

Negotiation and Conflict Resolution in Organizations

GBUS 873 Summer 2020

Updated March 6, 2020

**This is a draft course outline and is subject to change and students enrolled in the course should follow to the course outline posted on UR courses in late June 2020**

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### **Course description and objective**

GBUS 873 will further develop students' understanding the nature, origins, and management of conflict commonly found between and within organizations. The course identifies the processes for effective management of conflict in both unionized and non-unionized environments. Sources and types of conflict will be examined using group and individual settings as well as business to business and employer-employee examples. Negotiation, facilitation and mediation skills will be emphasized through classroom practice and individual work outside of class. Students will develop skills in negotiation, arbitration and 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 theories and dimensions of conflict in organizations at the individual and group levels
- Apply conceptual frameworks to the diagnosis and assessment of organizational conflict
- Identify and implement appropriate intervention programs and strategies for a variety of conflict scenarios in organization settings
- Recommend the design of a conflict management systems for organizations

The prerequisite knowledge for success in the course includes a good understanding of micro and macro theory of organization behaviour, as well as knowledge of the range and scope of human resource management practices and the role of unions in the contemporary workplace. If students have any concerns about their level of preparation for the course, they are encouraged to speak with the instructor before the course work begins.

The course incorporates the theoretical, the technical and the personal aspects of learning. Participants will explore the advances and insights provided by well developed theory and relevant research; they will reflect on their own experiences and observations of contemporary

organizations; and they will explore and apply established professional approaches to managing conflict in a range of situations. The course will provide a rich experience for students willing to put in significant effort to understand and to develop professionally as effective managers in an increasingly complex business environment.

## **Resources**

The set text for the course is:

Choices in Approaching Conflict: Understanding the practice of alternative dispute resolution, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

by Charles Ewert, Gordon Barnard, Jennifer Laffier & Michael Maynard and published in 2019 by Edmond Publications. This text provides a basic overview of negotiation and mediation.

A variety of additional readings and other material will be assigned for each section of the course, and these will be available on the course website in the URCourses platform. Class exercises will also be posted on the course website; occasionally assignments and exercises may be distributed in class without prior posting on the website. There may be a small charge for some materials, the Levene office handles charges for these materials.

Optional texts students may wish to consider, but which you are not required to purchase include:

Getting To Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In by Roger Fisher and William Ury originally published in 1981, 1991 (with Bruce Patton in 3rd edition 2011)

The negotiation classic is likely already on many of your bookshelves. It is a Penguin paperback and multiple copies are available through the campus libraries. I highly recommend you read this short book.

Becoming a Conflict Competent Leader: How You and Your Organization Can Manage Conflict Effectively. By Craig E. Runde and Tim A. Flanagan; published in 2007 by Jossey-Bass (This title is available through the Archer library as an ebook.)

You may also wish to subscribe to the Negotiation Insider, an e-newsletter of the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School. Visit their website for more information: [www.pon.harvard.edu](http://www.pon.harvard.edu)

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.

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.

## **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. It is to your distinct advantage to do as much reading as possible before the course meeting dates in August, as we will move very quickly through a lot of material. 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.

Every class requires students' active, engaged participation. Your diligent application of skills and knowledge gathered from your preparation (including your own experiences where these are relevant) to the topics at hand will result in success on each of the components of the course. Your professional conduct in the class will enhance not only your own learning experience but the experience of everyone sharing the space. A portion of your overall grade is reserved for participation.

It is not possible to receive credit for activities and submissions held in classes you have missed. Likewise, given the compressed nature of the course and the need to provide timely feedback to students on assignments, late submissions will not be accepted. Uncompleted work will receive a grade of 0.

