Portland State University
Graduate Program in Conflict Resolution

MASTER’S DEGREE PROGRAM IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Student Handbook

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General Information

Conflict Resolution is a discipline within the Humanities Division of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Portland State University. Our Masters Degree Program also benefits from its ties with other related disciplines across the University, including philosophy, psychology, political science, anthropology, sociology, communication, criminology, urban studies, and education. The program’s current areas of emphasis are: violence prevention, mediation, negotiation, restorative justice, nonviolent social change, policy and organizational facilitation, international and intercultural conflict resolution, dispute systems design and evaluation.

For admission to graduate study, the student’s background and preparation should reflect an ability to pursue graduate work in conflict resolution. It is not required that the applicant have an undergraduate degree in philosophy or any other specific academic discipline. Because the program is broadly interdisciplinary, students with any undergraduate degree are encouraged to apply for admission. Should the student’s preparation be deemed inadequate in certain areas, the student will be required to overcome those deficiencies through formal coursework and/or directed readings. All such work is separate from work toward the master’s degree.

All students are admitted to the program on conditional status. Regular status and retention in the graduate program requires the satisfactory completion of 12 graduate credits with a minimum grade of 3.00 in each course and evidence of satisfactory progress toward the degree.

Degree Requirements:
Master of Arts or Master of Science in Conflict Resolution

University master’s degree requirements are listed in the current Portland State University Bulletin. Specific program requirements are listed below. The distinction between the Master of Arts and the Masters in Science degree lie in the language requirement which is explained further below.

Students entering this program are expected to develop an understanding and appreciation of the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological breadth of the field and to develop expertise in the pursuit of their own particular interests in the study of conflict resolution.

In conjunction with the student’s advisor, each student will design a program based upon particular concerns within the field of conflict resolution, such as
violence prevention, mediation, negotiation, facilitation, restorative justice, nonviolent social change, international and intercultural conflict resolution, dispute systems design and evaluation.

This program will provide the student with the appropriate research and program evaluation competencies—critical, qualitative, or quantitative—to complete the capstone tasks of either a professional project or a thesis. The master’s degree program consists of a minimum of 63 credits of coursework, including 9 credits of capstone work (either a professional project or a thesis) work and 9 credits of practicum work. Each student’s program must be based upon the following courses.

1. **Required Core Courses:**
   a. CR 512 Perspectives on Conflict Resolution (4 credits)
   b. CR 513 Philosophy of Conflict Resolution (4 credits)
   c. CR 518 Psychology of Conflict Resolution (4 credits)
   d. CR 515 Negotiation and Mediation (4 credits)
   e. CR 524 Advanced Mediation (4 credits)
   f. CR 526 Intercultural Conflict (4 credits)
   g. CR 522 Thesis Preparation Seminar (1 credit)
   h. CR 510 CR Methodology (4 credits)*

   *Several departments offer courses that satisfy the methodology requirement, such as Anth 512, Eng 596, PHE 520, PS 595, Psy 597, Psy 598, Soc 592, Soc 593, Sp 521, Sp 531)*

2. **Areas of Emphasis:** All graduate students are expected to develop a theoretical competency in at least two areas of emphasis. Areas of emphasis will be designed in consultation with the student’s program advisor. Areas of emphasis currently supported in this program include: violence prevention, mediation, negotiation, facilitation, restorative justice, nonviolent social change, international conflict resolution, dispute systems design and evaluation; other areas of emphasis may be developed, according to particular student needs, in consultation with the program advisor.

3. **Emphasis Area Coursework:** Students must take a minimum of four interdisciplinary elective courses. These four courses, combined with the core courses, must support at least two emphasis areas. The program director maintains a current list of recommended interdisciplinary elective courses that support emphasis areas.
4. Elective Coursework
In addition to core requirements, all students must take a minimum of 16 credit hours in elective courses. These courses can be either within the Conflict Resolution program or from other departments. Ideally, each student will pursue classes that most meet his or her areas of interests and needs. Students should work with their advisors to make sure that electives outside of the program fulfill the necessary and appropriate conditions of the program.

