COURSE SYLLABUS

Leadership and Conflict Resolution

Course code: COM 253
Semester and year: Fall 2025
Day and time: Thursdays 11:15-14:00
Classroom: 3.13
Instructor: Dr. Joshua M. Hayden
Instructor contact: Joshua.hayden@aauni.edu
Consultation hours: by appointment

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	**Level**	Intermediate
Length	15 weeks	**Pre-requisite**	
Contact hours	42 hours	**Course type**	Bachelor Required

1. Course Description

This course focuses on leadership as an activity involving leader(s), follower(s) and context; with a focus on one of its chief competencies: conflict resolution. We will explore the roots, challenges, and evidence-based practices of conflict resolution at three levels: (1) direct interpersonal conflict, (2) intervention with others, and (3) group conflict. On these levels, we will examine the leader's role as a conflict negotiator, peacemaker, and change initiator. Within this we will examine the communicative processes and psychology of conflict interaction. We will look at leadership practice through the lens of Adaptive Leadership Theory in a variety of settings including business, NGO, community/ social movements, and students' personal experience. The learning methods of this course will include group discussion, case study analysis, in-class simulations, reflection on readings, and short lectures to provoke further thought and application. The goal is to increase students' capacity for leading conflict by exposing students to different options and strategies for engaging conflict as a leader and follower both professionally and personally.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:
1. Distinguish technical from adaptive problems and the leadership implications that emerge from diagnosis of conflict.
2. Understand their own interpersonal conflicts through the lens of the three conversations that comprise a difficult conversation.
3. Apply theoretical frameworks in the conflict research to particular situations and contexts.

4. Apply effective communication strategies in reframing conflict to a learning conversation.
5. Problem-solve through conflict based on analysis of key issues.

3. Reading Material

Required Materials

- Folger, J. P., Poole, M. S., & Stutman, R. K. (2021). *Working through conflict: Strategies for relationships, groups, and organizations, 9th edition*. Routledge. **Available on Perlego:** https://perlego.com/book/2194342/working-through-conflict-strategies-for-relationships-groups-and-organizations-pdf/?utm_medium=share&utm_source=perlego&utm_campaign=share-book

- Stone, Patton & Heen (2010) Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most New York: Penguin. **Select chapters available on NEO.**

- Heifetz, R. & Linsky, M. (2002) Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading. Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press. **Select chapters available on NEO.**

Recommended Materials:
- Gerzon, M. (2006) Leading Through Conflict: How Successful Leaders Transform Differences into Opportunities. Cambridge: Harvard Business Review Press. (On Perlego)

- Furlong, G.T. (2010) The Conflict Resolution Toolbox: Models and Maps for Analyzing, Diagnosing, and Resolving Conflict. (On Perlego)

- Coleman, P.T., Deutsch, M., & Marcus, E.C.(2014) The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice. Jossey-Bass. (On Perlego)

- Ripley, A. (2021) High Conflict: Why We Get Trapped and How We Get Out. New York: Simon & Schuster.

4. Teaching methodology

This course will seek to balance high expectations with high support of you and your learning. Effective communication takes consistent practice. To better accomplish our goals, we will:
- Frequently engage in individual exercises and critique in pairs and groups to help each other learn.
- Ask questions and engage in dialogue about the subject matter in class.
- Respond to writing prompts practicing creative generation of ideas, developing structure in essay writing, and evaluating grammar and usage of methods.

- Debate one another with civility in response to readings, class exercises, and current events.
- Give oral presentations in class and receive feedback from the professor as well as peers.

A Special Opportunity: This fall a major conference is coming to Prague, the 27th Annual International Leadership Association (ILA) conference from October 15-18. This is a gathering of scholars and practitioners in leadership studies from across the world. The professor of this course is a co-chair of the program for this conference and students will have a chance to volunteer and be part of the conference. It's an opportunity to learn and interact with the scholars that are actively shaping the growing field of leadership studies. For more see: https://ilaglobalconference.org/

