

STMM 550: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: PAVING THE ROAD TO PEACE IN A CONFLICTED WORLD

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

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Course Description:

In this course we will explore the personal, interpersonal and professional challenges of dealing with conflict creatively as a means of peacemaking. Participants will identify their own experiences as well as the strengths and challenges they bring when dealing with difficult situations at home, in all relationships and in ministry. We will study the common sources of conflict with particular attention to communication styles, the impact of change, and individual approaches in responding to conflict. The interconnection between reconciliation and peacemaking is explored later in the week and builds upon the conflict management and leadership skills we will discuss in the first days. We will investigate principles and practices grounded in a holistic spirituality which are expressed in being a change agent, transformational leader and peacemaker. Come to contribute, learn and enjoy!

Course Objectives:

1. Explore definitions of conflict and conflict management, transformational leadership and peacemaking.
2. Examine systems thinking, diversity, culture and co-cultures as they relate to conflict.
3. Reflect on the reality and rate of change in our world and its impact on conflict management, leadership and peacemaking.
4. Increase students' understanding of, appreciation for and capacity to live a wholistic spirituality in the midst of conflict.
5. Engage students in the preparation for and practice of constructive conversations, facilitated conversations and mediated conversations.
6. Practice respectful conversation in the midst of difficult situations.
7. Assist students to identify their role as transformational leaders and peacemakers.
8. Practice skills for empowerment, conflict management, respectful communication and professional success.

Course Requirements:

- Required reading
- Sharing one symbol of peacemaking or conflict management on day one
- Participation in class activities (1/3 grade)
- 4 –one page Journal entries (1/3 grade)
- Synthesis Paper: 3-4 pages (1/3 grade)

Course Outline:

- CLASS ONE:** The Role of Transforming Leaders in the Midst of Conflict
- A framework for leadership
 - Effective leadership in the midst of conflict
 - Spirituality and the peacemaking path
 - The role of non-violence
- CLASS TWO:** You as an Individual Peacemaker and Conflict Manager
- Definitions of peacemaking and peacebuilding; conflict and conflict management; mediation and facilitation
 - Reflections from the 3 readings
 - Start with yourself: The importance of personal inner work
 - Family of origin: Our initial training in conflict
- CLASS THREE:** Identifying Sources of Conflict
- Effective communication
 - Additional sources of conflict
 - Dealing with differences and how leadership matters
 - Neurophysiology and conflict
- CLASS FOUR:** Change, Conflict & Leadership
- Your personal relationship to change and conflict
 - Change and the seeds of conflict
 - Resistance to change and conflict management
 - Skills to be an effective change agent
- CLASS FIVE:** The Many Faces of Conflict Management
- The relationship between conflict resolution and conflict management
 - Negotiation; Mediation; Arbitration
 - Introduction to the mediation process
 - Skills and practices of the conflict manager
 - Self-care of the leader as conflict manager
- CLASS SIX:** Conflict Management in Family & Community and how Leaders can help
- Mediating family disputes
 - Facilitating community conflicts
 - Conflict in church settings
 - The cost of inaction

CLASS SEVEN: Creative Conflict Management

- Being creative in conflicts
- Building your tool kit
- The role of ritual in reconciliation
- Making resistance your friend

CLASS EIGHT: Opportunities for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

- Similarities and differences among mediation, conflict management and reconciliation
- Steps to Reconciliation
- Deepening our capacity and commitment to forgive
- The Power of Forgiveness

CLASS NINE: Conflict Management as the way to Peace

- Encountering and working with impasse
- Facilitating conversations of the heart
- Peacemaking in the real world
- Restorative justice and possibilities for healing

CLASS TEN: Peacemaking in the Real World

- Learnings from the synthesis papers
- Living the Beatitudes
- The moral imperative for peace
- Leader as peacemaker

REQUIRED READING

1. The Paradox of Power: From Control to Compassion, by Michael Crosby OFM Cap, 2008
2. Difficult conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most, by Stone, Patton, Heed and Fisher, 2010
3. The Crossroads of Conflict: A Journey into the Heart of Dispute Resolution by Kenneth Cloke, 2006
4. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, by Stephen R. Covey, 2004

RECOMMENDED READING

1. Ambassadors of Reconciliation – vol. I, Ched Meyers and Elaine Enns, 2010
2. Non-violent Communication: a Language of Life, by Marshall Rosenberg, 2008
3. Romero, 1989 DVD, Paulist Productions
4. Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High, by Patterson, Greeny, McMillan, Switzler, 2009