

PADM 3100.400 — Workplace Conflict and Resolution

Fall 2026 · Eight-week online course · August 17 – October 9, 2026

Instructor Contact

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Meetings by appointment.

Office hours — all courses: Online, Monday 1:00–3:00 p.m. and Thursday 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Welcome to UNT and This Course

This course is PADM 3100: Workplace Conflict and Resolution. Whether you aspire to lead organizations, manage public programs, work in business, serve your community, or simply improve your ability to navigate everyday working relationships, the ability to diagnose and resolve conflict is among the most valuable competencies you can develop. Conflict is a daily fact of organized work rather than an occasional emergency, and how it is handled shapes performance, retention, and the quality of working life. Throughout this course you will study the theory, categories, processes, and venues of workplace conflict resolution while building skills that apply in both professional and personal settings.

This syllabus outlines several expectations of you, me, and UNT, and explains how we will work together to create a meaningful and engaging learning experience. To maximize your success in this course, focus on the following principles:

- Familiarize yourself with the course structure and requirements.
- Commit to active engagement and continuous learning.
- Participate in course activities with professionalism and mutual respect.
- Develop effective communication and conflict resolution skills.
- Approach differing viewpoints with curiosity and an open mind.
- Be prepared with the technology needed for online learning.
- Comply with UNT policies and academic standards.
- Seek support and assistance whenever needed.

Course Description

This course examines the theory and practice of workplace conflict resolution in public, private, and nonprofit settings. Students will explore the definition and sources of workplace conflict; the traditional and contemporary theories of its role in organizations; the three categories of conflict — rights, interests, and power — and their function as resolution lenses; positions and interests; distributive and integrative bargaining; conflict styles and strategies; and the principal venues of resolution, including negotiation, facilitation, mediation, arbitration, and litigation. The course also addresses the communication skills on which every venue depends, the cognitive biases that obstruct resolution, and the legal framework underlying rights-based conflict. Through readings,

videos, case studies, written assignments, and practical exercises, students develop the analytical and interpersonal skills necessary to diagnose a workplace conflict, select an appropriate venue, and defend that choice.

Course Structure

One hundred percent online. Content is delivered in modules with due dates set by the instructor.

Course Prerequisites or Other Restrictions

None.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to:

- Define workplace conflict and identify the elements and dynamics that create disputes;
- Recognize the traditional and contemporary theories of conflict and explain their organizational implications;
- Compare and contrast the three categories of conflict — rights, interests, and power — and classify a dispute accordingly;
- Explain how those three categories also function as resolution lenses, and identify the family of processes each generates;
- Distinguish positions from interests, and distributive from integrative bargaining;
- Identify a personal conflict-handling style and distinguish a style from a strategy;
- Compare the principal venues of workplace conflict resolution across their differentiating attributes;
- Given a workplace conflict, select an appropriate starting venue and fallback venue and defend the choice;
- Apply core communication skills — paraphrasing, empathic response, reframing, bridging, and structured inquiry — to a workplace conversation;
- Explain how cognitive biases obstruct resolution and identify the process discipline that counteracts each.

Required Texts

Masters, M. F., & Albright, R. R. (2002). *The complete guide to conflict resolution in the workplace*. New York, NY: AMACOM. ISBN-13: 978-0814407196.

Griffith, B. A., & Goodwin, C. C. (2016). *The conflict survival kit: Tools for resolving conflict at work* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. ISBN-13: 978-0133458251.

Students may purchase new, used, rental, audiobook, or electronic versions of the required texts. Access codes and publisher websites are not required for this course.

Provided Materials

Companion chapters authored by the instructor — covering negotiation, facilitation, mediation, and arbitration — are provided in Canvas at no cost, together with all instruments, worksheets, and summary decks. All other course materials will be provided in the Learning Management System.

Teaching Philosophy

This course emphasizes practical application, critical thinking, and skill development. Students are expected to engage actively with course materials and apply conflict resolution concepts to realistic workplace situations. The course is built on a single analytic habit — diagnose the category, choose the lens, select the venue — practiced repeatedly against progressively harder facts.

