

**Title: Constructive Conflict Intervention (IP-510) DRAFT Syllabus**

**Why is this syllabus a draft?** *My syllabi always change as the semester goes along. I don't yet know you as a class, the pace at which you will work through material, or any particular needs you may bring. Sometimes the syllabus changes in very minor ways, and sometimes it gets a thorough overhaul mid-semester. We will find out together.*

**Offered:** Fall 2025, Wednesdays 4:00-6:50pm, Sept. 3-Dec. 17, 2025.

**Modality:** Face-to-face

**Course description:** This class will train each student to be a mediating presence in interpersonal and community conflicts. The instructor will teach conflict transformation ideology and tools for conflict analysis to build students' capacity to understand and respond to conflict in ways which advance justice. In conflict transformation-inspired mediation, the primary goal is to improve the relationship between the parties to allow them to chart their own solutions. Students will learn the five-stage mediation process so that they could conduct a complete formal mediation. However, the emphasis will be on understanding the goals and practices of each stage so that they can informally and effectively intervene in the conflicts in their own lives and their own communities. The class will use case studies to build skills in conflict analysis. Students will also practice skills through partner exercises and small group mediation role plays. Students will also be asked to use the skills outside the classroom and reflect on those experiences verbally or in writing.

**Instructor:** Phoebe Milliken [pmilliken@hartfordinternational.edu](mailto:pmilliken@hartfordinternational.edu) . Office: Room 8, 60 Lorraine St. (The Budd Building), Hartford, CT. [pmilliken@hartfordinternational.edu](mailto:pmilliken@hartfordinternational.edu) 860-709-7713

Meetings by appointment.

**Course Specific Outcomes:**

- Reflect upon the value of conflict and articulate the differences between the conflict transformation and conflict resolution approaches to conflict.
- Demonstrate the capacity to analyze conflict in terms of context, stakeholders, symptoms, primary issues, and root causes.
- Demonstrate capacity for active listening and use of language to convey understanding and respect across lines of difference.
- Demonstrate capacity to lead a multi-stage mediation process, and to be a mediating presence, i.e. use mediation skills informally. Self-assess the impact upon relationships.
- Demonstrate the capacity to prioritize relationships within situations of conflict.

**Relevant MAP program learning outcomes:**

- Building the internal resources necessary to engage conflict constructively.
  - a. Investigate your own inner world, including your motivations for participating in peacebuilding work, the mindsets you bring to conflict, your loyalties and biases, your reactions to complexity and ambiguity, and important components of your identity.
- Demonstrating skills necessary to transform conflict.
  - a. Demonstrate the skill of active listening.
  - b. Demonstrate the skill of eliciting and sharing stories.
  - c. Demonstrate multi-partiality by holding safe-enough space for diverse perspectives.
  - d. Apply conflict analysis tools, such as Tree Organizer, Nested Theory of Conflict, and Stakeholder Analysis, to case studies and real-world problems.

### **Concepts and skills covered:**

- Reframing the value of conflict
- Identifying conflict styles, in yourself and others
- Identifying the components of conflict: reasons, emotions, positions, needs/interests
- Theory of Conflict Transformation
- Approaches to conflict:
  - Range of approaches from interpersonal to international conflict
  - The role of a mediating or arbitrating body
  - The power of the parties in conflict
- Conflict Analysis:
  - Stakeholder analysis: examining conflict through the identity, position, needs and interests, and feelings of those involved
  - Tree theory: examining conflict in terms of symptoms, key issues, root causes
  - Nested Theory of Conflict
- Stages of the Mediation Process:
  - Pre-mediation Stage: Getting parties to the table
  - Introduction Stage: Creating Safety
  - Storytelling Stage: Developing Understanding
  - Problem Solving Stage: Building Ownership
  - Agreement Stage: Crafting Sustainability
- Skills:
  - Deep listening and paraphrasing
  - Asking open and clarifying questions
  - Handling lies and demands for apology

- Maintaining the power of decision-making with the parties
- Using mediation to build/repair relationships
- Accepting responsibility for the process; deflecting responsibility for the outcome
- Laundering language
- Hearing hidden offers
- Co-mediation

