

General Education 174

COPING WITH INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

Roger Fisher
Williston Professor of Law

with the assistance of
Bruce Patton
Beal Lecturer on Law

and Teaching Fellows

GENERAL MEMORANDUM

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General Education 174
Coping with International Conflict
Professor Roger Fisher
Lecturer Bruce Patton
Pound Hall 500
Harvard Law School
495-1684

I. **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Student Ideas
and Suggestions

This course consists of work in progress. Student ideas and suggestions on how to improve the theory, the content, or the process of the course are strongly encouraged. In previous years, this course has been substantially and successively revised and improved as a result of student contributions.

Our subject matter is international conflict. Our premise is that international conflicts are not being handled as well as they might. Nations tend to react to the actions of others, rather than acting purposively to achieve their own ends. They focus on their own choices, instead of the choices of those they are trying to influence. The demands of special interests often outweigh the need for coherent policy. More concern is usually given to having the correct attitude toward any given problem and making an elegant statement about it than to bringing about beneficial change.

One reason for this state of affairs is that there is a shortage of systematic theory on how conflicts ought to be handled, and a shortage of skill in bringing theory to bear on practice. Because the problem is how we think about and deal with conflict generally -- rather than what we know about specific conflicts -- this course is not primarily concerned with transmitting large amounts of factual information. Instead it seeks to develop in students analytical skills for systematically bringing

knowledge to bear on the practical question of "Who should do what tomorrow morning?" Equally important, it seeks to develop the capacity and desire to continue using and improving these skills in the light of future experience.

Thus, "Coping With International Conflict" (CWIC) is an opportunity to become activist and operational. Instead of just asking why things work the way they do, we are also going to ask how we can affect the way they work. Instead of just learning how other people get things done, we are also going to learn how we can cause things to happen more nearly as we would like them to.

To achieve these goals, we will emphasize learning by doing. Actively dealing with a problem helps us think, act, and "see" differently, and helps internalize new insights, attitudes, and behavior patterns. There are two classes and one two-hour section meeting per week. In addition to lectures, many of the classes focus on particular case studies and a particular technique (or "tool") for analyzing or coping with a conflict. This tool is developed and explored first through the preparation before class of short-answer Concept Exercises and then through the use of carefully focused questions arising out of the readings.

At the end of the week, we ask each student to apply these tools with pencil and paper to a given conflict, producing a one- or two-page worksheet. The worksheets are used in the section meeting (on Thursday, Friday, or Monday), which revolves around a small group simulation or group problem-solving. Unit tests focused on the readings will be distributed at two points during the semester. Finally, we ask each student to produce during the semester two integrated operational memoranda applying insights and techniques learned to a current international conflict of his or her choice. There is no midterm or final examination.

Select a problem soon. We ask each student, as soon as possible, to select for continuing analysis one current international conflict. As a process for analyzing and searching for ways to cope with that conflict, you can apply, to the extent relevant, each of the techniques developed in the course (or improvements on them). You should analyze your chosen conflict, at least in draft form, week by week, concurrently with the consideration of that technique in class and section.

We expect students to engage in additional research on their conflict as necessary, and to write up a a working memorandum analyzing that conflict. In this Analysis Memorandum, you should develop the case for what you think some specific person should and could do about the conflict and develop a strategy for persuading that person to take the desired action. The Analysis Memorandum (discussed more fully in a later handout) should be specific and persuasive, covering each step from defining and analyzing the problem, through inventing and developing options and strategic theory, to pairing a specific person with a specific proposed action, and suggesting theory on how to maximize the chance of the former taking the latter. In other words, it is a finished working paper that makes the case for a specific action proposal. This Analysis Memorandum of, say, 20 to 30 pages in length, is due initially on Friday, March 23, but can be revised thereafter in light of comments and further work.

The Analysis Memorandum discusses the *theory* of converting a good idea into a persuasive recommendation, of getting it onto someone's agenda, and of getting it considered. To turn theory into *action*, the Analysis Memorandum should include an appendix of the operational documents needed to implement your proposal. This appendix, or "Action Memorandum," might be a short, persuasive memo with cover letter intended to be sent to someone who you think could

initiate a chain of constructive action with respect to the conflict and designed to maximize its chance of producing such action. Or it might be notes for or of a telephone conversation or interview. This Action Memorandum (of perhaps 5 pages -- usually the shorter it is, the more likely that it will be read or used) is due with the Analysis Memorandum and can also be revised.

