

Cooperation, Competition, and Conflict

CUSP 115 A

Winter 2010
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 AM – 1:05 PM
UW1 021

Instructor: Nives Dolšak, Associate Professor
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:45 -10:45 AM, and by appointment
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Course Description

A number of pressing current problems, including, but not limited to maximization of group productivity, consumer protection, health care provision, economic development, budget allocation, democracy, protection of human rights, sustainable development, public education, international trade, international and ethnic conflict, as well as national security depend on our ability to cooperate, compete fairly, and resolve conflict. Under some conditions, humans manage to cooperate to foster the common good even though this may not be in their individual interest. This course develops an interdisciplinary approach to examine factors promoting cooperation, including altruism, natural selection, reciprocity, retaliation, power relationships, norms, rules, culture, social and psychological dynamics. While cooperation is often stereotyped as something good, competition and conflict are often seen as negative social phenomena. However, they can lead to development of skills, clarification of preferences and prioritization of goals, strengthening of group identity, and development of compromise. This course examines what mechanisms can be developed to foster cooperation and the positive aspects of competition and conflict while mitigating the negative ones.

Course Objectives

The goal of this discovery core course is to provide an introduction to interdisciplinary approach to studying social phenomena.

To accomplish this broad goal, the course will help students develop skills applicable across areas of social inquiry and **problem solving** to:

- (1) Employ theoretical insights from a number of academic disciplines (biology, economics, management, psychology, and political science) to foster interdisciplinary learning;
- (2) Productively engage in a collaborative research effort, examine its dynamics, identify potential barriers to achieving success in a team, and propose solutions;
- (3) Recognize patterns of behavior across social dilemma issues and levels of organization;
- (4) Apply multiple theoretical perspectives to identify the key factors impacting cooperation or lack thereof;

- (5) Identify interests of stakeholders using theoretical literature from a variety of disciplines, library sources and participatory research.

In addition to problem solving skills, students will develop academic **research and presentation skills** to:

- (6) Write clearly and concisely about social dilemmas, starting from identification of the problem, articulation of the thesis, presentation of the evidence, and proposal of a solution;
- (7) Productively use electronic academic sources of information; and
- (8) Make effective oral presentations.

Readings

Readings will range between 50-70 pages a week. Readings will comprise mostly of journal articles and book chapters. Readings will be accessible through the Electronic Reserves at UWB/CCC Library. Students are expected to read all required readings **prior** to the class for which they are assigned and come prepared to summarize, evaluate, and apply them.

Assignments, Evaluation, and Grading

Evaluation and Grading

Your work in this class will be evaluated based on individual assignments and a group project. See the table below for a relative weight of each assignment. You will find detailed instructions for each assignment on the Blackboard site for this class. Please submit a hard copy of your assignment at the beginning of the class on the due date.

Assignment		Points	Due in class
Individual Assignments	Group project assessment (two reports; 10 points each)	20	February 9 th and March 11 th
	Newspaper article in-class report	10	Sign-up on BB.
	Unannounced quizzes	20	
	Group Project Contribution and Management (Blackboard entries)	5	
	Final exam	30	March 16 th
Group Assignments	Draft	5	January 19 th
	Written report (15 points individual grade; 5 points group grade)	20	March 9 th
	Oral presentation	10	March 9 th or March 11 th
TOTAL		120	

Style Manual

American psychological association publication manual (6th ed.). (2009). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. (available at the UWB/CCC library *writing* reference desk-library use only).

Short APA citation guides were prepared by the UWB Writing Center.

<http://www.uwb.edu/getattachment/writingcenter/resources/citingsources/apa/apahandout.pdf>

Please remember to include your name and page numbers on all assignments.

Late Submission Policy

I will not accept late assignments. If you are not able to meet the deadline for medical reasons, please provide documentation from your physician indicating the duration of the incapacitation.

Students with Disabilities

If you believe that you have a disability and would like academic accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services at 425.352.5307, 425.352.5303 TDD, 425.352.3581 FAX, or at dss@uwb.edu. They will be happy to provide assistance. You will need to provide documentation of your disability as part of their review process.