5. The Conflict Resolution Practicum
Each student is required to take 300 hours of practicum during your degree program. This translates to 9 credits. Therefore each credit should be thought of as approximately 34 hours. This is a significant time commitment, so please ensure that the practicum you have planned is commensurate with the time you intend to commit, and fits with other logistical constraints in your schedule.

You may take these credits one at a time, or in groups. Some people take them all at once. You can distribute them across multiple sites, or you can take them all in one place. You may decide to accumulate practicum experience in your emphasis areas, or you may decide to explore the breadth of the field of conflict resolution and transformation. However, there are several objectives for the practicum which we hope you will keep in mind. We intend the practicum to:

1) Provide students with an opportunity to see a variety of conflict resolution techniques in practice in a variety of settings.
2) Provide students with an opportunity to practice conflict resolution skills beyond the classroom setting.
3) Create the possibility of a mentorship relationship with a conflict resolution practitioner in the community.
4) Include the community in educating and training new conflict resolution professionals.
5) Provide community partners with skilled and trained assistance in their organizations as a way of our contributing to their work in exchange for training and supervision.
6) Increase the theory/practice dialogue in the classroom and in the community.
7) Continue to build strong relationships with our partners in the community.
8) Enhance career opportunities and facilitate transitions from academic life to the world of work.
In most cases, students are encouraged to wait until their second year of study to begin practicum work and students should have taken primary core classes such as CR 512, CR 518, CR 515 and CR 524 before beginning their experience. This allows for the grounding in theory and practice in classes before setting off into the community.

Decisions about the focus and purpose of your practicum and how you distribute credits during your course should be made in consultation with your program advisor and with your onsite supervisor who will both contribute to the practicum contracts each quarter in which you take practicum credits, and will sign your registration paperwork (obtained from Stephenie).

**The Practicum Contract**

This form is available from Stephenie and requires several signatures before it is completed. You will provide a description of the place where you are working complete with contact information and URLs if there are any. Deadlines for submission of assignments are also included. When all the signatures are collected, the original goes in your file. You should make one copy for your own records.

**The Practicum Log of Hours**

You are required to keep a log of your hours on the job with brief descriptions of what you have been doing. Please ask your onsite supervisor to initial your log entries. This log should be turned in to your advisor on the last Friday of classes.

**The Practicum Seminar**

Concurrently with the practicum is a virtual seminar in which all practicum students are required to participate. The seminar will be facilitated this Fall by Rachel Hardesty. The seminar will take place on Blackboard and the seminar site (The CR Practicum Seminar) will open on Monday September 27th. All discussions will be asynchronous, but you are expected to participate at least once weekly. Please check into the site early in the first week of the quarter to review the syllabus which will clarify the expectations and topics of discussion. We are very excited to introduce this opportunity to collaborate on the integration of theory and practice, to discuss topics relevant to the learning community, and to facilitate connection for all of you while you are in your practicum placements.
The Practicum Onsite Supervisor’s Report

In order for you to have a successful practicum, you will need someone on site who is willing and able to supervise your time. Please be as clear as possible when setting up your practicum what is expected of you and of them. At the end of each term, your supervisor is expected to write a brief report summarizing and evaluating your activities at the site. This can be brief (1-2 pages) and should be sent directly to your advisor within the program.

The Practicum Reflection Paper

Students who register for 3 or more credits of Practicum are required to submit an additional reflection paper integrating core principles and concepts from the discipline of conflict resolution into their observations and experiences of practice. Your advisor will detail with you the precise expectations of you and will provide a rubric or plan for how your paper will be evaluated. Students who register for less than 3 credits will meet this requirement for integration in the practicum seminar.