Because these memoranda are meant to be of truly operational (real-world) quality, **revision of both memoranda is strongly recommended.** In all past cases, revision has had a significant effect on the quality of the ideas, the rigor of the argument, and the persuasiveness of the presentation (as well as the grade). If a student approves, Professors Fisher or Patton will personally forward memoranda of high quality to the person to whom the recommendation is addressed, with a covering letter suggesting consideration.

Keep up with the course. Learning in this course is the result of active intellectual participation, not of memorizing a reading list. Consequently, anyone who waits until reading period before doing much work will have wasted his or her time; the course will be over and he or she will have missed the boat. The workload for this course is not overly heavy, and can be spread evenly throughout the term. Indeed, many students have asked us to emphasize that **written work is greatly facilitated by applying ideas as they are discussed to the particular conflict on which you are working.** Also, class discussion is of greatly reduced benefit to anyone who has not read the background materials on which each discussion is based.

Half of the grade for the course is based on worksheets and participation in section meetings. The other half is based on the memoranda. **In terms of grades, the consequences of doing no work during the term are FATAL.**

II. REQUIREMENTS

Readings should be carefully completed before class, keeping in mind the question which might be considered in class. Jot down some possible responses or additional questions to be discussed in class.

The daily news. Current conflicts will be discussed in class and section. Students are expected to keep up to date on international situations that are taking place during the semester. A more or less daily reading of the international news in *The New York Times* (or *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, or *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*) is sufficient for this purpose.

Class. Regular attendance at the two scheduled class meetings per week is expected. Active participation is recommended and encouraged.

Section. Attendance and participation in section meetings is required and will count for 10% of the course grade.

Concept Exercises. Short-answer Concept Exercises will be assigned in conjunction with many of the theoretical readings. These exercises do not take particularly long to prepare, but they require a thorough understanding of the theory and some careful thought. They should be done before the class for which they are assigned, and they will be due at the beginning of that class. They will be discussed in section. All Concept Exercises are required, and they will count for 10% of the course grade. There will be a penalty if they are not turned in before the class begins.

Problems. Eleven problems will be given, each of which calls for one or two worksheets of one or two pages each. Worksheets can be marked up and improved during section meetings, and are due within one-half hour of the end of the section devoted to that problem. Each student should turn in worksheets for at least four of the first five problems, and at least nine of eleven problems overall. Problem 6 is required. The best five will count for 25% of the course grade. In addition, handing in a worksheet will count toward the section participation grade.

Unit Tests. There will be two unit tests distributed during the semester. They will be take-home exercises applying to the case studies in the Gen. Ed. 174 sourcebook. Students are required to complete both of these tests, which will count for 10% of the course grade.

Simulation. There will be a course-wide formal simulation between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 11. All students are expected to attend. (Students who anticipate a conflict with that date should speak with the head teaching fellow as soon as possible.) There will be no section meeting during that week.

Analysis and Action Memoranda are due at noon on Friday, March 20, 1990. Place **three (3) copies** in the box at the reception area of the Program on Negotiation, Pound Hall 513 (Law School), and keep one copy for yourself. An automatic extension without penalty is hereby granted to any student who wants it until 4 p.m. Monday, March 30.

Memoranda may be revised in light of comments and resubmitted by 4 p.m. Friday, April 24. An automatic extension without penalty for the revised memoranda is hereby granted to any student who wants it until

4 p.m. Friday, May 1. Only two (2) copies of the revised memoranda need be submitted, one of which can be picked up by the student after grading is completed. ALL STUDENTS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO REVISE THEIR MEMORANDA, AS EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN IT SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVES BOTH QUALITY AND GRADE. The Analysis Memorandum will count for 30% of the course grade, the Action Memorandum for 15%.

No Extensions. We think it is a mistake to teach students that all deadlines can be extended by illness or other good cause. That is not true. Plan ahead; give yourself a margin in reserve. Except as discussed above under Memoranda, no extensions are to be granted by teaching fellows or anyone else. Memoranda submitted after a deadline to which an automatic extension is available should be marked with the time and date submitted and accompanied by any written explanation that the student may desire. Such late memoranda may be penalized to the extent of one letter grade. **NO MEMORANDUM WILL BE ACCEPTED OR GRADED IF RECEIVED AFTER FRIDAY, MAY 15.**

No Exams. There will be no mid-term and no final examination.

