The University of Oklahoma
College of Continuing Education
Advanced Programs – Ph.D. Course Syllabus

Course Title:
Conflict Management

Course Number:
COMM 5353-801

Course Description:
This is a survey course designed to acquaint the student with theoretical approaches to human conflict and conflict management, with emphasis placed on communication perspectives concerned with understanding and managing conflict within various contexts. Classical work as well as current research trends in conflict studies will be explored. Topics for the course include meta-theoretical perspectives and theories of motivation and conflict management. In addition to an exploration of contextual topics (see accompanying list), specific attention will be directed toward understanding relevant research designs and methodologies for studying conflict. Special emphasis will be placed on the motivational processes involved in intergroup conflict.

Class Dates, Location, and Hours:

Location: Heidelberg, Germany. Classroom is located in Tompkins Barracks (Schwetzingen) Education Center, Bldg. 4236, Rooms 6 and 7.
Hours: Friday 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm and Sat and Sun 8:30 am-4:30 pm
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: August 2, 2011

Site Director:
Rebecca Hansen. Phone: DSN 370-6687; CIV 06221-768118; DSN Fax (call first) 370-6687; CIV Fax: 06221-768945; E-mail: apeupprograms@ou.edu

Professor Contact Information:

Course Professor: Kevin B. Wright, Ph.D.
Mailing Address: Department of Communication
610 Elm Avenue, Room 101
University of Oklahoma
Norman, OK 73019
Telephone Number: (405) 325-5946
Cell Number (405) 535-5909
Fax Number: (405) 325-7625
E-mail Address: kbwright@ou.edu
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before each class session, or by appointment.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:

Student materials are available at the Follett/AP Bookstore located in the Oklahoma Memorial Union, 900 Asp Ave., Norman, OK. Orders can be placed online at www.oklahomaunion.bkstr.com or by telephone at 866-369-9713 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-5960 (outside the U.S.). E-mail orders may be sent to oklahomaunion@bkstr.com. Representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST on Friday. Summer hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST. Faxed orders may be placed 24 hours a day to 866-223-5607 (toll free in the U.S.) or 405-325-1557 (outside the U.S.).

Note: The Follett AP Bookstore is the Advanced Programs contractual textbook provider. Should text changes become necessary after publication of the course syllabus, Advanced Programs will facilitate text returns/refunds only for texts purchased through the Follett/AP Bookstore.

**Course Objectives:**

It is expected that at the conclusion of the course, students will: a) have developed a thorough understanding of the importance of managing conflict in various contexts, b) understand how research is conducted and evaluated in conflict contexts, c) be familiar with several of the predominant theories in the fields of inter-group conflict and conflict management, and d) have developed special knowledge in a chosen area related to human conflict.

**Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:**

**Course Format:**

As this is a seminar, students are expected to engage in thoughtful discussion of the course concepts. Effective participation is judged by the informed comments provided as well as by the intelligence and insight advanced by the questions and issues students develop from the readings. Because this seminar is in the form of a 3-credit accelerated course taking place over two consecutive weekends, there will be minimal time for reading once the seminar has commenced. Therefore students should take it upon themselves to have read all of the designated chapters in the text prior to the first class meeting (see chapters and topics below).

Everyone is expected to come to class ready to talk about the assigned readings. In-class discussions and presentations of theoretical applications found in the readings will comprise the first weekend of the class. The second weekend will continue discussion of the readings as well as explore student developed research designs addressing theoretical perspectives found in the literature.

During the first weekend, students will be expected to (1) lead a portion of the class discussion based on their preparation and presentation of a selection from the assigned readings. Chapters and/or articles for this purpose will be assigned by request on a first come first serve basis. Students should contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss and identify an area in the literature they wish to present. If an area of interest has not been indicated by October 1 (one month before the beginning of the seminar), the material will be assigned according to need. We will attempt to complete the discussion of all or most of the readings by the end of the first weekend. Depending on class size, presentations should be expected to last 30- 60 minutes.

Prior to the final weekend, students will (2) develop a brief research proposal based upon specific theoretical and contextual perspectives discussed in the readings and in class. The purpose of the proposed research design is to demonstrate an understanding of a conflict-related model or theory, its application, and its utility (see potential topics and contexts below). Each student will present her or his research proposal and seek feedback from the class during the second weekend. The written proposal will be distributed to each of the seminar participants, and should be seven to ten pages long, and include a brief discussion of the theory to be utilized within a specific context. The proposal should also include one or more testable hypotheses, and a discussion of the research setting, how the data will be collected and analyzed, and what will constitute support for the hypotheses. This will entail providing operational definitions of the constructs of interest as well as the measures used to assess them.
There will be no final exam. Students will, however, revise and resubmit their proposal in the form of a (3) final paper due three weeks after the end of the seminar (i.e., November 30th). The final paper should be 17-20 pages of text demonstrating a clear understanding of the relevant literature, the theory, and its application, and the appropriate methods for evaluating the theory. Papers should conform to APA format.

**Readings**

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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter in O&amp;T-T Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methods; Approaches</td>
<td>Ch. 2; Ch. 26; Ch. 11</td>
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<td>Social-Cognitive Perspectives; Emotional Processes</td>
<td>Ch. 3; Ch. 4</td>
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<td>Close Relationships</td>
<td>Ch. 5; Ch. 6; Ch. 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argumentativeness; Verbal Aggressiveness</td>
<td>Ch. 8</td>
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<td>Group Conflict</td>
<td>Ch. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational &amp; Inter-Organizational Conflict</td>
<td>Ch. 9; Ch. 12; Ch. 13</td>
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<td>Inter-Group; Inter-Racial; Inter-Ethnic</td>
<td>Ch. 17; Ch. 21</td>
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<td>Community and Conflict</td>
<td>Ch. 15; Ch. 19; <em>Ch. 14 (Optional)</em></td>
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<td>Risk; Crises; Disasters</td>
<td>Heath &amp; O’Hair (In press)</td>
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<td>Intercultural Conflict; Regional Conflict;</td>
<td>Ch. 20; Ch. 22; Ch. 25; <em>Chs. 23 &amp; 24 (Optional)</em></td>
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**Potential Contexts for Research Topics**

- Conceptualizing Conflict
- Theoretical Approaches to Conflict
- Dimensions of Conflict
- Conflict Styles
- Managing Conflict
- Personality Factors Influencing Conflict
- Escalation Cycles
- Constructive Controversy
- Framing
- Change Processes
- Argumentativeness
- Verbal Aggressiveness
- Intrapersonal Conflict
- Interpersonal Conflict
- Facework
- Accounts
- Relational Control
- Relational Distress & Dissolution
- Relational Termination
- Disengagement Resistance
- Relational Reconciliation
- Power
- Moral Conduct
- Social Justice
- (Intra)Group Conflict
- Inter-Group Conflict
- Conflict in Organizations
- Organizational Dissent
- Organizational Change
- Voice
- Culture and Conflict
- Ethics in Conflict Management
Grading: This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

1) General class participation and the first week presentation (i.e., leading the class discussion of an assigned reading). (25 percent).

2) The 7-10 page research proposal presented in the second week (and feedback offered to other students regarding their proposals) (25 percent).

3) The final 17-20 page paper/research proposal submitted after the end of class (50 percent).

NOTICE: Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy
Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy.

Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Honesty
Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and … [you] have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the “Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity” found at http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity

Accommodation Statement
The College of Continuing Education [Advanced Programs] is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your OU Site Director.

Course Policies
Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course.

Copyright
Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA

Kevin B. Wright, PhD

Education

- 1999 Ph.D. The University of Oklahoma
- 1995 M.A. California State University, Chico
- 1992 B.A. San Francisco State University

Current Positions

- Advanced Programs professor since 2005
- Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

- COMM 5213 Interpersonal Communication
- COMM 5353 Conflict Management

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

Current Program of Research includes health communication (including provider-patient interaction, computer-mediated social support groups, provider communication training, and health organizations), computer-mediated communication (including on-line social support, social networking sites), and interpersonal communication (communication and aging, social support).

Representative Publications and Presentations


**Representative Honors and Awards Received**

• Editor, Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication

• Outstanding Young Scholar Award, SSCA