



# TYNDALE

• SEMINARY •

## Course Syllabus

**SUMMER**

**LEAD 0548 01**

**LEADING THROUGH CONFLICT**

**MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS, 6:30 TO 9:20 PM**

**MAY 4, 6, 11, 13, 20, 25, 27; JUNE 1, 3, 8**

**INSTRUCTOR: ARTHUR BOERS, DMIN**

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To access your course material, please go to <http://classes.tyndale.ca>. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account. For information how to access and forward emails to your personal account, see <http://www.tyndale.ca/it/live-at-edu>.

### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prepares students—theologically, cognitively, personally—for fruitful Christian ministry in dealing with communication, conflict and conciliation. Attention is paid to: understandings of conflict and its multiple causes, levels of conflict, healthy and unhealthy communication, family systems understandings, implications of personality type and communication styles, strategies and skills useful in transforming conflict. Students interact with the readings as well as increase their communication and conflict-transformation skills. Includes interactive and experience-based collaborative work.

### II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, the student will:

1. reflect biblically, theologically, pastorally, and imaginatively on conflict's nature and causes and dynamics of bringing change.
2. demonstrate self-awareness of personal style, strengths and challenges in communication and in conflict interactions.

3. grow adept at healthy communication, empathic listening, dealing with conflict and change.
4. expand tolerance for listening to and engaging differing perspectives in conflict and change by acquiring a “research stance.”
5. apply family systems theory and its implications in personal and professional settings.

### III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. REQUIRED READINGS:

Read texts in the order suggested by the schedule. Readings serve as background for classes. Texts are not necessarily discussed in detail during class sessions but you are welcome to bring questions arising from readings to class discussions.

Campbell, Will D. *Brother to a Dragonfly*. New York: Continuum, 2000. (0826412688)

Elmer, Duane. *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993.

Herrington, Jim, et al. *The Leader’s Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003. (078796266X)

Kreider, Alan, et al. *A Culture of Peace: God’s Vision for the Church*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005. (1561485047)

Mennonite Church USA, “Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love.” Available [on-line](#) but also in Kreider et al book, 179-186.

O’Connor, Flannery. “Revelation.” (This short story is available in many different short story collections. The library has a DVD about Ms. O’Connor.)

#### B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING:

Boers, Arthur Paul. *Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1999. (1566992184)

\_\_\_\_\_. “Will Campbell: In the Great Company of God’s Grace,” *The Other Side*, September 1987.

Brubaker, David R. *Promise and Peril: Understanding and Managing Change and Conflict in Congregations*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2009.

Cosgrove, Charles H. and Dennis d. Hatfield. *Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

Friedman, Edwin. *Family Process and Process Theology: Basic New Concepts*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1991. (video)

\_\_\_\_\_. [\*Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue\*](#). New York: Guilford Press, 1985.

Gilbert, Roberta M. *Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Relationships*. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1992.

Lerner, Harriet Goldhor. *The Dance of Anger: A Woman's Guide to Changing the Patterns of Intimate Relationships*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Dance of Intimacy: A Woman's Guide to Courageous Acts of Change in Key Relationships*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985.

Leas, Speed B. *Discover Your Conflict Management Style*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1996.

Portaro, Sam. *Conflict and a Christian Life*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 2003.

Richardson, Ronald W. *Becoming a Healthier Pastor: Family Systems Theory and the Pastor's Own Family*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Family Ties that Bind: A Self-Help Guide to Change through Family of Origin Therapy*. Vancouver, BC: Self-Counsel Press, 1984, 1987.

Scazzero, Peter with Warren Bird. *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.

Schrock-Shenk, Carolyn, ed. *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual*. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Service, 2000.

Stevens, R. Paul and Phil Collins. *The Equipping Pastor: A Systems Approach to Congregational Leadership*. Herndon, VA: Alban, 1993.

Steinke, Peter L. *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*. Herndon, VA: Alban, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*. Herndon, VA: Alban, 1993.

York, Tripp and Justin Bronson Barringer, eds. *A Faith Not Worth Fighting For: Addressing Commonly Asked Questions about Christian Nonviolence*. Eugene OR: Cascade, 2012.