SCHEDULE FOR MEMORANDA

Friday, March 20	Both Analysis and Action Memoranda are due at noon. (An automatic extension without penalty is granted to those who want it until 4 p.m. Monday, March 30.)
Friday, April 24	Revised Analysis and Action memoranda are due at 5 p.m. (An automatic extension without penalty is granted to those who want it until 4 p.m. Friday, May 1.)
Friday, May 15	No memorandum received after 5 p.m. on this date will be accepted or graded unless so ordered by God or other high authority.

III. MATERIALS FOR THE COURSE

Books to Buy

- 1a. *Gen. Ed. 174 (CWIC) Sourcebook*. The majority of materials for the course are contained in this large multilith package. This sourcebook is comprised of materials on particular international conflicts (most of which comes from primary sources) and a few additional reading selections. Excerpts from *International Conflict for Beginners* are also included in this packet. These materials will be sold at cost. The best current estimate of the cost, which includes duplication and copyright permission fees, will be announced in class on January 30. **Available at the General Education Office, 6 Prescott Street.**
- 1b. *Working Guide on Coping With International Conflict* (draft edition). This draft textbook, also in multilith form, is distributed with the Sourcebook. **Available at the General Education Office, 6 Prescott Street.**
2. Lederer, William and Eugene Burdick. *The Ugly American*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1958. (paperback). **Available at the Coop.**
3. Fisher, Roger and William Ury. *Getting to YES: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. (Second Edition) Penguin, 1991. (paperback) **Available at the Coop.**

Strongly Recommended

- Allison, Graham. *Essence of Decision*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971. (paperback). **Available at the Coop.**
- Brown, Scott and Roger Fisher. *Getting Together: Building Relationships as We Negotiate*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988 (hardcover), Penguin, 1989 (paperback). **Available at the Coop.**

Reserve Readings

All the required readings are available on reserve at Hilles and Lamont Libraries. In addition the following **recommended readings** are on reserve:

Practical Guides to Dealing with Conflict:

Fisher, Roger with William Ury. *International Mediation -- A Working Guide*, 1978. (Also available for purchase from the Program on Negotiation, Case Clearinghouse, Pound Hall 513, Law School.)

Fisher, Roger. *International Conflict for Beginners*, Harper & Row, 1969.

Case Studies: Dealing with Conflict

Curle, Adam. *In the Middle: Non-Official Mediation in Violent Situations*, Berg (St. Martin's Press) 1986.

Fisher, Roger. *Dear Israelis, Dear Arabs*, Harper & Row, 1972. (A series of yesable propositions for specific actors in the Middle East.)

Fisher, Roger. *International Crises and the Rule of Law -- Points of Choice*, Oxford University Press, 1978.

Princen, Thomas. "International Mediation -- The View from the Vatican: Lessons from Mediating the Beagle Channel Dispute," *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Oct. 1987.

Rubin, Jeffrey, ed. *Dynamics of Third Party Intervention*. Praeger, 1981.

Touval, Saadia. *The Peace Brokers*, Princeton Univ. Press, 1983.

Ury, William & Richard Smoke. *Beyond the Hotline: Controlling a Nuclear Crisis*, Report to Arms Control & Disarmament Agency, 1983. (An operational blueprint for containing nuclear conflict.)

Negotiation and Conflict Theory

Merrills, S.G. *International Dispute Settlement*, Sweet & Maxwell, 1984.

Pillar, Paul R. *Negotiating Peace: War Termination as a Bargaining Process*, Princeton University Press, 1983.

Raiffa, Howard. *The Art and Science of Negotiation*, Harvard University Press, 1982. (Strongly analytic approach to negotiation, with roots in game theory.)

Schelling, Thomas. *The Strategy of Conflict*, Oxford University Press, 1960. (The classic

study of conflict in the nuclear age)

Touval, Saadia & I.W. Zartman, *International Mediation in Theory and Practice*, Westview Press.

Role of International Law in Managing Conflict

Fisher, Roger. *International Crises and the Role of Law -- Points of Choice*, Oxford University Press, 1978.

Fisher, Roger, *Improving Compliance with International Law*, University of Virginia Press, 1981.