

This course will provide methodologies for assessing, analyzing and managing issues related to each of five levels and three types of conflict. Emphasis will be on procedure- and resource-based conflicts. Students will examine their own conflict management style preferences, analyze case studies, and utilize systems thinking to develop plans for managing conflict effectively.

Reading list

- Boers, Arthur Paul (1999). Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behaviors. Washington, DC: Alban. ISBN 1-56699-218-4.
- Leas, Speed B. (1997). Discover Your Conflict Management Style. Washington, DC: Alban. ISBN 1-56699-184-6.
- Lott, David B. (Ed.)(2001). Conflict Management in Congregations. Washington, DC: Alban. ISBN 1-56699-243-5.

Unit 1

Leas, iii - 44

Students will post short bios and digital photos, set goals for themselves for this course, and use the instrument in Discover Your Conflict Management Style to assess their own preferred and secondary styles. They will analyze a case study to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each style in a given situation.

Unit 2

Boers, v - 80.

Students will examine congregational conflict from a systems perspective. They will consider issues such as triangulation, anxiety, projection, and transference in relation to difficult behaviors that must be managed. They will assess dysfunctional and healthy congregational responses to those behaviors.

Unit 3

Boers, 81 - 147.

Students will focus on how to help congregations and their leaders to manage their anxieties, and put policies and procedures in place to help manage procedure-based conflicts. They will discuss ways to move toward self-differentiation in relationship, while taking care of themselves in conflict situations.

Unit 4

Lott, 1 - 53

Students will learn to distinguish between procedure-based and resource-based conflicts, and assess distinguishing characteristics of conflict levels. They will assess nine common sources of congregational conflicts, and how to manage them effectively. They will analyze a case study to determine conflict type and level, and make recommendations for effective conflict management strategies.

Unit 5

Lott, 54 - 94.

Students will assess ways to determine the role of congregational cultures, norms and histories, and analyze conflict as a source of creative tension. They will prepare case studies of conflicts that illustrate a particular conflict type and level.

Unit 6

Lott, 95 - 121.

Students will analyze their own responses to criticism, and examine ways to deal effectively with conflicts among and between congregational leaders, both professional and volunteer. They will examine ways of managing their

own anxieties in conflict situations and choose a technique to use throughout the week.

Unit 7

Lott, 125 - 163.

Students will examine congregational conflicts that arise from cultural issues, and analyze a case study to assess conflict type, level and appropriate responses.

Final project

Participants will post brief final projects, of 1 - 2 written pages if students decide to write an essay, or poetry, music, calligraphy, photography, collage, or other artistic media.