

**SPCM 4540/6540: Interpersonal Conflict (Maymester 2008)**  
**214 Terrell Hall**  
**9:30-12:15 MTWRF**

Staff:	Dr. Jennifer Samp
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Office Hours:	After class or by appointment

**Overview**

Typically, conflict is an everyday occurrence. Although many of you are experienced with conflict, this course will provide you with an opportunity to explore the complexities of conflict, to understand the forces that make conflict challenging, and to develop a repertoire of skills for thinking about and managing conflict more effectively in a variety of close relationship contexts. Prerequisite: SPCM 3700.

**Required Texts & Readings**

Christensen, A., & Jacobson, N. S. (2000). *Reconcilable differences*. New York: Guilford.

Nay, W. R. (2004). *Taking charge of anger*. New York: Guilford.

Wilmot, W. W., & Hocker, J. L. (2007). *Interpersonal conflict (7<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

The following readings are available on the course WebCT site (<https://webct.uga.edu>) for download:

Miller, J. B. (1991). Women's and men's scripts for interpersonal conflict. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 15, 15-29.

Koerner, A., F., & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (2002). You never leave your family in a fight: The impact of family origin on conflict behavior in romantic relationships. *Communication Studies*, 53, 234-251.

Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, S., Chew-Sanchez, M. I., Harris, R., Wilcox, R., & Stumpf, S. (2003). Face and facework in conflicts with parents and siblings: A cross-cultural comparison of Germans, Japanese, Mexicans, and U. S. Americans. *The Journal of Family Communication*, 3, 67-93.

Canary, D. J., Cunningham, E. M., & Cody, M. J. (1988). Goal types, gender, and locus of control in managing interpersonal conflict. *Communication Research*, 15, 426-446.

Jewkes, R. (2002). Intimate partner violence: Causes and prevention. *The Lancet*, 359, 1423-1429.

## Evaluation

Your course grade will be based on a 1000-point scale and will be determined by combining scores from four sources:

- ***In-class assignments:*** Ten in-class assignments will be offered throughout the semester at Dr. Samp's discretion. These tasks will be assigned in-class and turned in at the end of the class session; therefore, you **must** attend class on the day that an in-class assignment is presented in order to receive credit. You cannot make up in-class assignments under any circumstance (really). These are graded on a +10 (present and turned in assignment) or 0 (not present) basis. (200 points)
- ***Exams:*** Two multiple-choice exams will be given. Each exam will contain 50 questions worth 4 points each. The questions on these exams will require recall and application of course material. Make-up exams will not be scheduled due to our abbreviated schedule. (400 points)
- ***Case Study Analysis Paper:*** In this 5-6 page paper, you will assess the precipitating factors and conflict behavior as revealed in *The Break Up*. (200 points)
- ***Personal Conflict Analysis:*** In this 8-10 page paper, you will assess your conflicts with one significant person in your life by applying one or more theories of interpersonal conflict to your experience. (200 points)
- ***Final Grades.*** You may earn a possible 1000 points in this class. Your final letter grade will reflect this distribution:

A	930-1000	C+	770-799
A-	900-929	C	730-769
B+	870-899	C-	700-729
B	830-869	D	600-699
B-	800-829	F	000-599

**Note:** Your final grade is **final**. Adjustments will be made only in the case of a mathematical error. Applying subjective standards after the fact in order to bolster your grade is unfair to your classmates, and therefore will not occur.

