

COMM 353 – CONFLICT, MEDIATION, AND COMMUNICATION

MTWRF 4.5 hours – 8:00am – 12:30pm GRUE 402

This syllabus contains important information about your rights and responsibilities in this course. Please take the time to read it carefully.

The University/student relationship is not one of producer/consumer. When students, parents, scholarships, and/or other funders pay fees in order for a student to attend classes, this obligates the student to a set of educational responsibilities and expectations.

Professor Contact Information

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Office Hours: by appointment
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Text/Resources

Text:

McCorkle, S., & Reese, M. J. (2005). *Mediation theory and practice*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Resources: (available from instructor for interested students)

Domenici, K., & Littlejohn, S. W. (2001). *Mediation: Empowerment in conflict management* (2nd Ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Rusk, T. (1993). *The power of ethical persuasion*. New York, NY: Viking Books.

General Course Description

This course examines conflict as a complex communication event with an emphasis on developing skills to engage in mediation. Emphasis is placed on the role of the mediator as process facilitator to enhance constructive outcomes in conflict situations.

Attendance/Participation

Attendance and courtesy are expected. This class is an interactive learning experience. To complete course requirements and successfully grasp the material, it is important that you are in class, **have read the assignment**, and participate in classroom and group activities. Class time will primarily consist of mini-lectures, discussion, and skills building activities. Lecture will include information from the text as well as outside material. Additionally, there are participation points awarded in the class for involvement in various class activities and engaging in discussion.

E-mail Policy

E-mail is one of the best ways to contact me. I will respond within 24 hours, however, we will be seeing each other five out of every seven days. E-mail should be used to set up appointments and ask short questions for clarification. E-mail is not to be used to replace class attendance, office hour visitation, or to attach paper drafts for review. Paper drafts are to be reviewed in person. This allows for the greatest learning.

Writing Quality Assumptions

All assignments (unless otherwise specified) should be typed, double-spaced, and have 1 inch margins on all sides. A 12-point font should be used. Follow the current American Psychological Association (APA) style. Manuals are available in the library, in the Writing Center, and in the Communication Department Resource Area (GRUE 503). No papers are assigned for this course, however, any written assignment you turn in must be clear. I expect you to use a computer and to take advantage of the programs that guard against grammatical and typographical errors; however, these programs do not catch all errors. Therefore, there is no substitute for good proofreading. Additionally, I expect papers to incorporate citations and evidence appropriately.

Makeup Exams/Late Work

Makeup exams are rarely given. If you miss an exam, you lose the points associated with it. The only exceptions are due to documented sickness, death in the family, or some other catastrophe. The best policy is to take the exam in advance or let me know in advance of your absence. I am very unlikely to allow you to take an exam after the scheduled time if you do not have the professionalism to contact me beforehand.

All assignments are due at the BEGINNING of the class period on the day in which they are due unless otherwise indicated. Late work will only be accepted at the instructor's discretion and under the most extreme circumstances. Documentation of those circumstances is required. If accepted, late work will be graded and then a deduction of one letter grade per working day that the assignment is late will be assessed.

Grade Discussion

If you want to discuss a grade, please do not confront me the day I hand back a test/paper (i.e., you have not had time to adequately review my feedback). See me during office hours within a week of my returning the assignment.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student or the attempt to commit such an act. This includes submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructors and providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment. Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of UAF to accommodate students with a physical or medically documented learning challenge, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student with a disability who needs accommodations, for example in seating placement or in arrangements for note-taking, examinations, or access to information on the web, should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course (during the first week). Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact Center for Health and Counseling at (907) 474-7043 or TTY (907) 474-7045. Information can be found on the web at <http://www.uaf.edu/chc/Disability.htm>. This office will arrange, coordinate, and provide a variety of support services designed to ensure educational access and to enhance individual development of students with disabilities.

<u>Assignments</u> (assignment sheets or detailed discussion of assignments will occur)	<u>Points</u>
Pre-class assignment:	50
Class participation points:	100
Journal: (4 journal entries).....	50
Test: (cumulative quizzes).....	100
Two skills assessments: (#1 - 50 pts., #2 - 100 pts.).....	150
Final Exam:	50
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TOTAL:	500

Grade Determination

- A -- An *honor* grade, indicates originality and independent work, a thorough mastery of the subject and the satisfactory completion of more work than is regularly required.
- B -- Indicates outstanding ability above the average level of performance.
- C -- Indicates a satisfactory or average level of performance.
- D -- The lowest passing grade, indicates work of below-average quality and performance.
- F -- Indicates failure. All “F” grades, including those earned in pass/fail courses, are included in the GPA calculations.

Course Agenda (subject to adjustment)

WEEK 1, May	<u>Reading for that day’s class</u>	<u>Class Content</u>
Mon. 11 th	McCorkle & Reese 1 & 2	Introduction to Mediation
Tue. 12 th	McCorkle & Reese 3	Essential Mediation Skills
Wed. 13 th	McCorkle & Reese 4 & 5 <i>Journal Entry 1 Due</i>	Before the Mediation Session
Thur. 14 th	McCorkle & Reese 6	Mediator’s Opening Statement
Fri. 15 th	McCorkle & Reese 7 <i>Journal Entry 2 Due</i>	Storytelling and Issue Identification
 WEEK 2, May		
Mon. 18 th	McCorkle & Reese 8	Setting the Agenda for Negotiation
Tue. 19 th	McCorkle & Reese 9	Problem Solving and Negotiation
Wed. 20 th	McCorkle & Reese 10	Settlement and Closure
Thur. 21 st	<i>Journal Entry 3 Due</i>	Mediation Workshop
Fri. 22 nd	<i>Journal Entry 4 Due</i>	Final Exam