

SOC 425
Spring 2022

Social Conflict

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:05-4:20 pm, Chambers 111

Instructor:

Daniel DellaPosta

503 Oswald

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:30-5:30 pm (or by appointment)

Contact: Canvas message (or djd78@psu.edu)

Course Overview and Goals:

Conflict involving individuals, groups, and societies is a universal feature of the social world. Does this mean that such conflict is natural and inevitable? Why, then, is cooperation and agreement also so common? Through lectures, reading, simulated scenarios, and active discussion, this course will explore the forces that give rise to violent and non-violent conflict across various levels of analysis—from small groups to entire nations. By analyzing the similarities and differences across diverse instances of social conflict, students will gain a “theoretical toolbox” they can use to analyze conflict in a variety of settings.

Course Expectations:

1. Attend classes and participate actively in group discussions and activities. Given the ongoing pandemic, however, students should use proper judgment and stay home if they are experiencing any COVID symptoms. If you experience a situation that will cause you to miss more than 2 class meetings, you should contact me when you are able in order to discuss options for catching up with coursework.
2. Complete assigned reading and quiz for each week **before** coming to Tuesday’s class. Arrive prepared to discuss the reading in detail.
3. Complete 1 written reflection essay applying concepts learned from readings and lectures. Each student will also be assigned as a peer reviewer for one classmate’s reflection essay, and will be expected to read and respond to that classmate’s essay.
4. Complete midterm and final exams.

Course Materials:

Students do **not** need to purchase any books or other course materials. All assigned readings will be available for download in the “Files” section on the Canvas site. Students will also need to enroll in Top Hat, which we will use for quizzes and for interactive lectures/discussions.

Final Grades:

A = 93.0-100%	A- = 90.0-92.99%
B+ = 87.0-89.99%	B = 83.0-86.99%
B- = 80.0-82.99%	C+ = 75.0-79.99%
C = 70.0-74.99%	D = 60.0-69.99%
F < 60.0 %	

Grade Distribution:

Participation	5%
Top Hat Quizzes	20%
Reflection Essay	10%
Peer Review	5%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%

Assessment Breakdown:**1. Participation**

- Since this class will involve group discussion and activities, students are expected to attend class and participate actively. In order to contribute to the discussion, students will need to have completed the assigned reading for each week before coming to Tuesday's class. I will assess your participation at the end of the semester based on both the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussion and group activities. A rubric for participation is available under "Files" on Canvas. Having said all of this, please use your judgment and do **not** come to class if you are experiencing COVID symptoms. If you experience an extended illness that causes you to miss 2 or more classes, you should contact me when you are able in order to discuss options for making up required coursework.

2. Top Hat Quizzes

- **Before the start of class every Tuesday** (except for the first week of class and the week in which you take the midterm exam), students are responsible for completing a short True/False quiz on Top Hat. Quizzes are based on the assigned reading for that week, so students should complete the reading before taking the quiz. These quizzes are open-book and will not be timed. Each student is responsible for enrolling for the course in Top Hat before Week 2 of class, and for planning ahead to make sure that they are able to complete quizzes before the start of class each Tuesday. There will be 13 total quizzes and I will drop your **3 lowest quiz scores** at the end of the semester when I calculate this portion of your grade. The dropped grades provides students with flexibility in case they need to miss a quiz for any reason; however, since we will discuss the answers at the start of class on Tuesday, there will not be opportunities to make-up missed quizzes.

3. Reflection Essay and Peer Review

- Every student will submit **1 written essay (2-4 double-spaced pages)** that applies concepts and theories from the lectures and reading to a real-world example of social conflict. Successful essays will (a) accurately and thoroughly **describe** the conflict you've chosen and (b) **analyze** the conflict using theories and concepts learned in class. In addition, each student will be assigned as a peer reviewer for one classmate's essay, and the peer reviewer will have to carefully read and respond to that classmate's essay with their own reactions to the case of social conflict analyzed in the essay. More detailed instructions for writing both the reflection essay and the peer review will be given in a separate document distributed early in the semester. Students will be randomly assigned to Group 1 or Group 2. Group 1 will submit their reflection essays on 2/23, with assigned reviewers in Group 2 submitting their reviews by 3/16. Group 2 will then submit their reflection essays on 4/20, with assigned reviewers in Group 1 submitting their reviews by 4/27.

4. Midterm and Final Exams

- The midterm and final exams will be comprised of multiple choice and short answer questions and will cover material from lectures, readings, any activities done in class, and key points highlighted in class discussions. The exams will not be cumulative, although some key concepts from the first half of the semester will still remain relevant to material on the final exam. Both the midterm and final exam will be taken **remotely on Canvas**; students will have a 48-hour period in which they can choose to take the exam, but once they begin the exam they will only have 90 minutes to complete it. Accordingly, while students can use their notes while taking the exam, I still strongly recommend studying before beginning the exam. The class session before each exam is due will be a review session in which students can raise any topic for further discussion and clarification.