5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Lesson 1: Sept. 4	**Topic: Introduction to Conflict Resolution and Adaptive Leadership** **Description:** Activity and discussion on the definition and nature of conflict, arenas of conflict and the differences between constructive and destructive conflict. We will discuss class assignments, readings, and course requirements and expectations contained in this syllabus. **Reading:** This syllabus
Lesson 2: Sept. 11	**Topic: Communication and Conflict** **Description:** We will actively discuss the properties of conflict interaction, the nature of change as it relates to leading through conflict, and Confrontation Episodes Theory (Newell & Stutman, 1988). We will explore the possibilities involved in viewing conflict as a constructive enterprise that enables people to confront adaptive change. Students will also explore their own experiences and assumptions with conflict. **Reading:** 1. Folger et al. (2021) Working Through Conflict, chapter 1 "Communication and Conflict" (NEO or Perlego) 2. Heifetz & Linsky (2002) Leadership on the Line, chapter 1 The Heart of Danger 3. Watch Amy Gallo's TED talk "The Gift of Conflict" **Assignments/deadlines:** - Reading Response 1: Communication
Lesson 3: Sept. 18	**Topic: Getting a Broader Perspective on Conflict and Change** **Description:** Heifetz & Linsky (2002) distinguish between adaptive and technical challenges and suggest that the primary work of leadership is getting oneself and other "to the balcony," that is, to a place of broader perspective. We need to see the landscape of conflict in its array and understand the three primary conversations that comprise conflict. Our psychological tendency to sharpen our focus, especially during conflict interactions, often can be a detriment. Thus, understanding 'how conflict works' is a key component of the view from the balcony on to the dancefloor. **Reading:** 1. Folger et al. (2021) Working Through Conflict, chapter 3 "Conflict Interaction"

	2. Heifetz & Linsky (2002) Leadership on the Line, chapter 3 "Get to the Balcony" **3.** Stone et. al. (2010) Difficult Conversations, chapter 1 "Sort Out the Three Conversations" **Assignments/deadlines:** 1. Personal Aspirations Paper
Lesson 4: Sept. 25	**Topic: Conversational Receptiveness, Listening, and Avoiding Pitfalls in Conflict** **Description:** Listening may be one of the most important leadership qualities for transformation and change. Yet, it is easier said than done. As research suggests there is often a gap between our intentions and our impact, and this applies not only to the way we encounter others but to our openness to the ideas and perspectives of others. The psychological concept called "Naïve Realism" is a key component of why this gap exists. We will discuss theoretical and practical ways to approach our own assumptions about conflict and how we come across to others **Reading:** 1. Stone et. al. (2010) Difficult Conversations, chapter 2 "Stop Arguing About Who's Right: Explore Each Other's Stories" 2. Stone et. al. (2010) Difficult Conversations, chapter 3 "Don't Assume They Meant It: Disentangle Intent from Impact" 3. Stone et. al. (2010) Difficult Conversations, chapter 4 "Abandon Blame: Map the Contribution System" 4. Listen to *Hidden Brain* podcast: "Relationships 2.0 How to Keep Conflict from Spiraling" with Dr. Julia Minson **Assignments/deadlines:** **2.** Reading Response 2: Conversational Receptiveness…
Lesson 5: Oct. 2	**Topic: The Inner Experience of Conflict** **Description:** In this session we will apply psychodynamic theory to conflict to discuss the frustrations, collusions and emotions that emerge during conflict. Sometimes emotions are at the heart of difficult conversations and the more we try to frame emotions as irrelevant to the conflict, the worse it becomes because we missed the point. When do we honor others' feelings? When do they lead us astray? Social cognition comes into play when we examine our stories that ignite our emotions in a conflict and in our beliefs and contextual influences on conflict. We will explore these topics through role plays and case studies as well as our own experiences. **Reading:** 3. Folger et al. (2021) Working Through Conflict, chapter 2 "The Inner Experience of Conflict" 4. Stone et. al. (2010) Difficult Conversations, chapter 5 "Have Your Feelings (or they will have you)" **Assignments/deadlines:** 5. Reading Response 3: Inner Experience