Academic Integrity

I expect students to uphold the highest standards of academic conduct pursuant to the University of Washington Student Conduct Code, Section WAC 478-120-020-2(a). I expect that you are familiar with and adhere to the rules regulating academic conduct as outlined *UWB General Catalog* and the policy statements at <http://www.uwb.edu/academic/policies/academic-conduct>. The library also has an extremely useful website with resources at www.uwb.edu/library/guides/research/plagiarism.html. You are responsible for knowing what constitutes a violation of the University of Washington Student Code, and you will be held responsible for any such violations whether they were intentional or not.

Online Course Communication and File Exchange

I will use Blackboard site to post my announcements, share course documents/assignment instructions with you, administer the exam, post grades, and e-mail you. You will also use Blackboard to organize your collaborative, group projects. To be able to access the CUSP 115 Blackboard site (<http://bb.uwb.edu>), you will first have to enroll in this class on the UWB blackboard site. The guidelines on how to enroll in a Blackboard site are appended at the end of this syllabus. Please also read the note about Blackboard e-mails in the same Appendix. If you have any problems accessing Blackboard site, contact the UWB Help desk at IT@uwb.edu or at 425-352-3456.

Course Outline

Week 1

What to expect from this course and how it links to freshmen scholarship?

January 5, 2010

No readings assigned for this class.

January 7, 2010

Dreams from My Father by Barack Obama.

University of Washington Common Book.

Though you have most likely read the entire book, please re-read the chapters on the Electronic Reserve.

Week 2

The Problem of Cooperation and Competition

Readings and discussions this week will provide the essential background information for understanding two key issues related to cooperation and competition. First, there is the issue of interdependence in accomplishing a common goal. For example, ensuring national security (nuclear non-proliferation, health care, high quality public education, continuous innovation) requires action of a number of individuals (communities, States, countries, firms). No one individual, no matter how generous her/his contribution to the common good is, can provide it by herself/himself. Cooperation is, therefore, essential for provision of certain goods and services in a society. Second, there is the issue of zero-sum games, an issue of dividing any scarce resource (a pie, an organizational or family budget, water from a river in an arid area, or fish stocks in Puget Sound) among all stakeholders that claim they have the right to a share. Clearly, stakeholders' intent to claim a share for themselves is in conflict with other stakeholders' claim to a share.

January 12, 2010

Axelrod, Robert. *The Evolution of Cooperation*, pp. 3-24; 27-39.

Hardin, Garret. 1968. *The Tragedy of the Commons*. *Science*, 162 (3859): 1243-1248.

Also available at <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/162/3859/1243>

January 14, 2010

Peter Kollock. 1998. "Social Dilemmas: The Anatomy of cooperation." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24:183:214.

Week 3

The Nature

Readings and discussions this week will examine non-human animal behavior to explore the impacts nature has on the occurrence of cooperation and conflict. In particular, we will study what factors shape an individual's interaction with others within the species. These factors include, but are not limited to competition for resources, kin selection, and reciprocal altruism.

January 19, 2010 :

Dugatkin, Lee Alan. 1997. "The Evolution of Cooperation." *Bioscience* 47:6, 355-362.

Infrastructure and Technologies Fostering Cooperation and causing Increased Competition

Modern technologies enable communication across distances and at speed not experienced before. This enables creation of new communities over the internet that can engage in a variety of activities, including production, such as open-source software. The question then is what factors motivate such involvement. Further, these technologies also enable higher involvement in democratic governance through faster mobilization of interests. On the other hand, these technologies enable competition among firms to extend across continents.

January 21, 2010 :

Ghosh, Rishab Aiyer. 2002. "Understanding Free Software Developers: Findings from the FLOSS Study." Available electronically at MERIT/Institute of Infonomics, University of Maastricht at <http://www.infonomics.nl/FLOSS/papers/ghosh-2005.pdf>
Healy, Kieran. 2002. "What's New for Culture in the New Economy?" *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*. 32(2): 86-104.