Other Policies and Resources:

- **Masking:** Penn State University requires everyone to wear a face mask in all university buildings, including classrooms, regardless of vaccination status. **All students must** wear a mask appropriately (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) while you are indoors on campus. This is to protect your health and safety as well as the health and safety of your classmates, instructor, and the university community. Anyone attending class without a mask will be asked to put one on or leave. Instructors may end class if anyone present refuses to appropriately wear a mask for the duration of class. Students who refuse to wear masks appropriately may face disciplinary action for Code of Conduct violations. If you feel you cannot wear a mask during class, please speak with your adviser immediately about your options for altering your schedule.
- **Attendance:** This is a course based on in-person instruction. Please note that instructors are **not** able to change the scheduled format of courses. As a result, you should not expect a remote option to be available as an alternative to in-person attendance and participation. If you are not currently able to attend classes in person on the University Park campus, you should not take this course. You are expected to attend all scheduled sessions to the best of your ability. However, if you are feeling ill

and/or experiencing COVID symptoms, please do **not** come to class. Missing one or two classes in such circumstances will not negatively impact your overall grade. If you are absent for a more extended period of time (i.e. more than 2 class sessions), you should get in touch with me in order to discuss your options for making up coursework. If you test positive for COVID, you are expected to follow all university requirements. Finally, in order to avoid scenarios of serious illness, I would personally encourage you to get vaccinated if you have not already done so.

- **Due Dates:** Please make every effort to complete any assignments by the assigned dates and times. If you contract an illness and are not able to complete coursework, please contact me by Canvas message so that we can discuss a plan for making up work. However, please note that you are **not** required or expected to share any personal health information with me. If no time of day is specified for due dates, then this means the assignment is due at **midnight** on the due date. All quizzes are due **before** the start of class on Tuesday.
- **Contacting Me:** The best way to contact me and receive a quick response is using Canvas message. However, if (for some reason) you are unable to access Canvas, you may email me directly at djd78@psu.edu.
- **Responsibility for Missed Work:** Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason. Students are also responsible for regularly checking Canvas and this syllabus to make sure they are aware of due dates and other critical information about the course.
- **Office Hours:** Office hours will take place from 4:30-5:30 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays in my office (Oswald 503). I am always happy to talk with students during this time, so please make use of it if I can be of any help to you. You do not need an appointment to come to the scheduled office hours. If you are not able to meet during the available times, you may send me a Canvas message to set up an appointment for another time. You are expected to follow all university requirements regarding masking when coming to office hours. I will do the same. Students can also request to meet on Zoom during this time instead if they message me.
- **Schedule Changes:** Please note that circumstances can change quickly. If the University moves to a remote format at any point during the semester, our in-person sessions will move to Zoom and I will provide you with an updated syllabus and communicate any major changes to you.
- **Academic Integrity** is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights, and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts. Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Such acts of

dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

- **Disability Accommodation:** Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Student Disability Resources: 814-863-1807 (<http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/>)

- **Counseling and Psychological Resources:** Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (814) 863-0395
(<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>)

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

- **Educational Equity:** Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the Report Bias webpage (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>).

Course Outline

**Subject to later change.*

Week Of:	Content:
Jan. 11	Week 1: Course Overview and Introduction
Jan. 18	Week 2: Microsociology of Conflict <i>Reading:</i> – Simmel, selection from <i>The Sociology of Georg Simmel</i>
Jan. 25	Week 3: Dominance Hierarchies <i>Reading:</i> – Chase, “Social Process and Hierarchy Formation in Small Groups: A Comparative Perspective.” <i>American Sociological Review</i> .
Feb. 1	Week 4: Status and Conflict <i>Reading:</i> – Gould, selection from <i>Collision of Wills</i> (1)
Feb. 8	Week 5: Group Conflict <i>Reading:</i> – Gould, selection from <i>Collision of Wills</i> (2)
Feb. 15	Week 6: Norms, Laws, and Institutions <i>Reading:</i> – Ellickson, selection from <i>Order without Law</i>
Feb. 22	Week 7: Group Threat <i>Reading:</i> – Blumer, “Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position.” <i>Pacific Sociological Review</i> . Reflection Essays (Group 1) Due on Wednesday 2/23

Week of:	Content:
Mar. 1	***MIDTERM DUE ON THURSDAY, MARCH 3***
Mar. 8	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
Mar. 15	<p>Week 9: Intergroup Contact <i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Allport, selection from <i>The Nature of Prejudice</i> <p>Peer Reviews (Group 2) Due on Wednesday 3/16</p>
Mar. 22	<p>Week 10: Political and Cultural Conflict <i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mutz, “How the Mass Media Divide Us.”
Mar. 29	<p>Week 11: Symbolic Conflict <i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Gusfield, selection from <i>Symbolic Crusade</i>
Apr. 5	<p>Week 12: Class Conflict <i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Marx, “The Communist Manifesto.”
Apr. 12	<p>Week 13: Racial Conflict <i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bonilla-Silva, selection from <i>Racism without Racists</i>
Apr. 19	<p>Week 14: Revolutions and Societal Unrest <i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Skocpol, selection from <i>States and Social Revolutions</i> <p>Reflection Essays (Group 2) Due on Wednesday 4/20</p>
Apr. 26	<p>Week 15: Civilizational Conflict <i>Reading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” <i>Foreign Affairs</i>. <p>Peer Reviews (Group 1) Due on Wednesday 4/27 ***FINAL EXAM DUE ON WEDNESDAY 5/4***</p>