Lesson 6:
Oct. 9
	Topic: Conflict Styles and Strategic Interactions
	Description: Now that we have made our way through the "differentiation" process of conflict resolution, we need to focus on the "integration" of strategic planning and problem-solving. We will explore conflict styles, the various approaches to conflict, and how we can become more versatile is handling various conflict situations and contexts. Here we will also explore gender, race and cultural influences on conflict styles. The second part of this session will examine the identity conversation in terms of our own and others' sources of identity and how to build awareness and flexibility in our sense of self during conflict.
	Reading:
	    1. Folger et al. (2021) Working Through Conflict, chapter 4 "Conflict Styles and Strategic Conflict Interaction"
	    2. Stone et. al. (2010) Difficult Conversations, chapter 6 "Ground Your Identity: Ask Yourself What's at Stake"
	Assignments/Deadlines:
	    • Reading Response 4: Conflict Styles

Lesson 7: Oct. 16	**Topic:** International Leadership Association Conference (offsite) **Description:** Students are given the opportunity to volunteer at the conference and attend sessions related to our topics. There will be an assignment attached to this out-of-classroom learning opportunity. **Reading:** 1. Student research on the topic before attending out-of-classroom learning event

Lesson 8:
Oct. 23
	Topic: Power and Politics in Leadership
	Description: Understanding power and politics are both integral to understanding leadership. At the root of leadership is anticipating resistance and strategic alliances, utilizing different forms of power, and navigating politics are important tools that leaders must learn to wield. We will practically discuss the uses and balance of power in conflict including the ethical implications.
	Reading:
	    1. Folger et al. (2021) Working Through Conflict, chapter 5 "Power: The Architecture of Conflict"
	    2. Heifetz & Linsky (2002) Leadership on the Line, chapter 4 "Think Politically"
	Assignments/deadlines:
	    • External Leadership/Conflict Analysis

Oct. 30	**Mid-term break**

Lesson 9:
Nov. 6
	Topic: Orchestrating Conflict
	Description: If leading adaptively is about connecting with values and addressing loss associated with change, then conflict must be leveraged as a positive force. Otherwise, people tend to engage in work avoidance, which shares many of the same properties as destructive ways to handle conflict (e.g. blaming others). This discussion will involve the leadership dynamics behind using conflict to enact positive change and draw upon Ripley's research that distills five steps for dealing with high conflict.
	Reading:
	    1. Heifetz & Linsky (2002) Leadership on the Line, chapter 5 "Orchestrate the Conflict"
	    2. Listen to "Conflict Is Normal. Here's How to Keep It Healthy and Avoid Disaster." (Amanda Ripley on 10% Happier podcast with Dan Harris)
	Assignments/deadlines:
	    • Reading Response 5: Orchestrating Conflict

Nov 13	**No class meeting- professor teaching in Sweden**

Lesson 10:
Nov. 20
	Topic: Cultural Differences and Conflict
	Description: The environment and external influences (often internalized) on conflict interaction are critical to pay attention to. In this session we will mostly explore the impact of culture and cultural differences on conflict. We will discuss misunderstanding that come with cross-cultural conflict and how we can move past these to interact more effectively.
	Reading:
	    1. Folger et al. (2021) Working Through Conflict, chapter 7 "Climate and Conflict Interaction"
	Assignments/deadlines:
	    • Reading Response 6: Cultural Differences
	    • Interpersonal Conflict Case Study

Lesson 11:
**FRIDAY
Nov. 21ˢᵗ**
(make up)
	Topic: Principles of Negotiation (with special guest)
	Description: Often conflict and negotiation are taught together, especially in business contexts, as they share many of the same properties and interpersonal principles. However, negotiation has some distinct properties as it distinguishes claiming value from creating value for both parties and other psychological biases such as anchoring. We will practice negotiating and using the principles from the articles and from best practices to understand artful negotiation in a deeper way. This class will include a special guest AAU lecturer and former CEO Heinrich Homola.
	Reading:
	    1. Six Habits of Merely Effective Negotiators (Harvard Business Review) Sebenius, J.K.
	    2. Watch "Harvard negotiators explain: How to get what you want every time"
	Assignments/deadlines:
	    • Reading Response 7: Negotiation

