



A PROGRAM OF EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

FORMATION FOR PEACEBUILDING PRACTICE PAX 532

SPI 2025

June 9-13, plus assignments throughout the summer for 3 graduate credits, **final due date August 8th, 2025**

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

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This syllabus explains requirements for those taking this course for graduate academic credit (3 SH). If you are part of this class primarily for professional development or training, this syllabus is provided for your information. You may participate in course activities as you wish, but there are no required assignments.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As individuals working for peace, social justice, reduction of violence, and the possibility of reconciliation, **we** are the instruments of the work. How can we best prepare ourselves to take constructive action whether in a professional role or in a personal relationship? How can we prepare ourselves to work for a better future? This course will explore four areas of awareness and accountability essential for effectiveness in our action efforts. These areas of content and engagement, described more fully under "Course Content" below, are awareness, assessment, management, and care.

In focusing on these four areas, we'll consider the roles we play, the skills we have and need, and the processes available to us for doing the work. We will make use of in-person instruction and conversation, video inputs, personal action and reflection, paired and plenary discussion, group projects, demonstration/presentation and a sampling of non-traditional forms of learning and integration (e.g arts-based methods, play, music/rhythm, etc). We will also plan and practice (as appropriate) selected strategies for structuring conversations and decision-making. Course participants will strengthen their abilities to understand and manage self, attend to self/communal care, and assess appropriateness of action. *This course is being offered for 3 graduate academic credits and for non-credit training. It cannot be taken for reduced credits.*

COURSE CONTENT:

This course will explore four areas of awareness and accountability that we must attend to in order to be effective in our action efforts and to keep from causing further harm or injustice.

Self-awareness is crucial for our understanding of who we are personally as we engage with others around issues of conflict and injustice. We will consider how **values**; personal and social **identity** (personality, biography/life experience, social groups, and spirituality/faith); **cultural** beliefs and norms; human **needs** and dignity; social **systems**, and **power** and influence (including leadership and participation styles) impact our work and how we engage others, affect how others experience us, and influence the actions we take.

Self-assessment. In addition to personal awareness, we must also be equipped to ask ourselves questions about personal or professional action and if we are the most appropriate actors. What am I uniquely able to contribute? What **roles** will I take in the situation? And how do these influence the power I have to act? How am I empowered and disempowered in a context and how do these affect my ability and effectiveness in taking action? Do I have the **skills** and experience for the needed role or action? What do I need to know how to do? What do I have experience doing? Do I know and have experience with effective **process** strategies (including contemporary methods of facilitation, dialogue and decision-making)?

Self-Management, or what some call self-discipline or self-control, arises when we challenge ourselves and hold ourselves accountable to our values. Self-management asks us to do no harm, but rather to practice ethically (**ethics**), work toward non-destructive **engagement** with others (through good communication, honoring dignity, and reserving judgments etc.), and build relational structures for **accountability**.

Self and Community Care is also an essential part of our sustainability in the work of peace and justice. It is embedded not in individualistic care for self, but in an ethic of community care and mutuality where webs of support are nourished and maintained for the well-being of all. Self-care implies **reflection** on practice (action taking) to facilitate personal and professional growth, development of communal **support** (for emotional and resource needs), establishing personal and professional **boundaries**, and regularly engaging approaches (e.g. spiritual, physical, relational, or creative activities and other strategies) for building **resilience**.

In peace and justice seeking, we must practice what we preach in order to be effective in our action efforts. Our values for equity and access, healthy relationships and systems, meeting needs and honoring dignity, doing no harm and reducing violence, and seeking reconciliation, restoration and resilience all depend on our own ability to model and live these out. To do this well, whether we are in professional fields like peacebuilding and conflict transformation, global development, and restorative justice, in the helping professions like ministry, healthcare, teaching, mental health and social work, and other professional practice (e.g. law, trades, crafts, etc.) or even in our own personal lives, we must continuously strive to grow into our better selves.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

The goal of this course is to help prepare us to be reflective practitioners who skillfully and ethically respond to a call to engage in the difficult social dilemmas of our time. This is done by supporting the personal and professional integration of theory, analysis and practice into processes of constructive social change and peacebuilding as we also develop and sustain practices of self-awareness, self-assessment, self-management, and self and communal care.

