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COMX 412.01: Communication and Conflict

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COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT

SPRING 2016

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Course Objectives:

- To be able to define the elements of a conflict and understand the potential for altering them in a given condition.
- To be familiar with the various internal and interactive theories that explain how and why conflict occurs.
- To understand how concepts such as power, face, climate, emotions, and styles influence the conflict process.
- To be able to determine when a third party should be brought in to a conflict situation, and which form of third party intervention is appropriate.
- To learn through engagement, experience, and immersion within conflict experiences.

Required:

Your text for this course will be Folger, Poole, & Stutman's *Working Through Conflict*, 7th Edition. This text is available at the UM Bookstore, or secondhand on websites such as <http://www.half.com>.

Supplemental materials will be provided online, in our Moodle page.

Course Format:

This class is designed in two parts.

Part 1: Online readings and powerpoint lecture notes that you may engage without the constraints of a set time or location. There will be readings/notes that must be read BY a certain day (listed at the end of the syllabus) so that you are prepared for our in-person meeting. However, you may begin reading as early as you like, and may complete all of the course reading in advance if you wish.

Part 2: Our once-a-week in person meetings have been designed as a multiplayer game. You are the players. You will each create an avatar to represent you, and you will be sorted into villages that will engage and interact throughout the length of the semester. To earn points and participate well in the game all readings/notes/powerpoint review must be done prior to class.

Grading Procedure:

You will begin the first day of class at Level 1. You will have opportunities to level up throughout the class, both on your own and in collaboration with your peers. Your class letter grade will be determined by your final level.

Levels and Grades:

Level	XP	Grade
15	2411	A+
14	2107	A
13	1833	A-
12	1584	B+
11	1358	B
10	1154	B-
9	969	C+
8	801	C
7	650	C-
6	512	D+
5	388	D
4	276	D-
3	174	F
2	83	F
1	0	F

Opportunities to Gain XP and Level Up:

Task	Description	XP value
Village Calamity Success	Triumphant (group defined) village following a calamity	50
Village Encounter Success	Triumphant (group defined) village following a nose-to-nose village encounter	50
Solo Success	Top-rated villager for MVP performance during a calamity	30
Village Enlightenment	Group development of a class segment of 20 minutes, including an inspiring talk (research or expertise based, like TED talks) on elements of communication and conflict, coupled with discussion questions to guide class discussion for a minimum of 15 minutes	0-150
Pick-up Group Enlightenment	Two players (from any two different village affiliations) presenting an outside article that is useful to game play (grounded in conflict and communication from a peer-reviewed communication studies journal or edited volume) ready to hit high points in a 3-5 minute oral overview with accompanying handout, then fielding questions. No more than two presentations per person, pending timing in class.	0-100
Good Citizen Standing	Attendance in class	10 (per day)
Solo Quest	Propose a village to the class on the first class meeting day	20
Solo Quest	Avatar Creation (using Chapter 2)	0-30

Solo Quest	Defeat Online Reading Quiz	0-10 (each)
Solo Quest	Defeat Midterm	0-200
Solo Quest	Defeat Final Examination	0-200
Village Raid	Defeat in-class reading puzzle	40
Village Peer Review	Rating of performance throughout the semester by your fellow villagers	0-100

**Certain quests will have varying and, at this time, unknown associated treasure in addition to the listed XP. New opportunities will arise throughout the class, which is part of the reason that attendance at all village gatherings (Monday evening classes) is so vital. These quests and opportunities will grant various classroom boons which cannot be discussed now, as no one in the class' level is high enough for that knowledge at this point.

Village Peer Review: At the end of the semester each villager will rate each of his/her citizens in the same village. The average score across villagers will be used to generate XP points for this category. It would be wise to realize early on what your village norms are, what good citizenship requires, and how much effort and preparation you are giving to your peers. Peer review will remain blind (secret).

Rating	Description	XP
Shining Knight	Consistently stellar participation and preparation	100
Raid Leader	Shining moments of participation and preparation, with solidly average performance the remaining time	75
Noble Townsperson	Regular participation, indicates knowledge useful for village life and quests, but does not stand out for extra effort or participation	50
Apprentice	Still in training, still working on the skills needed to be prepared and participatory at the average level of the class	25
Waste of Rations	Consistently/frequently deficient in participation or preparation	0

Personal Statement:

I am committed to the endeavor of teaching, whether that is online, classroom, or even game atmosphere. I believe that I can meet my goals for teaching this course and you can meet your goals in taking this course, even though this will not occur in a traditional classroom setting. In my eighteen years of teaching experience, I have found that the more connections students make with the more successful they are in the course. Thus, it will be my goal throughout this course to encourage you to interact and to engage in this course as fully as possible.

