LDR 404
Communication and Conflict Resolution
Summer 2015

Dr. Rich Braunstein

I.   Instructor Contact Information

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II.   Course Description

This course is designed to expose students to the role that principled negotiation plays in the resolution of conflict. Its focus is on the skills of effective communication, negotiation and mediation. We use the health care setting as a case study for some of our discussions, though the course is not limited to this area of study. The course considers conflict at the personal, professional, and social levels to give students a full understanding of how conflict develops and how it can be satisfactorily resolved.

The course builds from the more simple negotiations and mediations of two-party disputes to those of greater complexity and scope that occur in organizations and communities. The skills of communication and conflict resolution are developed through a combination of readings, discussions, practical scenarios and exercises. Some exercises require classmates to work together in telephone or electronic meetings that will be discussed in detail as the semester progresses. If you are not able to participate in such meetings, you will have to drop the class as these meetings are required. To be clear, this is a largely interactive course that requires participation and preparation from class members in an effort to learn these skills at the most practical level possible.

The course begins with communication and conflict theories. We then move to the procedures often adopted to resolve conflict, including negotiation, mediation, and facilitation. In the end, students should leave the class with a greater understanding of the nature of conflict and how they can contribute to its successful resolution.

III.   Course Prerequisites

None

IV.   Student Learning Outcomes

The following table presents the desired learning outcomes and the strategies used in this course to assess them.

Table One: Learning Outcomes

1. Enhanced knowledge of principled negotiation, mediation strategies, multi-party facilitation, consensus building and how to lead organizations through change.	Discussion thread postings (initial and response postings); response to practical scenarios in Blackboard Collaborate sessions; written assignments.
2. Use of interactive tools to identify and resolve organizational conflict.	Responses to practical scenarios in Blackboard Collaborate sessions; discussion thread postings (initial and response postings).
3. Understanding how to identify and overcome negotiation and/or planning impasse.	Responses to practical scenarios in Blackboard Collaborate sessions; discussion thread postings (initial and response postings).
4. Increased ability to analyze the challenges and opportunities facing public and nonprofit organizations and the key stakeholders they impact.	Written assignments and final exam.

The next table (Table Two) presents the expectations for the course.

Table Two: Course Expectations

Responsible Party	Expectations
1. Students	• Familiarize yourself with all course procedures, assignments and web etiquette. • Participate in each discussion thread. Through this, it is expected that you will help each other succeed in this class -- and beyond where possible. • Follow course calendar to remain current with the rest of class. • Check D2L e-mail three times each week to remain current with rest of class. • Complete assignments and quizzes on time and contact the instructor prior to scheduling conflicts to seek alternative approach if schedules cannot be kept.
2. Instructor	• Be accessible to students through D2L. Student e-mail, discussion thread and other types of questions will be addressed twice daily on most weekdays. The instructor will check for student correspondence each morning and evening, likely between the hours of 9:00-10:00am and again from 10:00-11:00pm. • Help students identify topics for written assignment and provide feedback, as requested, to assignment related questions. • Give advice about how to present the most successful written assignments and, more generally, how to succeed in the course. • Give feedback on class and individual performance on quizzes and assignments and provide feedback on all submitted work within one week of the final due date for the assignment.
3. University of South Dakota	• Provide technical, academic and student support services, as well as information on how to take advantages of these services, which is available through the CE Online Student Orientation. • Answer all technical D2L questions through the USD helpdesk, which can be accessed at helpdesk@usd.edu or via telephone at 605-677-5028 or 877-225-0027. Help desk hours are as follows: | Regular Hours	
Monday - Thursday	8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Friday	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Holiday Hours	
Monday - Friday	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	

V.   Course Requirements

A. <u>Texts</u>

Roger Fisher and William Ury. Getting To Yes. Second Edition. Penguin Books: New York. 1991. **ISBN-13:** 978-0140157352

Bernard Mayer. The Dynamics of Conflict. Jossey Bass Publishers: San Francisco. 2000. **ISBN:** 978-0-7879-5019-4

Supplemental Readings (available in Content Section of D2L course)

B. <u>Reading and Assignments Schedule</u>

The D2L *Course Schedule* is available at the top of the D2L content area and in the "important files" pod on our course homepage. The Course Schedule is your source for what is due and when it is due in this course. The Course Schedule lists all readings and activities associated with the course. You should look over this schedule carefully at the beginning of the semester, and then each week as the semester progresses to be sure you are on schedule and don't miss anything.

For your convenience, excerpts of the course schedule will be posted on our D2L course homepage that cover the module we are currently in. This homepage pod will not include the entire schedule, just what we are focused on at that time. For complete understanding of the course schedule, and to plan ahead, you must review the entire course schedule in the content area and linked from the important files pod on the homepage.

C. <u>Policies and Procedures</u>

C1. Course Policies:

This course is conducted online through the D2L and Blackboard learning environments. It is important to note that we will use online discussion threads in D2L and online conferences in Blackboard to work on the content associated with each course module. Links to the live Blackboard sessions and their recordings are posted in the important files pod on our D2L course homepage.

Each module of the course has a set of reading assignments and a set of activities. These are presented on our course schedule. Reading assignments are either in the required books for this course or in the D2L content area in specific folders for each module.

We will use a series of **discussion forums within D2L** and **live Blackboard Collaborate sessions** that allow for careful discussions of the material. While it may be that face-to-face discussions

are more comfortable and are often viewed as more productive, these online discussions are very strong means to learn course material and carefully consider the different perspectives you bring to the class and the material. As such, I will ask that we take our online discussions seriously. Give them the same attention (potentially more attention) that you would give a face-to-face exchange or response. Think carefully of the meaning of your posts and comments and of their implications for successful communication and learning.

The D2L discussions are asynchronous, meaning that each student and instructor post can be made at any time of the day and at independent times from other classmates' posts. This is what we have become accustom to in online courses, with greater and lesser degrees of success.

The Blackboard sessions are live. I realize that scheduling live sessions for our group may be difficult, and that there will be sessions that not everyone can attend. Still, you are required to put your best effort into working with the class to reserve time for the Blackboard sessions. The dates and times for these live sessions are posted on our *Course Schedule*. **If you are not able to attend a live Blackboard Collaborate sessions**, you must view the recording of the session within 48 hours. If you are not able to watch the session within 48 hours you can ask for an extension – just send me a D2L e-mail and share the reason you can't watch the session that soon.

A headset with microphone is also required for the Blackboard sessions, as relying on the text chat feature can be quite cumbersome. A headset with a microphone typically run about $15-30 and is a tool you should have as an online student. Even if your computer has internal speakers, video and microphone you still have to use ear buds or a headset to insure your microphone does not pick up on your speakers because it will create duplicate audio back to the class. This is, well, annoying. Fortunately, the feedback created by open speakers and mic is easily resolved with ear buds or a headset. I use an open mic and internal camera with ear buds whenever I lead Blackboard sessions from my laptop, which is a good set up as long as I have a good wireless connection.

Participation grades for Blackboard sessions (live or recorded) are earned through a brief D2L quiz on the content of that session. These quizzes will be a question or two only and are used as an administrative tool for the participation grade. If all goes well, you should easily get 100/100 on these quizzes, which will have a strong impact on your final grade. Lots of points are given for participation in these live or recorded sessions (see Table Three below). Participation in these forums serves to benefit more than your final grade. More important in my mind is the collaboration they foster. It is uncommon for professionals to work alone and so we will model some elements of teamwork in this course. In my view, collaboration serves to inform our professional practice and improve our contributions to organizations and society alike.

This is the type of interaction I hope to foster through the discussion threads and Blackboard Collaborate sessions. When you have questions about class in general or specific assignments,

try not to submit them to me individually via e-mail. Instead, when appropriate, post them in the relevant discussion thread topic and engage classmates - work together to resolve questions and conflicts. Try your best to answer other each other's questions, but only when you are sure that you have a correct response for them. Help each other resolve "class conflicts."

Of course, more personal and grade related discussions should be reserved for individual discussion with your instructor. For these issues, D2L e-mail is the best means of communication. You can also call my cell phone (posted at the top of this syllabus). Typically, I am available at most times of the afternoon and evening if you need to talk. In short, don't hesitate to contact me if you need me (or have any questions/concerns at all). Often a conversation about the thing that is frustrating you can help shed light on the problem and identify a solution in ways that e-mail sometimes cannot.

More specific information on how discussion threads in D2L are graded can be found in the D2L Course Resources widget and content area section. There, you will find a link to the *Discussion Thread Participation* file that contains a complete description of expectations and how points are given for this part of the class. If you have questions about discussion participation, or any other element of the course, you can post them in the D2L discussion titled *D2L and Class Mechanics*.

VI.   Evaluation Procedures

Grades for this course are given on a standard grade scale, where a 100-90 is an A, 89-80 is a B, 79-70 is a C and 69-60 is a D. Final grade averages below a 60 will result in a failing grade. The distribution of grades for the assignments this semester is presented in table below.

Table Three: Grade Distribution

Blackboard session attendance quizzes	20% (4% for each of 5 sessions)
Ability to talk to classmates through headset microphone (no open speakers and mics).	Extra Credit (1 point per session attended with working headset and mic)
Class Participation in Discussion Threads	20% (10% for each of 2 threads)
Assignments	45% (15% each for 3 assignments)
Final Exam	15%
Total	100%

VII. Campus Policies:

In addition to the specific policies for this class, the University of South Dakota offers policies that apply to all classes at the University. Those are:

1.   Freedom in learning. Under Board of Regents and University policy student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the dean of the college or school that offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

2.   Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register with Disability Services during the first week of class.   Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered with Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester.

Ernetta L. Fox, Director
Disability Services, Room 119 Service Center
(605)677-6389
Web Site: www.usd.edu/ds
E-mail: dservices@usd.edu

3.   No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. At the discretion of the instructor, a student caught engaging in any form of academic dishonesty may be:
   a.   Given a zero for that assignment.
   b.   Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.
   c.   Assigned a reduced grade for the course.
   d.   Dropped from the course.
   e.   Failed in the course.

VIII. Cheating and Plagiarism

In this course we will follow the College of Arts and Sciences Cheating/Plagiarism Policy, which states:

The College of Arts and Sciences considers plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty inimical to the objectives of higher education. The College supports

penalties on students who engage in academic dishonesty, as defined in the "Conduct" section of the University of South Dakota Student Handbook.

No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. At the discretion of the instructor, a student caught engaging in any form of academic dishonesty may be:

a. Given a zero for that assignment.
b. Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.
c. Assigned a reduced grade for the course.
d. Dropped from the course.
e. Failed in the course.

-- Adopted by vote of the faculty
April 12. 2005