



Course Syllabus<sup>1</sup>

## Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Workplace

Course No: 37:575:312 (undergraduate)  
38:578:515 (graduate)  
Summer Session, 2021

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Delivered live via Zoom

**General:** In recent years, the field of alternative dispute resolution (“ADR”) has grown dramatically for resolving a wide range of conflicts, including those that arise in the workplace. As the presence of labor unions in the workplace has declined, many non-union employers have opted to provide their employees with a forum to resolve disputes that otherwise would go unresolved or would require lengthy and expensive litigation. As a result, grievance and other ADR procedures, long used in the unionized sector, have increased exponentially in the non-union sector. This course will explore the reasons for workplace conflict and compare the types of dispute resolution procedures that are used in both the union and non-union workplaces.

The first half of the course primarily examines dispute resolution in the non-union workplace while the second half explores the processes used to resolve disputes in the union sector. Although the class is focused on processes that are used to resolve labor and employment disputes there will also be an emphasis on substantive laws and collective bargaining agreement provisions that often are the sources of conflict. Some background and knowledge of employment or labor law is useful but not required.

The class will also include a focus on communication and negotiating skills that are beneficial regardless of your major or career path. We spend nearly a third of our lives at work and experience a variety of workplaces, supervisors and co-workers who have different methods of addressing or avoiding conflict. Dispute resolution skills are also beneficial in our everyday lives where disagreements may range from selecting a place to go to dinner to serious interpersonal conflicts.

**Format:** Classes meet on Monday and Wednesday evenings at 6:00 pm from June 1 through July 9. During the pandemic, the classes will be delivered via Zoom in a live (synchronous) format. Recordings of each class will be made available for students who must be absent or have experienced technical difficulties. The classes will be comprised of lecture, group work and videos. In addition, for graduate students only, a labor arbitration simulation will be assigned

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<sup>1</sup> Note, this syllabus is subject to changes based on unforeseen circumstances

where students will experience what it is like to analyze a case and to write an award and opinion as a labor arbitrator.

**Required Textbook:** There is one textbook that is required for this course: The Complete Guide to Conflict Resolution in the Workplace M. Masters and R. Albright. Paperback: 368 pages. Publisher: AMACOM (May 13, 2002). ISBN-10: 0814417183 ISBN-13: 978-0814417188

Additional required reading assignments will be posted at no cost.

**Class Preparation:** Class will include lectures, small group discussions, simulations and in-class assignments. Student participation is very important in this class and therefore you are expected to:

- read the assigned material before class and be prepared to discuss it.
- attend, participate and be on time for every class. Because dispute resolution skills are developed throughout the course, attendance is very important.
- be familiar with the University's Policy on Academic Integrity and follow it: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>

**Absences:** Attendance is required. Please report any absence in advance unless you have a sudden and unexpected illness or emergency. Do not call or email me directly to report an absence. Absences MUST be reported by using the university absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email will be automatically sent to me.

If you must be absent it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a classmate. Get the email address of a classmate in case you need to find out about a homework assignment. If you will be absent, email the assignment so that it is timely. Late homework will NOT be accepted.

**Class Participation:** In-class meetings will include class discussions and group activities. You are encouraged to explain your views but listen and consider the views of others. Diversity of views and opinions are strongly encouraged. If it is difficult for you to speak up in class, try doing so in the smaller groups.

**Communications:** If you need to reach me email is the best method (wmd3@smlr.rutgers.edu).

**Grades (Undergraduate Students):** For grading purposes, there are three components:

1. Assignments. (33.3%)
2. A mid-term exam. (33.3%)
3. A final exam that focuses primarily on material covered during the second half of the semester but also including processes/principles from the first half of the semester. (33.3%)

**Grades (Graduate Students):** For grading purposes, there are four components:

1. Assignments. (25%)
2. A mid-term exam. (25%)

3. A mock-arbitration exercise with the grade based upon a written arbitration opinion and award in a case involving an employee who was suspended from work. (25%)
4. A final exam that focuses primarily on material covered during the second half of the semester but also including processes/principles from the first half of the semester. (25%)

**Office Hours:** All students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of meeting with me to discuss any matters of concern or interest. I am available by appointment.

### **The fine print**

**Learning Objectives.** The student is able to:

Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:

- Apply concepts from employment relations, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2).

School of Management and Labor Relations:

- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal VI)

Additional Course Objective(s) from the Instructor:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the reasons for workplace conflict, the types of dispute resolution procedures that are used in both the union and non-union workplaces and integrated conflict management systems.

### **Academic integrity**

Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals. Joint efforts are legitimate only when the assistance of others is explicitly acknowledged and permitted by the assignment. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the University community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses. Any such issues will be submitted to the Dean of the Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department, as appropriate. Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course. Students are also expected to report incidents of academic dishonesty to the instructor or dean of the instructional unit. Students are expected to abide by the Rutgers University Code of Student Conduct. They are to conduct themselves with honesty and integrity.

### **Disability services**

#### **From the Office of Disability Services:**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports

your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please carefully complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

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