

CM315 Conflict Resolution | Pre-Course Assignments

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Required Reading

Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration by Norma Cook Everist

Publisher: Abingdon Press

ISBN-13: 978-0687038015

Never Call Them Jerks by Arthur Paul Boers

Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

ISBN-13: 978-1566992183

Recommended Reading

When Sheep Attack by Dennis R. Maynard

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

ISBN-13: 978-1451513912

Pre-Course Assignments

There will be no final paper due after the class 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.

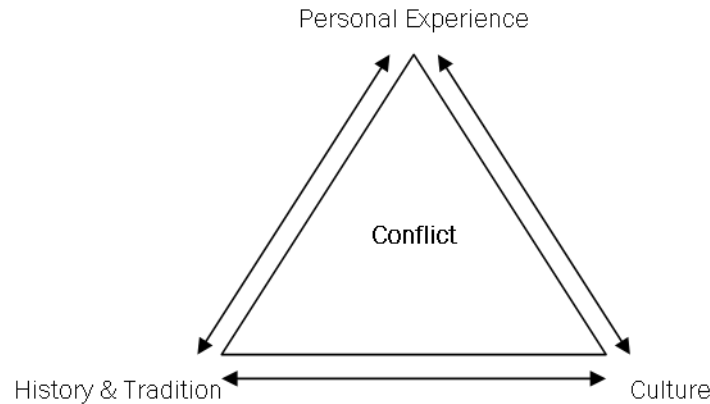
Reading

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

Theological Reflection on Conflict

This assignment must be posted to Blackboard no later than 11:59 PM, December 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 Friday, January 6 2017, 11:59 PM.

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's book 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 about writing a case study 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 devise proposed 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 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.