## C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Class sessions include lecture, discussion, guest lectures, and exercises. As well as a major case study, students write three short reflective papers, and a self-study.

1. Class participation (10%): Attend all classes, arrive punctually, do assignments regularly and on time, and participate in class discussions. Non-participation, absences and tardies negatively affect grades. Cell phones disrupt class involvement; thus cell phoning in class will also negatively affect your grade. Please be sure your phone is turned off before each class begins. In this class, the following devices may not be used: laptops, tablets, smart phones.

If you arrive at class after the devotional has begun, please do not enter until the devotional is finished. Three tardies/lates in the class equals one absence.

Participation is graded according to the rubric below.

This requirement is important to Outcomes 1 through 4.

2. Reflective papers (45%): Three papers reflect either on reading done or on a profile one completes; they are not research papers. Extensions are not an option as assignments are key to the day's class discussion. The instructor's responses are also instructive in understanding expectations around style, grammar, critical thinking. (Due: Kreider 11 May; Campbell 25 May; O'Connor 8 June.)

These papers are important to all the Outcomes.

3. A self-study of your personal conflict styles, 8-10 pages, double-spaced (20%): Use the following in your study: personal conflict style inventory, learnings from class lectures and discussions, and one additional theorist. Examine your: (i) dominant styles in communication and conflict and their strengths and weaknesses; (ii) your goals for growth and change; (iii) family of origin issues; (iv) blocks, obstacles, and resistance you face in this change; (v) discuss how your self-assessment compared or contrasted with the findings of someone who knows you well. (Due: 22 July.)

This requirement is particularly important to Outcomes 2-5.

5. Case study, 10-12 pages, double-spaced (25%): Analyze a conflict situation (interpersonal, group, family, church, institutional) employing description of events and dynamics, family systems perspectives, intervention strategies, projected outcomes, faith and theological issues, etc. Briefly describe the conflict and those involved. Analyze the conflict using learning tools from class or readings (e.g. levels of conflict, conflict styles, family systems, triangulation, et cetera). (Due: 22 July.) This requirement connects to all the Outcomes.

## D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Students should consult the current *Academic Calendar* for policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Calendar is posted at [www.tyndale.ca/registrar/calendar](http://www.tyndale.ca/registrar/calendar). An excerpt is attached with this syllabus for easy reference.

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Consequences of plagiarism can range from failing an assignment to failing the entire course.

Grades for papers submitted late without advance permission are lowered at the rate of one grade per week or fraction thereof (i.e. 7 days late moves grade from A- to B-).

As well as submitting papers on hard copy, submit papers as Word.doc attachments to the professor by email ([aboers@tyndale.ca](mailto:aboers@tyndale.ca)). This facilitates checking for plagiarism.

Students are encouraged to print papers double-sided.

### E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Class Participation	10 %
Kreider Reflection Paper	15 %
Campbell Reflection Paper	15 %
O'Connor "Revelation" Paper	15 %
Self Study	20 %
Case Study	25%
Total Grade	100 %

### Evaluation and Grading Rubric

Criteria	Grade of A	Grade of B	Grade of C	Grade of D
<b>General (Classroom and Assignments)</b>				
Analysis / Reflection	High degree	Average degree	Limited degree	Severely limited
Questions Raised	Highly insightful, provocative, challenges information, actively seeks insights using new information	Good insight, shows general comprehension and ability to use new information to reflect on experience	Limited insight, shows basic ability to learn from new information and use it to reflect on experience	Severely limited insight and limited comprehension of information
Interpretation of Knowledge sources	Highly creative yet true to the source	Somewhat creative and true to the source	Limited creativity and /or misunderstands source	Uncreative and/or greatly misunderstands source

