Course information

BUS 455 will further develop students’ understanding the nature, origins, and management of conflict commonly found within the employment relationship. The course identifies the processes for effective management of conflict and the resolution of disputes in both unionized and non-unionized environments. Sources and types of conflict will be examined using individual and group settings as well as employer-employee examples. Facilitation and mediation skills will be emphasized through classroom practice and individual project work outside of class. Students will develop skills in mediation, the design of conflict resolution systems, the analysis of conflict and the recommendation of appropriate mechanisms to resolve conflict in a wide range of organization settings.

At the end of the course students should be able to:

- Understand organization dynamics and the theory and nature of conflict in organizations at the individual and group levels
- Apply conceptual frameworks to the diagnosis and assessment of organizational conflict
- Identify, develop and implement appropriate intervention programs and strategies for a variety of organization settings
- Recommend the design of conflict management systems for organizations

The course prerequisites reflect the expectation that students have a good understanding of micro and macro theory of organization behaviour, as well as a knowledge of the range and scope of human resource management practices and the role of unions in the contemporary workplace.

I have designed this course to incorporate the theoretical, the technical and the personal aspects of learning. Together we will explore the advances and insights provided by well developed theory and relevant research; we will reflect on our own experiences and observations of the contemporary organizations around us; and we will explore and apply established professional approaches to managing conflict in a wide range of situations. The course will provide a very hands-on experience for students willing to put in the effort to understand and to develop professionally as effective managers in an increasingly complex business environment. Course outcomes will be of value to students in any major.
Resources

There is one set text for the course, Choices in Approaching Conflict, by Ewert et al. (2010) This book should be available in the campus bookstore. In addition, a variety of readings have been collected for each module of the course, and these are available on the course website in the URCourses platform. Some of the cases and exercises are copyrighted material and thus there will be a small charge for these items, levied against your student account. Additional material from the news may be assigned as well. Class exercises will also be posted on the course website.

The Student Success Centre provides a number of workshops and support tools for students to assist with writing, study, and student life skills. Please be sure to take advantage of these assists if you feel the need. More information is available on the University website.

There is generally no need to access a personal digital device in class. Some students may prefer to take and keep their class notes on their laptop or tablet, and I ask your discretion in the use of this learning tool; it can be very distracting for other students as well as for the instructor if students move away from their note taking into other digital/online activities in class time.

Class routine

Students are expected to check the course website regularly and to stay up to date with readings and assignments as the course progresses. The course is an evenly balanced theoretical/practical undertaking, and most of the practice takes place in class. If you have not prepared the readings and taken time to reflect on what you are learning in terms of the theory, you will find the class exercise difficult and of little value. This will unfortunately be reflected in your grade.

Students with any special need that may have an impact on their performance and participation in the course should contact the Centre for Student Accessibility to make arrangements according to the university policy on accessibility. The Instructor needs to receive any related communication from the Centre at the start of term. Please see the university website for more information.

If you are aware of any planned absence(s) please provide the instructor with prior written notification at your earliest convenience. It is not possible to receive credit for quizzes, exercise results, or journal entries for missed classes.

Academic integrity is a cornerstone of the course. Please familiarize yourself with the University Regulations on Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct in the University
Calendar. I take these regulations and the Faculty of Business Administration procedures surrounding lapses in academic integrity very seriously and rigorously follow up on all cases.

Course requirements:

1. Quizzes 15%
2. Case write ups (best 2 out of 3) 15%
3. Exercises - Conflict Management Journal 50%
4. Conflict diagnosis: class discussion & report 20%

1. Class Quizzes
The intent of the quizzes is to motivate up-to-date reading by providing a grade for understanding the basic content of assigned material. Quizzes are generally held in the first few minutes of the class before a reading or topic is discussed; quizzes may also be administered online through the UR Courses website. There is no quiz on the first day of class.

2. Cases
Students will write up a brief case analysis of 3 assigned cases. This provides an opportunity to address course concepts in a structured way that differs from the exercises, and which gives students different perspectives and information on conflict scenarios. These will be due before the class in which they are discussed. There are three required cases and your best two marks count towards your final grade. You must complete all three case analyses to get a mark in this section of the course.