### **In-class exercises:**

1. Case study conflict analysis: context, tree diagram, Nested Conflict diagram, stakeholder diagram. These tools will be used in small groups, and in whole-class discussion.
2. Case study conflict recommendations exercise
3. Role Plays: (A job aid/rubric will help students prepare for and self-assess their performance.)
  - Preparation to be a mediator or a party
  - Role play – as mediator
  - Role play – as party
  - Debriefing the role play in small groups and as a class
  - Role play goal setting and self-assessment
4. Laundering language exercise
5. Hidden offers exercise
6. Final Assessment: lead a four-stage mediation role play. The mediator will self-assess, be peer assessed by the parties, and assessed by the instructor.

### **Homework Assignments:**

1. Reading as assigned in table below. Also listed in Canvas.
2. Practice of skills covered in class, sometimes informally, sometimes through structured exercises described on Canvas.
- Written reflections:
  - Over the semester there are six reflections to write on topics related to your practice of a particular skill or a thought experiment. You will find the topics in the Canvas site.
  - a. All of the topics will require some introspection; some may feel very personal. I ask that you complete all the reflections, however you may choose one not to turn in. None of the reflections will be shared with the class as a whole. Reflections are not discussion posts. However, there will be class periods in which I invite people to share their experience of practicing a skill outside of class or something they thought about while writing their reflection. Participation in these discussions is voluntary.

- b. Once during the semester you will need to meet with Emily Holcombe, the writing consultant, to review one of your reflections. You will receive a one-week extension for that reflection.
3. Conflict analysis using the tools taught in class.
4. Analysis of Fence Fiasco mediation demo. Students will watch a video of a mediation and analyze the choices the mediators made. What did the mediators do that you think was well done, and why? What would you do differently?

**Assessment:** This course is graded as high pass/pass/fail.

- 60% Participation in class discussions, exercises, and role plays\*
- 15% Written reflections
- 3% meeting with Emily Holcombe
- 8% Conflict analysis exercise
- 8% Analysis of mediation demonstration video
- 6% Final Assessment: lead a four-stage mediation role play.

**\*PLEASE NOTE:** Participation is the biggest part of your grade by far. Our learning is cooperative, so being late for class or missing class not only hurts your learning, it also hurts your classmates' learning. I am going to be time-mechanical/very North American about starting class at 4:00. If you come late to class your participation grade will suffer. Unexcused absences will also hurt your participation grade. However, I know that unexpected things happen in life. Illness happens. If you are unavoidably delayed, please let me know. If you are sick, please let me know and do not come to class. Excused absences will not hurt your participation grade. If you have an amazing opportunity, but taking it up means missing a class, please tell me. This will likely be considered an unexcused absence, since you had a choice in the matter. Life is full of choices and there will be times when your participation grade is not the most important thing to choose.

An additional note on participation: Our goal is for all members of the class to have their voices heard. For some people, speaking in class is difficult, for others it is easy. If it is difficult for you, I ask you to "step up": challenge yourself to share your ideas even if that is uncomfortable for you. If it is easy for you, I ask you to "step back": challenge yourself to listen more often to help allow space for more reserved class members to speak.

### **Required texts and resources:**

Note: Many YouTube videos contain captioning/subtitles in English. Look for the little box with CC in the bottom towards the right of the screen. Some TED talks contain captioning/subtitles in many languages. Look for the little box with three dots in the bottom towards the right of the screen.

## Conflict Transformation and Mediation

- Evans, Alice F., et al. Peace Skills: Manual for Community Mediators. Jossey-Bass, 2001.  
**[This is the only book you need to buy!]**
- Maire Dugan [Dugan Maire Nested-Model-Original.pdf \(emu.edu\)](#)
- Heidi Burgess "Conflict Styles" <https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict-styles>
- Melody Stanford Martin "What is Conflict Transformation?"  
<https://bravetalkproject.com/what-is-conflict-transformation/>
- Vicki Assegued [I'm Not Neutral About Neutrality: I'm Partial to Multi-Partiality - Mediate.com](#)
- Mediation demonstration ["Resolving Conflicts Through Mediation" - YouTube](#)
- [Voice thread on Apologies](#)
- [Voice thread on Lies](#)