The course asks participants to:

- Practice self-awareness by reflecting on values, personal characteristics, abilities, and areas for growth.

- Deepen self-assessment and understanding of others in relation to our personal and social identities, culture, needs, systems, and power and how these affect actions we take as participants, practitioners, and social change leaders (among other roles).
- Practice needed skills and processes identified through self-assessment to gain experience in facilitating effective communication, decision-making, and team-building.
- Practice self-management by choosing appropriate actions or interventions and roles to play that are ethically sound, non-destructive, and have built-in accountability structures.
- Exhibit the ability to exercise self and communal care by establishing regular reflective practice, developing communal support, establishing boundaries, and building resilience.

Course Delivery and Dates

This course will be conducted in person as part of EMU's Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI) with an online learning platform called Moodle (available asynchronously) for access to course materials. This platform is made available by EMU upon registration for the course. All participants, whether for professional development or for graduate credit, have access to Moodle and course materials.

On site sessions will take place June 9-13, from 8:30-12:30 and 1:30-5 p.m. each day US Eastern Daylight Time (US EDT). Attendance at all sessions is required for graduate credit seeking participants. Please notify the instructors if you encounter unavoidable problems in joining us.

Activities and assignments for credit will need to be completed before, during, and after the in-person sessions of the course. **All final work will be due by August 8, 2025.**

Course Philosophy

We, as instructors, seek the creation of a dynamic learning community in which everyone is a teacher and a learner. Our personal and professional lives, social identities, cultural heritage and spiritual beliefs impact the way we, the instructors, understand the course content and how we present it. Likewise, we invite all course participants to bring the multiple dimensions of your experience and identity into the course. We ask that we all work to:

- a. Respect others' points of view (even when you think and believe differently)
- b. Listen to gain insights, fresh ideas, and new perspectives, and
- c. Accept that we are here to learn with and from one another.
- d. Give each other the benefit of the doubt. Avoiding making judgments about each other based on our perceptions. Let's give each other as much grace and flexibility as possible.
- e. Equal participation: Listening and taking positive actions to ensure participation of all participants.

These principles are even more important in a short in-person experience. You will be asked to interact with each other and instructors even though you may not know others well. We hope that you will share what you know, and help us all to learn by listening with curiosity to each other, help to hold us all accountable to our values, and find ways to share your constructive criticism, your concerns about process or content, and help us all to be at our best together.

Readings and other materials are provided for differing perspectives and in the same way may not all reflect your values. If you find this to be true, you are invited to share your point of view in class or personally with the instructors. Teaching Philosophy in all CJP courses draws heavily upon Paulo Freire's, Bell Hook's, and John Paul Lederach's publications among many others.

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:

To be read by all participants before the course begins:

1. Rhodes, Gloria. 2025 (forthcoming). Do we ***Walk It Like We Talk It?*** *A Peacebuilders Guide for Reflection and Action* (working title). Rowman & Littlefield. Available on Moodle as an unpublished manuscript. Not for Citation or reproduction. Introduction and Chapter 1.
2. Optional: Please familiarize yourself with basic history and definitions frequently in use at CJP as time allows.
 - A. [Conflict Transformation | Beyond Intractability](#)
 - B. [Peacebuilding | Beyond Intractability](#)

For credit students should come to the course having completed the following assignments:

1. Take some time to reflect on how your family (whatever unit you grew up as part of) handled conflict. What did you learn from observing how conflict was handled? How did the family promote peace and justice or not? What were you taught about how to deal with problems? How did your parents or caregivers model handling conflict, inequities or difficult issues (what did observe them doing)? What are your definitions of peace and justice now? How has your perspective changed? **Please come to our first class having submitted your Conflict Biography. Additional prompts are available in the assignments section of the Moodle page.**
2. For your primary project in this class, you will need to identify a situation of conflict or injustice that you know well and that you could potentially do something about. The situation should involve at least one other person, or a small group of people (e.g. it could be your own family, a small organization, or part of an organization, a family or two, or a subset of a larger group). If you are also taking the Analysis class, you are encouraged to use the same situation for the project in both classes. For your own preparation, describe the conflict or justice situation with as many details as possible. What is the change you'd like to see? This will be for your own use, not for submission or sharing with the group unless you are willing to share it. **Keep your notes for this in a file to return to.**

REQUIRED TEXTS (YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO READ THESE):

Core Texts to be purchased or accessed: The name, title, or keywords in **BOLD** below will be how each resource is referred to on the course schedule for assignments and reading due dates.

