

**CUTTING EDGE TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR LABOR RELATIONS IN
TURBULENT TIMES**

PPA 730 Section # 73166

Summer 2009

May 13-17, 2009

Wednesday, 1 pm-5 pm; Thursday through Saturday, 8:30 – 5 pm;

Sunday, 8:30 – 12 Noon

Hall of Languages, Room 421 – main instruction

Breakout rooms: Room 102 and 211

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Course Description and Objectives

Traditionally, the full focus of the relationships between labor unions and management in the workplace has been the identification and resolution of conflicts within the framework of a collective bargaining agreement. As turbulence in the financial, economic, and political environments rises, workplace conflict increases because tension, confusion, and worry become amplified. Trying to take hold of this situation can give labor leaders and managers sleepless nights. This workshop provides practitioner participants with the latest tools, processes, and techniques to transform workplace interchange from competitive divisiveness to collaborative problem solving. Participants learn how to engage their counterpart to create and sustain labor-management partnerships; how to successfully conduct and sponsor interest-based negotiations; how to jointly assess the patterns of conflict in their organization and design non-litigative approaches to resolution (thereby reducing costs, improving outcome control, and raising satisfaction with results); and lastly, how to improve organizational functioning through enhanced dispute resolution capacity. An interactive learning approach is used, including lecture, discussion, exercises, simulations, and a case study project of the back-

home organization. Labor leaders and managers leading organized workplaces are encouraged to attend this practitioner-focused workshop TOGETHER, if at all possible.

Required Materials

All course readings and other materials will be available on Black Board.

Grading and Course Assignments

Your grade will be based on the following:

Class participation:	30% of final grade
Assigned reading facilitation:	10% of final grade
Post-class on-line participation:	20% of final grade
Application Project paper:	40% of final grade

1. CLASS PARTICIPATION 30%

You will be assigned a different “learning partner” on each day of this course...it is expected that you will discuss with this partner the highlights of the day’s topics and experiences, and explore applying these “best practices” to the workplace “system” that will be the focus of your final project paper. Time will be provided in class for this discussion/exploration.

The class participation portion of your grade will be based on: 1) my evaluation on whether or not you have read the assigned material and prepared for class, 2) your engagement with your “learning partners” each day to uncover insights from each other’s class experiences; 3) the degree to which you are an active and constructive participant in the class which includes listening and building on each other’s ideas; and 3) the degree to which you regularly attend all class sessions.

2. ASSIGNED READING FACILITATION 10%

Each student will be required to provide written comments on the assigned readings for ONE class session and kick-off a class discussion. These comments should be one to two paragraphs in length and should address aspects of the readings that were found to be engaging, interesting, or problematic. Potential questions are: How do the readings connect with one another and with the central framework of the course? Does a reading fit with your past

experience? Did the reading prompt a significant insight? Does a reading make you think about labor relations in a new way...if so, why?

Comments should also include at least two questions that you are left with following the reading that you think would be useful for the class to discuss.

Comments are due by 7 am on the day you are assigned. Please post your reading on the discussion board on our course Black Board site.

3. APPLICATION PROJECT PAPER 40%

Each student will write a 16-18 page (using 12-font Arial type style, one-inch margins, and double-spaced) case study/ research paper in the form of an analysis of current labor relations tensions and conflicts in a “back-home organization” or another organization of interest. You must receive approval from me on your proposed project through electronic submission of a one page proposal by 12 pm May 22nd. After you complete your analysis, you will offer a set of recommendations offering an integrated and realistic approach to intervening to improve results and relationships. The paper will: 1) analyze the conflicts between labor and management, quantifying the direct and indirect costs of the resolution processes currently used and their outcomes; 2) develop a set of goals for a project to transform that conflict from a negative to a more positive state; 3) outline a specific conflict management plan that flows from your expressed project goals, and 4) describe how you will evaluate the impact of your project. Please see the Appendix for further detail on each section of the paper. The paper is due electronically to my email address on this syllabus by June 15th at 12 pm!!! There are grade penalties for lateness...as professors have a deadline as well to submit grades. So, for each day the paper is late, I will deduct one-half grade...so an A paper becomes an A-...and so on.

