# Course Syllabus:

# SOCI 228: Theories and Fundamentals of Conflict Transformation

# Middlebury College: Spring 2024

**Instructor**: Chong-suk Han

**Course Meetings Times**: Tuesday and Thursdays 8:15-9:30 AM.

**Class Location:** Munroe 406.

**Instructor’s Office:** 414 Munroe Hall.

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**Instructor’s Office Hours:** The “official” office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM and Wednesdays 10:00-11:00 AM However, it is STRONGLY advised that you make an appointment. Your appointment does NOT have to be during “official” office hours. By “making an appointment,” I mean that you give me some advance notice when you want to touch base. While some amount of notice is nice, it is often the case that I can speak with you on the same day that you request a meeting (That is, if you email me in the morning and ask if we can speak “sometime” that day, we usually can. BUT, please, when you do email me, provide me with as much potential times as possible. For example, “Are you free later today after 2:00” or “Can we touch base sometime tomorrow between 9:00-11:00 or after 2:30.”).

**Disability Statement:**

Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Students requiring more formal accommodations should contact the Middlebury College Americans with Disabilities Act Office.

# Course Description:

In this course, we will explore the interdisciplinary field of Conflict Transformation as both a philosophical orientation and a theoretical framework for understanding conflict as part of the human experience. In exploring conflict transformation, we will move beyond examining conflict as something that should be avoided (conflict prevention) or resolved through various formal and informal processes of negotiation (conflict resolution). Instead, this course will examine the ways that conflict is normal in human relationships, an integral part of human experiences, and can act as a catalyst for social transformation. To do so, we will examine conflict at multiple different levels of human experiences such as interpersonal, national, and international using a broader lens to explore the “bigger picture” of the historical, social, and interpersonal causes of conflict. In doing so, we will come to understand conflict as not something that is always destructive but also productive in creating social change on the personal, interpersonal, local, national, and international level.

**Standards of Conduct:**

Students should be well aware of the academic honor code of Middlebury College.

**Weekly Discussion Questions:** Each week, students will prepare TWO discussion questions from the readings. Discussion questions are due on Monday of the week for the week’s readings.

**Semina Leading:** Starting in week three, small groups of students will be assigned to lead the classes for the week. As seminar leaders, students will be expected to provide both a broad overview of the readings for the week and to facilitate class discussions of the readings, provide “context” materials for the class, be prepared to analyze the readings in terms of the strengths, weaknesses, and arguments presented by the authors, select questions from class members for expanded discussions, etc.

**Conflict Mapping and Analysis:** The “main” assignment for the semester is a conflict mapping exercise. Students will be expected to identity a local, national, or international conflict and produce a report that:

1. Discusses the situation, including the underlying causes and the conditions that led to and maintained the conflict, the primary stakeholders in the conflict, the opposing viewpoints regarding the conflict held by individual and group stakeholders, their individual and social “identities” within the conflict that may lead them to hold specific beliefs regarding the conflict, etc.
2. An assessment of the various methods of prevention, intervention, negotiation etc. conducted by stakeholders and outside parties (if applicable). In the event of outside parties, a discussion of what is “at stake” for such outside parties.
3. A critical evaluation of the methods employed towards prevention, intervention, negotiation etc. and a discussion about how this specific conflict has been, or potentially could be, transformative.

Each week, we will attempt to make time to provide space for student discussions on their projects.

**Participation:** It is expected that all students will complete the week’s readings prior to class meetings. During class, students will be expected to be active listeners of, and contributors to, class discussions. In addition, students will be expected to respect the opinions and comments made by other students in the class. I realize that “participation” is a relative term and I have found that several students regularly contribute to discussions while other students possess a learning style based on more listening and less talking. Either style is valid. At the same time, students should make an active effort to share their thoughts with others and several opportunities to do so will be provided.

**Policy on Submitting Work:** All assignments MUST be emailed as ATTACHED WORD DOCUMENTS. No other format will be accepted. Please do not “share” a file on Google drive, please do not turn in a PDF, etc.

**Grades** will be based on the following manner:

Main Assignment (cumulatively) = 70%

Seminar Leading = 10%

Participation = 10%

Presentation = 10%

**The Four books you must acquire for the class (All other readings are provided for you):**

1. John Paul Lederach. The Little Book of Conflict Transformation.
2. Bruce W. Dayton and Louis Kriesberg. Constructive Conflict: From Emergence to Transformation.
3. Sarah Schulman. Conflict is Not Abuse: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility, and the Duty of Repair.
4. Benjamin Ginsberg. The Value of Violence.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**Week One: February 13-15**

Introduction to Conflict Transformation

1. Johannes Botes. “Conflict Transformation: A debate over semantics or a crucial shift in the theory and practice of peace and conflict studies?”
2. *Constructive Conflict: From Emergence to Transformation*. Chapter 1.
3. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. Chapters 1-3 and 6.

