

## **KVVS1010 Conflict and Intergroup Communication**

5 ECTS (1 ECTS amounts to 27 hours of work = 135 hours)

Autumn 2025

**Contact:** [margarethe.olbertz-siitonen@jyu.fi](mailto:margarethe.olbertz-siitonen@jyu.fi) and [mahnaz.m.shirdelsarkarizi@jyu.fi](mailto:mahnaz.m.shirdelsarkarizi@jyu.fi)

### **1 Course description and schedule**

Approaching conflict through interactive and discursive perspectives, we discuss how (cultural) group membership may be evoked to incite, explain, or justify different forms of confrontation. The course thus deals with the relationship between conflict and communication, specifically intergroup and intercultural communication. Participants are introduced to theoretical viewpoints that explain the extent to which conflicts may be linked to intergroup processes. During the course, the students are encouraged to ponder concepts such as identity, banal nationalism and groupism, strategic essentialism, microaggression, and language as a conflict tool. In addition, the course includes themes such as the role of the media as well as conflict management and diplomacy.

- understand intergroup communication as a field of study
- understand the concepts of social identity and self-categorization in intergroup relations
- know relevant intergroup theories and processes and how they relate to conflict
- apply intergroup theories to analyzing societal conflicts and everyday interaction
- critically reflect on common conceptualizations of intergroup diversity in society.

*Modes of work:* lectures, group work, individual final assignment

*Platform:* I'm using **Moodle** for storing and sharing course materials (e.g., lecture slides, readings, links), organizing and supporting your group work (e.g., group discussion areas, tasks for group sessions, return boxes for your group assignments) and interacting with you (e.g., by sending out messages through Announcements). Please check the course Moodle page regularly.

**Please note:** *The default set up is that all the messages sent via Moodle forums are compiled and sent to recipients in bulk once a day. This means that my updates might not reach you on time. In order to change that, you need to click on your profile picture in Moodle and select "Preferences". Under "User account" choose "Forum preferences". Next (under "Email digest type") choose "No digest (single email per forum post)". This way you will receive my messages immediately and not sometime in the evening. Selecting this option means that you will receive all messages sent out in your other courses immediately as well. However, since I intend to rely heavily on Moodle, I find it important to be able to reach you quickly.*

## Course schedule

Class format and themes discussed	Time and location
Lecture 1: Introduction to the course; conflict, interpersonal and intergroup communication	Mon, 27.10., 12:15-13:45, C5
Group session 1: Constructive feedback; social identity theory	Thu, 30.10., 12:15-13:45
Lecture 2: Conflict and disagreement; conflict management and resolution; the bias towards conflict in organizational and intercultural communication literature; crisis communication	Mon, 3.11., 12:15-13:45, B349
Group session 2: A critical look at face-negotiation theory	Thu, 6.11., 12:15-13:45
Lecture 3: Conflict and intercultural communication; culture as a tool for provoking conflict; culture as an excuse	Mon, 10.11., 12:15-13:45, B349
Group session 3: The politics of culture (Wikan, 2002)	Thu, 13.11., 12:15-13:45
Lecture 4: Linguistic diversity and conflict	Mon, 17.11., 12:15-13:45, B247
Group session 4: Linguistic landscape activity; discussing selected posts from Language on the Move	Thu, 20.11., 12:15-13:45
Lecture 5: Political conflict, media, banal nationalism	Mon, 24.11., 12:15-13:45, H306
Group session 5: Banal nationalism in your everyday life and in the news	Thu, 27.11., 12:15-13:45
Lecture 6: Mediation and diplomacy	Mon, 1.12., 12:15-13:45, B347
Lecture 7: Guest lecture	Mon, 8.12., 12:15-13:45, Zoom
Deadline for sending the first draft of your essay to your feedback partner	Fri, 12.12., 6 pm
Deadline for sending your feedback on your partner's essay	Tue, 16.12., 6 pm
Deadline for submitting your essay for grading	Fri, 19.12., 6 pm
Deadline for submitting a short individual report of your group's work	Fri, 19.12., 6 pm

## 2 Course completion

### 2.1 Attendance

In accordance with the policy of the Department of Language and Communication Studies, I require you to be present at least 80% of the time. However, I heartily recommend coming to all lectures, and participating actively in your group sessions. My slides do not contain everything I cover in class, which is because I include (group) discussions in the sessions and want to ensure open dialogue. When it comes to group work, being present is also a question of fairness, and ensuring that your workload is distributed equally among all team members. Please inform me when you can't come to class.

### 2.2 Course assignments

All the course assignments are mandatory.