Lesson 12:
Nov. 27
	Topic: Face-Saving, Dealing with Difficult People
	Description: One well-researched area in social psychology and essential area when it comes to conflict is face-saving. We will discuss threats to face, the consequences of face-saving, and the potential for face-giving when we are engaged with others in conflict. We will also cover how to deal with arrogant jerks, blunt people that make rude comments, those that annoy us, and bad bosses. How do you handle people that just don't give a damn?
	Reading:
	   1. Folger et al. (2021) Working Through Conflict, chapter 6 "Face-Saving"
	   2. Heifetz & Linsky (2002) Leadership on the Line, chapter 6 "Give the Work Back"
	Assignments/ deadlines:
	  • Reading Response 8: Face-Saving…

Lesson 13:
Dec. 4
	Topic: Managing and Leading Conflict
	Description: From the beginning we learned that leadership is dangerous and since then we've been learning about all the traps of high conflict, poor communication, emotionally changed (and draining) interactions, and move that keep us stuck in perpetual. We've learned about how to break the cycles, when to compromise or negotiate, and better communication skills to improve relationships interpersonally or on a team. But what about leading others through these processes? What if you're the third-party equipping others to handle conflict more effectively? How do you 'give the work back' to the people with the problem? These issues and more will be discussed as a culminating lesson of our semester.
	
	Reading:
	   1. Folger et al. (2021) Working Through Conflict, chapter 8 "Managing Conflict"
	   2. Stone et. al. (2010) Difficult Conversations, chapter 10 "Expression: Speak for Yourself with Clarity and Power"
	   3. Stone et. al. (2010) Difficult Conversations, chapter 11 "Problem-Solving: Take the Lead"
	Assignments/ deadlines:
	  • Reading Response 9: Managing and Leading
	  • Conflict Leadership Scenario due

Final Exam
Dec. 11
	Topic: Final Exam
	Description:
	Readings:
	   1. Stone et. al. (2010) Difficult Conversations, chapter 12 "Putting It all Together"
	   2. Folger et al. (2021) Working Through Conflict, chapter 10 "Working Through Conflict"
	Assignments/deadlines:
	  • Study for final exam (written in class)

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (avg.)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Attendance and Class Participation	42	20%	1, 2 & 4	2,3
Reading Responses (9)	35	15%	3	1
Personal Aspirations Paper	10	10%	1,2	2,3
Interpersonal Conflict Case Study	30	20%	3,2	1,3
External Leadership/ Conflict Analysis	18	15%	1,2,	1,2
Conflict Leadership Capstone / Final Exam	15	20%	4,5	3
TOTAL	**150**	**100%**		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

7. Detailed description of the assignments

Attendance and class participation

Missing more than 3 class sessions will result in failure in the course. Attendance and participation is a grade that includes active engagement during class, showing you've done the reading, short assignments, putting cell phones away (not on the table), and being on-time for class. *Being distracted by phones or laptop use will affect this grade*.

The following are some general expectations for class participation that are inspired by the approach of Aristotle in finding the ideal mean of the virtue. An ideal—perhaps even virtuous—student will substantively improve the learning of the group by doing some or all of the following:
1. **Curiosity:** Ask questions that uncover confusion or contradiction, probe the depths of an idea, or appropriately apply concepts from the texts to the real world.
2. **Collaboration:** In small groups, help the group learn by keeping on task, exploring new ideas, listening, and appropriately adding their own questions and insights.
3. **Contribution:** Come to class not only having done the reading, but having given it thought. The virtuous student is willing to express both confusion and questions as well as offer theories of explanation.

Assessment Breakdown:

Assessed area	Percentage
Puts cell phone away and if they use a laptop, not distracted by their use. Closes laptop to engage with others during discussion and activity	25%
Evidence of critical reflection on readings and lecture content	25%
Works effectively with others and engages in class discussion verbally and nonverbally	25%
Asks good questions or provides comment and thus shows curiosity about class content or readings	25%

Assignment 1: **Reading Response(s)**

Reading the chapters assigned and coming to class with prior knowledge to work with is a large part of the learning in this class. To that end, this short assignment is designed for you to both (1) show you have engaged with the reading on a deeper level, and (2) that you are ready to contribute something to the class. Your reading response can come in two forms:

1. A set of critical questions (2 or more) about the reading that demonstrates critical thinking about the topic. You could compare/ contrast to other readings or topics, you could apply a concept to a particular situation, you could consider the ethical implications of an issue or approach, and so on.
2. A personal application of a major theory, concept, or research finding from the reading. This comes from your experience but it also needs to relay your understanding of how the concept, theory or research find works. This should be 1-2 paragraphs in length but specific. "Applying" means demonstrating, showing, solving, or suggesting some phenomena at work.