Hicks, Donna. 2021. ***Dignity: The Essential Role it Plays in Resolving Conflict.*** New Haven: Yale University Press. \$17.

Kelsey, Dee, Pam Plumb and Beth Braganca. 2004. ***Great Meetings! Great Results!*** Hanson Park. ISBN: 978-0965835411. This resource is **fully available online** at a link provided in Moodle. **Selected Chapters.**

Menakem, Resmaa. 2017. ***My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies.*** Central Recovery Press. \$15

Rhodes, Gloria. 2025 (forthcoming). Do we **Walk It Like We Talk It?** *A Peacebuilders Guide for Reflection and Action (working title)*. Rowman & Littlefield. Available on Moodle as an unpublished manuscript. Not for Citation. Selected chapters.

Schulman, Sarah. 2016. **Conflict is not abuse**: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility and the duty of Repair. Publisher: Arsenal Help Press.

Stone, Douglas and Patton, Bruce, and Sheila Heen. 2010. **Difficult Conversations: How to discuss what matters most**. New York: Penguin. 10th anniversary edition. \$15.

Trujillo, Mary Adams and S. Y. Bowland. 2008. **Re-Centering: Culture and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution Practice**. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press. **Selected Chapters**. This book is required for both PAX 534 Analysis and PAX 532 Formation and should be purchased. Several chapters are also available on Moodle. \$15.

Additional readings and links will be made available on Moodle. More information below.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

These are brief descriptions of required graded assignments for the course with assessment worth (percentage). More details for assignments can be found in the "Guidance Notes" section that will be provided on Moodle.

1. Course Participation (15%)

Course participants are expected to attend every class session prepared to participate in discussions, exercises and other learning activities. Preparation will include individual assignments (assessments etc.), paired conversations, group work, and reading/viewing.

2. Facilitation Demonstration (25%)

With a partner(s), you will research and demonstrate a facilitation process that is new to you. Full instructions are provided in the Guidance Notes for this project. Choose and read one of the following resources for your facilitation (or propose your own).

Allen, Will. 2005-2019. *Facilitation Tools & Techniques* from Learning for Sustainability. Available from: <https://learningforsustainability.net/facilitation/>

Brown, Juanita with David Isaacs. 2005. *The World Café: Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations That Matter*. San Francisco: Berrett-Kohler

Corrigan, Chris. *Facilitation Resources*. Really excellent guide for various group process tools. Read the bio, Chris works primarily with aboriginal groups. Available from: <http://www.chriscorrigan.com/parkinglot/facilitation-resources/>

Guzman, Monica. 2022. I never thought of it that way. *How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times*. BenBella Books.

Kraybill, Ron and Evelyn Wright. (2006). *The Little Book of Cool Tools for Hot Topics: Group Tools to Facilitate Meetings When Things Are Hot*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books. ISBN: 9781561485437.

Mohr, Bernard and Jane Magruder Watkins. 2002. *The Essentials of Appreciative Inquiry: A Roadmap for Creating Positive Futures*. Pegasus Communications.

Pranis, Kay. 2005. *The Little Book of Circle Processes*. New York, NY: Good Books. ISBN: 978 156148-5512.

Schirch, Lisa and David Camppt. 2007. *The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects: A Practical Hands-On Guide*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books. ISBN: 978-156148-5512.

Kaba, M. & Hassan, S. 2019 *Fumbling Towards Repair: A Workbook For Community Accountability Facilitators*. Project NIA and Justice Practice.