## Conflict and the Brain

- Michelle Maiese "Emotions" <https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/emotion>
- The Fight or Flight response  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2GywoS77qc&list=PLXF1rEBoWNmeoWsU8n\\_4LDdwgRkk1kBbm](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2GywoS77qc&list=PLXF1rEBoWNmeoWsU8n_4LDdwgRkk1kBbm) &index=7
- The amygdala and the stress response <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEHwB1PG-Q>
- "The Power of Apologies" (podcast, 54 minutes) <https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/the-power-of-apologies/>
- "Cultivating Your Purpose" (podcast, 56 minutes)  
<https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/cultivating-yourpurpose/>

## Selected case studies, such as:

- One School Became Two (Community insecurity post violence in Indonesia)
- Prairie Storm (Church-state conflict in the U.S.)
- Giving Thanks (Interracial conflict in the U.S)
- No Reforms, No Elections (Governance and authority in East Africa)
- Saving the Forest (Post-violent conflict and eco-justice in Indonesia)
- Down in the Dust (Pollution in China)

## Optional resources:

- The Chemical Consequences of Listening — or Not [The Chemical Consequences of Listening — or Not — Michael Clifton Alliance](#)
- Neuroscience of conversation  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/conversationalintelligence/201905/the-neuroscience-conversations>

- Daniel Kahneman, *The Machinery of the Mind*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUpqr7nWc3s>
- Lucia Kanter St. Amour "How Understanding Neuroscience Improves Mediation"  
<https://www.mediate.com/articles/kanter-neuroscience.cfm>
- Kwame Christian, *Finding Confidence in Conflict* –  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6Zg65eK9XU>
- Voss, Chris, and Tahl Raz. *Never Split the Difference: Negotiating as If Your Life Depended on It*. Random House Business Books, 2016.
- Video summary of *Never Split the Difference*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIRk382yJm4>
- Fisher, Roger, and William Ury. *Getting to Yes*. Hutchinson, 1991.
- Adam Grant. *Pandemic to Politics: Adam Grant on How to Debate Someone With Opposing Views* | Amanpour and Company - YouTube or  
[https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/31/opinion/changesomeones-mind.html?referringSource=articleShare&fbclid=IwAR3bP15pii4nT-\\_vkeycfhAtUtakyAhLSsNhkV9maclg2H85TOVyEVzI5is](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/31/opinion/changesomeones-mind.html?referringSource=articleShare&fbclid=IwAR3bP15pii4nT-_vkeycfhAtUtakyAhLSsNhkV9maclg2H85TOVyEVzI5is)
- John Paul Lederach on Four Dimensions of Conflict  
<https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/transformation>
- John Paul Lederach *Defining Conflict Transformation*  
<https://ideasforpeace.org/content/defining-conflict-transformation/#:~:text=I%20propose%20the%20following%20definition,for%20creating%20constructive%20change%20processes>
- Definition of negotiation  
<https://www.beyondintractability.org/coreknowledge/negotiation>
- Harvard's Four Principles of negotiation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfTafEeKKE>
- Maire Dugan "Peaceful Change Strategies" (Negotiation and direct action together)  
[https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/Peaceful\\_Chg\\_Strats#narrow-body](https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/Peaceful_Chg_Strats#narrow-body)
- Ken Cloke "The Art of Asking Questions"  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bw3\\_EkTe\\_sl&t=31s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bw3_EkTe_sl&t=31s)

**Course Schedule:** Please note that the course schedule frequently needs to be updated in mid-semester to better accommodate the needs of the group.

