

Module 1, UC IRVINE Ethics Center Class syllabus

Module 1. There is always something you can do! Citizen Peace Building Initiatives. David Rosten, UCI Graduate, degree in International and Comparative Law from the University of San Diego, former co-chair of the Dean's Council at UCI, Rosten is superbly networked and remarkable for bringing together people from all sides of hot-button issues. In this module, he brings together people to talk about what everyday people can do, from Paula Garb former director of Center for Citizen Peacebuilding UCI, the Kugelman's, who established UCI's Citizen Peace Builders, to Gershon Baskin, an Israeli who negotiated the release of prisoners between Israel and Hamas. We will try to bring in speakers from diverse communities and help students learn how to assess their analysis of the flexibility in the situation. These might include people Rosten knows and can invite personally, from experts such as David Makovsky (the Washington Institute for Near East Policy) to Marwan Muasher (Vice-President of the Carnegie Institute for International Peace).

Title: Ethical Approaches to Conflict Resolution 2024

Module Description: In this module, we will explore ethical considerations in conflict resolution, with a focus on empowering individuals to contribute to peacebuilding efforts in hot conflict areas. Through engaging discussions and guest speakers from diverse communities, students will gain insights into practical strategies for promoting peace and understanding amidst conflict. Emphasis will be placed on fostering critical analysis skills to assess the nuances and complexities of conflict situations.

What to expect:

Attendance: 20% I expect each student to attend class. If you will be missing a class, traveling, sickness, family emergency etc., let me know before class.

Participation: 20% Please try to participate. I always have students that might have difficulty expressing themselves. This is okay. A lot of the material is new and developing. There are no right or wrong answers. Just be respectful of the other students if they have differences of opinion.

Readings: 20% - I'll supply some material for you to read. Additionally, look at some of the "suggested" readings to get a greater insight to the subject matter.

Break out groups: 20% The teacher assistants (TA's) will place each of you in "break-out" rooms. You will have an opportunity to meet other students and work on a group project of your choosing. This is a great learning opportunity plus you'll probably make some new friends.

Final presentation: 20% This is a visual, written, and oral presentation with your group. Don't worry, everyone who participates will get full credit for the presentation.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the ethical dimensions of conflict resolution.
2. Explore practical approaches to promoting peace in hot conflict areas.
3. Analyze the role of individuals and communities in fostering reconciliation and understanding.
4. Develop critical thinking skills to assess the flexibility and adaptability of conflict resolution strategies.
5. Apply ethical principles to real-world conflict scenarios.

Week 1: Introduction to Ethical Conflict Resolution

Definition of conflict resolution and its ethical dimensions

The importance of ethical considerations in promoting peace

Case studies: Ethical dilemmas in conflict resolution efforts

Week 2: Understanding Hot Conflict Areas

Overview of hot conflict areas around the world

Root causes and drivers of conflict

Impact of conflict on communities and individuals

Week 3: Perspectives from Diverse Communities

Guest speakers from diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds share their insights on conflict resolution.

Strategies for promoting dialogue and understanding across divides.

Week 4: Role of Individuals in Peacebuilding

Empowering individuals to contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

Grassroots initiatives and community-based approaches to conflict resolution

Ethical considerations in activism and advocacy

Additional Guest Speakers

Week 5: Flexibility and Adaptability in Conflict Resolution

Assessing the dynamics of conflict situations

Identifying opportunities for flexibility and innovation in peacebuilding strategies

Case studies: Successful examples of flexible conflict resolution approaches

Complete group projects

Week 6: Ethical Analysis and Reflection

Applying ethical principles to analyze conflict scenarios.

Reflection on personal values and biases in conflict resolution efforts

Strategies for ethical decision-making in complex situations

Additional group projects

Assessment:

Participation in class discussions and activities

Written reflections on guest speaker presentations

Case study analysis papers

Final project: Proposal for a peacebuilding initiative in a hot conflict area, incorporating ethical considerations and flexibility in approach.

Note: This syllabus is subject to adjustments based on the availability of guest speakers and emerging topics in conflict resolution.

Here are some suggested readings for exploring ethical approaches to conflict resolution: Please do not purchase all the books. I'll supply excerpts from some of the books that we will discuss in class.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

"Just and Unjust Wars" by Michael Walzer: This seminal work delves into the ethical complexities of warfare and the principles that govern the justice of engaging in armed conflict. 2015

"The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace" by John Paul Lederach: Lederach explores the role of moral imagination in conflict resolution, emphasizing the importance of empathy, creativity, and ethical reflection in promoting peace. 2010

"A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East" by David Fromkin: This historical study offers insights into the consequences of past conflicts and their relevance to contemporary ethical dilemmas in conflict resolution. 2009

***"Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics" by Reinhold Niebuhr: Niebuhr's classic work explores the ethical challenges inherent in collective action and the pursuit of justice in social and political contexts. (classic book republished in paperback 2021)

***"The Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict" by The Arbinger Institute: This book offers a transformative approach to conflict resolution by focusing on personal accountability, empathy, and understanding as key components of ethical peacemaking. (4th Edition 2022)

"Ethics and International Affairs: A Reader" edited by Joel H. Rosenthal and Christian Barry: This anthology brings together essays and articles on various ethical issues in international relations, including conflict resolution, humanitarian intervention, and peacebuilding. (Not required) lots of interesting essays

***"Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life" by Marshall B. Rosenberg: This book presents a practical framework for resolving conflicts peacefully through compassionate communication and empathetic listening. 2015

SUGGESTED MOVIES: Several movies address ethical decisions in war-torn countries, offering insight into the complexities of such situations. Here are a few:

Hotel Rwanda (2004) - Based on real events, this film portrays the story of a hotel manager who saves over a thousand Tutsi refugees during the Rwandan genocide. It delves into the moral dilemma faced by individuals amidst such atrocities.

The Killing Fields (1984) - Set during the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, this film follows the friendship between a Cambodian journalist and his interpreter as they navigate the horrors of the genocide. It showcases the difficult choices people make to survive and help others.

Schindler's List (1993) - Steven Spielberg's masterpiece tells the true story of Oskar Schindler, a German businessman who saved the lives of more than a thousand Polish-Jewish refugees during the Holocaust by employing them in his factories. It examines the moral obligations and sacrifices in the face of genocide.

In This World (2002) - Directed by Michael Winterbottom, this film follows the perilous journey of two Afghan refugees as they travel from Pakistan to the United Kingdom. It sheds light on the ethical challenges faced by individuals fleeing conflict zones and those who try to help them.

City of God (2002) - Set in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during a period of extreme violence and poverty, this film portrays the lives of young people caught up in the cycle of crime and violence. It explores the ethical dilemmas faced by individuals trying to navigate survival and morality in such environments. (movie is rather violent and many disturbing scenes)

The Battle of Algiers (1966) - This Italian-Algerian film depicts the Algerian struggle for independence from French colonial rule. It raises questions about the morality of resistance movements and the use of violence in achieving political goals.

The Falconer (2022) Based on a true story of an arranged marriage. First feature movie filmed in Oman. This is the movie that I was executive producer of.

These films provide powerful narratives that can stimulate discussions and reflections on ethical decision-making in the context of war and conflict.