

This assignment challenges you to draw from both sections of the course; origins of conflict, and conflict resolution.

1.) Description and Origins of conflict. First, you should choose a type of social conflict in which you are interested such as interpersonal conflict, marital conflict, religious conflict or state conflict. These are examples only. Please see me if your topic seems distinct from a topic that we discussed in class. Once you have decided on the *scope* of the behavior that you want to explain, you should define and describe this behavior. For example, you may want to describe some of the general patterns associated with this type of conflict. A discussion of marital conflict might start with some statistics that illustrate how common this behavior is, and some of the factors associated with it.

In the first section of the course, we discussed a few theories that help explain patterns of conflict and cooperation. Although I stressed evolutionary theory, this does not mean that you need to use this theory. What I do want to see is a clear discussion about why the conflict that you are describing emerges. For example, is religious conflict really about disagreements over religious doctrines, or are other factors more important (e.g., water rights, anger from past wars). What leads marital couples to fight? How much of the conflict is driven by biology, and how much by culture? These are examples only. Your discussion is going to be guided by the type of conflict that you choose. Some topics might also benefit from a discussion of conflict dynamics.

2.) Conflict Resolution and Institutions. We discussed institutions of social control and how these are used to reduce conflict. Which particular mechanisms are the most important to your case? State mechanisms? Informal contracts and norms? Also, I expect you include a discussion about negotiation and strategies for individuals to remedy their disputes and underlying conflict. Please consider the degree to which “Gandhi’s Way” might help resolve the conflict that you discuss. The easy answer is that Gandhi “was smart” and his ideas “would help”. Be precise, and really think about the degree to which Gandhi’s ideas apply to your case.

I would like to see that you integrate your ideas, and think in depth about how social conflict emerges, and how it can be controlled. If you prefer, you can break up your paper into two sections as outlined above. HOWEVER, THE SECTIONS MUST BE INTEGRATED, and not simply blocks of ideas that are not intellectually connected.

FORMAT

The paper length should be five to six (6-7) double spaced pages, and printed using 12-point font. You must include a “References Cited” section to document the literature you will consult. You must cite at least *four* scholarly journal articles or books outside of class readings. I am not concerned with the type of citation format you use, but you need to include references within the text (e.g., (Walker, 1998)). I prefer that you cite outside sources and put ideas into your own words, rather than using long quotations. However, a few short quotations are acceptable.

Writing Hints

- 1.) The first paragraph of any writing assignment is the most important. In effect, the first paragraph should serve as an outline or abstract of your paper. Each following sentence or section in the first paragraph should introduce the various subtopics of the paper in sequential order. The second paragraph should then introduce your first subtopic, and so on.
- 2.) Start with an outline, and then start writing.
- 3.) Use headings and sub-headings (e.g., introduction, definition of crime, theoretical concepts, etc.).