Welcome!

Welcome to LDR 404/504: Communication and Conflict Resolution. I appreciate you enrolling in this course and hope it will serve you well. This course is designed to provide an important building block for your work in negotiation and conflict resolution. The emphasis of the course is on helping you to develop relevant skills to identify the underlying causes of conflict and to facilitate productive negotiations that can successfully resolve the inevitable conflicts that occur in our personal and professional lives.

You will need to access the course in Desire2Learn (D2L). This can be done via the USD student portal, http://my.usd.edu, or directly via https://d2l.sdbor.edu. The course should be listed in under “My Courses.” Note: you will not be able to access the course until the official start date.

You should familiarize yourself with the CDE Online Orientation, which can be found in the ‘USD Getting Started’ widget on the D2L course homepage. The orientation materials contain important information on accessing USD’s resources online.

There are two required books for this course listed in the D2L course syllabus.


Additionally, you are required to purchase a headset and microphone for use in our live Blackboard Collaborate sessions.

Beyond these purchasing needs, there are several readings posted in the D2L course schedule. The schedule will serve as your main organizational tool for the course. It links to lectures, reading assignments, quizzes, written assignments and expected due dates. Our course schedule will direct our efforts this semester, so please become familiar with it as soon as you are able.
The course in D2L presents a series of course modules to complete, including lecture materials, text readings and assignments. The modules include a variety of activities, including D2L discussion threads, Blackboard Collaborate sessions, and practical/applied assignments. Each module is approximately three weeks long and is detailed in the course schedule within D2L. The syllabus details additional course responsibilities, so be sure to read that for information on how grades are determined. Because course grades are based on participation and writing assignments, it is recommended that students reserve approximately 5 hours per week for the course. Slow and steady will be our model, and so be sure to not put off readings and assignments, as the “cramming” method for this course will not be successful. We need to get engaged and stay engaged, because the conflict resolution skill set is a cumulative one. If you miss or delay one module, the next will seem less intuitive and more difficult.

If you have any questions as you get started, or at any point in the semester, the best way to contact me is via the course in D2L mail, which can be access within the course. My contact information is listed at the top of this document. Feel free to use it!

I will do my utmost to respond to your requests within twenty-four (24) hours during the weekdays, or forty-eight (48) hours on the weekends and holidays. Note: please do not use the pager tool to contact me. You can also call or text my cell. If you do, share your name and course name in the text (or voice mail). Sometimes, texting can get a quick response if you need it, so don’t hesitate to call or text if you need a response right away.

Again, let me know if you need anything as you get started.

Best Wishes,

[Signature]

Rich Braunstein, Professor
Department of Political Science