

**AECO 4020.090/5050.090**  
**Spring 2009 Course Syllabus**

**Workplace Dispute Resolution**

**Dave Renfro, Instructor**

***Class Location***

UNT Dallas  
Room 248

***Office Hours***

Saturdays at 6:00  
by Appointment

***Class Meeting Times***

Friday (5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.): 1/23  
Saturdays (8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.): 1/24; 2/7; 2/21; and 3/7

***Course Objectives***

This course presents an overview of the dynamics of workplace conflict and the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) practices in addressing such conflict in the workplace. It has been estimated that as much as 25 percent of a manager's time is devoted to activities related to interpersonal conflict. This conflict arises from the application of, and compliance with, statutory employee-management issues such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Pregnancy Disability Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Litigating these conflicts is costly and time consuming for employers and employees alike. In addition, dealing effectively with conflict among workers and between employees and non-employees gains importance as incidents of workplace violence have escalated over the past several years.

Students will be introduced to a variety of ADR procedures including arbitration, mediation, interventions, mini-trials, neutral fact-finding, panel review, and other alternatives to litigation-based conflict resolution. Trends in the use of ADR procedures in private, public and non-profit organizations will be reviewed as well as discussion of legal and ethical considerations in the use of ADR.

Students successfully completing this course will have a broad understanding of the history of ADR as it has evolved in the American workplace, the political and cultural implications impacting employers, employees, taxpayers and the public at large. In addition, students will learn the benefits and limitations of using ADR to address both interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict in the workplace. Students will also gain experience in selected ADR methods through role-playing exercises and case study examinations.

## ***Course Requirements***

**Text for the course** is RESOLVING CONFLICTS AT WORK (Revised Edition): Eight Strategies for Everyone on the Job by Kenneth Cloke and Joan Goldsmith (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000, ISBN 13-978-0-7879-8024-5 or ISBN 10-0-7879-8024-2).

**Readings for the course** include a compendium of articles from professional journals and other materials selected from organizations such as the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, the American Arbitration Association, or from other sources listed on the UNT web site or the Internet via search for ADR and ADR-related topics. In addition, students will select, read and report on at least one book from a list of authorized books dealing with workplace conflict and/or resolution.

**Lectures during the course** presented by the instructor and/or selected guest speakers will provide theoretical and practical information regarding the use of ADR methods. Students are expected to interact with both the instructor and guest presenters regarding experiences with ADR methodologies being discussed.

**Case studies and role-playing** will be important to students in evaluating applicable methodology for ADR use in addressing conflict in the workplace. Assignments of case studies and role-playing will be as homework or in-class.

## ***Grading Procedure***

Grades will be determined according to the following weights:

In-class preparation and interaction	20%
Final exam	40%
Book analysis and perspective	<u>40%</u>
Total	100%

## ***Classroom Expectations***

By its very nature, this class provides significant opportunity for students to engage one another in class discussion and/or role-playing exercises. Students are expected to follow the discussion topics and/or role descriptions furnished with assignments and to maintain decorum and respect in all class sessions, as well as to further the educational experiences of all concerned.

A few common courtesies will make our class time more pleasant:

- No beepers or cellular phone interruptions
- No sleeping
- No talking while others have the floor
- No reading or writing pertaining to other endeavors or courses

## *ADA Accommodation*

If you require accommodation for a special need, you must notify the instructor prior to the second weekend class meeting. If you have questions about an accommodation, please see the ADA advisor for the Institute of Applied Economics.

## *Topics*

- Dynamics of Workplace Conflict
  - Political impact on the workplace
  - Cultural impact on the workplace
  - Dynamics and Origins of Workplace Conflict
  - Approaches to Workplace Conflict
  
- ADR Procedures, Uses and Limitations
  - ◇ Arbitration
  - ◇ Mediation
  - ◇ Negotiations
  - ◇ Interventions
  
- Workplace Conflict Resolution Methodologies and Techniques
  - ◇ Understanding workplace conflict
  - ◇ Individual, collective and organizational responses to conflict
  - ◇ Defining issues in conflict
  - ◇ Selecting appropriate responses and approaches

## *Professional Certificate*

In conjunction with successful completion of AECO 4000, 4120, and 4420, this course can be used as the elective to receive the Professional ADR Certificate offered by the Institute of Applied Economics. Requests for the certificate **must be made in writing** and after grades for the semester have been issued. Request forms are available from the Institute of Applied Economics office in Chilton Hall, Room 263, or via the Internet at <http://www.unt.edu/aeco/adrstudies.htm>

**This syllabus is subject to minor change due to possible scheduling conflicts or special needs and considerations of the class.**

## ***APPROVED READING LIST***

1. PIGS AT THE TROUGH: How Corporate Greed and Political Corruption Are Undermining America by Ariana Huffington (Crown Publishers, New York, New York, 2003; ISBN 1-4000-4771-4)
2. NICKEL AND DIMED: On (Not) Getting By in America by Barbara Ehrenreich (Henry Holt and Company, New York, New York, 2001; ISBN 0-8050-6389-7)B
3. THE POLITICS OF RICH AND POOR: Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath by Kevin Phillips (Random House, New York, New York, 1990; ISBN 0-394-55954-1)
4. WEALTH AND DEMOCRACY: A Political History of the American Rich by Kevin Phillips (Broadway Books, NY, NY, 2002; ISBN 0-7679-0534-2)
5. FAST FOOD NATION: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal by Eric Schlosser [New York Times Bestseller]; (Perennial, Harper Collins Publishers, 2002; ISBN 0-06-093845-5)
6. THE FUTURE OF SUCCESS: Working and Living in the New Economy by Robert Reich (Vintage Books, NY, NY, 2000; ISBN 0-375-41112-7)
7. WHITE-COLLAR SWEATSHOP: The Deterioration of Work and Its Rewards in Corporate America by Jill Andresky Fraser (W.W. Norton & Company, New York, New York, 2001; ISBN 0-393-04829-2)
8. RADICAL EVOLUTION: The Promise and Peril of Enhancing Our Minds, Our Bodies – and What It Means To Be Human by Joel Garreau (Doubleday, New York, New York, 2004, ISBN 0-385-50965-0)
9. THE THIRD SIDE: Why We Fight and How We Can Stop by William Ury (Penguin Books, New York, New York, 2000, ISBN [hardcover] 0-670-88758-7; [paperback] 0-14-02.9634-4)
10. MONEY AND THE MEANING OF LIFE by Jacob Needleman (Doubleday Books, New York, New York, 1991, ISBN 0-385-26242-6)
11. LEADING THROUGH CONFLICT: How Successful Leaders Transform Differences into Opportunities by Mark Gerzon (Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, 2006 (ISBN 1-59139-919-X)
12. EMPIRE OF DEBT: The Rise of an Epic Financial Crisis by Bill Bonner and Addison Wiggin (John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NY, 2006, ISBN 13: 978-0-47173902-9 and/or 10: 0-471-73902-2)
13. LET THEM IN: The Case for Open Borders by Jason L. Riley (Gotham Books, NY, 2008, ISBN 978-1-592-40349-3)

**\*Other books may be added by the instructor or added by students with instructor's approval.**