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 components:**

Please note, all written course work is submitted online, through UR Courses

Assignment 1 due July 20	10%
Assignment 2 due August 1	10%
Conflict management Exercises conducted in class	30%
Analysis of current event in groups	15%
Course participation	10%
Final Exam	25%

### Assignment 1 (10%) due July 20 – submit on UR Courses

Please read chapters 1 and 2 of the text. Please check the UR Courses website for the supplemental course material and review the materials on conflict style posted there. Write no more than 1250 words responding to these questions:

- 1) Using your own words, how would you describe your preferred conflict style? Explain how you identified and determined this is your preferred style, drawing on your readings and online work.
- 2) What factors in your personal and organization life have contributed to developing this preferred style?

## Assignment 2 (10%) due August 1<sup>st</sup> – submit on UR Courses

Please read one of the readings posted on the course website under the section “Assignment 2” and write up to 1250 words to answer the following questions:

- 1) In your own words, what is the principal message of the reading?
- 2) What evidence does the author(s) draw upon to illustrate his/her/their point?
- 3) What counter arguments are present (or missing) in the reading?
- 4) What are the implications of this reading for conflict in organizations?

At the end of your paper, pose one question based on the assignment which we can use to generate discussion in class.

### Conflict management exercises

Class exercises, which require preparation beforehand and which will require reflection and sometimes writing after class, form an important part of the course. There are at least 4 different exercises in the course which will permit each student to experience a variety of roles in conflict management. Your preparation, execution and evaluation of the exercise will contribute to your learning. Students will be asked to prepare a brief written reflection on some of the exercises. Sometimes students will be given time in class to prepare these reflections. One reflection may be assigned over the period between classes (August 9-13). These reflections may be assigned to your preparation for the exercise or as an assessment of the exercise after it is complete.

The following are broad guidelines to keep in mind when preparing for and analyzing these experiential exercises:

1. Can you explain the situation from your point of view (observer, invested party)?
2. Can you explain any investigation/research/reading necessary to expand your understanding of the conflict?
3. Have you provided comment on the specific area of the course we are exploring at the moment and how it applies to the conflict in question?
4. Did you discuss how the outcome of this experience/exercise prepares you to face similar challenges, consolidates your knowledge, or poses new questions for you as a learner as well as a manager?

### Current event group project

Students will be assigned to groups when class begins. Your group will choose an example of a conflict in an organization (or between organizations) either from current events or from personal experience. As a group, you will analyze the type, sources and contributing factors of the conflict, and develop a conflict management strategy to resolve the situation and to manage similar issues going forward in the organization i.e., recommend a conflict management system.

There is no written submission for this assignment. Students will have 20 minutes in the final day of the class to present their findings and recommendations. You should include in your presentation, as a minimum, a clear statement of the problem, and concise summary of the situation and relevant circumstances, a very focussed review of relevant literature, and a sound explanation of your recommendations for resolution and for ongoing conflict management in the organization. Please also pay attention to any implications that might arise out of your recommendations.

You are free to use any tools and devices you can imagine in order to create a meaningful learning experience in your presentation. You are not limited to a PowerPoint presentation – you can use video, even pre-record portions of the presentation ahead of time. You may also use live interactive technology in the class time and also make use of UR Courses to post and present material.

### Course participation

Class participation is based on the degree to which your comments and insights enrich the learning experience of the class. Contribution marks for comments and insights are earned by:

- Making observations that integrate concepts and discussions.
- Citing relevant personal examples.
- Asking key questions that lead to revealing discussions.
- Engaging in devil's advocacy: disagreeing with the instructor and other students when the difference of opinion serves as both counterpoint and a way of exploring all sides of a concept, issue, or practice.
- Working with others to come to a common understanding of the topics –in and out of the classroom.
- Participating enthusiastically in classroom group activities and group discussions.
- Listening open-mindedly and responding to what others say.

Participation marks will be allocated at the end of the course, based on the five days of classes, in the following manner:

#### Exceeds Expectations

9-10 marks

Students in this category provide leadership in and out of the classroom and work toward enhancing the interpersonal dynamics of the class. Rather than dominating the setting, they act as facilitators, bringing others into the discussion.

#### Meets Expectations

7-8 marks.

Students show an active interest in class activities and participate actively in classroom discussions; regularly make insightful comments which help others to understand the course material; act as positive group role models, etc.

