

# Speech 455

(CRN77864)

## Conflict Management

### Fall 2009

**Instructor:** Dr. Bill Sharkey  
**Office:** George Hall 332  
**Office Hours:** T & R 8:30 - 10am & W 10:30 - 12 or by appointment  
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**Laulima:** <https://laulima.hawaii.edu/>  
**Speech Dept:** <http://www.hawaii.edu/speech/>  
**Classroom:** KUY 209  
**Time:** T & R 9am – 10:15am

**Readings:** Readings for class can be found on Laulima <https://laulima.hawaii.edu/>

#### Warning

This course contains information that may cause you to view your relationships and to interact with your relationship partners differently. This information has the potential to help and/or hurt your relationships

## Course Description

This course looks to define conflict. It looks to theories of communication and conflict to help explain and understanding the phenomenon, and it looks at skills used in the constructive management of conflict. Destructive conflict ravages the lives and relationships of individuals in families, organizations, and intimate relationships. This course will attempt to help you understand the nature of conflict and the assumptions that handcuff an individual's ability to deal with conflict in productive ways. The course is broken into three main themes that mirror the components of being a competent communicator. The first part of the class is devoted to developing **knowledge** about conflict; the second part of the class is devoted to understanding **motivation** and its relationship to conflict; the third part of the class is devoted to developing behavioral **skills** necessary to increase the chances of being effective, "appropriate," productive, and satisfied during conflicts.

## Attendance

You are expected to show up for class. There is no direct penalty for not attending class; however, you will be missing out on discussions and lecture material. If you miss a class, you are responsible for acquiring notes from a fellow classmate.

## Participation

Although no grade will be assigned for participation, those who participate will be given the benefit of the doubt when it comes to borderline final grades (.01 to .05 percentage points). It is expected that you will have read the reading assignment by the day they are listed on our schedule. On that day, you are presumed to have enough knowledge to discuss the concepts in a coherent fashion. You are also expected to ask questions during lectures and help with discussions about terms, ideas, and theories that will be presented in class. You will also be randomly called on to explain various concepts and theories and to provide examples to help us all understand conflict in real life.

## **Opportunities**

(a.k.a., exams, tests, quizzes, and so on)

The opportunities are worth a total of 72% of your grade. Three opportunities will be given. Opportunities will include information from class readings and lectures up to the date of the Opportunity. All Opportunities will include multiple choice questions and/or short-answer essay questions. Opportunities are non-cumulative; however, an understanding of previous material is essential to doing well on each subsequent Opportunity. The majority of multiple choice questions on the Opportunities are application questions; for a few examples of questions visit our Lualima home page ("Study Materials").

If the average/mean for an opportunity is lower than a 74, all grades will be curved to a "C" average (approximately 75) by adding a percentage to each person's opportunity grade.

## **Research Participation**

Participation in research projects is an essential part of the academic system. It is the cooperation of undergraduate and graduate students that allows us to investigate a variety of communicative phenomena and, in turn, share our findings with you, our colleagues, and hopefully, the outside community. This is a very serious and exciting obligation. It is important to actively partake in research participation and utilize the opportunity to learn about the research process (1% of grade).

## **Assignments**

There are three graded assignments for this class: 1) Self-Analysis (2% of final grade); 2) Weekly Journal Entries (5% of final grade, see schedule for due dates); and 3) Final Journal Paper (20% of final grade). A description of each assignment can be found later in the syllabus.

## **Email Announcements**

During the course of the semester, multiple announcements/emails will be sent to you via Lualima. Most of the emails you will receive will be reminders for upcoming assignments, opportunities, and so on. As per UH policy, only students' UH email accounts will be used. Be sure to check your UH email and/or Lualima regularly.