Perspective	Keen attention to detail and nuance	Some attention to detail and nuance	Limited attention to detail and nuance	Severely limited attention to detail and nuance
Energy	Offers input with passion and excitement	Offers input with some passion and excitement	Shows limited energy for topics	Shows no excitement for topics
Focus	Highly focused, yet able to make relevant connections that enhance topic	Good focus with some ability to make connections to enhance topic	Satisfactory focus, sometimes goes on unrelated tangents	Limited focus, is easily distracted or strays to unrelated topics
Use of Sources	Creative, high variety	Good variety	Limited variety	Severely limited variety
Description/Summary	Accurate, insightful, excellent blend of breadth and detail	Generally reliable, good blend of breadth and detail	Limited accuracy, imbalance between breadth and detail	Inaccurate, highly disproportionate attention to breadth or detail
Feedback and Evaluation	Actively seeks and integrates	Sometimes seeks and integrates	Seldom seeks and integrates	Never seeks and integrates
<b>Classroom</b>				
Class Interaction (speaking)	Frequent yet sensitive to giving others opportunity to speak	Frequent and usually sensitive to others	Infrequent and/or sometimes overbearing	Seldom interacts and/or is domineering
Engagement of Others (listening)	Highly respectful, collaborative when appropriate, challenging when appropriate	Respectful, at times appropriately collaborative, at times appropriately challenging	Somewhat lacking in respect or sense of appropriateness	Lacking in respect or sense of appropriateness
Class Attendance	Highly regular	Regular	Semi-regular	Irregular
<b>Presentations</b>				
Creativity	Highly creative	Average creativity	Uncreative	Dull
Use of Media	Diverse yet appropriate with excellent mastery	Good experimentation and generally appropriate	Diversity lacking or used in distracting way	No attention to use of media or used in highly distracting way
Interaction with Class	Excellent body language (eye contact, appropriate gestures etc.), highly confident and strong verbal interaction	Good body language, somewhat confident, good verbal interaction	Poor body language which communicates disinterest, little confidence, poor verbal interaction	Bad body language that is dull or uncomfortable, verbal expression is primarily unidirectional and unconvincing
Content	High command of topic and	Good grasp of topic and presented well	Limited grasp of topic and not clearly presented	Severely limited understanding of the topic with little

	extremely well presented			regard for presentation
<b>Formal Papers</b>				
Title Page, Footnotes, Bibliography	Complete information, accurate, proper formatting	Complete information, good accuracy, minor formatting flaws	Most information, somewhat accurate, major formatting flaws	Necessary information not provided, significant inaccuracies, major formatting flaws
Organization and Structure	Clearly organized, highly logical flow of thoughts and ideas that build throughout	Good organization, good logical flow	Unclear organization, slightly illogical or choppy flow	Little organization, haphazard and illogical placement of ideas
Opening and Conclusion	Clear opening that captures the reader's attention. The thesis statement informs the reader succinctly about the purpose, topic and focus. Solid conclusion that ties everything together	Good opening which states what the paper is about. Good conclusion which wraps up what was discussed	Poor opening that does not clearly introduce the topic and content of the paper. Poor conclusion that leaves many loose ends and does not bring the discussion to conclusion.	Opening or conclusion that leave the reader clueless as to what the paper is about.
Writing style	Words are carefully, appropriately chosen. Sentences are clear with appropriate variety of structures. Paragraphs have coherent, well developed concepts and link properly from one to the next	Words are used properly. Sentences are clear and demonstrate some variety of sentence structure. Paragraphs are generally coherent with good development and fairly well linked.	Words are used carelessly or even inappropriately. Sentences are vague, unnecessarily complex or lack variety, inconsistent in tense or subject. Paragraphs are underdeveloped and do not connect one from the other.	Words are frequently used inappropriately. Sentences are difficult to understand. Paragraphs include too many independent ideas and/or not at all linked.

#### IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

(This schedule may be subject to slight modifications.)

##### 1. Monday 4 May

##### Introduction to Course Syllabus, Introductions

Read Kreider et al, *A Culture of Peace*. Complete reading and reflection assignment on this book by 11 May. Write 2 to 3 pages, single-spaced on 3 insights or discoveries that you

made about the Bible's perspectives on conflict as a result of reading this book. Up to one-third of the paper needs to reflect on what difference these insights make for you on how to deal with conflict.

Optional: (Journal entries may be useful for your final self-study.) Consider journaling about conflict this week. What image/s do you hold of conflict? Do you have a sense of the source of your perceptions? Has this image helped or hindered you? Has your image evolved over time? Is it changing now?

Observe instances of conflict or collaboration in your daily life. How do you react?  
(Questions derived from Norma Cook Everist, *Church Conflict*, 12.)

