Perspectives on Conflicts: 
Origins, Management, and Resolution 
Prof. Sunwoong Kim (sunwoong.kim@gmail.com)

SHORT COURSE DESCRIPTION
Dealing with a conflict, regardless of its form or situation, is often painful. But conflicts are facts of life, and it is absolutely necessary for all of us to learn how to deal with them. This course offers a multidisciplinary perspective on various forms of conflicts (e.g. inter-personal conflicts such as the problems with in-laws, inter-group conflicts such as political discourse, and international conflicts such as territorial disputes and international trade). Based on advances in philosophy, psychology, literature, history, management, economics, political science, and other disciplines, we try to analyze origins and nature of conflicts and the role of rationality and emotion in our decision-making and behavior in choosing how to avoid, manage, and resolve the conflicts. As the choice critically depends on the personality of the actors (individuals or groups), we also try to examine the relationship between the personality and the choice of action.

In addition to the lectures, readings and discussions, the course will have several group exercises or presentations: one in inter-personal conflicts, another on inter-group conflicts, and another on international conflicts. Each presentation will cover the nature of the conflict, personalities of the principal actors, the potential alternatives to deal with the conflict (avoidance, management, or resolution). The purposes of group presentations are: 1) to be able to frame the conflict; 2) to understand the nature of the conflict; 3) to understand the objectives, rationality and emotion of the main actors; 4) and to devise a mechanism for a constructive solution. Hopefully, this course would enlighten students for improved personal and group collaborations in the age of conflict-ridden world.

READING MATERIALS
All reading material is listed for the date of the class. They will be available in digital form at the beginning of the class. Items with (*) are required, and others are recommended and for reference. Students are expected to read the required readings before the scheduled class, and should be prepared to engage in the discussion of the topic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING
All ISS classes are pass/fail based on the student academic achievement evaluated by grades on a scale of 100 points (grade of 60 or above is Pass). SKKU regulations require students to attend at least 80% of all classes in order to receive a passing grade. Highest standards on academic conduct are expected, and any students who displayed academic misconduct (e.g. cheating, plagiarism, fraudulent attendance representation, and so on) will be strictly dealt with. Students show up 15 minutes after the class has started or leave 15 minutes before the class adjourns will be considered “tardy”, and two “tardy” will be counted for one absence.

Course grades will be determined based on the following four activities with respective weights:
1. Presentations 60%
2. Final Exam 40%
The topics and formats of presentations will be explained and assigned at the first class meeting. The format of the final exam will be take-home essay questions.

COURSE SCHEDULE READING MATERIALS

PART I: BACKGROUND AND THEORY

— WEEK I —

Thursday (27 June)

Consciousness, Self-Consciousness, and Conscience

The idea of I, WE, and THEY


Thandie Newton, “Embracing otherness, embracing myself,” TED Talks,

http://www.ted.com/talks/thandie_newton_embracing_otherness_embracing_myself.html

Lion Battlefield – A BBC documentary, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qfnkAdr_Ts or

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOZT4wBq-34&list=PL759BA939FFB90163 (part 1&2)

Group Discussion and Presentation: How to survive in savanna?

Animals in African savannah (Pride lions, nomad lions, hyenas, zebras, vulruers,...)

A. Identify genetic endowments (habitat, strength, weakness, etc.)

B. How do you survive and success in the environment? As an individual and as a species.

C. What are the things that you would like to improve? (or pass on to the next generation)

Friday (28 June)

Models of human and human society

Animals and humans: Similarities and differences


https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4451179/


http://science.sciencemag.org.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/content/317/5843/1360


What is humanity?
Rationality vs. emotion
1. Brain: A remarkable organ
   A. Automatic function (heart, sweat, etc.)
   B. Reflex
   C. Impulse/instinct
   D. Thinking
2. Their respective roles in human survival/success
3. Where are they in brain
Which one DOES (SHALL) human make action (decision) base on?
1. Rationalist
2. Emotionalist
3. Elephant and its rider

Haidt, Jonathan, Happiness Hypothesis, ch. 1-4,
http://books.google.com/books?id=Tz4wVAp6qL0C&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ViewWAPI#v=onepage&q=&f=false
Tali Sharot, Optimism Bias, TED Talk, http://www.ted.com/talks/tali_sharot_the_optimism_bias.html