Or, you could do a combination of question and personal application. Submit this before class via NEO. The professor will work to incorporate these into that class period.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Questions or personal application demonstrates accurate understanding of subject matter.	25%
Evidence of critical reflection on readings (comparisons, connections, applications, further inquiry)	25%
Follows guidelines and submission criteria	25%
Examples / illustrations or questions are specific enough to generate discussion in class and contributes to others' learning	25%

Assignment 2: Personal Aspirations Paper

Psychologically, goal-setting motivates and provides a structure for effective learning. In this short paper students will use the reading and reflection they have done thus far in class to construct a paper that pinpoints areas they would like to personally work on and/or topics they are curious to delve into concerning conflict resolution. Partly, this is first-person narrative focused personal evaluation via the frameworks or concepts discussed in the readings. The paper should be specific and reflective, not a summary of the readings. The length of the paper should be 1 to 1.5 pages double-spaced. At least two of the readings should be referenced (with title of chapter or author name- not a formal citation) in the paper. Here are some questions that could help you get started: What has resonated with your experience of conflict thus far? Which concepts could be the most helpful for you to implement in your relationships and work with people? How are the three conversations or principles of conflict interaction applicable to you right now? What aspects of adaptive leadership offer fresh perspective that you'd like to experiment with? This paper sets the tone for motivated learning in this course and will be meaningful to look back on at the end.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
References readings and shows evidence of initial engagement with them.	25%

Demonstrates critical thinking through personal application	25%
Organized and specific in terms of aspirations and goals for the course	25%
Shows a willingness to look at their own weaknesses and limitations that could impact good leadership or conflict resolution	25%

Assignment 3: Interpersonal Conflict Case Study

In this written case study students will apply a framework from Difficult Conversations to zoom in on a specific case of conflict in which they were engaged. They will write out, as best they can recall, a transcript of a specific conflict conversation and then analyze it using the framework. This will result in a section where students will write some lessons learned, or next steps they could take in resolving the conflict.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Follows the guidelines of the case study method outlined in the assignment.	25%
Demonstrates critical thinking and good analysis	25%
Evidence of honest and transparent assessment of what they thought but did not say during a conflict.	25%
Shows a willingness to look at their own weaknesses and limitations that could impact good leadership	25%

Assignment 4: External Leadership/ Conflict Analysis

This assignment challenges students to apply their course learning outside of the classroom. Students will have several choices to attend the International Leadership Association conference in October or Professors in the Pub on campus or other options that are directly relevant to leadership and/or conflict resolution. Mainly principles of conflict communication and conversational receptiveness will be applied to your observations and participation in events. Students can attend and focus on one or more leadership sessions related to conflict or related topics (Your professor will moderate one on ethical collusion, which we will also discuss in class). For events like Professors in the Pub students can focus on principles of disagreement and conflict escalation that they observe or even participate in. The objective is "real world" application and learning in social/ public contexts.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Applies an existing or constructed from course content rubric for evaluating disagreement, conflict, and/or leadership (uses their learning from the course)	25%
Provides evidence of understanding and engagement in the event	25%
Displays critical thought about the topics discussed at the event and makes connections with and between material.	25%
Written account and analysis is well-organized and follows instructions	25%

Assignment 5: Conflict Leadership Capstone/ Final Exam

This exam exists in two parts and will be discussed and prepared for two weeks before the actual written exam in class. Here are the parts:

1. Part 1 involves using ChatGPT to devise a case study that will challenge students to apply their learning from the course to a current conflict-oriented case based on a news story. Students will bring in their generated cases (based on prompts which we will discuss in class), and will discuss them on the second-to-last class lesson. These will be exchanged and used as an essay prompt for the exam. Students can bring their notes to the exam in order to answer the case study in written essay form.
2. Part 2 will be short answer questions regarding the major concepts from the course based on classroom lectures and readings.

