CRES 610: MANAGING CONFLICT IN ORGANIZATIONS
8:30-9:50am, rm 282

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to prepare students to work in a conflict management position in or for an organization. Students will receive a basic introduction to organizational context and structure, leadership and communication styles, and sources of workplace disputes. The course also provides an overview of the processes by which organizations typically resolve disputes. Students then apply this knowledge to current organizational disputes, designing a conflict analysis and suggested resolution strategies and redesign.

Instructor: Dr. Clare Fowler, Cfowler@Mediate.com, Discussion times available in person or on phone.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify standard organizational disputes, structure, and culture
- Identify leadership and communication styles, their impact, and common associated conflicts
- Propose a resolution strategy
- Define an organization’s culture, analyze the conflict and its path, and create an assessment and strategies for exiting the conflict
- Create Documents for Personal Portfolio: Organizational Assessment, Conflict Diagnosis Questionnaire, Toolbox, Conflict Cost, Exit Options, Rate Sheet, Strategy Suggestions

Course Texts

- Course pack available through the bookstore.
- Additional readings will be available through links in this document.

Assignments and Grading

Purpose of this course: to prepare you to manage organizational disputes. When preparing your assignments, be creative, professional, and thorough. Use this time as an opportunity to develop your brand, your portfolio, and your approach to create real diagnoses, proposals, and agreements. This class is reading heavy in the beginning, allowing you to use this knowledge to prepare your assignments at the end of class.

Feedback: I will be reviewing your assignments from the eyes of an HR/manager and giving you their feedback.

Readings and assignments are due at the beginning of each class.

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<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<td><strong>1. Organizational Culture memo</strong> Select an organization (in the news or personal familiarity), then prepare memo diagnosing organization: Analyze organization using the tools and concepts covered in the class, culture, key players, hierarchy, leadership style, potential concerns and conflicts. 1-2 pgs.</td>
<td>[Class 4, Jan 16]</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td><strong>2. Conflict Cost memo and presentation</strong> - Identify an organizational conflict. Outline the potential direct and indirect, immediate and long-term costs of organizational conflict. Come prepared to discuss, as if presenting to company/board. 1 pg., + 2 minute presentation</td>
<td>[Class 6, Jan 23]</td>
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<td><strong>3. Conflict Diagnosis Presentation and accompanying memo</strong> – (Use the same conflict from assignment 2). Based on public information or personal information, what internal dispute systems are in place to address and resolve conflicts? Were those processes used in the conflict you identified? Provide a sample Conflict Diagnosis template, and your assessment of why those processes were used or avoided. Present these in a memo and be prepared to present your findings to the class. 5 pgs, + 3-5 minute-presentation</td>
<td>[Class 11, Feb 11]</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td><strong>4. Final assignment</strong> – Assume that you are a consultant to a company in a real-world organizational conflict of your choice. Prepare a diagnosis, conflict resolution proposal, and working plan. Apply the concepts, tools and research we have covered in the course. Assess the extent to which the company’s existing processes and culture mitigate or exacerbate the conflict. Identify potential future risks the status quo imposes on the organization. Devise dispute prevention recommendations for the company to improve its approach to organizational conflict. You might also want to include a “Personal Strategies” section, outlining any potential legal considerations, key players, potential outcomes, etc. 10-20 pages of material (report, memo, website, presentation, portfolio, etc.)</td>
<td>[Due on the date of your presentation or by the last class]</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td><strong>5. Attendance, preparation, and participation</strong>—including various ad hoc in class and brief assignments</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>25%</td>
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**Expectations for ALL Assignments:**
- Well-edited
- Define your brand, reinforce a consistent brand
- Be creative (let me see you and your purpose through your work)
- Include theory behind organizational or conflict concept
- Cite resources supporting theory and analysis (footnotes or endnotes are acceptable): Resources should be from Course Packet, Class Lecture, Additional Resources
- As soon as you explain a concept in a paper, define it, cite it, use an example
# Syllabus

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PART I – ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

1/7 Class 1: Organizational Structure
Understanding the tax, culture, and structure of an organization helps to identify common conflict pitfalls—as well as common options for resolving those conflicts. This class will set the stage for the course by looking at a variety of organizational structures, examining what conflicts are common, and which conflicts are unique to each structure.

Discuss Assignment 1, Costs of Organizational Conflict. Students pick an organization. Identify Culture, Leadership, a real or realistic conflict, and outline costs. Be creative—use time to prep a real presentation or proposal.

1/9 Class 2: Organizational Leadership
This class will examine the different organizational leadership styles. These styles are derived from the personality of the CEO, the needs of the company, pre-existing structure, and company values. Being familiar with the leadership style often indicates what types of conflicts are likely to be present, and how the management will respond to resolution options.

Class discussion will highlight the types of conflict each leadership style might create. This will discuss the effect on structure.
1) Brainstorm leadership styles:
2) What conflict will these leadership styles create?
3) What types of organization require these leadership styles?

Organizational Communication--Introduction
Class discussion: What are the goals of communication in the workplace? What factors foster or hinder this environment? The class will examine communication styles (individually, departmentally, and organizationally). What are some practical tools for increasing the effectiveness of communication?

Reading:
2. Ury, Brett, & Goldberg, (1998). Getting Disputes Resolved, 101-133. (When reading, students pick a role—employees, union, or mine management. Prepare to role play your side.)

6. Optional:

Then, this class provides an overview of status discrimination under federal law that can escalate to employment litigation. It includes discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, and disability. This class also covers the legal concepts of harassment and stereotyping.

When should a case be mediated? Litigated?

In Class Resources—review and use to solve in class examples in groups. Identify issue, understand the legal context, and create a potential agreement:
   1. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act available at http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/titlevii.cfm

Extra Credit quick answer for next class: What does at-will employment mean? What is the history of this concept? What does “just cause” mean in grievance disputes?

1/14 Class 3: Consequences of Organizational Conflict
Extra Credit: What does at-will employment mean? What is the history of this concept? What does “just cause” mean in grievance disputes?

Conflict can have positive or negative effects on an organization, and short- and long-term consequences. These consequences can also have repercussions on the rest of the organization. Cost of employment disputes will be examined. Long-term economic effect on companies with a history of conflict will also be studied.
PART II – ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT

1/16 Class 4: Conflict Entrance
The number one cause of conflict in organizations is miscommunication. This class will begin to focus on the common path of conflict in organizations, with miscommunication as the common Entrance. Additional conflict entrances will be examined (task, process, relational, role confusion, scarcity of resources, etc.) and illustrated with video snippets.

Students will look at the conflict path and will discuss the path their conflicts have taken.

Reading:

Reminder – Hand in Assignment #1 at the start of class.

Discuss Assignment 2: Conflict Cost memo and presentation - Identify an organizational conflict. Outline the potential direct and indirect, immediate and long-term costs of organizational conflict. Come prepared to discuss, as if presenting to company/board. Due Class 6

No class on 1/21

1/23 Class 5: Conflict Location and Types
Internal, External, and Systemic Conflicts:

Optional:

Reading:
This class will examine employee to employee, employee to employer, department to department, home to office, vendor to organization, location to location, local and organization-wide systemic disputes, and economic entrances to conflict.

**Class Preparation - Discuss Assignment 2.** Identify an organizational conflict in the news before the next class. Become familiar with the facts, and analyze it using the tools and concepts covered in the course. Be prepared to present your findings to the class. Diagnose the conflict, using the tools in Stitt (2003) chs 2 and 3. Create an argument for mediation, addressing the potential concerns of the organization.

**Extra optional homework to be assigned at end of Class 4:**

**Review and answer at the beginning of Class 5**

What is BFOQ?
Does Hooters have to hire men?
Does a stockroom have to hire someone in a wheelchair?
    What happens if they are hired, then become disabled?
Does an office have to hire someone with autism/Aspergers?
What should someone do if they think they are being harassed?
What is the role of the EEOC?
Give an example of a case that should be mediated.
Give an example of a case that should be litigated.

