



**International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution (MD-ICCCR)**  
**Teachers College, Columbia University**

**Course: ORLJ 4804**

**Healing and Reconciling Relationships in Conflict**

**Instructor:** Donna Hicks, Ph.D.

**Credits:** 1 Credit or non-credit

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Schedule:** Friday (4 pm-7:30 pm); Saturday (9 am- 5 pm);  
Sunday (9 am- 3 pm)

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Contact the MD-ICCCR if you have questions or concerns:** [icccr@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:icccr@tc.columbia.edu)

**Please review: 5 Statements from The Provost and Dean of the College on the last pages of this document.**

### **Course Description**

This course examines the role that unaddressed and unhealed emotional trauma plays in creating and maintaining conflict. It also highlights unaddressed trauma as an obstacle to reconciliation—our ability to put the past to rest and to rebuild relationships that have broken under the strain of conflict. Using evolutionary psychology theory, a framework will be presented that explains our emotional human vulnerability, showing that threats to our inner psychological stability are as dangerous as physical wounds and perhaps more so because they are often ignored and left unattended. The framework will use the language of dignity and indignity to describe the universal effect emotional injuries have on human beings. If indignity tears us apart, dignity can put us back together again. The course will present the Dignity Model—a way of repairing, reconciling and building human relationships. While many of the ideas that will be presented are based on my work at Harvard University as a third-party facilitator of dialogues between ethnic groups in conflict, the insights can be applied to conflict at any level—where ever human beings come into contact with one another. The Dignity Model has been applied in the workplace, schools, churches, and interpersonal relationships.

### **Course Objectives:**

Participants in this class will

- Explore the meaning of trauma, healing and reconciliation from the perspective of evolutionary psychology.
- Using evolutionary theory as a guide, develop an understanding of our instinctive response to threats to our well-being and the role they play in creating conflict and trauma.
- Learn how our hardwired, evolutionary inheritance creates obstacles to healthy relationships.
- Understand the role dignity plays in conflict and the breakdown of relationships.
- Understand the role dignity plays in rebuilding broken relationships.
- Compare two traditional paradigms of reconciliation: forgiveness vs. honoring dignity. Are they distinctly different approaches? Are there other ways to achieve reconciliation?



## Course Requirements

### General Expectations

- Attend all class sessions
- Complete the required readings by the date specified
- Participate in the in-class activities
- Complete the written assignments by the date specified

### Selected Readings

- Enright, R.D, Freedman, S. and Rique, “The Psychology of Interpersonal Forgiveness” in *Exploring Forgiveness*, ed. R. Enright and J. North, University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.(posted on Canvas)
- Hicks, Donna, *Dignity: The Essential Role it Plays in Resolving Conflict*. Yale University Press, 2011 (available at the Columbia Bookstore).

### Course Assignments

**Final Paper:** Students will write a final paper (10 pages) analyzing a conflict they have had (or one that is ongoing), where they apply the lessons learned in the course. The paper should begin with a brief description of the conflict—the conditions that created it, the actual conflict, and how it was resolved or left unresolved. Using the framework and tools from the Dignity Model, the second part of the paper will analyze the conflict in the dignity framework, using the tools to make recommendations for rebuilding the relationship.

**REMINDERS:** Type all assigned material double-spaced and on 12pt font. Put your name on all sheets of paper. **All assignments should be emailed.**

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is mandatory for all course sessions. You are expected to join all class sessions and participate fully in class assignments and activities. In the event of extenuating circumstances that cause you to miss parts of this class, you must consult with your instructors *and* the Associate Director of the ICCCR.

### **Grades:**

Grades will be based on demonstrating the knowledge and skills you acquired in the class. This includes integration of theory, both class and personal life experience and the required readings. You will receive a letter grade or you may opt for **Pass/Fail** by filling out the Application for Elected Grade Option. Students who are registered for non-credit will automatically receive a Pass/Fail Grade.

### **Final Grade Breakdown:**

Participation:	30%
Final Paper	70%



### Final Grading Scale:

Grade	Percentage
A+	98–100 %
A	93–97.9 %
A-	90–92.9 %
B+	87–89.9 %
B	83–86.9 %
B-	80–82.9 %
C+	77–79.9 %
C	73–76.9 %
C-	70–72.9 %
D	60–69.9 %
F	59.9% and below

### 5 Statements From The Provost and Dean of the College

1. The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities (OASID) for information about registration. You can reach OASID by email at [oasid@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:oasid@tc.columbia.edu), stop by 163 Thorndike Hall or call 212-678-3689. Services are available only to students who have registered and submit appropriate documentation. As your instructor, I am happy to discuss specific needs with you as well. Please report any access related concerns about instructional material to OASID and to me as your instructor.

2. The grade of Incomplete will be assigned only when the course attendance requirement has been met but, for reasons satisfactory to the instructor, the granting of a final grade has been postponed because certain course assignments are outstanding. If the outstanding assignments are completed within one calendar year from the date of the close of term in which the grade of Incomplete was received and a final grade submitted, the final grade will be recorded on the permanent transcript, replacing the grade of Incomplete, with a transcript notation indicating the date that the grade of Incomplete was replaced by a final grade. If the outstanding work is not completed within one calendar year from the date of the close of term in which the grade of Incomplete was received, the grade will remain as a permanent Incomplete on the transcript. In such instances, if the course is a required course or part of an approved program of study, students will be required to re-enroll in the course including repayment of all tuition and fee charges for the new registration and satisfactorily complete all course requirements. If the required course is not offered in subsequent terms, the student should speak with the faculty advisor or Program Coordinator about their options for fulfilling the degree requirement. Doctoral students with six or more credits with grades of Incomplete included on their program of study will not be allowed to sit for the certification exam.



3. Teachers College students have the responsibility for activating the Columbia University Network ID (UNI) and a free TC Gmail account. As official communications from the College – e.g., information on graduation, announcements of closing due to severe storm, flu epidemic, transportation disruption, etc. -- will be sent to the student’s TC Gmail account, students are responsible for either reading email there, or, for utilizing the mail forwarding option to forward mail from their account to an email address which they will monitor.
  
4. It is the policy of Teachers College to respect its members’ observance of their major religious holidays. Students should notify instructors at the beginning of the semester about their wishes to observe holidays on days when class sessions are scheduled. Where academic scheduling conflicts prove unavoidable, no student will be penalized for absence due to religious reasons, and alternative means will be sought for satisfying the academic requirements involved. If a suitable arrangement cannot be worked out between the student and the instructor, students and instructors should consult the appropriate department chair or director. If an additional appeal is needed, it may be taken to the Provost.
  
5. Sexual Harassment and Violence Reporting - Teachers College is committed to maintaining a safe environment for students. Because of this commitment and because of federal and state regulations, we must advise you that if you tell any of your instructors about sexual harassment or gender-based misconduct involving a member of the campus community, your instructor is required to report this information to the Title IX Coordinator, Janice Robinson. She will treat this information as private, but will need to follow up with you and possibly look into the matter. The Ombuds officer for Gender-Based Misconduct is a confidential resource available for students, staff and faculty. “Gender-based misconduct” includes sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and gender-based harassment. For more information, see <http://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/gender-based-misconduct-policy-students>.