Outline – LAWS 5703

Graduate Diploma in Conflict Resolution Program

LAWS 5703 - ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT AND SYSTEM DESIGN

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Organizations of all size, nature and types benefit from and call upon conflict resolution expertise to prevent, manage and resolve organizational conflicts.

This course will engage students in contemporary theory, techniques and practices for preventing, managing and resolving organizational conflict.

More specifically, students will learn to: apply conceptual frameworks to the assessment of organizational conflicts; develop and implement appropriate intervention programs and strategies; develop and practice using skills and techniques to assess, design and implement appropriate and effective interventions and conflict management systems; assess the efficiencies and appropriateness of conflict resolution intervention programs, strategies and management systems.
Course objectives:
By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Understand the nature and dynamics of organizations
- Understand the nature and dynamics of organizational conflicts
- Distinguish the various types of organizational conflicts and their impacts
- Understand and apply structured approaches to assess organizational conflicts
- Understand the challenges and opportunities of organizational conflict intervention and system design
- Develop communication as well as facilitation skills and techniques for effective organizational conflict interventions and system design
- Develop appropriate intervention programs and strategies
- Design conflict management system for organizations
- Assess organizational conflict management system

Outline – LAWS 5703  
Winter 2019

REQUIRED TEXTS AND VIEWING

  - Pages: 1 to 66; 96 to 133
  - Pages: 1 to 120
- SPIDR and Institute on Conflict Resolution. Designing Integrated Conflict Management Systems: Guidelines for Practitioners and Decision Makers in Organizations, No.4 in the series of Cornell Studies in Conflict and Dispute Resolution, Institute on Conflict Resolution, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

This publication can be downloaded free of charge at: http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=icrpubs
• Ted Talk on Leadership: Students are asked to identify and view one ‘Ted Talk’ of their choice and related to leadership. This will form the basis of an evaluated assignment. Consult http://www.ted.com for the library of searchable Ted Talks.

EVALUATIONS (All components must be completed in order to get a passing grade)

Preparation for Class, Participation, Group Presentations, and Attendance (15%)

The course will involve lectures, class discussion, small group work, individual and group presentations. Students are required to read the texts and chapters in advance of class and be prepared to offer informed and analytical observations. Students will be assessed on their willingness to participate in the class and group activities, to ask questions that advance their own understanding and build knowledge for others, to engage in discussion that deepen the conversation, encourage participation of others, and attend to group process.

Independent Learning Initiative (10%)

Students will maintain a learning journal throughout the course. Students may include in their journal statements of expectations, questions regarding readings, presentations or class discussions, as well as observations or reflections that occur during the course. The learning journal is due by 4 pm, Monday March 25, 2019. Late paper will be penalized.

Individual Presentation on Leadership (10%)

Students will choose and watch a Ted Talk on Leadership by any speaker they consider valuable. Students will prepare and deliver a short (maximum 10 minutes) analysis of the talk, linking it to relevant aspects of the course. The analysis should focus on the following questions: What are the methodologies being presented that may impact on organizational conflict management system? What are the relevant questions being raised and answered regarding the link and impact of leadership and organizational conflicts? What are the skills and techniques that are being presented? (The assignment will be further discussed and explained in class)

Team Project: Design a Conflict Management System (40%)
Each team will select an organization (preferably one of the team member’s organization) for which they will design a conflict management system. The team will have time to work on this throughout the course. Some evening work may also be required. On the last day of the course each team will make a 20 minutes presentation on the system they have designed, and then lead a 20 minutes discussion/question period on the system that they are presenting. The presentation will include an analysis of the organization and its conflicts; the system design process and the theoretical basis for that process; the system itself; and key learnings or guidelines. This presentation may be accompanied by graphics, handouts, overheads, powerpoint slides and video representations. It will be assessed on the substance, quality and clarity of the presentation, and the ability to link between theory and practice.

- **Report/Presentation (20%)** - This is worth 20 % of the final grade and each team member will be assigned the same grade for this

- **Individual contribution to the team (10%)** - Each member of the team will evaluate its own contribution to the team. The individual evaluation will be done following a peer feedback discussion. The feedback discussion should be conducted as per the process presented in class. The rational for the grade and the impact of the feedback discussion should be included as part of the individual summary discussion of each student (see below)

- **Individual Summary (10%)** - Each team member should also prepare an individual summary describing the strengths and challenges associated with the system their team developed; their contribution to the team’s system; the effectiveness of the peer feedback discussion. The summary should be no longer than three pages in length. The use of point form or bullets is acceptable. This should be handed in to the instructor by 4 pm Monday April 1, 2019. Late paper will be penalized.