Course Requirements and Schedule

Canvas course modules are the official source of course requirements, assignments, readings, instructions, and deadlines. Students are responsible for reviewing course modules regularly and ensuring that all assignments are completed on time. Automated Canvas tools, including calendars, notifications, and To-Do lists, may not display all course activities. Failure of these tools to display an assignment does not excuse late or missing work.

All work is due by 11:59 p.m. Central Time on the Sunday that closes each week, with the single exception of Week 8, which closes on Friday, October 9.

Week and Dates	Module and Work	Points	Due
Week 1 Aug 17 – 23	Module 1: Foundations of Conflict Definitions, theories, sources, and conditions; the three categories; rights-based conflict Reading: Masters & Albright, Introduction, Ch. 1, and Ch. 2 through p. 64; Griffith & Goodwin, Introduction, Ch. 1–2 Module 1 Summary deck Module 1 Quiz	200	Sunday, Aug 23
Week 2 Aug 24 – 30	Module 2: Conflict Responses and Strategies Resolution lenses; understanding interests; positions and interests; the Dual Concerns Model Reading: Masters & Albright, Ch. 3; Griffith & Goodwin, Ch. 3–4 Module 2 Summary deck Workplace Conflict Engagement and Style Inventory (WCESI) and reflective essay Module 2 Quiz	300	Sunday, Aug 30
Week 3 Aug 31 – Sep 6	Module 3: The Resolution Toolbox The venue control spectrum; specialized methods and hybrids; choosing the venue; the legal and professional infrastructure Reading: see the Module 3 To-Do List in Canvas Module 3 Summary deck North Valley Case Study assignment Module 3 Quiz	300	Sunday, Sep 6

Week and Dates	Module and Work	Points	Due
Week 4 Sep 7 – 13	Module 4: Negotiation Preparation; BATNA, reservation point, and ZOPA; concessions; the negotiator's dilemma Reading: see the Module 4 To-Do List in Canvas Module 4 Summary deck Negotiation Preparation Worksheet assignment Module 4 Quiz	300	Sunday, Sep 13
Week 5 Sep 14 – 20	Module 5: Facilitation and Mediation The five phases of mediation; facilitation versus mediation; reality-testing; the boundary that closes collaborative venues Reading: see the Module 5 To-Do List in Canvas Module 5 Summary deck Mediation Observation assignment Module 5 Quiz	300	Sunday, Sep 20
Week 6 Sep 21 – 27	Module 6: Arbitration and Direct Confrontation The arbitration process and finality; the seven tests of just cause; supportive and assertive confrontation Reading: see the Module 6 To-Do List in Canvas Module 6 Summary deck Arbitration Observation and Analysis assignment, with observation log Module 6 Quiz	300	Sunday, Sep 27
Week 7 Sep 28 – Oct 4	Module 7: Communication, Inquiry, and Synthesis Three channels, four levels of listening, five communication continua; the five conversational moves and the Conflict Inquiry Framework; cognitive biases; the venues in review Reading: Griffith & Goodwin, Ch. 5–7 Module 7 Summary deck Listening, Diagnosis, and Bias assignment Module 7 Quiz	300	Sunday, Oct 4
Week 8 Oct 5 – 9	Module 8: Review and Final Examination No new reading. Comprehensive review and study guide Final Examination, Part One — selected response (50 minutes) Final Examination, Part Two — written (90 minutes) The two examinations are separate Canvas assessments on separate clocks. Take them in either order; neither unlocks the other.	500	Friday, Oct 9
Total	Eight modules	2,500	—

Points shown are module totals. The point value of each individual quiz and assignment appears in the Canvas assessment itself.

Videos

Instructional videos are embedded in several of the learning modules. These videos enhance your learning experience by reinforcing course concepts and demonstrating conflict resolution principles and techniques. If you have difficulty accessing the videos, you can still be entirely successful in the course by relying on the assigned readings. If you have any questions, contact the instructor for assistance.

Grading Philosophy

Students do not start the course with the maximum number of points and then lose points over time. Instead, students earn points through their work during the semester. Final grades reflect the cumulative number of points earned through demonstrated learning and successful completion of course requirements.

Grading

Total points = 2,500. Twenty-five points equals one percent of the course grade.

Grade	Points earned
A	2,500 – 2,250
B	2,249 – 2,000
C	1,999 – 1,750
D	1,749 – 1,500
F	1,499 – 0

Table 1. Grade scale.

Bonus Points

SPOT Course Evaluation participation: up to 40 points.

Artificial Intelligence Policy

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Grammarly, Copilot, and similar technologies may be used to support learning, brainstorming, organization, editing, and research support.

Students remain responsible for all submitted work. AI may assist with idea generation, outlining, editing, grammar review, and research support, but students must substantially author the analysis, arguments, examples, and conclusions contained in all assignments. Students remain responsible for the accuracy, quality, originality, and proper citation of all submitted work, including any material generated with AI assistance.

Submitting AI-generated work as original authorship is prohibited and may constitute a violation of university academic integrity standards. Any use of AI beyond grammar or proofreading must be disclosed in a brief statement submitted with the assignment.

The instructor may use artificial intelligence tools to assist with educational activities such as reviewing assignments for completeness, organization, alignment with assignment requirements, consistency of evaluation, and the generation of preliminary feedback comments. Any such use is advisory in nature. The instructor remains responsible for all evaluations, grading decisions, feedback provided to students, and final academic judgments regarding student work.

Quiz and Exam Policy

Each quiz or exam is timed and has a deadline for completion. Please read the on-screen instructions carefully before beginning. After all quizzes and exams are graded and released, the score will be posted in Canvas. Students may not discuss a quiz or exam with other students. The University is committed to providing all users with a reliable online course system. However, if any unexpected server outage or unusual technical difficulty prevents students from completing a time-sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor, contact the UNT Student Help Desk at helpdesk@unt.edu or 940.565.2324, and obtain a ticket number. The instructor and the UNT Student Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues as soon as possible.

Late Work

The professor will base decisions regarding acceptance of and credit for late work consistent with UNT and course policies. An extension may be given under limited circumstances, including but not limited to the student's or a close family member's illness or injury, death of a close family member, or other major life event. If a student believes he or she will miss or has missed assigned coursework, the student must contact the professor within two (2) days after the coursework's due date. The student must provide written documentation of any such event upon request. If a student fails to contact the professor in a timely manner or to provide the requested documentation, the student will not be given additional time to complete the assigned coursework and will receive no credit for it. Late work without prior approval will incur a penalty of 10% per day.

Professionalism and Respect

Because workplace conflict resolution frequently involves discussion of competing interests, controversial issues, and differing viewpoints, students should expect to encounter perspectives that differ from their own. The objective of this course is not agreement but the development of diagnostic, communication, and critical-thinking skills through respectful engagement with differing perspectives. Students are expected to challenge ideas rather than individuals and to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with professional workplace standards. Harassing, discriminatory, threatening, or disruptive behavior may be addressed through applicable university policies and course procedures.

Communication

Students are expected to communicate professionally and respectfully. Course-related questions should be submitted through Canvas. Students should review the syllabus and course materials before contacting the instructor regarding course requirements, deadlines, or grading policies.

The instructor will make reasonable efforts to respond to student inquiries within 24 hours during business days. Messages received during weekends or holidays may require additional response time.

Technology Requirements

Students must have reliable internet access and access to:

- A computer capable of running Canvas and Zoom
- A webcam and microphone

- Microsoft Office or equivalent software
- A current web browser
- Access to Canvas and university email

Students are expected to possess the basic technical skills necessary to access course materials, submit assignments, participate in online activities, and communicate through Canvas.

Course Authority Statement

The instructor reserves the right to interpret and apply course policies, grading rubrics, assignment requirements, and course procedures in a manner consistent with University policy and the course's educational objectives.

Syllabus Change Policy

The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus when necessary to support student learning, address unforeseen circumstances, or comply with university requirements. Any changes will be communicated through Canvas announcements and reflected in updated course materials.

Course Evaluation

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. The SPOT will be available at the end of the semester.