

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION CMNS 347-4

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BurnabyDay

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COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICT AND INTERVENTION

Prerequisites: 60 credit hours including CMNS 110 and 130.
Recommended: CMNS 247 and 362.

Overview:

This course is an introduction to the role of communication in various types of conflict, and the uses and affects of different forms of communication in interventions in those conflicts. It combines communication studies with conflict analysis and conflict theory, and with studies of the theory and practice of intervention, such as interest-based conflict resolution, peace studies and journalism. Students who complete this course will be ready to take more advanced courses in negotiation and dialogue (e.g., CMNS 447), international communication, news analysis, political economy, media democratization, technology-transfer, risk etc.

Communication is understood broadly to include the general and impersonal forms mediated by technologies and mass media, to smaller-scale organizational forms, to private, even secret, forms of communication. *Conflict* in this version of the course refers to a range of situations, from private, interpersonal disputes, to public multi-party disagreements, to war and its contexts. Emphasis is on comparative, cross-cultural and multi-national/international analysis. The material discussed refers to television, cinema, radio, newspaper, Internet, etc. treatments of conflicts, and their uses in various forms of intervention.

In order to focus this wide range of issues, the course makes use of *selected case studies* for common discussion, while enabling students to develop a project of their choice. The mid-term exam emphasizes a grasp of the conceptual literature and its link to specific case studies, and builds the proposal for the final project.

Course Themes:

Scales and types of conflict: climate, context-theory, interests, and face-work. The conflict cycle: asking ten questions about peace, conflict and communication. Why do the media matter in conflict and intervention? Contending perspectives on media and conflict. Theories and models of conflict and intervention (e.g., game theory). The impulse to intervene, and its consequences. 'Interveners in trouble', and the balance of power in conflict. The characteristics and examples of journalism in conflict.

Course Readings and Required Text:

A custom courseware package will be available at the SFU Burnaby Bookstore.

This course will make regular reference to stories in *The Vancouver Sun*, *The National Post*, *The New York Times (online)* and/or *The Globe & Mail*, particularly on the day of the class. Students should be reading and prepared to discuss one of those newspapers on class days.

Grading: *(subject to confirmation in class)*

Mid-Term Exam and Proposal	40%
Final Project	50%
Participation	10%

The School expects that the grades awarded in this course will bear some reasonable relation to established university-wide practices with respect to both levels and distribution of grades. In addition, the School will follow Policy T10.02 with respect to “Intellectual Honesty,” and “Academic Discipline” (see the current Calendar, General Regulations Section).

The "final project" means an individual [or small team] effort to define, investigate, and write a report on a conflict and intervention in a special field. Teams of two work well, and three can be very effective if each person's role is well (but flexibly) defined. Special research advice will be given to small teams, and teams will get priority in scheduling of presentations. Projects can mix media (text, audio-tape, video-tape, photographs, etc.) and should combine the talents of the team. The emphasis is on getting as close to the activity, to the practices, and to the people involved, as possible under the circumstances. Only students who have successfully completed CMNS 362 may do a project involving field research for this project.