Seeds for Change.org.uk. 2019. Facilitation tools for meetings and workshops: A compilation of tools and techniques for working in groups and facilitating meetings or workshops. Available from: <https://seedsforchange.org.uk/tools.pdf>

Spinks, David. 2020. [A Comprehensive List of Tips, Tools, and Examples for Event Organizers During th.e Coronavirus Outbreak](#). Accessed 4/7/2020

Polarity Management: Explore how many conflicts/challenges we face are polarities to manage vs. conflicts to solve or resolve. <https://rise-leaders.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Polarity-Management-Summary-Introduction.pdf>

3. Four Personal Reflection Forum Responses (5% each – total 20%, Graded Pass/Fail)

After reading or doing assigned activities, respond to the prompts on the Discussion Forum. The designated topics will include reflection on the topics and readings listed below. Full instructions will be posted with the prompts for each week on the forum board for that week. 4 responses total.

1. Self-Awareness - Identity, conflict styles, values, conflict biography, etc
2. Self-Assessment - Identity, empowered and disempowered identities, roles, skills, processes, systems, *Difficult Conversations*
3. Self-Management - Power, *Dignity*, *Helping*, accountability
4. Self-Care - *My Grandmother's Hands*, *Conflict is not Abuse*, Trauma

4. Practitioner Interview or Observation (15%)

Interview and/or observe a peacebuilding practitioner or social change leader who you respect. Write a 3-5 (single-spaced) page paper to describe your chosen leader's work and practice, guiding values and vision, the skills and qualities this person embodies, and the peacebuilding processes the practitioner and her/his/their organization uses. Your discussion should include an analysis of personal characteristics, training and educational background, the roles chosen and given, and the methods, tools and skills used. Finally, highlight what you have learned about the leader's approach to one or more "core values" such as balance, empowerment, interdependence, and leverage. See Guidance Notes for further details. Alternative forms of content including media/arts may be proposed for this assignment instead of writing a paper.

5. A Change I'd Like to See Project (25%)

You will identify one specific context, conflict or justice issue/situation (your "case") that you would like to address. This situation may be in a personal or professional context. You will do an initial

description (Part I), including a *Difficult Conversation* that is a necessary step in moving toward the change, and a method you will use in having the conversation.

Then we ask that you attempt to have the difficult conversation and reflect on how it went (Part II) including thinking through a plan for another step for action and reflection in July and August. Choose from among the course materials to inform your plan (for example, choose ideas from *Four Pivots, Dignity, Difficult Conversations, Great Meetings, My Grandmother's Hands* etc.). In our final online conversation in August we will reflect on how it went, as well as explore potential next steps. Throughout the process, you are asked to reflect on and apply the topics, skills, processes and approaches you are considering in this class, including required readings. Additional information is provided in the Guidance Notes.

Additional Supporting Reading Materials (optional resources posted on Moodle):

Dernoot, L. L. van, Burk, C., & Conte, J. R. (2009). *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self while Caring for Others*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Selected chapter.

Fisher, Simon, et al. *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Change*, Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (available on Moodle). *This is from a practitioners' handbook for conflict transformation written by 5 practitioners in the field. It provides some starting definitions and a basic conceptual framework (although these will be up for discussion and can be challenged). These same chapters are also required for PAX 533 Analysis.*

Folger, Joseph, Marshall Scott Poole, and Randall Stutman. 2012. Third-Party Intervention. And Power. In *Working through Conflict: Strategies for Relationships, Groups, and Organizations*, 7th Edition. New York: Routledge. Chapters 5 and 7 on power and on face-saving. These chapters are also required for PAX 533 Analysis.

King, Ruth. 2018. *Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True Inc. [Selected pages].

Laue, James and Gerald Cormick. 1978. The Ethics of Intervention in Community Disputes. In *The Ethics of Social Intervention*, edited by Gordon Bermant, Herbert C. Kelman, and Donald P. Warwick. Washington, DC: Halsted Press.

Lederach 1, John Paul. 2001. Five Qualities of Practice in Support of Reconciliation Processes. In *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*, edited by Raymond Helmick and Rodney Petersen. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press.

Lederach 2, J. P., Neufeldt, R., and Culbertson, H. 2007. *Reflective peacebuilding: A planning, monitoring, and learning toolkit*. Mindanao, Philippines: Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and Catholic Relief Services (East Asia Regional Office). This resource is also required for PAX 533 Analysis. Chapter 1-5.