Supplementary reading: *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual*, pp. 17-26.

**2. Wednesday 6 May                      Biblical and Theological Considerations on Conflict and Change**  
**Does Earthy Conflict Do Any Heavenly Good?**  
**Discuss Kreider Assignment**

**Due today:** Kreider writing assignment.

**3. Monday 11 May                      Introduction to Family Systems, Congregations, and Change**

**Preparing for this Class:**

Read Herrington et al *The Leader's Journey*, Introduction through chapter 3. (Complete book by Wednesday.)

Begin reading Campbell, *Brother to a Dragonfly*.

Background to Campbell found in article "Will Campbell: In the Great Company of God's Grace," by A. Boers, *The Other Side*, September 1987.

Describe the various kinds of conflicts you see in *Dragonfly*. Name hunches you have for addressing these conflicts on the basis of work done in our course. What can you see and understand now in this story that you might not have noticed prior to this course?  
2 to 3 pages, single spaced. **Due: 25 May 2015**

Supplementary reading: Friedman, *Generation to Generation*. (This long –at times dense – book is the most comprehensive volume on family systems. Sooner or later, you need to engage it. This book's importance cannot be overstated. It launched the application of family systems theory to thinking about and working with congregations)

Optional: Journal about yourself and conflict. What are the strengths, resources, and experiences you bring to conflict/s? What do you hope to learn or derive from this course? What areas are particularly problematic for you when learning from conflict? (Questions derived from John Savage training event, "Conflict Management and Resolution," 1995.)

**4. Wednesday 13 May                      Family of Origin and Systems etc contd**

**Preparing for this Class:**

Complete reading Herrington, et al.

Supplementary reading: An excellent and accessible introduction to family of origin work is Ronald W. Richardson, *Family Ties that Bind: A Self-Help Guide to Change through Family of Origin Therapy*. It is useful for pre-marital counseling, Sunday school teaching, and for recommending to well-motivated individuals.

Other fine books on family of origin and family systems include:

Roberta M. Gilbert, *Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking About Human Relationships*.

Harriet Goldhor Lerner, *The Dance of Anger*.

Harriet Goldhor Lerner, *The Dance of Intimacy*.

Supplementary reading:

Several books address applying family systems thinking to congregational life and church leadership.

Charles H. Cosgrove and Dennis d. Hatfield, *Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights*.

Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. (See note on Friedman above.)

Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives*.

Ronald W. Richardson, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor: Family Systems Theory and the Pastor's Own Family*.

Ronald W. Richardson, *Creating a Healthier Church: Family Stems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life*.

Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*

Peter L. Steinke, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*

Peter L. Steinke, *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*

Peter L. Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*

**No class on Monday May 18, Victoria Day**

**5. Wednesday 20 May**

**Understanding Your Conflict Style**

**Due today in a.m.:** Have someone who knows you well complete the Personal Conflict Style Inventory in *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual*, pp. 64-66 about you. Be prepared to discuss any discrepancies with your own conclusions. This will feed in to your final self-study.

**6. Monday 25 May**

**Listening and Communication**  
Discuss Campbell Assignment

**Due Today:** Will Campbell Assignment

O'Connor, "Revelation." (Reflection paper due 7 August.)

Write a two-page single-spaced paper on how you as a pastor, deacon/elder, therapist or small group member would interpret the experience and actions of Ruby Turpin in Flannery O'Connor's story, "Revelation." How would you work with her in your church context? Be sure to apply insights derived from the course. **Due 8 June.**

**7. Wednesday 27 May**

**Listening and Communication contd**

Complete Scazzero inventory and discuss it with one other person in the class. Incorporate learnings into your final self-study.

**8. Monday 1 June**

**Conflict—Healthy and Destructive Levels of Conflict**

**Supplementary:** A full version of Leas' Levels of Conflict in "Moving Your Church through Conflict" can be downloaded and purchased from Alban at [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org).

**9. Wednesday 3 June**

**Conflict—Healthy and Destructive**

**10. Monday 8 June**

**Leadership, Self-Awareness and Commitment to Growth  
Dealing with Criticism**

**Post-Class Work:**

**Major papers due 22 July: self study, case study**