I am also committed to fairness. I generally abide by the ethical system of the categorical imperative – something is just and fair if it can be applied to everyone in the same circumstance. I created the policies in this syllabus to be applied to everyone in the course – I do not grant exemptions, extensions, or extra credit to one person if I cannot do so for the entire class. The entire class is being held to the policies in this syllabus, and the timeline and schedule for this course – please make sure that you are willing to accept this if you choose to continue in the course.

Policies:

Deadlines: Although many of the constraints of time and place (and even reality) have been released for you in this course, deadlines are still inevitable. To keep you caught up in the course there are deadlines by which each assignment must be completed. Assignments may always be completed earlier than the deadline, but any assignment that is not turned in when called for at the START of the class in which it is due will begin accruing a late penalty of 10% per 24 hour period of lateness. Please communicate with me immediately any difficulties you foresee in meeting a deadline. If you require any different testing/writing/deadline accommodations than listed here due to work with DSS or due to taking this course for graduate credit, be sure to contact me and make me aware of this within the first week of the course. **Late work may be submitted in this course up to a week past the due date, accruing a 10% deduction for each 24 hr period past the deadline, up until the final day of the class. After that date no late work may be submitted.**

Academic Integrity: The University of Montana and the Department of Communication Studies strongly believe in academic integrity; thus cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated. Students will be charged with academic dishonesty for any breach of these standards, including sharing their work (**in any form**) with other students, claiming another individual's work as their own, or attempting to thwart the examination process in any way. No work done for credit in any other class may be turned in for credit in this class (whether it is your own work for this course taken previously, or anyone else's work). The *minimum* consequence for engaging in cheating or plagiarism is failure on the related assignment, but this type of activity usually results in failure in the entire course. At worst, academic misconduct can result in expulsion, denial of your degree, and/or revocation of a degree that has already been awarded. See the Student Conduct Code for definitions and consequences of cheating and plagiarism. The unabridged student conduct code is located at: [Student Conduct Code](#)

Consideration: The overall atmosphere in the class should be that of respect – for yourself and everyone else in the class. In the course of our interactions, personal information may be disclosed. Please do not repeat this information or use it to harm others. Help foster an atmosphere where a priority for education and a respect for all students are valued by engaging in comments that relate to course content and show tolerance (if not acceptance) for opinions different from your own. Please understand that whether it occurs in a face-to-face, online, or game environment, harassment of any kind is both inappropriate and intolerable, and disciplinary action will be taken should it occur.

Contesting Grades: I am willing to go over any assignment or exam with you to discuss your concerns. This is more difficult in an online context than an in-person one, so we'll have to work with what we've got. Please wait 24 hours after receiving an assignment before you contact me. When you do contact me, please write down your specific concerns and your backing for these concerns, and I will research your situation. We'll take it from there should further discussion need to occur.

Week 1 – Jan 25

Groundwork and Model for Conflict

READ – Chapter 1 and lecture notes/slides

Week 2 – Feb 1

The Inner Experience of Conflict (Interests, goals, personality)

READ – Chapter 2 and lecture notes/slides

DO – Quiz 1

DO – Bring Avatar profile to class

Week 3 – Feb 8

The External Experience of Conflict (interaction dynamics)

READ – Chapter 3 and lecture notes/slides

DO – Quiz 2

Week 4 - Feb 15

No Class, President's Day

Week 5 – Feb 22

Emotions and Power

READ - Chapter 5, lecture notes/slides, and online readings (McIntosh and Wilmot/Hocker)

DO – Quiz 3

Week 6 – Feb 29

No Class - WSCA

Week 7 – Mar 7

Conflict Styles

READ – Chapter 4 and lecture notes/slides

DO – Quiz 4

Week 8 – Mar 14

Face and Climate

READ – Chapters 6 and 7, lecture notes/slides

DO – Quiz 5

Week 9 – Mar 21

Managing and Mapping Conflicts

READ – Chapter 8, lecture notes/slides, online reading (Wilmot and Hocker)

DO – Quiz 6

Week 10 – Mar 28

Conflict Contexts – The Family and Chosen Relationships

READ – lecture notes/slides, online reading

DO – Quiz 7

Week 11 – April 4

No Class – Spring Break

Week 12 - April 11

Conflict Contexts – Political Conflict

READ – lecture notes/slides, online reading

Quiz 8

Week 13 – April 18

Conflict Contexts – Workplace Conflict

READ – lecture notes/slides, online readings

DO – Quiz 9

Week 14 – April 25

Negotiation and Third Party Intervention

READ – Chapter 9, lecture notes/slides, online readings

DO – Quiz 10

Week 15 – May 2

Postmortem and Peer Evaluations

All readings/lecture notes from this class are copyrighted materials. You may print one copy for your own use, but you may not reproduce or use them beyond your own academic pursuits.

None of the material on the preceding pages is negotiable.

If you choose to remain in class beyond the first day, you are agreeing to abide by the principles and requirements set forth for this class.