Download from Moodle or from http://kroc.nd.edu/sites/default/files/crs_reflective_final.pdf

Lederach 3, John Paul. 2005. *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. New York: Oxford University Press. Selected Chapters.

- Mayer**, Bernard. 2012. *The Dynamics of Conflict: A guide to engagement and intervention*. 2nd Ed. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Selected chapters 1-4. These chapters are also required for PAX 533 Analysis.\
- Neufeldt, Reina. 2016. *Ethics for Peacebuilders*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. \$46 or less if buying used. Selected Chapters.
- Seligman, A., Wasserfall, R., Montgomery, D. 2015. *Living with Difference: How to Build Community in a Divided World*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press. Selected chapters.
- Schein**, Edgar. 2011. *Helping: How to Offer, Give, and Receive Help. Understanding Effective Dynamics in One-to-One, Group, and Organizational Relationships*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Stevenson**, Brian. 2013. *We need to talk about an Injustice: TEDX talk*. Accessed on April 7, 2020 at <https://youtu.be/8cKfCmSqZ5s>
- Shigeoka, S. et al.** *Bridging Differences Playbook*.
https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/Bridging_Differences_Playbook-Final.pdf
- Tuso, H., & Flaherty**, M. P. 2016. *Creating the Third Force: Indigenous Processes of Peacemaking*. Lanham, Maryland : Lexington Books, an imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc. Chapter 23 and conclusion.

Supplemental Reading Materials

We will provide supplemental reading ideas on Moodle and below. Some of these may need to be purchased or accessed individually. We may make reference to these materials, but they are not required for purchase or reading.

- Ginwright, Shawn A. 2022. *The Four Pivots: Reimagining Justice, Reimagining Ourselves*. Huichin, unceded Ohlone land, aka Berkeley, California : North Atlantic Books.
- Erenrich, Susan and Jon Wergin, eds. 2017. *Grassroots Leadership and the Arts for Social Change*. New York: Emerald Publishing.
- Cloke, Kenneth. 2018. *Politics, Dialogue and the Evolution of Democracy: how to discuss race, abortion, immigration, gun control, climate change, same sex marriage, and other hot topics*. Dallas, TX: Good Media Press.
- DeWolf, Thomas and Jodie Geddes. 2019. *The Little Book of Racial Healing: Coming to the Table for Truth-Telling, Liberation, and Transformation*. New York, New York: Good Books.
- Goldberg, Marshall. 2003. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language for Life: Life-Changing Tools for Healthy Relationships*. 3rd ed. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press. ISBN: 978-1892005281
Approximate price: \$20.00. [selected pages]
- Hicks, Donna. 2018. *Leading with Dignity: How to Create a Culture That Brings Out the Best in People*. Yale University Press.

Lencioni, Patrick. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*. 2007. Jossey Bass. ISBN: 978-8126506750. Approximate price: \$25.00

Mitchell, Sherri. 2018. *Sacred Instructions: Indigenous Wisdom for Living Spirit-Based Change*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Rosenberg, Marshall. 2003. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language for Life: Life-Changing Tools for Healthy Relationships*. 3rd ed. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press. ISBN: 978-1892005281
Approximate price: \$20.00. [selected pages]

Ruiz, D.M. 1997. *The Four Agreements: A Toltec Wisdom Book; A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom*. San Rafael, California: Amber-Allen Publishing

GRADING CRITERIA AND OTHER POLICIES:

In SPI the instructors will provide to all students taking the course for graduate credit some supplemental information that will serve as a resource after SPI when students are working on course assignments. This will include information on library resources, EMU's academic integrity policy, guidelines for writing graduate papers, information regarding the grading scale and course deadlines, and then some suggestions we have for you in order to make your experience of taking SPI courses for graduate credit as successful as possible! These documents are available online at <https://emu.edu/cjp/spi/participants/graduate-credit>.

SPI ATTENDANCE POLICY:

It is expected that individuals registering for an SPI course will participate in the entire course (barring unforeseen emergencies). Please contact SPI directly at spi@emu.edu before registering if you know you will have to miss any portions of a course. For-credit participants are expected to attend all class sessions unless they are given permission from the instructor to miss a session. SPI courses rely on active student participation in a learning community.