## **Final Grading Divisions**

Grades will be assigned on the following basis:

A+ = 96.5-100; A = 92.5-96.4; A- = 89.5-92.4; B+ = 86.5-89.4; B = 82.5-86.4; B- = 79.5-82.4; C+ = 76.5-79.4; C = 69.5-76.4; (no C- will be assigned); D+ = 66.5-69.4; D = 62.5-66.4; D- = 59.5-62.4; F < 59.4

Opportunity One	24%
Opportunity Two	24
Final Opportunity	24
Self-Analysis	02
Conflict Journal Paper	20
Weekly Journal	05
Research Participation	01
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Total	100%

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE DOCKED 10 POINTS FOR EACH DAY LATE BEGINNING THE END OF THE "DUE DATE" CLASS (10:15 AM). THIS INCLUDES WEEKEND DAYS AND HOLIDAYS. NO EXCEPTIONS. IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO SUBMIT YOUR ASSIGNMENT IN PERSON, BE SURE TO HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE DROP IT OFF FOR YOU TO AVOID PENALTY.**

## **Instructions for Class Assignments**

1. **Self-Analysis** (Due Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> in hard copy – do not email your papers; 2% of grade)

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

- a. Describe how you generally feel about the conflicts you experience.
- b. Generally speaking, do you think you act "competently" or "incompetently" in conflict situations? Why do you think this?
- c. Generally speaking, when engaged in conflict, are you more competitive or cooperative? Why do you think this?
- d. Generally speaking, when engaged in conflict, do you believe your conflict partners view you as more competitive or cooperative? Why do you think this?
- e. **On a separate page, (a) list three aspects of your own conflict behavior (verbal and/or nonverbal) or perceptions of conflict that you would like to improve/change this semester (be specific--that is, focus on your communication actions or your thoughts about conflict); (b) Indicate why you believe each of these behaviors/perceptions needs to be improved or changed?**

For example:

"I want to be able to stop myself from yelling at my friends when I'm angry."

"When I yell at my friends, I notice that it usually makes things worse. They start yelling back at me. We call each other names and bring up things that are not really relevant to the conflict. My feelings and their feelings get hurt, and we don't solve the problem. In fact, my yelling creates more problems. If the problem is supposedly solved, one of us usually does not like the solution."

**Self-Analysis is to be typed:**

- **STAPLE PAGES TOGETHER IN UPPER LEFT HAND CORNER**
  - DO NOT use a paper clip.
  - DO NOT hand in paper with a plastic cover.
  - Be sure to place your name, course number, date, and instructor's name on the first page.
  - **Double Space** your entire paper.
- f. Fill-out the *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument* **and** the *Putnam/Wilson Conflict Behavior Scale*. **Do not turn-in these questionnaires**, hold on to them until the professor asks you to bring them to class. These can be found on Lulima ("Assignment #1 Scales").

2. **Weekly Journal** (5% of grade, in hard copy – do not email your journal entries)

You are to keep a weekly journal throughout the semester describing the conflicts you experience. At the end of the semester, you are required to have a **minimum** of 10 entries. I will ask for your journals five times during the semester (See the schedule for the due dates). Each time, you are required to turn in two new journal entries and any previously graded journal entries. Each entry must include each of the following items in the order presented below:

**See Lailima (“Journal Forms”) for an example of a well written journal entry.**

**You may also use the on-line PDF form to report your conflicts.**

**Simply type in the information and print it out (NOTE: *the site does not allow you to save the pdf file*).**

a. **At the beginning of each entry, provide the following information:**

- i. Your name
- ii. journal entry number
- iii. the date of the conflict
- iv. the location of the conflict
- v. the names and/or role of the people involved in the conflict
- vi. the conflict issue; what is the conflict about (e.g., *where to go to dinner; what behaviors to avoid during conflict; who gets the car Friday night; how to discipline our child; whether to go to the beach or the game*)
- vii. the two main goals (i.e., what you want and what your partner wants) that appear to be in conflict.

