

# CM315 Conflict Resolution

Wesley Theological Seminary

January Term, 2017 | January 2-6, 9-13

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## Course Description

Skill building in listening, responding, asserting self, problem solving, and dealing with conflict. Intentionality and skill building in the resolution and management of difference and conflict resolution in various church outcomes and contexts. Intentionality about the role of emotions in group setting. Details about the difference between and implication of IQ and EQ (Emotional Quotient). 2 Credits.

## Course Objectives:

1. To reflect on and analyze one's theology of conflict.
2. To apply personal experience, course reading, research, personal history and cultural contexts to understand the nature of conflict.
3. To articulate and refine our reactions to conflict and build a repertoire of skills and responses for various ministry situations.
4. To gain skill in practicing the arts of ministry and church leadership and to gain the ability to work effectively with others to facilitate gifts for service and leadership, whether in the church, community organizations, or the public square (per Wesley Seminary's Curricular Goals and Objectives).

## Required Reading

- *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration* by Norma Cook Everist  
Publisher: Abingdon Press
- *Never Call Them Jerks* by Arthur Paul Boers  
Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

## Recommended Reading

- *When Sheep Attack Paperback* by Dennis R. Maynard  
Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

*“Every conflict we face in life is rich with positive and negative potential. It can be a source of inspiration, enlightenment, learning, transformation, and growth—or rage, fear, shame, entrapment, and resistance. The choice is not up to our opponents, but to us, and our willingness to face and work through them.” – Kenneth Cloke and Joan Goldsmith*

## Pre-Course Assignments

There will be no final paper due after the course concludes. Most of the reading and writing will be done by the end of our first week together. When we actually meet face-to-face, we will be prepared for some quality conversation and experiential learning as we develop competence and confidence in dealing with conflict.

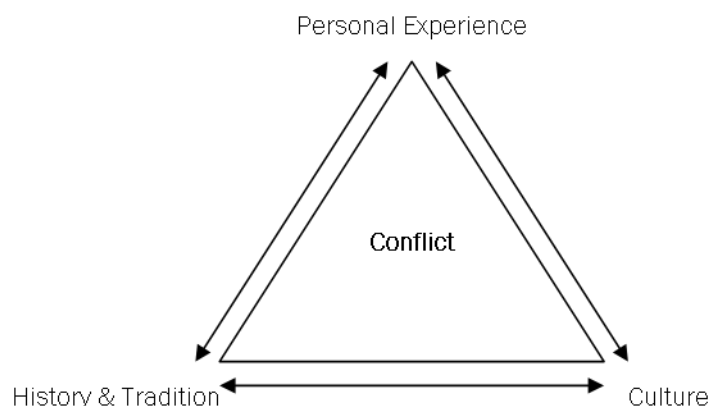
### Reading

Read *Church Conflict* by Norma Cook Everest in its entirety before the first class session.

### Triangular Reflection on Conflict

***This assignment must be posted to Blackboard no later than 11:59 PM, Dec. 31, 2016.***

Jackson Carroll once proposed a view of clergy as “reflective practitioners” who have expertise as meaning definers, as community builders and as managers of the interface between the church and its social context. Using Everist and Boers as guides, write a reflective essay that describes how you understand and make meaning of conflict from three different theological poles or angles: History & Tradition, Personal Experience, and Cultural Resources



As you reflect on the interaction of these poles, here are some questions and suggestions to guide your thinking:

1. History and Tradition: What is your theology of conflict? What sources inform your theology (e.g. scripture, creeds, historical writings, theological traditions, religious teachings and/or media)?

2. Cultural Resources: How do racial/ethnic background, socioeconomic and educational levels, gender, cultural practices and norms, geography, and multi-generational expectations influence how you view conflict? In what ways are your views shaped by dominant culture or multi-cultural contexts? In what ways did your extended family system shape your experience with conflict?
3. Personal Experience: Identify times and places where you have a prevailing response or a patterned reaction to conflict in your personal history. Where and how might those reactions have been learned? Do you notice that you have one particular response across the board, or do you have different responses for different roles you play in life? Describe how those roles vary. Are you satisfied with your responses to conflict? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Write your reflections in a 7-10 page essay (1750-2500 words). Be prepared to present your learning \*to your colleagues in class. ***This assignment must be posted to Blackboard no later than 11:59 PM, December 31, 2016.***

\*Please note: Because your personal history may be tender, difficult or confidential, students will be focusing on the *learning* from our personal reflections, not the *content* itself. Your submissions will be kept confidential by the instructor. You may choose to share pieces of your personal history with colleagues at your own discretion.