**Reading**


**1/28 Class 6: The Escalation of Conflict**

Assignment 2 due at beginning of class, and class mini-presentations

Miscommunication is the most common entrance to conflict, but there are many things that make it escalate. In an organization, a personal conflict is often escalated by the betrayal of values. A departmental conflict is often escalated by a mix of loyalty and the lack of clear goals. Systemic conflict is often escalated by scarce resources. Common organizational conflicts will be examined to understand what fuels their fire.

Class project: Each student creates their own Conflict Diagnosis Worksheet

Diagnosis options: (interview, phone, survey?)
Culture,
Frequency of Conflicts,
Escalation of Conflicts,
Consequences of Conflict,
Leadership Style,
How tech savvy is organization
Number of employees, departments, and projects,
Budget: just to set up, keep someone on retainer, keep someone on staff, train
existing employees to facilitate and mediate?
Purpose of meeting: reduce conflict, reduce tension, improve communication, avoid
litigation?
Who is involved (external, internal, management, seasonals)
Typical conflict type (relational, interest-based, rights-based, need for clarification, systemic)
Existing DR options
Previous DR training
Acceptance of DR
What processes are voluntary? Mandatory?

Reading:
1. Noll, D. Conflict Escalation, here:
   http://www.mediate.com/articles/noll2.cfm
2. Jordan, T. Glasl’s Nine Stage Model of Conflict Escalation, here:
   http://www.mediate.com/articles/jordan.cfm

PART III –SELECTING THE RESOLUTION PROCESS

1/30 Class 7: Continuum of Organizational ADR Processes
The Conflict Resolution Continuum:
This class will compare common processes for resolving disputes within organizations: prevention, negotiation, conciliation, HR as neutral, mediation, arbitration, and litigation.

Class discussion: look at different conflicts—where should they be handled on the continuum? What is the outcome—binding, enforceable? Should the outcome be verbal or written—part of the employee record, performance improvement plan?

Reading:


Turn in Assignment 2 at the start of class
Discuss Assignment 3 Conflict Diagnosis Presentation and accompanying memo – (Using earlier conflict from assignment 2) Based on public information, what internal dispute systems are in place to address and resolve conflicts? Were those processes used in the conflict you identified? Provide your assessment of why those processes were used or avoided. Write them in a memo and be prepared to present your findings to the class.

2/4 Class 8: TEACH Dispute Prevention: Systems Design, Handbooks, Training
The fastest way to solve a conflict is to prevent it from happening in the first place. How can dispute systems design be applied to the organizational conflict? Do ADR systems improve employee satisfaction?

Discuss the TEACH method.

Students will dissect a typical employee handbook, analyzing how each section could create systemic conflict. Then students will create a list of what items need to be included in an employee handbook, and draft new definitions designed to prevent future conflict.

Reading:


4. HP's Open Door Policy

5. Vanderbilt University's Progressive Discipline Policy


2/6 Class 9: Moving through the Continuum: Ombuds Offices
This class provides an overview of ombuds practices and procedures.

Reading:

PART IV. RESOLVING ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS

2/11: Class 10: Mediating Disputes:
Preparation: Identifying Type, Culture, Leadership Style, Who Needs to be Involved, Issues, Preparing Forms, Scheduling
Pre-exit conversations and SONAR

Reading:

2/13 Class 11: Organizational Communication: Nature v Nurture Value Disputes

Turn in Assignment 3 at the start of class, be prepared to give mini-presentations

Discuss Assignment 4 Final assignment – Assume that you are a consultant to a company in a real-world organizational conflict of your choice. Prepare a diagnosis, conflict resolution proposal, and working plan. Apply the concepts, tools and research we have covered in the course. Assess the extent to which the company’s existing processes and culture mitigate or exacerbate the conflict. Identify potential future risks the status quo imposes on the organization. Devise dispute prevention recommendations for the company to improve its approach to organizational conflict.

Class discussion: How to manage power imbalances in the workplace, to prevent victimization/isolation of employees. Students will look at clips from popular movies and news stories and identify the prevailing power imbalance. Then students will prepare an informal analysis of the imbalance, as if they had been hired to resolve the imbalance.
Discuss options for resolving a dispute: power-based, rights-based, position-based, and interest-based. People with power prefer power-based or rights-based, but this is often a negative experience for the person without power. The person who has a position-based dispute is taking a risk, and might be preventing themselves and the other party from a better option. Position-based disputes only allow for one outcome. Interest-based allows for multiple outcomes. Example: Strawberry Fields Central Park musicians dispute. Interest-based allows for most flexibility and ownership. Try using interest-based options first—best way to combat power imbalances.