## Examples of Issues and Goals:

- EX 1: Issue: My boyfriend’s religious association  
Goals: “I want my boyfriend to convert to Christianity” “My boyfriend wants to remain a Unitarian”
- EX 2: Issue: Weeding or going to the beach  
Goals: “My father wanted me to weed the side yard on Saturday” “I wanted to go to the Beach, instead of weeding the side yard”
- EX 3: Issue: Whose facts were correct  
Goals: “I wanted to show my boss that the facts she had were wrong” “My boss wanted to prove to me that her facts were correct”
- EX 4: Issue: How to hang-up shirts  
Goals: “I want my husband to hang up his shirts with the top button buttoned” “My husband wants to hang up his shirts without the top button buttoned”
- EX 5: Issue: When to meet with my professor  
Goals: “I want to meet with my Professor after class today to discuss my grade” “My professor wants to meet with me tomorrow at 2pm”
- EX 6: Issue: How to define our relationship  
Goals: “My friend wants to define our relationship as lovers” “I want to keep our relationship defined as good friends”
- EX 7: Issue: Who wins our conflict  
Goals: “I wanted to win our conflict.” “My friend wanted to win our conflict.”
- EX 8: Issue: Whether or not the volleyball hit was in bounds  
Goals: “I want to convince Gerry that my volleyball hit was in bounds.” “Gerry wants to convince me that my hit was out of bounds.”
- EX 9: Issue: What to do with my money  
Goals: “I want to spend my money anyway I want.” “My father wants me to invest it.”
- EX 10: Issue: Dating rules  
Goals: “I want to date around.” “My boyfriend wants a monogamous relationship.”
- EX 11: Issue: My father yelling at me  
Goals: “I want my father to stop yelling at me.” “My father wants to yell at me.”
- EX 12: Issue: Who should have control in our relationship  
Goals: “I want to have control in our relationship.” “My friend wants to have control in our relationship.”
- EX 13: Issue: Who should pay for dinner  
Goals: “I want to pay for dinner.” “My partner wants to pay for dinner.”
- EX 14: Issue: What movie to see  
Goals: “I want to see ‘Hairspray.’” “My friend wants to see ‘The Simpson’s Movie.’”

**\*\*Weekly Journal instructions continued on next page\*\***

**Next:**

- viii. describe the conflict; how did the conflict develop?
- ix. was the conflict resolved (i.e., both people were satisfied with the outcome)?; if so, how was it resolved? What did you and your partner say and/or do to resolve it?; if not, why wasn't it resolved?
- x. describe which of **your conflict partner's** behaviors you feel were most effective and appropriate and which were most ineffective and inappropriate in resolving the conflict. Why?
- xi. what could **she/he** have done/said differently to improve upon **her/his** ineffective and inappropriate behaviors?
- xii. describe which of **your** behaviors you feel were most effective and appropriate and which were most ineffective and inappropriate in resolving the conflict. Why?
- xiii. what could **you** have done/said differently to improve upon **your** ineffective and inappropriate behaviors?

In writing your entries in your journal, you will be able to view your conflict behaviors over a period of time. It will help you to analyze your own conflict behaviors that otherwise may have gone unnoticed. Additionally, the journal will help you make sense of your conflict partners' behaviors. This conflict journal will be used to write your "**Conflict Journal Paper**," so be sure to keep up with it.

### 3. Conflict Journal Paper

This assignment is worth 20% of your final grade. This paper is meant to be a self-assessment. At the beginning of the semester, you reported three conflict behaviors you wanted to improve or change (Self-analysis). You have experienced conflict over the course of this semester. In answering the following questions, you should focus on your behaviors during the semester. Be sure to support your claims by providing examples from your journal entries (one example does not support a claim, be sure to cite two or three example where possible). The entries are not to be included in the body of your paper; however, you are required to use portions from them as data (i.e., support) as you assess your behavior [Due (along with a minimum of 10 Journal Entries) Dec 8<sup>th</sup>, by 10:15pm, in hard copy – do not email your papers].

When answering the questions, assume that I have no knowledge about you, your journal entries, nor the concepts/theories that you discuss. This means that you need to explain yourself clearly.

Address the following questions. Answer each question in order. Be sure to **double space** your entire paper.