4. POST-CLASS ON-LINE PARTICIPATION 20%

All participants will be expected to be involved in an on-line component for the 2 weeks following the completion of the residential portion of the course. Participants will be expected to “log-on” periodically and post some of their thoughts as they continue to reflect on their class experience and application project paper development. Specific guidelines will be given at the end of the workshop.

Course Policies

- ✓ ***Confidentiality, Civility and Respect:*** This is a workshop which will encourage the participants to reflect on their actual workplace labor relations. As such, I have a hard and fast rule of confidentiality...“who you see here, what they say here, when you leave here, let it stay here.” Please treat everyone in this class with respect, sensitivity, and openness to new and different ideas. We are all different. Be tolerant and use these differences as

learning opportunities. Distractive practices, such as tardy entrances, leaving the room while class is in session, ringing cell phones, cell phone conversations, excessive conversation with other students, and conducting activities unrelated to class discussions are not acceptable and will be detrimental to your participation grade.

- ✓ **Academic Integrity:** The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

I take this extremely seriously. Plagiarism, cheating, assisting others to cheat, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in a grade of "F" for the course. The submission of any work by a student is taken as a guarantee that the thoughts and expressions in it are the student's own except when properly credited to another. It is your responsibility to understand what plagiarism is and how to correctly reference and cite documents and other peoples' arguments. Information about what constitutes plagiarism and how to make references and citations in papers can be found at <http://www.plagiarism.org/>. In addition, you may find assistance in any of the standard references on writing, such as *The Elements of Style*, as well as at the S.U. Writing Center (<http://wrt.syr.edu/>).

- ✓ **Academic Accommodations:** Students who may need academic accommodations due to a disability are encouraged to discuss their needs with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. In order to obtain authorized accommodations, students should be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498 and have an updated accommodation letter for the instructor. Accommodations and related support services such as exam administration are not provided retroactively and must be requested in advance." For more information about services and policy, visit the Office of Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>).
- ✓ **Consultation and Assistance:** I am available to help you achieve the learning objectives for this course. When you need assistance or wish to discuss some element of the course or materials, or if other issues are interfering with your success in this course, please contact me immediately. Please do not wait until the last moment.

APPENDIX

Application Project Paper Cutting Edge...Labor Relations...Summer, 2009

CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Conduct a comprehensive conflict analysis that includes the following (along with any additional information that you deem to be important):

- Analysis of the origins, bases, roots of the conflict you are addressing.
- Conflict history: Important political and historical milestones that have shaped the course of the conflict.
- Stakeholder analysis: a) who are the current stakeholder groups involved in the conflict? b) what are their positions and the interests, motivations, beliefs, conflict frames, etc., that lie “behind” these? c) How have these variables impacted the course of the conflict and its prospects for constructive management?

PROJECT GOALS

- What aspect of the problem/conflict will you try to address?
- Why focus on this/these problems and not others?
- What are your ultimate project goals: that is, what are you trying to transform (attitudes, conditions, ability to reach agreement, ability to communicate, access to decision-making, lower cost of conflict, greater engagement of workforce)?

PROJECT METHODOLOGY AND EXPECTED RESULTS

- Detailed description of a proposed conflict management/ intervention strategy (activities, participants, tools, methods, duration, location, etc.).
- Detailed schedule of activities
- Explicit description of expected results of the activity that links back to your stated goals

EVALUATION DESIGN

- What do you intend to evaluate as evidence of the success of your project?
- How will you evaluate it?
- What barriers might you face as you carry out your evaluation and how will you overcome these barriers?

GRADING WILL BE BASED ON:

- Your ability to integrate significant literature and class practices into your paper.
- The breadth and depth of your conflict analysis.

- The creativity of your proposed conflict management strategy and evaluation design.
- Your ability to connect each section of the paper with the previous section
- Clarity/ writing style