**Week Two: February 20-22**

What Conflict is Not

1. *Conflict is Not Abuse: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility, and the Duty of Repair.* Chapters 1-4.

**Week Three: February 27-29**

Identity and Conflict

1. Terrell Northrup. “The dynamics of identity in personal and social conflict.”
2. Francis Fukuyama. “Against identity politics.”
3. Stacey Abrams et al. “E Pluribus Unum.”
4. German Lopez. “The battle over identity politics explained.”
5. Amy Chua. “How America’s identity politics went from inclusion to division.”
6. Kenan Malik. “The rise of white identity politics.”
7. Gary Alan Fine. “Forgotten classic: The Robbers Cave experiment.”
8. Dominic Packer and Jay Van Bavel. “The myth of tribalism.”

**Week Four: March 5-7**

Framing and Understanding Conflict

1. Sandra Kaufman, Michael Elliott, and Deborah Shmueli. “Frames, framing and reframing.”
2. Guus Bartholome, Sophie Lecheler, and Claes de Vreese. “Manufacturing conflict? How journalists intervene in the conflict frame building process.”
3. Julie Mertus. “Legitimizing the use of force in Kosovo.”
4. Stephen Reese and Seth Lewis. “Framing the war on terror: The internationalization of policy in the US press.”
5. Boris Brummans et al. “Making sense of intractable multiparty conflict.”
6. Susannah Paletz, Ella Miron-Spektor, and Chun-Chi Lin. “A cultural lens on interpersonal conflict and creativity in multicultural environments.”
7. Jeanne Zechmeister and Catherine Romero. “Victim and offender accounts of interpersonal conflict: Autobiographical narratives of forgiveness and unforgiveness.”

**Week Five: March 12-14**

Conflict Drivers

1. *Constructive Conflict: From Emergence to Transformation*. Chapter 2-5.
2. *Conflict is Not Abuse: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility, and the Duty of Repair.* Chapters 5-7.

**Week Six: March 26-28**

Escalation and De-escalation

1. *Constructive Conflict: From Emergence to Transformation*. Chapters 6-7.
2. *Conflict is Not Abuse: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility, and the Duty of Repair.* Chapter 8 and Conclusion.

**Week Seven: April 2-4**

Strategies in Mediation, Negotiation, and Transformation: Part I

1. Barnett Rubin and Bruce Jones. “Prevention of violent conflict: Tasks and challenges for the United Nations.”
2. Richard Betts. “The delusion of impartial intervention.”
3. Isabel Bramsen and Poul Poder. “Emotional dynamics in conflict and conflict transformation.”
4. Maria Stephens and Erica Chenoweth. “Why civil resistance works.”
5. Roy Lewicki, Stephen Weiss, and David Lewin. “Models of conflict, negotiation and third party intervention: A review and synthesis.”
6. Hilal Ahmad Wani, Andi Suwirta, and Joseph Payeye. “Conflict resolution and conflict transformation: Some reflections.”

**Week Eight: April 9-11**

Mediation, Negotiation, and Transformation: Part II

1. *Constructive Conflict: From Emergence to Transformation*. Chapters 8-11.
2. *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. Chapters 4-5 and Chapters 7-9.
3. Maria Stephens and Erica Chenoweth. “Why civil resistance works.”
4. Morgan Brigg. “Mediation, power, and cultural difference.”
5. Marvin C. Ott. “Mediation as a method of conflict resolution: Two cases.”
6. Jacob Bercovitch and Richard Jackson. “Negotiation or mediation?: An exploration of factors affecting the choice of conflict management in international conflict.”

**Week Nine: April 16-18**

Does Violence Have a Place?

1. *The Value of Violence.* Entire Book.

**Week Ten: April 23-25**

Cancel Culture

1. Meredith Clark. “DRAG THEM: A brief etymology of so-called ‘cancel culture’.”
2. Pippa Norris. “Cancel culture: Myth or reality?”
3. *We Will Not Cancel Us: And Other Dreams of Transformative Justice.* Entire Book.

**Week Eleven: April 30-May 2**

Student presentations

**Week Twelve: May 7-9**

Student presentations