#### Does not Meet Expectations

Up to 6 marks

Students attend class regularly but only occasionally contribute to the classroom experience.

Less than 5 marks

Students fail to contribute in any of these ways.

### Final Exam

A final exam will be posted on UR Courses on the last day of the course, August 15<sup>th</sup>. The exam will consist of 4-6 questions. Each question will have a strict word limit (200-500 words each). This is an individual exam, and students are not allowed to discuss their work or the exam questions with any other students or other individuals. You should spend no more than 4 hours on the exam. The deadline to submit the exam is Sunday August 16<sup>th</sup> at 10 pm. More information about the exam format and content of the exam will be provided in the last class.

### Writing expectations

Written submissions must be double spaced and use Times New Roman 12 point font. 25% of all assignment grades will be based on quality of writing (structure, grammar, logical flow, completeness of arguments, appropriate references and citations) and 75% will be based on the content, analysis and application of course concepts. Please indicate your student number on all submissions.

**Draft timetable (Update March 6, 2020 – please see UR Courses for final version)**

	Thursday August 6	Friday August 7	Saturday August 8	Friday August 14	Saturday August 15
8:30 – 10:00	Introduction Recognizing conflict Groups and current event	Stakeholder theory and Power Applying the ADR continuum	Mediation overview and exercise preparation	Arbitration, And exercise preparation	Project presentations
10:00 – 10:15	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
10:15 – 11:45	Theories of conflict The ADR continuum	Negotiation exercise	Mediation exercise	Cross cultural issues in conflict management	Project presentations
11:45 – 12:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:45 – 14:15	Diagnosing conflict Exercise	Exercise debrief Guest lecture	Exercise debrief Guest lecture	Arbitration exercise	Course synthesis and review
14:15- 14:30	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
14:30 – 16:30	Reading discussion Group project work	Microskills discussion Group project work	Reading discussion Group project work	Debrief, Group project work	Exam

	<b>CLASS Date</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READING</b>	<b>CASE/ ASSIGNMENT</b>
1	Sept. 9	Introduction Prisoner's dilemma Theories of conflict Identifying conflict	Be sure to obtain a copy of the text and begin your reading before our first class Chapters 1 & 3	Discussion of teams for live case Watch the website for further materials. Select your week for the Learning Object assignment Pemberton exercise
2	Sept. 16	Approaches to conflict resolution Diagnosing conflict	Chapter 2	Pink Power exercise
3	Sept. 23	Stakeholder theory Power in conflict	Readings on stakeholder theory – UR Courses Chapter 9	Nova Nada exercise Follow up Discussion Board
4	Sept. 30	Negotiation Interest-based negotiation	Chapter 4	Cinnamon exercise
5	Oct. 7	Adapting negotiation styles Emotion in negotiation	UR Courses site	Downed airplane exercise
6	Oct. 14 (no face to face class)	Forms of alternate dispute resolution	Readings on ADR URCourses	Group project proposal due Discussion Board
7	Oct. 21	Microskills for ADR	Chapter 7	In class exercise Mike & Vicky
8	Oct. 28	Mediation	Chapter 5	Follow up Mike and Vicky
9	Nov. 4	Arbitration	Chapter 6 UR Courses readings on arbitration	Goodwin Sporting Goods case Activities as determined by students working on their learning object
10	Nov. 11 (no face to face class)	Cross- Cultural dispute resolution Commercial dispute resolution	Chapters 8, 9 Note – this is a review of Chapter 9 – we addressed it in week 3 as well	Intel in China case Discussion board
11	Nov. 18	Unionized dispute resolution	Chapter 11	Prepare Drug Testing Exercise

12	Nov. 25	Designing dispute resolution systems	URCourses readings	Activities as determined by students working on their learning object  Beautiful Springs case
13	Dec 2	Indigenous approaches to conflict resolution Talking Circle	URCourses reading on culture in negotiations	Presentations of group projects (4 minutes)
	Dec 9	Group project paper due		