The final exam will test students on their applied knowledge of the concepts discussed in class and in the readings. Study guides will be provided in advance. The exams will consist of short-answer and case scenario response questions.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Demonstrates understanding of key concepts in Working Through Conflict, Difficult Conversations and Leadership on the Line.	25%
Applies key concepts to specific cases, diagnosing the key issues and leadership implications offering constructive ways forward based on the reading and lectures.	25%
Provides specific examples and connection to the main ideas in the course.	25%
Evidences personal engagement with course material and critical thinking.	25%

General Requirements and School Policies

Written Assignment Format:
All submitted assignments should be typed in Times New Roman 12pt. and double-spaced. Assignments should have a cover page with a title, course name and code, student name(s), instructor's name and date. Pages should be numbered and have one-inch margins. Written assignments will be submitted electronically in a single file on NEO.

Course specific requirements

Students who are absent for more than SIX classes will be administratively withdrawn from the class and will receive FW on their transcript. Please monitor your absences carefully.

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams.
Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, "SOC 101-2 Mid-term Exam. Question".

All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

Late work: *No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.* In the event of a family or medical emergency, please contact me to discuss an assignment extension.

Electronic devices

Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). You may use your laptop or tablet to take the exam in this class during the scheduled exam dates.

Please keep your smartphone in your bag or pocket and not on the table. several experiments have found that the mere presence of a smartphone reduces attention capacity and cognitive performance (Skowronek et al., 2023; Ward et al., 2017).

Cheating, plagiarism and disruptive behavior

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the student's Dean.

Students engaging in behavior, which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the student will fail the exam or assignment and be expelled from the exam or class. At minimum, plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the student's Dean. Intentional or repeated plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

Use of Artificial Intelligence and Academic Tutoring Center

Per AAU policy, all written work must be submitted online in NEO. This permits review to prevent plagiarism and offers a record of your work submitted for major course grades. Please note, all submissions are reviewed by the software **TurnItIn.com** for potential matches to existing documents created by artificial assistance writing programs (e.g., *ChatGPT*). I would much prefer you write up your own report about your research findings than to have you turn in a submission which is generated by AI and shows little/no evidence of learning. Please consider carefully, if you use AI tools at AAU, you should use them to help improve any existing writing you have completed first. AI use is always a risk to you – if you cannot show your own conceptual understanding and application in writing, I cannot award you points for your work. Put simply, always use AI with care, or do not use it at all at the collegiate level. If unsure about technical aspects of writing, or to improve your academic writing, please consult with student tutors in the AAU Academic Tutoring Center.

For more information or to book a tutor, contact: http://atc.simplybook.me/scheduler

Use of Laptops in class: take handwritten notes if you want better outcomes!

While I do not prohibit the use of laptops in class, I strongly recommend that you take handwritten notes. There is strong evidence that suggests that using laptops to take notes (vs. taking handwritten notes) results in shallower processing and worse performance on conceptual questions (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014). Note taking improves cognitive

processing and forces students to summarize and process as they go along instead of copying verbatim as students tend to do with laptops. Laptops create a distracting environment from course material and active engagement. Evidence suggests this has detrimental effects on student learning (Dontre, 2021).

Class presentations, PowerPoints, will be available on NEO for your review after class. Readings are meant to complement classroom lectures, activities and discussions so your notes will be critical along with the readings for full comprehension and your success in this class.

References on note taking:

Dontre, A. J. (2021). The influence of technology on academic distraction: A review. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, *3*(3), 379-390.

Mueller, P. A., & Oppenheimer, D. M. (2014). The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. *Psychological science*, *25*(6), 1159-1168.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95–100	**Excellent performance**. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A−	90–94	
B+	87–89	**Good performance**. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83–86	
B−	80–82	
C+	77–79	**Fair performance**. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73–76	
C−	70–72	
D+	65–69	**Poor**. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student's work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60–64	
F	0–59	**Fail**. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by: Joshua M Hayden
Date: 29 August 2025

Approved by: Karen Grunow-Harsta, Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences