10 – November 28th - Maintaining Peace
Creating a Culture of Peace in the Church
Emotionally Healthy Spirituality & Emotionally Healthy Churches
Triad-Led Case Discussions
Assignment: Finish reading Cleveland’s Disunity in Christ.

Session 11 – December 5th - Cultural Issues in Conflict Resolution
Guilt vs. Shame Cultures
Discussion of Disunity in Christ book
Triad Case Discussions (experiences in cultural misunderstanding/conflict)

Session 12 – December 12th – Wrap-Up
Conflict Strategies in Context
Triad Discussions
Course Evaluation

Reminder: Personal Conflict Management Plan (or approved Research paper) due next Tues. 12/18
Annotated Reading Report due next Tues., 12/18 (Last Day for Written Work)

GRADING:

- Attendance/Participation = 20%
- Annotated Reading Report (1000 pages not read for other classes, and not including required
texts; however, required texts must be annotated) = 10%
- Biblical Conflict Scenarios paper (5 pages) = 15%
- Personal* Conflict Case Reflection Paper (5 pages) = 15%
- Personal Conflict Management Plan or Research Paper (10 pages) = 40%

[*or church, with permission]

A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 88-89; B = 83-87; B- = 80-82; C+ = 78-79; C = 73-77; C- = 70-72; D+ = 68-69; D = 63-67; D- = 60-62; 59 and below = F

Extension Petitions should be requested from the Professor before or at the latest on the due date.
- All late work submitted without an extension will be subject to a required grade penalty -

- Always look in CAMS and/or Sakai for assignments and resources.
- Remember that all seminary’s communication is primarily via e-mail to your GCTS account. Please check this e-mail regularly.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Community:

Conflict and the Church:


**Cultural Considerations:**


**Enneagram:**


Interpersonal Conflict:


Systems Theory:


Theological:


Various:


**Case Study Resources: (not for Reading Report)**