Week 4

Values, Interests, Preferences, Perceptions

Readings and discussions this week will examine how preferences impact individuals' behavior. Students will identify circumstances in which values and interests, including self-interest, fairness, altruism and risk-aversion guided their behavior. We will then move from an individual to understand how interactions among individuals may impact the behavior. These interactions will include, for example, the role of culture, understood as both, a set of values (individualist vs. collectivist cultures) as well as well as art; the role of trust as a mechanism for reducing uncertainty about behavior of others involved in a cooperative effort; and the role of communication among individuals.

January 26, 2010 :

Weber, Mark J, Shirli Kopelman, and David Messick. 2004. "A conceptual Review of Decision Making in Social Dilemmas: Applying a Logic of Appropriateness." *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 8 (3): 281-307.

January 28, 2010 :

Knack, Stephen and Philip Keefer. 1997. "Does Social Capital have an Economic Payoff? A Cross-Country Investigation." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112 (4): 1251-1288.

Week 5

Firms and Markets

This week, we will move from an individual to a group of individuals who engage in a cooperative effort with a particular goal of generating wealth. Cooperation among these individuals is essential for creation of a joint product to be sold in a market. Each individual was hired to participate in this effort because of a set of unique skills she/he

possesses. However, even in this situation of contractually negotiated input of each individual, some are still able to free-ride on the efforts of others. Business managers have developed a set of mechanisms to address these problems. The discussion this week will explore whether, and if so, how these mechanisms could be adapted in other social choice dilemma settings. Further, success of such economic exchange is based on freely functioning markets. However, groups with power can attempt to change the rules of a free-functioning market to further their self-interests. As opposed to other areas of social interaction, cooperation in markets is perceived to be negative whereas competition is seen as a positive force.

February 2, 2010 :

Prendergast, Candice. 1999. "The Provision of Incentives in Firms." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 37 (4):7-63.

February 4, 2010 :

Child, John and David Faulkner. "Chapter 4: Motives" in *Strategies of Co-operation: Managing Alliances, Networks, and Joint Ventures*.

Viscusi, W. Kip, Joseph E. Harrington, and John M. Vernon. 2005. "Introduction to Antitrust." *Economics of Regulation and Antitrust*.

Week 6:

Institutions (Rules)

This week's readings and discussions will address the impact of rules on the likelihood of cooperation, competition, and conflict. Rules prescribe what behavior is allowed or forbidden. One of the key rules in any society is the rule regulating property ownership. Private property regime gives the owner an almost un-restrained right to enjoy the property. The question then is what can be done when the enjoyment of one's private property is in conflict with another individual's enjoyment of her private property and/or in conflict with the benefit of the entire society. Again, rules are essential to understand whose interest will count in resolving such conflict. When rules are perceived to be unfair, a group of individuals may cooperate in an effort to change the rules. Most contemporary societies have clearly outlined processes to be followed for changing rules.

February 9, 2010 :

Demsetz, Harold. 2002. "Ownership and the Externality Problem." In *Property Rights: Cooperation, Conflict, and Law*, Terry L. Anderson and Fred S. McChesney, eds. Princeton University Press. Pp. 282-300.

February 11, 2010 :

Fischel, William A. 2002. "Public Goods and Property Rights: Of Coase, Tiebout, and Just Compensation." In *Property Rights: Cooperation, Conflict, and Law*, Terry L. Anderson and Fred S. McChesney, eds. Princeton University Press. Pp. 343-364.

Week 7:

Power and Resources

Asymmetry of power has historically been seen as the most important factor contributing to absence of a major international conflict during the second half of the 20th century. Those who have resources can offer negative (threat) and positive (inducements) incentives to others to cooperate. On the other hand, conflict often erupts when individuals and societies lack the most essential resources. This week's readings and discussions will examine the seemingly contradictory impact of power and resources on cooperation and conflict.

February 16, 2010:

Hardy, Cynthia and Nelson Phillips. 1998. "Strategies of Engagement: Lessons from the Critical Examination of Collaboration and Conflict in an Interorganizational Domain." *Organization Science*, 9(2):217-230.

Hauge, Wenche and Tanja Ellingsen. 1998. "Beyond Environmental Scarcity: Causal Pathways to Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research*, 35(3):299-317.