- (1) Based upon your original three behavioral/perceptual goals (Self-Analysis), a) what were your three original goals for the class? b) which of these conflict behaviors/perceptions have you improved upon this semester? c) Which haven't you improved upon? d) Explain why you improved or did not improve on each of the behaviors.  
**(Be sure to provide illustrations of the improvements/non-improvements by referencing your journal entries – date and/or entry number).** It's okay if you haven't improved. It may be that this semester has created a greater awareness of behavior, so that you are thinking more about your conflict skills now. The next step after awareness is improved behavior--don't worry if you haven't made giant behavioral strides. Understanding is the most important first step. Moreover, you may have found that a behavior, in the end, was not in need of improving. Additionally, you may have developed new goals for yourself that you did not think of or notice at the beginning of class.
- (2) As you review your journal entries, a) how have your behaviors affected your conflict partners' perceptions of you? b) how have your behaviors affected your conflict partners' behaviors? b) Explain. **(provide illustrations from your journal entries to support your claims)**
- (3) At the beginning of the semester, I asked the following question: "Do you think you act 'competently' or 'incompetently' in conflict situations? Why?" Based on your journal entries, and all the information provided in this course, and three months later, **explain** how your level of competency during your conflicts has changed and/or stayed the same (*focus specifically on your effectiveness and appropriateness during your conflicts*) **(provide illustrations from your journal entries to support your claims)**
- (4) Finally, a) what two concepts, theories, models, ideas, discussed in class or your class readings are the most valuable or important to you and your conflicts. b) **Define/explain** the concepts/theories/ideas then c) explain **why** these two concepts, theories, models, ideas are important to you.

**\*\*\*\*IMPORTANT:** Throughout your paper, be sure to provide citations when using other people's ideas or words; for example (W. F. Sharkey, lecture, *Month/Day/Year*; Cupach & Canary, 2000; and so on.). If you use a direct quote from one of your readings, be sure to place the quote in quotation marks and provide the page number; for example, According to Morreale, Spitzberg, and Barge (2001), "competence is how effective and appropriate a person is in a given context" (p. 28). Proper citing for you journal entries should include the journal entry number and the date; for example, According to my journal entry #2 (January 12, 2008), I stated . . . OR "I have discovered that I tend to control my yelling much more now (journal entry #8, April 7, 2008; journal entry 9, April 12, 2008) than I did at the beginning of the semester" (journal entry #1, January 13, 2008; journal entry #4, February 20, 2008).

For additional information on proper and alternate ways of citing, see Hacker's (2004) Rules for writers, the APA (2001) Publication manual or the Department of Speech website "Links" then "Writing Manuals" for on-line writing manuals. <http://www.hawaii.edu/speech/links.php>

<b>Grading:</b>	15%	Grammar, mechanics and spelling
	10%	Organization of ideas
	50%	Application, explanations, definitions, analyses, and completeness of answers
	25%	Support of your statements and claims (e.g., examples from your journals, citations).

## Sp 455 Fall 2009

## Schedule (subject to change)

-- Readings are to be read by the date listed --

**Part I: Knowledge**

- Aug 25 Introduction to course:  
Communicative Competence & Ethics  
Knowledge
- 27 Types of Conflict  
**\*\*Morreale, Spitzberg & Barge (2001, Chap. 2, pp. 27-51)**
- Sept 01 Types of Conflict  
**\*\*Wilmot & Hocker (2007, Chap. 1, pp. 2-15)**  
**Self-Analysis Due**
- 03 Functions of Conflict  
Fundamental Assumptions
- 08 Conflict Patterns/Cycles  
**\*\*Wilmot & Hocker (2007, Chap. 1, pp. 16-27)**  
**\*\*Driver et. al. (2003, Chap. 18, pp. 493-496**  
**"Four Horsemen")**  
**Journal Entries 1-2 Due**
- 10 Conflict Patterns/Cycles
- 15 Theories for Understanding Conflict  
**\*\*Folger, Poole & Stutman (2005, Chap. 7, pp. 213-225)**
- 17 Theories for Understanding Conflict
- 22 Theories for Understanding Conflict  
**\*\*Folger, Poole & Stutman (2005, Chap. 5, pp. 145-177)**
- 24 Theories for Understanding Conflict  
Overview for Opportunity #1  
**Journal Entries 1-4 Due**
- 19 **Opportunity #1**
- 21 Conflict Structure: Issues & Goals  
**\*\*Wilmot & Hocker (2007, Chap. 3, pp. 62-94)**
- 29 Conflict Structure: Issues & Goals
- Oct 01 Conflict Structure: Trust  
Conflict Structure: Uncertainty
- 06 Conflict Structure: Power  
**\*\*Folger, Poole & Stutman (2005, Chap. 4, pp. 104-144)**
- 08 Conflict Structure: Power  
**Journal Entries 1-6 Due**
- 13 Conflict Structure: The Process
- 15 Perception's Role in Conflict  
**\*\*Harper (2004, Chap. 1, pp. 1-12)**

- 20 Perception's Role in Conflict  
**\*\*LiveScience (2006)**  
**\*\*Pitts (2004)**

**Part II: Motivation**

- Motivation  
**\*\*REVIEW: Morreale, Spitzberg & Barge (2001, Chap. 2, p. 38)**  
Skills: Tactics to Avoid  
Overview for Opportunity #2

**Part III: Skills**

- 22 **Opportunity #2**
- 27 Skills: Tactics to Avoid  
**\*\*REVIEW: Morreale, Spitzberg & Barge (2001, Chap. 2, p. 40)**  
**Journal Entries 1-8 Due**
- 29 Skills: Tactics to Avoid  
**\*\*Driver et. al. (2003, Chap. 18, pp. 493-513)**
- Nov 03 Skills: Analysis of the Context  
**\*\*Cahn & Abigale (2007, Chap. 3, pp. 40-57)**
- 05 Skills: Listening
- 10 Skills: Listening
- 12 Skills: Framing Messages
- 17 Skills: Anger Management  
**\*\*Folger, Poole & Stutman (2005, Chap. 7, pp. 225-255 & 268-271)**  
**Journal Entries 1-10**
- 19 Skills: Choosing Tactics
- 24 Skills: Culture and Conflict  
**\*\*Cupach & Canary (2000, Chap. 7, pp. 121-147)**
- 26 **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**
- Dec 01 Skills: Forgiveness and Conflict  
**\*\*Waldron & Kelley (2008, Chap. 5, pp. 127-152)**
- 03 Skills: Forgiveness and Conflict
- 08 Skills: Forgiveness and Conflict  
**Conflict Journal Paper Due 10:15pm**
- 10 Catch Up  
Class Evaluations  
Overview for Opportunity #3
- May 15 (Tuesday) **Final Opportunity (9:45am – 11:45am)**

# Speech 455: Conflict Management Readings List

Dr. Bill Sharkey  
Fall 2009

- Cahn, D. D., & Abigail, R. A. (2007). *Managing conflict through communication* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson. Chapter 3.
- Cupach, W. R., & Canary, D. J. (2000). *Competence in interpersonal conflict*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland. Chapter 7.
- Driver, J., Tabares, A., Shapiro, A., Nahm, E. Y., & Gottman, J. M. (2003). Interactional patterns in marital success or failure: Gottman laboratory studies. In F. Walsh (Ed.), *Normal family processes: Growing diversity and complexity* (pp. 493-513). New York: Guilford. Chapter 18.
- Folger, J. P., Poole, M. S., & Stutman, R. K. (2005). *Working through conflict: Strategies for relationships, groups, and organizations* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson. Chapters 4, 5, & 7.
- Harper, G. (2004). *The joy of conflict resolution*. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers. Chapter 1.
- LiveScience (2006). Political bias affects brain activity, study finds. Retrieved August 6, 2007, from <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11009379/print/1/displaymode/1098/>
- Morreale, S. P., Spitzberg, B. H., & Barge, J. K. (2001). *Human communication: Motivation, knowledge, & skills*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. Chapter 2.
- Pitts, L. (2004, December 24). We believe what we want to believe: Despite the facts, we tend to side with our biases. *The Honolulu Advertiser*, p. A8.
- Waldon, V. R., & Kelley, D. L. (2008). *Communicating forgiveness*. Los Angeles, Ca: Sage. Chapter 5.
- Wilmot, W. W., & Hocker, J. L. (2007). *Interpersonal conflict* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill. Chapters 1 & 3.