Reading:

2/18 Class 12: Special Issues Involving Whistleblowers
Whistleblowers raise difficult issues because their information may need to be disclosed to others inside or outside the organization. Whistleblowers are often socially marginalized, and management may be angry about the whistleblower's breach of loyalty.

Discussion of BATNAs: Many people who see a wrong do not act on it because their BATNA (best alternative to any agreement they could reach in negotiation) is good (the alternative is typically to stay and not do anything).

Reading:

2/20 Class 13: Conflict Exit—Agreements and Resolution
This class will focus on creating formal and informal resolutions to conflict. Students will analyze a formal organizational conflict resolution agreement, as well as an informal, verbal resolution. Students will create their own Climate Assessment and Mediated Agreement.
Reading:

2/25 Class 14: Organizational Change
Conflicts often occur within the context of organizational change. Sometimes addressing conflict may demand organizational change of its own. How can you engage the organization’s leadership to improve the conflict profile of an organization?

Unfreeze, Change, Refreeze.

Reading:
1. Schein, E. (2004). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, chs 15, 16, &17 pp 291-365. While reading, think about your final assignment. Use the steps outlined to prepare guidelines for moving the organization through a potential change – either to prevent a conflict or recover from a conflict. Will be scanned and sent to class.

2/27: Class 15: Review and prepare for Role Play
Students will pick a conflict from one of the organizations they have been studying. They will diagnose the organization and the dispute. They will prepare a proposal and a plan.

Review Conflict Terms and considerations

¾ Class 16: Ethics and Organizational Conflict Role-Play – an additional make-up class might be necessary
Students will act as a neutral in a mock organization with an escalated conflict. Students will take turns acting as neutral, assessing the organization, identifying the conflict, creating an analysis, tracing the conflict path, and suggest agreement and resolution strategies.

3/6 Class 17: Presentations
Together students will draft the agreement.

*Reminder - Final assignment due Class 18.*

3/11 Class 18: Online Facilitation

*Students will leave class having created their own Conflict Diagnosis Worksheet, analyzing the conflict path of an ongoing conflict.*
COURSE POLICIES

Accessible Education for All Students: The University of Oregon works to ensure inclusive learning environments for all students. We recognize that students bring a variety of learning styles to the course, and that some learning styles may require adjustment to course structure. We are happy to talk with you about such adjustments. Please be in touch with the professor if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your participation as a result of learning style or diagnosed disability. For more information, you are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Inclusion and Collegiality: Our community that values inclusion. We are committed to equal opportunities for all faculty, staff, and students to develop individually, professionally, and academically regardless of ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic standing, cultural beliefs and traditions. We are dedicated to an environment that is inclusive and fosters awareness, understanding, and respect for diversity. If you feel excluded or threatened, please contact Associate Dean of Students Jennifer Espinola. The University Bias Response Team is also a resource that can assist you. See http://bias.uoregon.edu or call 541-346-2037.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to demonstrate high levels of academic integrity and professionalism, and are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be grounds for automatic failure in the course. If you have questions about conduct please ask your instructor or review the University Student Conduct Code (available at http://conduct.uoregon.edu) or the UO policy at http://www.uoregon.edu/~stl/programs/student_judi_affairs/conduct-code.htm

Participation and Attendance: Attendance and participation are important parts of this course and are factored into your grade.