3. Exercises and Journal
You will prepare each class exercise ahead of time and preparation may include writing up an analysis and strategy based on current course concepts. At a minimum you should make notes about the readings and the assigned exercise. At the conclusion of each exercise you will write up a reflection based on your experiences. The goal of the journal process is to personalize your learning, applying the course material is a very specific way to your own experiences in the course, which you will share with the instructor. This is a major component of the course and you should be working on these entries every week. Keep the following in mind as you write:

- Explain the situation from your point of view (observer, invested party)
- Explain any investigation/research/reading you completed to expand your understanding of the conflict.
- Comment on the specific area of the course we are exploring at the moment and how it applies to the exercise in question.
- Discuss how you chose to approach the exercise in class and why.
- Describe how the exercise met (or did not meet) your expected plan. Using course concepts analyze the outcome and make recommendations for the future; what insights did this experience give you to face similar challenges, consolidate your knowledge or
pose new questions as a learner and a future manager?

Grades will be allocated based on a rubric, which you will find on the course website.

4. Conflict diagnosis presentation and report

This part of the course is to be completed in pairs. Drawing on the relevant readings and course content, select a conflict from an organization in the community around you or from the media and be prepared to discuss this in class. You must come prepared to summarize the conflict in a minute or two, apply the relevant diagnosis tools to the conflict, and engage the class in a discussion on this conflict. Sign up for dates will be through UR courses, and these presentations will take place in the middle of term. You are not required to use any visual aids such as PowerPoint; this is a very informal presentation and discussion; however, if you feel a hand out is helpful please use one. Once your presentation is complete, you will use the feedback you received to develop a report in which you analyze the conflict resolution system in place, or needed, in your chosen organization/conflict. You will have to conduct research in order to complete this assignment successfully. Details regarding the content and format of the report will be posted on UR Courses. This report is due December 12th at 9 am. See the website for further details.

Preparation and participation

Every class requires students’ active, engaged participation. I have reserved the right to recognize active participation in the course at the end of term. I do not feel it makes sense to grant grades for showing up and for contributing what is necessary as a normal part of an upper year undergraduate class, and thus significant and valuable contribution to the learning process may be recognized if a final grade is bordering on a higher letter grade. I am looking for your diligent application of skills and knowledge to the topics at hand, gathered from your preparation (including your own experiences where these are relevant); professional conduct; and respectful undertaking in the exercises.
Class outline and Schedule: Please see UR courses for specific readings, assignments, and exercises (note, in some weeks the activity will be a case study). Note: this is a tentative outline and progress through these topics may vary slightly.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Sept. 10 &amp; 12</th>
<th>Overview of conflict resolution</th>
<th>Ch 1&amp;2 in textbook</th>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Sept. 17 &amp; 19</td>
<td>Theories of Conflict Identifying Conflict</td>
<td>Exercise/reading/Assignment: Ch 3 in text; Pink Power reading and discussion preparation Check UR courses</td>
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<td>Diagnosing conflict</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Sept. 24 &amp; 26</td>
<td>Stakeholder approach to conflict management; understanding implications of settlement Power</td>
<td>Exercise/reading/Assignment: Ch 9, Nova Nada exercise to read and prepare Check UR courses</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Oct. 1 &amp; 3</td>
<td>Interest-based conflict resolution</td>
<td>Exercise/reading/Assignment: Ch 4, Cinnamon exercise Check UR courses</td>
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<td>Forms of dispute resolution</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Oct 8 &amp; 10</td>
<td>Adapting negotiation styles</td>
<td>Exercise/reading/Assignment: Ch 8 Negotiation simulation – computer lab Check UR courses</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Oct 15 &amp; 17</td>
<td>Micro Skills for ADR The Workplace: Areas of potential dispute</td>
<td>Exercise/reading/Assignment: Ch 7 Roommate exercise Check UR courses</td>
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| Week 7 | Oct 22 & 24 | Disputes in the workplace | Exercise/readings/Assignment: Ch5 & 11
Mike and Vicky exercise Presentation of Conflict paper topics
Check UR courses for Manager as mediator |
|------|------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 8 | Oct 29 & 31 | Disputes in the workplace – unionized staff | Exercise/readings/Assignment: Ch 11
Check UR courses for Conflict accuracy in Teams
Drug Testing exercise |
| Week 9 | Nov. 5 | Disputes between organizations | Exercise/readings/Assignment: National Distillers
Check UR courses |
| Week 10 | Nov 12 & 14 | Arbitration | Exercise/readings/Assignment: Ch 6
And check UR courses |
| Week 11 | Nov 19 & 21 | Workplace dispute resolution systems | Exercise/readings/Assignment: check UR courses |
| Week 12 | Nov 26 & 28 | Short term versus long term solutions and systems Aspects of culture in dispute resolution, indigenization | Exercise/readings/Assignment: Check UR courses |
| Week 13 | Dec 3 & 5 | Ombuds, mini trials, Restorative Justice | Exercise/readings/Assignment: Ch 12 |