6. Capstone: Professional Project or Thesis

Each student will complete a professional project or a thesis and pass a final oral examination on this work. Students must complete at least 9 credits of CR 506 Special Project or CR 503 Thesis; 9 credits maximum count toward the degree. The project/thesis advisor and project/thesis committee will be selected, in consultation with the program advisor. Prior to beginning work on the project or thesis, all students will be required to take the Thesis Preparation Seminar (which also prepares students to work on Projects where they demonstrate proficiency in relevant theories and research methodology In our experience, the professional project is a more suitable capstone for those intending to find employment in the field of conflict resolution after graduating from the program. The thesis may be of more interest to those who are interested in an academic career to be furthered through a PhD program. However, there are faculty members in our department who have PhDs who did not do theses and so these are not necessarily a pre-requisite to successful applications to programs. Your advisor is an important resource as you decide which capstone to do and the thesis preparation seminar provides an opportunity for you to fully explore your options, the process and procedures involved with each choice, and the implications for your program plan.
Library Resources

The study of conflict resolution is interdisciplinary, drawing on methods and theories from a variety of humanistic and social science disciplines. It is a good idea early in the program to visit the areas in the library devoted to education, humanities, social science, and business. The library designates specialists to support research in each department. Our specialist is Joan Pettit, she can be reached through http://library.pdx.edu/appointments.html. The Library offers orientations at the beginning of each term. It's important to become familiar with the journals, reference work, and general layout of each early, and consult them frequently. A list of relevant journals and their location in the library are:

PERIODICALS RELEVANT TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>CALL NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dispute Resolution Journal</td>
<td>KF 9085.A15A7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Conciliation Courts Review</td>
<td>KF 531.A3 C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>GN 496.I15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Journal of Conflict Management</td>
<td>HD 42.I57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>JX 1901.J6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Social Issues</td>
<td>HN 51 J6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law and Social Review</td>
<td>HM 34.A1L3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation Quarterly</td>
<td>KF 531.A3 M4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation Journal</td>
<td>BF 637.N4N414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace and Change</td>
<td>JX 1901.P248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arbitration Journal</td>
<td>KF 9085.A15A7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, the library has electronic subscriptions to a number of journals which can be accessed online.

**Transfer Credit**

Students should not assume that courses at the graduate level taken prior to formal admission to our Department’s program will be included in their degree program. There is a specific form (GO-21, see [http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_forms.php](http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_forms.php)) that must be completed for the transfer of credit. This form must be filed with the Office of Graduate Studies no later than the end of the term following the term of admission to the program. A maximum of 21 hours of transfer credit may be counted toward the degree, subject to the approval of the student’s advisor.

**Program Advisor**

Core program faculty serve as program advisors for all candidates admitted to the Conflict Resolution Graduate Program. An advisor is assigned to each student and assists the student in deciding on the appropriate courses to take based on program requirements, area of interest and anticipated capstone work. The Program Advisor also assists the student in completing required forms according to prescribed deadlines. Stephenie Jahnke is the most helpful resource on timelines and required paperwork. You should always start with her. Students may elect to work with a different advisor if there is another faculty member whose interests and abilities are more suited to their own. Program advisors may or may not serve as the capstone chair for their advisees. A capstone chair is someone chosen specifically by the student to work closely with on matters relating to the final capstone work. To simplify things, once this person is chosen, they become the student’s program advisor also. Change is common at this stage of the program, so don’t worry about hurting feelings by suggesting a shift. Once the capstone advisor has been chosen, students are responsible for ensuring that Stephenie Jahnke is notified of the change.

**Conditional Status**

All students are admitted to the graduate degree program on a "conditional" basis. See the current PSU Bulletin (catalogue) for a complete description of this status. Each spring, the Core faculty will review the progress of each student who is still on "conditional" status and initiate the change of status (Form GO-7, see [http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_forms.php](http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_forms.php)) for all students who are deemed to be making satisfactory progress. Students will be informed of the faculty’s action
within two weeks after the review is completed; a student not advanced to "regular" status is expected to meet with the Program Advisor to discuss needed remedial action within one month of notification.