— WEEK II —

Monday (1 July)

Personality and compatibility

Zodiac

Personality tests

1. MBTI (Meyers Briggs Type Indicator)
   A. Extraversion (E) – Introversion (I)
   B. Sensing (S) – Intuition (N)
   C. Thinking (T) – Feeling (F)
   D. Judging (J) – Perception (P)
2. Five Factor Model (OCEAN)
   A. Openness to experience: (inventive/curious vs. consistent/cautious).
   B. Conscientiousness: (efficient/organized vs. easy-going/careless).
   C. Extraversion: (outgoing/energetic vs. solitary/reserved).
   D. Agreeableness: (friendly/compassionate vs. analytical-detached).
   E. Neuroticism: (sensitive/nervous vs. secure/confident).


Personality compatibility

[https://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/social_customs/zodiac/compatibility.htm](https://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/social_customs/zodiac/compatibility.htm)

**Tuesday (2 July)**

Efficiency, Equity, and Justice

Pareto efficiency (win-win strategy)
Social justice, equality, equity
Trade-off between efficiency and equity

Group Presentation: Psychological illusions and cognitive bias of human

A. Optimism bias ([http://www.ted.com/talks/tali_sharot_the_optimism_bias.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/tali_sharot_the_optimism_bias.html))
B. Negativity bias
C. Confirmation bias ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_YkdMwEO5U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_YkdMwEO5U))
[D. Asch effect (conformation bias)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNmq0rBQtoQ)
E. Reflection effect and loss aversion
F. Planning fallacy
G. Anchoring effect
H. Endowment effect
I. Faulty causal theorizing
J. Hyperactive agency detecting device
K. Sunk cost fallacy
L. Base rate fallacy

**Wednesday (3 July)**

Venues and Mechanism of Conflict Resolution

Communication, Education, Avoidance, Negotiation, Mediation, Court, and Violence
Robert M. Krauss, “Communication and Conflict,”
[http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=6ef52da7-0a31-470a-b1ea-2adf665bd601%40sessionmgr110&vid=2&hid=103](http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=6ef52da7-0a31-470a-b1ea-2adf665bd601%40sessionmgr110&vid=2&hid=103)

Usage of a Third Party: Diplomacy, Arbitration, Court, and Super violence

PART II: INTER-PERSONAL CONFLICTS

Thursday (4 July)

Conflicts within couples and with other family members


– WEEK III –

Monday (8 July)

Workplace conflicts


Group Presentation: Laboratory of interpersonal conflicts

PART III: INTER-GROUP CONFLICTS

Tuesday (9 July)

Political conflicts (Conservatives vs. liberals, capitalist vs. workers, old vs. young)

Nolan chart on political ideologies
Test your own political ideology, https://www.politicalcompass.org/

Wednesday (10 July)

Xenophobia and racial conflicts


PART IV: INTER-NATIONAL CONFLICTS

Thursday (11 July)

Hegemony, war, terrorism and military conflicts

Peloponnesian War and Thucydides, Youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H73AcP-bfmr

Group Presentation: Historical cases of hegemony competition

– WEEK IV –

Monday (15 July)

Territorial disputes

Huth, Paul and Sunwoong Kim, “Is there a path to peaceful resolution in Dokdo/Takeshima

**Tuesday (16 July)**

Conflicts in international trade and commerce

World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute resolution mechanism,
[http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_e.htm)
WTO Doha Ministerial Declaration,
[http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min01_e/mindecl_e.htm#dispute](http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min01_e/mindecl_e.htm#dispute)

**Wednesday (17 July)**

Historical experience, nationalism, regionalism, and globalization

Park, Cheol Hee, “Nationalism, Historical Legacies and Territorial Disputes as Obstacles to Cooperation in Northeast Asia,”
Refugee crisis, terrorism, and nationalism, European experience
[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4894286/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4894286/)
European Union and nationalism, Brexit, Harvard Gazette, 2017

**Thursday (18 July)**

Final presentations on cases of conflicts and strategy for resolution

**Friday (19 July)**

Final Examination (Take-home)

Will be given one full day for three or four essay questions.
Dates to be determined.