PSYC 430: The Psychology of Social Conflict
Oberlin College, Spring 2014

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Office: Severance 211, 775-8499   Office hours: Tuesday, 3 – 4 pm; Thursday, 2 – 3 pm

COURSE OVERVIEW
What can psychology contribute to an understanding of social conflict? Through an
investigation of research and theory from the fields of social, cognitive, and political psychology,
this course explores the psychological processes that lead to and exacerbate conflict, as well as
those that contribute to resolving conflicts. The course is organized into three main sections:

I. GROUNDING OUR ANALSYIS: POWER BASES AND TACTICS
We will begin with a close exploration of power dynamics, because power ultimately determines
how a conflict unfolds, how it is resolved, and indeed whether it even occurs.

II. FORCES LEADING TO CONFLICT.
Examining both individual and group processes, we will explore some well-known concepts in
psychology and discuss how they help us understand why social conflict often becomes so
embattled and intractable.

III. TECHNIQUES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION.
Drawing from the expertise of those involved with conflict resolution in many settings -- from
corporate board rooms to international peace talks -- we will investigate what psychologists
know about resolving conflicts peacefully.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
All students are expected to come to class having read and thought about the readings. You
should contribute something to class discussion **every single class**. Other course requirements
include:

Weekly written response: Each week, you will submit a written response to the week's reading.
These responses should NOT be summaries; I have done the reading, and don't need a reminder.
They do not need to be long (no more than a page) or exhaustive (you do not need to elaborate on
every single reading). Use them as an opportunity to crystalize your thoughts on the reading
before coming to class. Write about any reactions, questions, agreements, critiques, or related
lines of thought that the readings inspire. Feel free to talk about how the readings relate to your
conflict. They will be turned in **electronically** before **10:00 am** Wednesday morning each week,
and will be graded ($\sqrt{}$-, $\sqrt{}$, $\sqrt{}$+) on content, not style. Responses must be received by 10 am to get
full credit. Note: A $\sqrt{}$ is the default grade; $\sqrt{}$+'s are given sparingly. A $\sqrt{}$- is an indication that
your responses are missing the mark. Feel free to come talk with me at any time to receive
feedback on your responses. You may skip ONE response paper during the semester without
penalty.

Conflict Presentation: At the beginning of the semester, all students will choose a real-life conflict that they will present to the class; this conflict will also serve as the subject matter of your term paper for the course. Students will take turns presenting their conflicts to the class throughout the first two sections of the course. These presentations will serve as a springboard for class discussion, and will provide the class with concrete examples to which abstract concepts can be tied. They will also allow each presenter to benefit from the class's input when preparing their papers (see below).

    You may choose any conflict that interests you (international, political, cultural, etc.), provided you have access to enough information about it to make a meaningful analysis of it. Your presentation should provide the class with a description of the parties involved in the conflict, as well as how the conflict developed. You should also offer thoughts on how the concepts from the day's readings relate to this particular situation.

Term Paper: Throughout the semester, you will work towards creating a 15 – 20 page term paper presenting and analyzing your conflict using the concepts from the course readings. This paper will be written and submitted in sections (please see the course website for a more detailed description of each section):

> Section 1: In 4 - 5 pages, describe the conflict you have chosen, including an analysis of the power dynamics present.
> Section 2: In 5 - 7 pages, discuss how this conflict can be understood using the concepts we have discussed in the first part of class.
> Section 3: In 5 - 7 pages, discuss how the conflict you have chosen might potentially be resolved using concepts we have discussed in the second part of class.

Each section is due at 4:00 pm on a Friday (see syllabus for dates) to limit the extent to which paper-writing interferes with class preparation. Please submit papers electronically via blackboard. I prefer papers to be submitted in MS Word so that I can edit and add comments directly into the paper.

Late work: Occasionally, we all have catastrophes and fall apart. Should this happen to you this semester (and I hope it doesn't), you may have 48 extra hours to complete any ONE paper. You may only do this once during the semester, and this does not apply to weekly response papers. NO OTHER EXTENSIONS WILL BE GIVEN, unless you are kidnapped by aliens or dying in the hospital. Late papers will lose one grade (i.e., from A to A-) for each day late. Papers turned in on Monday, for example, cannot get a grade higher than a B+.

One goal of this course is to help students become better writers. Writing improves with practice, and with feedback. Thus, at the end of the semester, you have the opportunity to revise all sections of your term paper before you resubmit them as one cohesive whole. At this point I will give a new grade for the whole paper that reflects your improvements and integration.

Your final grade will be determined using the following formula:

Class participation & weekly responses	25%
Term Paper Section 1	10%
Term Paper Section 2	25%
Term Paper Section 3	25%
Final Revision/integration	15%

<u>SYLLABUS</u> (* = available on ERES; + = available at bookstore; all other articles available in electronic format through the library's online catalog)

I. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

2/5   INTRODUCTION

DATE TBA   POWER
*French, J. & Raven, B. (1959). Bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power* (150 – 167). Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

*Ren, Z. D. (1993). Yin-yang theory and conflicts. In S. Worchel & J. A. Simpson. (Eds.), *Conflict between people and groups*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 233-235.

*Pratto, F., Lee, I., Tan, J., & Pitpitan, E. (2008). Power Basis Theory: A psycho-ecological approach to power. *Unpublished manuscript.*

Chen, S., Lee-Chai, A., & Bargh, J. (2001). Relationship orientation as a moderator of the effects of social power. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80,* 173 – 187.

Galinsky, A., Gruenfeld, D. & Magee, J. (2003). From power to action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85,* 453 – 466.

Goodwin, S., Operario, D., & Fiske, S. T. (1998). Situational power and interpersonal dominance facilitate bias and inequality. *Journal of Social Issues, 54,* 677-698.

II. FORCES LEADING TO CONFLICT

2/19   EXTREMISTS AND ENEMY IMAGES
           STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

*Ronson, J. (2002). *Them: Adventures with extremists*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 9-106.

*Silverstein, B. (1992). The psychology of enemy images. In S. Staub & P. Green (Eds.), *Psychology and social responsibility: Facing global challenges*. New York: NYU Press, 145-162.

*Deutsch, M. (1990). Psychological roots of moral exclusion. *J. of Social Issues, 46,* 21-25.

Harris, L. T. & Fiske, S. T. (2006). Dehumanizing the lowest of the low: Neuroimaging responses to extreme out-groups. *Psychological Science, 17,* 847 – 853.

Haslam, N. (2006). Dehumanization: An integrative review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 10,* 252 – 264.

Solomon, S., Greenberg, J., & Pszczynski, T. (2000). Pride and prejudice: Fear of death and social behavior. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 9,* 200-204.

Hayes, J., Schimel, J. & Williams, T. (2008). Fighting death with death: The buffering effects of learning that worldview violators have died. *Psychological Science, 19,* 501 – 507.

2/26   ATTRIBUTIONAL BIASES & PERCEIVING THE OTHER
        STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

*Jones, E. E., & Nisbett, R. E. (1971). The actor and the observer: Divergent perceptions of the causes of behavior. In E. E. Jones, D. E. Kanouse, H. H. Kelley, R. E. Nisbett, S. Valins, & B. Weiner (Eds.), *Attributions: Perceiving the causes of behavior* (pp. 1-16). Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press.

Baumeister, R. F., Stillwell, A., & Wotman, S. R. (1990). Victim and perpetrator accounts of interpersonal conflict: Autobiographical narratives about anger. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59,* 994-1005.

Chambers, J. R. & Melnyk, D. (2006). Why do I hate thee? Conflict misperceptions and intergroup mistrust. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32,* 1295 – 1311.

*Jervis, R. (1986). Deterrence, the spiral model and intentions of the adversary. In R. K. White (Ed.), *Psychology and the prevention of nuclear war.* New York: NYU Press, 107-130.

*Norenzayan, A., Choi, I., & Nisbett, R. E. (1999). Eastern and western perceptions of causality for social behavior: Lay theories about personalities and situations. In D. A. Prentice & D. T. Miller (Eds.), *Cultural divides: Understanding and overcoming group conflict.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Kennedy, K. A., & Pronin, E. (2008). When disagreement gets ugly: Perceptions of bias and the escalation of conflict. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34,* 833 – 848.

2/28   FIRST PAPER SECTION DUE AT 5 PM

3/5   SHORTCOMINGS IN JUDGMENTS AND DECISION-MAKING
        STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

*Ross, L. & Ward, A. (1995). Psychological barriers to dispute resolution. In Zanna, M. P. (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 27.* New York: Academic Press, 255-304.

Baron, J., Bazerman, M. H., & Shonk, K. (2006). Enlarging the society pie through wise legislation. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 1,* 123 – 132.

*Holsti, O. R. (1980). Crisis, stress, and decision-making. In R. A. Falk & S. S. Kim (Eds.), *The war system: An interdisciplinary approach.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 491-508.

Bar-Jospeh, U. & Kruglanski, A. W. (2003). Intelligence Failure and Need for Cognitive Closure: On the Psychology of the Yom Kippur Surprise. *Political Psychology, 24,* 75-99.

Dunwoody, P. & Hammond, K. (2006). The Policy of Preemption and Its Consequences: Iraq and Beyond. *Peace and Conflict, 12,* 19 – 35.

Kahan, D., Peters, E., Dawson, E. C., & Slovic, P. (2013). Motivated Numeracy and Enlightened Self Government. *The Cultural Cognition Project Working Paper #116.*

3/12   SOCIAL MOTIVES, SOCIAL GROUPS
        STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

+Rubin, J. Z., Pruitt, D. G., & Kim, S. H. (1994). *Social conflict: Escalation, stalemate, and settlement*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Read pages 90-97.

Stawiski, S., Tindale, R. S., & Dykema-Engblade, A. (2009). The effects of ethical climate on group and individual level deception in negotiation. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 20*, 287--308.

Seyle, D. C. & Newman, M. L. (2006). A house divided? The psychology of red and blue America. *American Psychologist, 61,* 571 – 580.

Lile Jia, Samual C. Karpen, and Edward R. Hirt (2011). Beyond Anti-Muslim Sentiment: Opposing the Ground Zero Mas a Means to Pursuing a Stronger America. *Psychological Science.*

Zhang, L. & Baumeister, R. F. (2006). Your money or your self-esteem: Threatened egotism promotes costly entrapment in losing endeavors. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32,* 881 – 893.

Barry, H. & Tyler, T. (2009). The Other Side of Injustice: When Unfair Procedures Increase Group-Serving Behavior. *Psychological Science, 20,* 1026 – 1032.

*Miller, D. T. & Prentice, D. A. (1999). Some consequences of a belief in group essence: The category divide hypothesis. In D. A. Prentice & D. T. Miller (Eds.), *Cultural Divides: Understanding and overcoming group conflict.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 213-238.

II. TECHNIQUES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

3/19   PERCEIVING AND DEFINING JUSTICE
        STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

*Tyler, T. R., & Belliveau, M. A. (1995). Tradeoffs in justice principles: Definitions of fairness. In B. B. Bunker & J. Z. Rubin (Eds.), *Conflict, cooperation and justice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 291-314.

Lind, E. A., Kanfer, R., & Earley, P. C. (1990). Voice, control, and procedural justice: Instrumental and noninstrumental concerns in fairness judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59*, 952-959.

Valdesolo, P. & DeSteno, D. (2007). Moral hypocrisy: Social groups and the flexibility of virtue. *Psychological Science, 18,* 689 – 690.

*Kim, S. H., & Smith, R. H. (1993). Revenge and conflict resolution. *Negotiation Journal, 9,* 37-43.

Lickel, B., et al. (2006). Vicarious retribution: The role of collective blame in intergroup aggression. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 10,* 372 – 390.

*Fine, M., & Wong, L. M. (1995). Perceived (In)justice: Freeing the compliant victim. In B. B. Bunker & J. Z. Rubin (Eds.), *Conflict, cooperation and justice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 315-345.

3/21   **SECOND PAPER SECTION DUE AT 5:00 PM**

4/2   **FACILITATING DE-ESCALATION**
           STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Coleman, P. T. (1997). Redefining ripeness: A social-psychological perspective. *Peace and Conflict, 3,* 81-103.

De Dreu, C. K. W. (2005). A PACT against conflict escalation in negotiation and dispute resolution. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 14,* 149 – 152.

+ Rubin, J. Z., Pruitt, D. G., & Kim, S. H. (1994). *Social conflict: Escalation, stalemate, and settlement*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Read Chapter 9, *Stalemate and De-escalation*.

Paese, P. W, & Gilin, D. A. (2000). When an adversary is caught telling the truth: Reciprocal cooperation versus self-interest in distributive bargaining. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 26,* 79-90.

*Osgood, C. E. (1986). Graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension reduction: GRIT. In R. K. White (Ed.), *Psychology and the prevention of nuclear war*. New York: NYU Press, 194-203.

*Fisher, R. (1996). *Beyond Machiavelli: Tools for coping with conflict.* New York: Penguin Books. Read Chapter 3, *Focus on their choice.*

+ Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (1991). *Getting to yes: Negotiation without giving in*. 2nd Ed. New York: Penguin Books. Read Chapter 1, *Don't bargain over positions.*

4/9   **EMOTION MANAGEMENT**
           STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

+ Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (1991). *Getting to yes.*   Read Chapter 2, *Separate the people from the problem,* and 7, *What if they won't play?*

Hall, N. R. & Crisp, R. J. (2005). Considering multiple criteria for social categorization can reduce intergroup bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 31,* 1435 – 1444.

Cohen, T R. & Insko, C. A. (2008). War and peace: Possible approaches to reducing intergroup conflict. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 3,* 87 – 93.

Nadler, A. & Liviatan, I. (2006). Intergroup reconciliation: Effects of adversary's expressions of empathy, responsibility, and recipients' trust. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32,* 459 – 470.

Sherman, D. K. & Cohen, G. L. (2002). Accepting threatening information: self-affirmation and the reduction of defensive biases. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 11,* 119 - 123.

Paolini, S., Hewstone, M., Cairns, E., & Voci, A. (2004). Effects of direct and indirect cross-group friendships on judgments of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland: The mediating role of an anxiety-reduction mechanism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30,* 770 – 786.

4/16   NEGOTIATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING
        STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

+ Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (1991). *Getting to yes*. Read Chapter 3, *Focus on interests, not positions;* and 4, *Invent options for mutual gain.*

+ Rubin, J. Z., Pruitt, D. G., & Kim, S. H. (1994). *Social conflict: Escalation, stalemate, and settlement.* New York: McGraw-Hill. Read Chapter 10, *Problem Solving*.

*Rouhana, N. N., & Kelman, H. C. (1994). Promoting joint thinking in international conflicts: An Israeli-Palestinian Continuing Workshop. *Journal of Social Issues, 50,* 157-178.

Galinsky, A. D., Maddux, W. W., Gilin, D., & White, J. B. (2008). Why it pays to get inside the head of your opponent. *Psychological Science, 19,* 378 – 384.

Cross, S., & Rosenthal, R. (1999). Three models of conflict resolution: Effects on intergroup expectancies and attitudes. *Journal of Social Issues, 55,* 561-580.

*Cohen, R. (1991). *Negotiating cross cultures: Communication obstacles in international diplomacy.* Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press. Read pages 19-48, and 105-161).

4/23   THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION AND MEDIATION.
        Class activity

+Rubin, J. Z., Pruitt, D. G., & Kim, S. H. (1994). *Social conflict: Escalation, stalemate, and settlement*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Read Chapter 11, *The intervention of third parties: Mediation*.

*Raiffa, J. (1981). *The art and science of negotiations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Read 205-217.

*Zartman, I. W., & Touval, A. (1985). International mediation: conflict resolution and power politics. *Journal of Social Issues, 41,* 27-45.

Tidwell, A. (2001). A preliminary evaluation of problem solving for one. *Mediation Quarterly, 18***,** 249 – 257.

*Rouhana, N. N., & Korper, S. H. (1997). Power asymmetry and goals of unofficial third party intervention in protracted intergroup conflict. *Peace and Conflict, 3,* 1-17.

4/30   BUILDING PEACE FOR THE LONG TERM

Desivilya, H. S. (2004). Promoting coexistence by means of conflict education: The MACBE model. *Journal of Social Issues, 60,* 339 – 355.

Wohl, M. & Branscombe, N. (2005). Collective guilt assignment to historical perpetrator groups depend on level of social category inclusiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.*

De Rivera, J., Kurrien, R., & Olsen, N. (2007). The emotional climate of nations and their culture of peace. *Journal of Social Issues, 63,* 255 – 271.

*Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2008). Transforming trauma in the aftermath of gross human rights abuses: Making public spaces intimate through the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In A. Nadler, T. Malloy, & J. Fisher (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Reconciliation*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Byrne , C. C. (2004). Benefit or Burden: Victims' Reflections on TRC Participation. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 10,* 237 – 256.

*Harris, L. T. & Fiske, S. T. (2008). Diminishing vertical distance: Power and social status as barriers to intergroup reconciliation. In A. Nadler, T. Malloy, & J. Fisher (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Reconciliation.* New York: Oxford University Press.

5/5   **THIRD SECTION DUE at 5:00 PM**

5/7   **CONCLUSIONS (Dinner chez Frantz)**

5/17   **COMPLETE, REVISED TERM PAPER DUE BY 9:00 PM**