Class	Topics	Preparation for THIS class (See Canvas for specifics)
1 9/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course Introduction</li> <li>• Mindsets about conflict</li> <li>• Issues and feelings in conflict</li> </ul>	Activity/Reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Come to class with a conflict in your own life you can talk about.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict styles</li> </ul>	
2 9/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict transformation</li> <li>Approaches to dealing with conflict</li> <li>Introduction to the Case Method</li> <li>Positions vs. needs and interests</li> <li>Deep listening</li> </ul>	<p>Other reading/listening/viewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Syllabus</li> <li>Heidi Burgess Conflict Styles <a href="https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict-styles">https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict-styles</a></li> <li>Melody Stanford Martin "What is Conflict Transformation?" <a href="https://bravetalkproject.com/what-is-conflict-transformation/">https://bravetalkproject.com/what-is-conflict-transformation/</a></li> <li>What is Mediation?</li> <li>About Reflections (Canvas page)</li> </ul> <p>Activity/Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflection: How do you use the different conflict styles?</li> </ul>
3 9/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict Analysis</li> <li>Case discussion: One School Became Two</li> <li>Introduction stage</li> </ul>	<p>Peace Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Introduction Stage, p. 38-42</li> <li>Listening Skills, p. 87-93</li> </ul> <p>Other reading/listening/viewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to read a case</li> <li>Case: One School Became Two</li> </ul> <p>Activity/Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paraphrasing practice</li> <li>Reflection: How is that paraphrasing practice going?</li> </ul>
4 9/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Storytelling stage</li> <li>Open and Clarifying Questions</li> <li>Problem solving stage</li> </ul>	<p>Peace Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Storytelling Stage, p. 43-49</li> <li>The Problem Solving Stage, p. 51-64</li> </ul> <p>Other reading/listening/viewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>David Hoffman "The Art of Asking Questions in Mediation and Negotiation" (1 hour video)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Michelle Maiese - Emotions <a href="https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/emotion">https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/emotion</a></li> </ul> <p>Activity/Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr. Fork and Ms. Spoon practice exercise</li> <li>Reflection: on Fork/Spoon</li> </ul>
5 10/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paraphrasing review</li> <li>Neutrality and multipartiality</li> <li>Introduction to mediation role plays</li> <li>Case-based role play</li> </ul>	<p>Peace Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Justice and Neutrality, P. 19-20</li> <li>The Agreement Stage, p. 75-80</li> </ul> <p>Other reading/listening/viewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amygdala and the stress response <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEHwB1PG-Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEHwB1PG-Q</a></li> <li><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEHwB1PG-Q">I'm Not Neutral About Neutrality: I'm Partial to Multi-Partiality - Mediate.com</a></li> </ul> <p>Activity/Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice NOT giving advice or solutions, but offering empathy and open questions</li> <li><u>Reflection due next week</u></li> </ul>
6 10/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement stage</li> <li>Stand-alone role play</li> <li>Caucus</li> </ul>	<p>Peace Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional Tools for Problem Solving, p. 66-74. Pay particular attention to the section on caucus on pages 72-74.</li> </ul> <p>Other reading/listening/viewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voice thread about apologies</li> <li>Voice thread about Lying</li> </ul> <p>Activity/Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice NOT giving advice or solutions, but offering empathy and open questions</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflection: How does it feel to NOT give advice?</li> </ul>
7 10/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nested Theory of Conflict</li> <li>Case Discussion: Prairie Storm or Giving Thanks</li> <li>Laundering language</li> </ul>	<p>Peace Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language in Mediation (p. 94-97. No need to do application exercises)</li> </ul> <p>Other reading/listening/viewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maire Dugan – Nested Theory of Conflict  <a href="#">Dugan Maire Nested-Model-Original.pdf (emu.edu)</a> </li> <li>Case: Prairie Storm or Giving Thanks</li> </ul> <p>Activity/Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a Tree Organizer for the issues in the case.</li> </ul>
8 10/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-mediation</li> <li>Co-mediation</li> <li>Hidden offers</li> </ul>	<p>Peace Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before Mediation: Laying the Foundation p. 32-35</li> <li>The Role of Co-Mediators, p. 35-37</li> </ul> <p>Other reading/listening/viewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ron Kraybill - When people interrupt  <a href="https://mediate.com/when-people-interrupt/">https://mediate.com/when-people-interrupt/</a> </li> </ul> <p>Activity/Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pair discussion: Constructive conflict intervention is cultural. Think about a conflict from your home context and how the skills you have learned might be appropriate or need to be adapted. Discuss with a partner. Post one takeaway from your discussion on Canvas.</li> </ul>
9 11/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural adaptation of conflict intervention tools</li> <li>Co-mediation</li> <li>Case Role Play</li> </ul>	<p>Other reading/listening/viewing: TBD</p> <p>Activity/Reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From the conflict analysis work we did on the case, generate 5 open questions a mediator</li> </ul>