February 18, 2010:

Group Research Project. No readings assigned for this class session.

Week 8

Identity

This week's readings and discussion will examine the role of identity in fostering cooperation and leading to conflict within groups and across groups. We will examine sources of civil wars and international conflict.

February 23, 2010 :

Gagnon, V.P., Jr. 1995. "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict." *International Security* 19(3) (Winter 1994/95), pp. 130-166.

February 25, 2010 :

Rothman, Jay and Marie L. Olson. 2001. "From Interests to Identities: Toward a New Emphasis in Interactive Conflict Resolution." *Journal of Peace Research*, 38(3):289-305.

Week 9

Conflict Resolution

Based on our learning in week 4 (the role of interests), week 6 (the role of rules regulating interactions among humans and exchanges in the market), and 7 (the role of power), this week's readings and discussions will first identify sources of conflict and measure the extent of conflict. Once the issues in conflict are quantified, negotiation strategies can be developed. We will examine how interpersonal skills, such as communication, relationship and trust building can be used to negotiate a solution.

March 2, 2010 :

Fisher, Roland J. 2000. "Chapter 8: " In *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, Deutsch, M. and Coleman P (eds). Jossey-Bass.

March 4, 2010 :

Weitzman, Eben A. and Patricia Flynn Weitzman. 2000. "Chapter 9: Problem Solving and Decision Making in Conflict Resolution." In *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, Deutsch, M. and Coleman P (eds). Jossey-Bass.

Week 10:

Student Conference

Presentation of Students' Group Research Projects

Groups will sign-up for presentation on Blackboard in advance. We will have presentations on March 9th and March 11th.

Week 11:

Final Exam: March 16th, during regular class time; the exam classroom will be assigned later.

Blackboard Course Sites: Enrolling and Receiving e-mail

Instructions for students who have not used Blackboard before and are enrolling as a new Blackboard user:

(Note: enrolling in a Blackboard course is a completely separate activity from student registration or the MyUW account)

1. Go to Blackboard at <http://bb.uwb.edu>.
 2. Click on the **Create Account** button
 3. Fill in only the information with the red asterisk. We recommend that your user ID be the same as your UW NetID. Click on the **Submit** button at the bottom of the page and then click on **OK**.
 4. Click on the **Courses** tab. To find your course, type the course ID in the **Course Search** box. Scroll down the page to get to the title of your course.
 5. Click on the **Enroll** button on the right side of your course. Click on the **Submit** button at the bottom of the screen and then on **OK**.
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Instructions for students who have used Blackboard before and already have an account:

1. Go to Blackboard at <http://bb.uwb.edu>
 2. Click on the **Login** button and put in the same login and password you had previously. If you don't remember your password, you can click on the **Forgot your password?** link to have your password emailed to you.
 3. Click on the **Courses** Tab. To find your course, type the course ID in the **Course Search** box. Scroll down the page to get to the title of your course.
 4. Click on the **Enroll** button on the right side of your course. Click on the **Submit** button at the bottom of the screen and then on **OK**.
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Macintosh users - Blackboard 6 Note: Those using an Apple computer with OS 9 or older will not have access to the Virtual Classroom (chat), though the text-only chat called Lightweight chat is available for your use. To use the lightweight chat feature, you will need to download the patch at <http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=120209>. Macintosh computers using OS 10.2 can use the Virtual Classroom.

PC users - Blackboard 6 Note: A java patch will be automatically installed the first time you access the Virtual Classroom.

E-mails from Blackboard:

Email systems (i.e. Hotmail, Yahoo, Comcast, etc.) may label Blackboard mail as junk, and send it to your junk or bulk mail folders. If this happens, you can designate that emails sent through Blackboard not go into your junk folders. For instance in Yahoo, if you find an email an instructor in the Bulk folder, you need to open the email and press the "Not Spam" button, and future emails will go into the regular inbox.

The best way for you to be sure you are getting all of your Blackboard email as well as any other mail coming from UW Bothell is to avoid forwarding your u.washington.edu mail. If you have difficulties with the above email issues, please contact the IS help desk at helpdesk@uwb.edu or 425-352-5275.