**Ongoing Satisfactory Progress Evaluations**

Annually, students and program advisors will meet to review unofficial transcripts to evaluate satisfactory progress. Satisfactory progress is defined

**Satisfactory Progress**

Graduate students in Portland State University’s Graduate Program in Conflict Resolution are required to make satisfactory progress towards their degree or they may be dropped from the program. The following are conditions for satisfactory progress.

1. Students will be registered for each term of the academic year following their admission to the program, unless:
   a. They defer their start of the program to a later date.
   b. They file a request for a leave of absence with an explanation and a term they will be returning. This request may be submitted by email. The faculty will consider it in light of other indications of satisfactory progress. The Program Director will notify students by email of either an approval or disapproval of their request.

2. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA throughout the program. Students’ GPA must not fall below a 2.67 for any term. Students who do not meet these standards will be placed on academic probation by the Office of Graduate Studies.

3. A grade of C+ or below in a CR core course is not a passing grade for that course, and means that the student is not making satisfactory progress in the CR program.

4. Students who leave an incomplete on their transcript past the agreed deadline for completion of the work—or a year, whichever comes first, are not making satisfactory progress.

5. Students with a pattern of Xs or Ws on their transcripts must make an adequate and timely explanation in writing about the reasons for these grades.
6. Every professional project or thesis credit must have a student contract that specifies the work to be done during the term. Students must be making appropriate progress on their practicum and professional project or thesis. Registering for practicum, project, or thesis hours and not making progress on these activities is unsatisfactory progress.

7. Admitted CR students, who have taken courses that do not meet any of the CR Master’s Degree requirements for two consecutive terms are not making satisfactory progress. Courses offered outside of the CR program to be used as CR electives must be approved by the student’s primary advisor. This restriction does not apply to students in a double masters program.

8. Students must abide by all of the requirements of PSU’s Office of Graduate Studies and Research, and the Student Conduct Code.

Language Requirement (MA Students only)

An MA degree requires proficiency in a foreign language. Those students seeking an MA degree will arrange with the Foreign Language Department for the language proficiency examination. The university language requirement must be satisfied prior to the final term of work. See the current PSU bulletin

Principles of the Program

All students are admitted with the understanding that they will conduct themselves in a manner congruent with the principles of the conflict resolution program. If there are conflicts or difficulties that arise between students or between a student and faculty member, students are expected to handle these situations in an appropriate, ethical, respectful and constructive manner. Students who behave in ways that are contrary to the values of the program could jeopardize their enrollment in our program.

Removal from the Program

Students may be removed from the program for violations of Portland State’s Student Conduct Code. Students may also be removed from the program if they are not actively enrolled or who have not had a petition for a leave of absence approved by the program, or who are in some other way not making satisfactory
progress. Students who have been removed from the program must formally reapply to the program, and be approved by the program admissions committee, in order to be reaccepted as an active student.

**General Reminders for Graduate Students**

1. As a graduate student, it is your responsibility to attend advising sessions each term with your assigned advisor. *Ultimately, it is the student’s responsibility to take care of the many details required to successfully complete all of the requirements of your graduate program.*

2. Each graduate student must use and maintain her/his assigned pdx.edu email address. Program faculty and staff will be contacting you regularly at this address, and it is the student’s responsibility to read and respond appropriately to the information provided.

3. Each graduate student must review her/his PSU transcript each term to make sure that it is accurate and that incompletes are completed before they expire one year after the end of the term of the course.

4. Each graduate student must make sure that all required forms are properly filed, and deadlines respected, from both the program and the office of Graduate Studies and Research.

5. Computer problems, though annoying, are not an excuse for incomplete registrations or not completing of any of the requirements for the program or any individual course. PSU technical support or campus computers are available to support computer work in the event of your personal computer problems.

6. If you are having difficulty completing any of the requirements of your program, you must contact your program advisor or, in an emergency, program staff.

7. If you must miss a term or more of work (not counting summer session), you must file a letter or email with the program, explaining how long you will need a leave of absence. Without such documentation, we will drop you from the program—and you will have to reapply for reentry, competing against new student applicants.