Computer Use: You are permitted to bring your computer but may not surf the internet for purposes unrelated to the class.
Class Terms:
Conflict Path
Entrance:

~ Scarcity (Fear) (workplace),
~ Rapid Expanse (Pride) (workplace),
~ Zero-Sum (Corner view),
~ Power Imbalance (relationships),
~ Unfair Advantage (religion),
~ Distrust (history/ethnicity/generational),
~ Dislike (lots of settings)
~ Self-identifying (Robber’s Cave/Realistic Conflict Theory which states people will tend to think positively of their own group and negatively of anyone outside of it),
~ Uncertainty Reduction Theory (people dislike uncertainty and they use communication to immediately identify if you are a friend or a foe)
~ Failure of connection (putting distance between ourselves and the other person makes it easier to “dragonize” them)
~ Lack of acceptance of ourselves (understanding our own strengths and weaknesses and sometimes other people must react to them)
~ Crossed personal space or personal circle
~ Way of getting attention—Poor Me! (negative intimacy serving as a proxy for positive intimacy)
~ Lack of skill with a certain kind of behavior (causes tension, internally and on group, people rarely admit)
~ Unrealistic expectations—no happily ever afters
~ A lack of real listening or understanding, leading to misassumptions and lack of validation
~ Secrets and cover-ups
~ Lack of skill in communicating
~ Projecting Daddy/Mommy Issues (common with management, need for approval, overreacting)
~ The asphalt, the surrounding structure or system causing tension/conflict
~ Grassroots grumbling—voice of change (conflict can also be an opportunity, but is still uncomfortable)
~ Death rumblings, when something is ending that sadness causes fights
~ Defense (Showing your side of the picture, in other words every prosecutor needs a defense attorney for things to be fair)
~ Fear of differences, instead of embracing differences
~ Bids for affection/fishing for compliments
~ Inability to learn from past mistakes
Escalation:

- Ingratiation
- Persuasion/Argumentation
- Shaming/Guilt-tripping
- Argumentation
- Tit-for-Tat
- Threats
- Aversion/Silent Treatment
- Insults/name-calling, swearing
- Non-Violent Resistance/Passive-Aggressive

1) ~ Violence
   Resolve: Hardening
2) Tactics intensify
3) Growth: It grows in issues and generalizations, exaggerations: sacred values, superior moral obligations, grows in crowd
4) Stereotype: Other person becomes a stereotype
5) Face: becomes an issue, sunk costs, gambling, invested
6) Goal: changes—being heard, being right, winning, revenge
7) Conflict Myopia. (Corner vision), Put two people in corners and explain conflict myopia. Discuss myopia in relation to the psychological reasons behind escalation.
8) Filters: Dark colored glasses, As our emotions get stronger, we feel we are even more right. We put rose-colored glasses on our actions, and black-colored glasses on their actions. Discuss with the class times where we KNOW we are right, and later had to realize we were only partially right. Review Pruitt & Kim’s writings—our concessions feel bigger, their escalations feel bigger.

9) Blinders
10) Investment: like a gambler
11) TARDIS

Exit Tactics:
The goal of finding exits is to create acceptable options, where all involved will be satisfied.
Create options using Exit Strategies:

Come up with a phrase to signal transition to exit
   Remove glasses: your rose-colored and their dark colored
   Southwest asphalt joke
   Hang the meat low enough so the dog can bite
   Sometimes you need to stand and fight. Sometimes you realize by standing you’re not going anywhere.
Consider these options:
~ Faith in ability: I can use my words/my skills/motivation to end it and stick to it
~ positive-sum thinking: we can get more done if we end it
~ Momentum: no more energy to fight, I’d rather end it
~ Third-party: if they say we’re done, then we’re done
~ Other’s readiness for problem-solving—truce?
~ Humor
~ Come to terms: I’m OK With This—have learned how to be peaceful
~ Preventing Conflict
~ Communication
~ Active Listening (feeling validated helps people to move off of their positions)
~ Reframing
~ Apology conveying Regret, Responsibility, and Remedy

Brainstorm additional options: Expand the pie, BATNA, WATNA, walk ideas around the block, remind them of the peace of moving on, what would life like look without this conflict?

Document every agreement during negotiation to help form agreement faster.

**Exit Options:**
Training
Facilitation
Climate Assessment
Ombuds
Negotiation
HR
Consultant
Mediation
Arbitration

**Sample Agreement**

This as a Mediated Agreement between Merkel Pharmaceuticals and the Researchers.

Merkel agrees to drop the libel and slander suit.

The Researchers agree not to badmouth Filoxin again.

The Researchers agree to continue working at Merkel.