**Individual Paper (25%)**

This paper will be based on an organizational conflict or challenge each student will have identified at the beginning of the class on Day 1. Based on the learning and experience of the course, the individual paper should include an analysis of the conflict, a strategy for intervention, appropriate mechanisms, approaches and techniques for dealing with the organization conflict or challenge. The paper should identify and take into account the nature and dynamics of the organization in general, and, in particular, towards conflicts. The paper should be no more than 10 typed double-spaced pages). This paper is due by 4 pm Monday April 1, 2019. Late paper will be penalized.
COURSE SCHEDULE - AGENDA

DAY 1

9:00 to 10h30  INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

- Introductions
- Learning objectives – theory and practice
- Learning approach
- Syllabus review
- Individual papers and team projects – guidelines

10:30 to 10:45  BREAK

10:45 to 12:00  ORGANIZATION NATURE AND DYNAMICS
• Understanding organizations: Vision; Mission; Values; Structure; Culture; Individuals; Interactions

12:00 to 1:00  LUNCH
1:00 to 1:45  ORGANIZATIONAL NATURE AND DYNAMICS (CONTINUED)
  • Introduction of conceptual frameworks
1:45 to 2:15  EXERCISE
2:15 to 2:30  BREAK
2:30 to 3:45  ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS NATURE AND DYNAMICS
  • Understanding organizational conflicts: Nature; Types; Causes; Dynamics; Impacts; Costs
  • Introduction of conceptual frameworks and guidelines
3:45 to 4:15  EXERCISE
4:15 to 5:00  SUMMARY OF THE DAY AND CLOSING

Outline – LAWS 5703  Winter 2019

DAY 2
9:00 to 9:30  OPENING AND REFLECTIONS
9:30 to 10:30  FORMING TEAMS
  • Presentations and initial discussion
10:30 to 10:45  BREAK
10:45 to 12:00  ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS
  • Identification and analysis of organizational conflicts
  • Layers of conflicts
  • Conflict management approaches and styles (individuals and organizations)
12:00 to 1:00  **LUNCH**

1:00 to 2:30  **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**
- Introduction to conflict management as a system
- Characteristics
- Challenges and opportunities
- Impacts

2:30 to 2:45  **BREAK**

2:45 to 3:15  **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (continued)**
- Introduction to conceptual frameworks, principles and guidelines
- Organizational assessment

3:15 to 4:30  **TEAM PROJECT PREPARATION MEETING**
- Discuss and confirm the type of organization and broad parameters for the Conflict Management System Design Project
- Discuss and agree on approach and criteria for interaction and feedback among team members - including approach for addressing and resolving challenges among team members
- Prepare a work plan and allocate tasks

4:30 to 5:00  **SUMMARY OF THE DAY AND CLOSING**

Outline – LAWS 5703  Winter 2019

---

**DAY 3**

9:00 to 9:30  **OPENING AND REFLECTIONS**

9:30 to 10:30  **ADR SPECTRUM/CONTINUUM**
- Review the various mechanisms for preventing, managing and resolving conflict
- Understand their appropriateness and impacts

10:30 to 10:45  **BREAK**

10:45 to 12:00  **DESIGNING A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**
- Design architecture
- Action plan
DAY 4

9:00 to 9:15 OPENING

9:15 to 10:30 INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS

- Individual Presentation on Leadership - Brief analysis of the ‘‘Ted Talk’’ on leadership and links to the course learning outcomes - maximum 10 minutes for each presentation (10% of the overall evaluation)

10:30 to 10:45 BREAK

10:45 to 11:15 INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS (CONTINUED)

11:15 to 12:00 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM EVALUATION
• Evaluating and measuring the effectiveness of a new implemented conflict management system
• Adjustments

12:00 to 1:00  LUNCH
1:00 to 4:30  TEAM PROJECT PREPARATION
  • As per guidelines provided in class
4:30 TO 5:00  SUMMARY OF THE DAY AND CLOSING

Outline – LAWS 5703  Winter 2019

DAY 5

9:00 to 9:15  OPENING
9:15 to 10:30  TEAM PROJECT MEETING
  • As per guidelines provided in class
10:30 to 10:45  BREAK
10:45 to 12:00  TEAM PRESENTATIONS
  • 20 minutes presentation and 20 discussion/questions - per team
12:00 to 1:00  LUNCH
1:00 to 2:30  TEAM PRESENTATIONS (CONTINUED)
- 20 minutes presentation and 20 discussion/questions - per team

2:30 to 2:45 BREAK
2:45 to 3:15 OVERVIEW
3:15 to 3:45 EVALUATION
3:45 to 5:00 CLOSURE AND MOVING FORWARD