**Warning:** Final point totals will **not** be rounded up under any circumstances.

**Also note:** You must earn a **C** or above for this course to count as part of a major in Speech Communication.

## Course & University Policies

- **The syllabus.** The terms of this syllabus are subject to change with notice from Dr. Samp.
- **Class attendance.** You will not be graded directly according to whether you show up for class or not; however, each class will include both a review of the readings and new material that cannot be made up. Further, some classes will involve in-class assignments, which cannot be made up. If you must miss class, you are expected to get the notes from one of your classmates and to check the WebCT site for any handouts. Dr. Samp will not have extra copies of handouts after the class day that they are distributed.
- **Paper deadlines.** All assignments are due on the date specified. **No late papers will be accepted under any circumstance.** Do not turn in papers by sliding them under my office door. Do not e-mail me your paper. If you cannot be in class when a paper is due, give it to a classmate to turn it in or turn it into the department administrative assistant no later than the end of our normal class time. Failure to do so will result in a zero on that assignment.
- **Extra Credit/Research Participation.** You may earn 10 extra points on your course point total by participating in **one** research opportunity sponsored by the Department of Speech Communication. Note: You will need to complete a separate research project or paper for each Speech Communication class that requires or offers research participation.
- **Reasonable accommodations.** Students with learning disabilities who may require accommodations should contact The Learning Disabilities Center at 706-542-7034. Reasonable accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis according to each student's individual documentation.
- **Preventable catastrophes.** Life is full of unexpected catastrophes. Some of these are controllable, whereas others are not. For those catastrophes that could have been prevented with careful attention (such as computer crashes, lost notes or disks, oversleeping, etc.), you will not qualify for extended deadlines or revised evaluations. So back up your work, hold onto your notes, and invest in a reliable alarm clock.
- **Academic honesty.** Your enrollment at this university and your participation in this course presuppose that you follow principles of academic and personal integrity whereby you live honestly and respect the work of others as inviolably theirs. Anyone caught cheating on exams, plagiarizing assignments, or failing to cite sources of research will receive a zero on the assignment and will face disciplinary action under the academic honesty policy. **Ignorance is not an acceptable defense.** For more information concerning what constitutes academic dishonesty, see the pamphlet entitled, *A Culture of Honesty: Policies and procedures on academic honesty*, which is available through the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- **Incompletes.** In accordance with University policy, an incomplete will be given only when a student who is otherwise earning a passing grade is unable to complete the course because of conditions beyond his or her control. No requests for incompletes will be granted after the regular Maymester class sessions have occurred. If you receive permission to take an incomplete, it is your responsibility to arrange for the timely completion of this course.
- **Final grades.** Your final grade is **final**. Applying subjective standards after the fact in order to bolster your grade is unfair to your classmates, and therefore will not occur.

## Course Schedule (Subject to Revision if Necessary)

H & W = Wilmot, W.W. & Hocker, J. L. (2007). *Interpersonal conflict*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

C & J = Christensen, A., & Jacobson, N. S. (2000). *Reconcilable differences*. New York: Guilford.

N = Nay, W. R. (2004). *Taking charge of anger*. New York: Guilford.

RA = Research Article (Available off of the course WebCT site).

	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings &amp; Assignments</b>
5/13	Course Introduction & Defining Conflict	H&W: Ch. 1
5/14	Individual and Relational Influences on Conflict	H&W: Ch. 2, pp. 29-56 RA: Miller (2001) RA: Koerner & Fitzpatrick (2002)
5/15	Cultural Influences on Conflict	H & W: Ch. 2, pp. 56-60 RA: Oetzel et al. (2003)
5/16	Interests, Goals, & Power	H&W: Ch. 3 & 4 RA: Canary et al. (1988)
5/19	Conflict Styles and Tactics	H&W: Ch. 5
5/20	Anger	N: Chs. 1-11
5/21	Violence	RA: Jewkes (2002)
5/22	<b>Exam 1</b>	
5/23	<i>The Break Up</i>	
5/26	<i>Memorial Day- No Classes</i>	
5/27	Assessing Conflicts as Systems	H&W: Ch. 6 C & J: Chs. 1-7 <i>Analysis of the Break Up Due</i>
5/28	Moderating Conflicts	H & W Ch. 7 C & J: Chs. 8-11
5/29	Negotiation and Change	H&W: Ch. 8 C & J: Chs.12-14
5/30	Third-Party Intervention	H & W Ch. 9 C & J: Ch. 17
6/2	Reconciliation & Prevention	C&J: Ch. 15 H & W: Ch. 10 & 11
6/3	<b>Exam 2</b>	

**Personal Conflict Analysis:** Due by June 5th. Your paper may be turned in earlier than this date if you wish.