#### 2.2.1 Group assignments

Five Thursday sessions in the course will be dedicated to group work and I expect you to participate in the group sessions actively. You will get a set of tasks (usually including some reading or other material to familiarize yourselves with before the group meeting). Please do your reading/assignment, take notes, and come to the group meeting well prepared; bring your notes with you. Be critical; the articles/chapters you will be reading are just some voices among many. I will provide you with questions to guide your discussions; the goal for your discussions is to answer the questions; your discussions need to be founded in the reading/assignment and they need to be theoretically ambitious.

Please select a secretary for each meeting; the secretary will be responsible for taking attendance and taking notes/writing a memo of your meeting. In this course, the memo will be graded (see below, "2.3 Grading")

*Memo guidelines:*

- your memo should reflect how you have answered the guiding questions – we would really like to see what discussions you had, the questions you were pondering
- your memos should be approx. 2 pages long (include time, date, names of people present, name of secretary, and title)
- make use of sections and subsections, tables, lists, charts, images etc. but remember that the text should be a coherent whole and not a random collection of points
- the secretary shows the memo to others for commenting, and then submits it to Moodle by **8 pm (on the day of the meeting)**
- we will be giving you feedback and grades on your memos throughout the course
- we will ask you to evaluate one another's contribution to group work later on in the course

*2.2.2 Individual assignment*

Towards the end of the course, we expect you to write an individual essay. The essay assignment is as follows:

Identify and critically examine an intergroup conflict that is related to your experience. Address all of the following issues:

- What makes the conflict intergroup? What makes it a conflict? What makes it an issue of intercultural communication? How is it meaningful to you?
- How is the conflict presented in the different media (use your linguistic expertise)? What similarities, differences, paradoxes can you see?
- Critically reflect on how the idea of "group membership" is used by those involved in the conflict.
- Choose a concept or theory discussed in the course that you think can be applied to analyzing your case. Present the concept and its previous applications in enough detail using at least 5 peer reviewed articles using the concept/theory.
- Apply the concept/theory to explain what is going on.
- How do you think the conflict could be solved?

Your essay should be **8-10 pages long** (1.5 spacing, size 12 font). Use a citation style of your own choice (e.g., APA, Chicago). Before you submit your essay for grading, you will have an opportunity to receive peer feedback:

- I will assign each student a feedback partner
- Prepare a ready draft of your paper and send it to your feedback partner by **Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> December, 6 pm**.
- Please read your partner's paper and give your feedback (you will get a feedback form to help you) by **Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> December, 6 pm**.
- Use your partner's comments to improve your essay. Submit the final version of the essay to Moodle by **Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> December, 6 pm**.
- Your essay will go through a plagiarism check in Turnitin. You can read more about Turnitin here: <https://www.jyu.fi/digipalvelut/en/guides/turnitin>

- For more information on citation and referencing styles, you can consult:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/resources.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html)

<https://www.monash.edu/learnhq/write-like-a-pro/acknowledge-sources>

- Here is still some advice on how to avoid plagiarism:
  - always indicate the source when drawing on other people's ideas in your work (in APA: Name, YEAR, page number in direct quoting) and list your references at the end of your assignments
  - Paraphrase sufficiently (i.e., use your own words) – and indicate the source you are drawing on
  - Use others' words as quotations (“...”)
  - Use scientific publications (books, book chapters, peer-reviewed articles); be careful with online sources

### **2.3 Grading**

Your final course grade will be made up of the average grade for your group memos (50%) and your final essay (50%). The quality of your participation in the course will be seen as a factor that can lower or raise your final grade.

*Evaluation criteria for course assignments:*

- **5 – 4 (excellent – very good):** In your group work, you demonstrate that you have familiarized yourself thoroughly with and have been thinking critically about the material. You actively participate in group discussions and your contribution is consequential to the group's success. In your essay you demonstrate a high level of independent work. You show a very good understanding of the subject at hand and reflect on the data accordingly. You explain your choices, and respond to questions convincingly and critically, and support your arguments with relevant literature, including a variety of sources you have found independently. You provide a proper reference list done consistently in a style of your own choice. Your essay is written in an accessible and clearly structured way in appropriate academic style.
- **3 (good):** In your group work, you demonstrate familiarity and general understanding of the material. You help the group answer the questions provided. In your essay, you show a good understanding of the subject at hand, which is supported by an adequate illustration of your data and analysis. You draw on course materials and the required number of independently found scientific sources. You provide a reference list in a style of your own choice. You explain your choices and present your analysis in an informative and clear way.
- **2 – 1 (satisfactory – sufficient):** In your group work, you demonstrate a basic understanding of the subject matter. Your essay is loosely linked to what you learned in class. Your reference list is inconsistent/incomplete. You present your choices. Your essay could be structured in a better way/more focused/accessible/engaging