### Case Description

***Post your assignment to Blackboard no later than 11:59 PM, Friday, January 6, 2017.***

Using Chapters 2-3 and 6-12 of *Church Conflict*, along with other sources, analyze a conflict in a faith community or non-profit setting (congregation, camp, ministry site, institution, etc). Write a 5-7 page case study (1250-1750 words), describing the situation together with your analysis. You can refer to Maynard and Moffett-Moore's books for ideas and examples of various conflict issues in ministry settings. ***Post your analysis to Blackboard no later than Friday, January 6, 2017, 11:59 PM.***

*Method:* A case study applies academic theories to a real-life event. The purpose of writing a case and sharing it with others is to describe an experience without your readers having to be in the same place. The first thing to remember is that the case should have a problem for the readers to solve. The case should have enough information in it so that readers can understand what the conflict is and, after thinking about it and analyzing the information, your readers will want to work collaboratively to propose solutions.

*Step One:* Create a question that begs for analysis, or an ongoing challenge that needs to move towards resolution. In one paragraph, describe the case you want to reader to solve.

*Step Two:* Research and analyze the question. Using course readings, interviews, the triangular theological reflection model, and other academic sources, explore the situation. As you research, you may find other sources that have encountered the same conflict. How

did they handle it? What do the experts have to say? As you apply different methodologies to the case, do more questions arise? Identify who or what has the pieces of information you need to help the reader get a more complete picture.

*Step Three: Organize the sections of your case.* Once you are satisfied with the way you have defined the problem and how you want your readers to think about it, break the problem down into all its parts. Each one represents a piece of the puzzle that needs to be understood before the problem can be solved. Ask yourself, “How much information does my audience need to have in order to be able to discuss it well?” A good case is more than just a description. It is information arranged in such a way that the reader is put in the same position as the case writer was when faced with a new situation and asked to figure out what was going on. You will want to include information including:

- Introduction
- Brief Background/History
- Description of the Setting/Context
- Description of the Major Characters
- Plot /Nature of the Conflict
- Conclusion/Questions

A note on the conclusion: Rather than solving the case for the reader, leave us with some questions. The point of a case study is not to have you fix a problem, but for you to give a well-researched and thoughtful description of an interesting and relevant conflict that will help us apply our learning and have a lively class discussion.

*Step 4: References.* When citing a source, please use footnotes (numbered citations at the bottom of the page) formatted according to a consistent reference guideline (e.g. Chicago/Turabian, MLA). The assignment requires you to process and integrate the course readings into the paper; therefore, no case study needs to include lengthy, verbatim source quotes. The case study is your critical reflection upon a conflict that is relevant to you. Be sure to include, at the end of your paper, a bibliography of all sources formatted according to consistent style guidelines.

This case study method was adapted from The Global Travel & Tourism Partnership, “How to Write a Good Case,” <[www.gttp.org/docs/HowToWriteAGoodCase.pdf](http://www.gttp.org/docs/HowToWriteAGoodCase.pdf)>.

*“There is little value in preparing a cookbook of recipes for conflict success. The effects of conflict interaction depend directly on what the participants do mentally with conflict behaviors—that is, how they process and interpret those behaviors.”*  
– William Cupach & Daniel Canary

**Class Schedule** *Topics are subject to change based on class learning goals and needs.*

**Week One: The Nature of Conflict**

**January 2, 6:00-9:00 PM**

- Welcome and Introductions
- Learning Goals Assessment
- Conflict, Community & Covenant

**January 3, 6:00-9:00 PM**

- Images of Conflict
- Solvable and Unsolvable Problems
- Ethos of Conflict: Types & Patterns