		<p>could use to get parties to talk about their interests rather than their positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think of a conflict in your own life. Make a stakeholder chart to represent it.</li> <li>• Reflection: Thinking about stakeholders</li> </ul>
10 11/12	Conflict Analysis group assignment	<p><i>Activity/Reflection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Read case: Saving the Forest</i></li> <li>• <i>Do individual conflict analysis</i></li> </ul>
11 11/19	TBD: Catching up, or reviewing skills, or examining cases from your home contexts	<p>Peace Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing a Peacebuilding Process, p. 107- 116</li> </ul> <p><i>Activity/Reflection:</i></p> <p>Analysis of Fence Fiasco mediation video <a href="#">"Resolving Conflicts Through Mediation" - YouTube</a></p>
12 12/3	Designing a peacebuilding process	<p><i>Activity/Reflection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue work in groups from class</li> <li>• Reflection: Being a mediating presence</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
13 12/10	Final role plays	<p><i>Activity/Reflection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediation Self-assessment</li> <li>• Reflection: MAP Outcome 2c: What have you learned over the past few months about <i>Demonstrating multi-partiality by holding safe-enough space for diverse perspectives?</i></li> </ul>
14 12/17	Final role plays	<p><i>Activity/Reflection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediation Self-assessment</li> </ul>

**Accommodations:** For students who could benefit from writing assistance, or who ask for accommodations due to a disability, please contact the Student Services Team. Start with the Dean's office.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Additionally, if students receive editorial help with their writing they should also acknowledge it appropriately.

Credit will not be given for work containing plagiarism, and plagiarism can lead to failure of a course. Faculty will report all instances of plagiarism to the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will then collect documented details of the case and advance any recommendations for further action to the Academic Policy Committee. Through this process the situation will be reviewed and any additional penalties that may be warranted (up to and including expulsion from the school) will be determined. For clarity as to what constitutes plagiarism, the following description is provided:

1. Word for word plagiarism: (a) the submission of another person's work as one's own; (b) the submission of a commercially prepared paper; (c) the submission of work from a source which is not acknowledged by a footnote or other specific reference in the paper itself; (d) the submission of any part of another person's work without proper use of quotation marks.
2. Plagiarism by paraphrase: (a) mere re-arrangement of another person's words and phrases does not make them your own and also constitutes plagiarism; (b) paraphrasing another person's words, ideas, and information without acknowledging the original source from which you took them is also plagiarism. See Part II of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, (7th Edition, University of Chicago Press, 2007) for an explanation of the proper ways to acknowledge the work of others and to avoid plagiarism.
3. Reuse of your own work: Coursework submitted for credit in one course cannot be submitted for credit in another course. While technically not plagiarism, this type of infraction will be treated in the same manner as plagiarism and will be subject to the same penalties. If you are using small amounts of material from a previous submitted work, that work should be referenced appropriately. When a student is writing their final program requirement (paper, project or thesis) it may be appropriate, with their advisor's permission, to include portions of previously submitted materials if properly referenced.

**Other Academic policies** are listed at [Academic Policies | Hartford International University](#).

**Inclusive language:** Hartford International University is committed to a policy of inclusion in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in language that reflects the equality of genders, openness to diverse cultural and theological perspectives, and sensitivity to one another's images of God.

**Email Policy:** The instructor will use the official Hartford International University student email address for all course communications. Students should check their hartsem.edu email account regularly.

**Technology in class:** There isn't much need for technology in this class. We're going to talk a lot. We're going to move around some. You'll want pen and paper for brainstorming during small group discussions, but generally you don't need to take notes. If something is important, we'll write it on the board, and you might want to take pictures of it at the end of class. During class, please keep your phones silenced and put away unless a loved one is in the middle of an emergency.

**AI policy:** To be discussed in class