**January 4, 6:00-9:00 PM**

- Stages of Conflict

**January 5, 6:00-9:00 PM**

- Origin of Conflict & Power: Rights & Needs

**January 6, 6:00-9:00 PM**

- IQ and EQ
- Introduction to the Case Study Process
- Week One Review

**Week Two: Responses to Conflict**

**January 9, 6:00-9:00 PM**

- Sustaining Healthy Leaders & Nurturing Healthy Churches
- Case Study Presentations

**January 10, 6:00-9:00 PM**

- Cultural Issues in Conflict: Individualist and Collectivist Paradigms
- Case Study Presentations

**January 11, 6:00-9:00 PM**

- Narrative-Based Strategies for Conflict Resolution
- Case Study Presentations

### **January 12, 6:00-9:00 PM**

- Apology, Forgiveness & Self Care
- Case Study Presentations

### **January 13, 6:00-9:00 PM**

- Case Study Presentations
- Week Two Review
- Personal & Course Evaluation and Closing Worship

## **Assessment**

Grading will adhere to the attendance and grading guidelines of the seminary.

### **Class Participation and Attendance = 25%**

This class will succeed if all participants are present for all sessions, arrive on time, remain for the entire class, and participate actively and constructively in class discussions. Each evening of class, students may be assigned one or two in-class reflections or short assignments for a complete/incomplete grade. For a two-credit class, .35 points can be subtracted from your final grade for each contact hour of absence. Missing more than 2 classes may result in a failing grade.

### **Reading = 25%**

Students must demonstrate the ability to make connections between the readings, written assignments, and the topic at hand during our plenary and small group discussions.

### **Triangular Theological Reflection = 25%**

This assignment will be graded on a complete, thoughtful, concise presentation of your learning, as well as your openness to refine your thinking as the course unfolds. This assignment must be posted to Blackboard no later than 11:59 PM, January 1, 2016 for full credit. Overdue assignments will receive a 2-point deduction for each day late.

### **Case Description = 25%**

A rubric will be available on Blackboard for students to understand how the instructor will assess your case. Case Descriptions must be posted to Blackboard no later than 11:59 PM, Friday, January 8, 2016, for full credit. Overdue assignments will receive a 2-point deduction for each day late.

All students have signed Wesley Seminary's Covenant of Professional Ethics and Behavior. This covenant will be adhered to, especially in regards to academic honesty and plagiarism.

## Grading System

95-100%	=	A / 4.000
90-94%	=	A- / 3.700
87-89 %	=	B+ / 3.300
84-86%	=	B / 3.000
80-83%	=	B- / 2.700
77-79%	=	C+ / 2.300
74-76%	=	C / 2.000
70-73%	=	C- / 1.700
69%>	=	F / 0.000
No Show	=	FX / 0.000

## Nota Bene

- Blackboard automatically records all students' activities including: your first and last access to the course, the pages you have accessed, the number of messages you have read and sent, chat room discussion text, and posted discussion topics. This data can be accessed by the instructor to evaluate class participation and to identify students having difficulty.
- Students are responsible for meeting course deadlines. If you experience technical problems with Blackboard, please exercise one or all of the following options:
  - Blackboard Support at [blackboardsupport@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:blackboardsupport@wesleyseminary.edu)
  - By phone at (202) 885-6091
  - Blackboard/E Support Ticket at <http://www.wesleyseminary.edu/MyWesley/eSupport.aspx>
- Students with disabilities must contact the Associate Dean ([communitylife@wesleyseminary.edu](mailto:communitylife@wesleyseminary.edu)) before accommodations can be made.
- Students are expected to keep up with course announcements. Please make sure to check your WTS email as opposed to a personal email address.
- There may be days when Wesley Seminary will need to close due to inclement weather. A recording will be put on the seminary's main phone line as soon as possible after any decision regarding closings or delayed openings is made. You are advised to check just before traveling to the Seminary. The WTS Main Phone line is: 202-885-8600; Website: [www.wesleyseminary.edu](http://www.wesleyseminary.edu); Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Wesleyseminary](http://www.facebook.com/Wesleyseminary); Twitter (@WesleyTheoSem).
- This course encourages different perspectives related to such factors as gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. The course seeks to foster understanding and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating.