**PRELIMINARY COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Course Title:** Leadership and Conflict Management  
**Course Code:** BUS 229  
**Quarter:** Fall 2015  
**Instructor Name:** John Steinhart  
**Course Schedule:** Five Thursdays (7:00 – 9:00 pm), Sept. 24 through Oct. 29  
[No class on Oct 15th]

**Required Text:** None  
I will provide a reading list for more in-depth study of topics covered in class. I will also bring books to class that students may check out provided they return them the following week, thus allowing all students access to these materials. In addition, throughout the course I will email relevant articles on the topics we are discussing in class.

**Grade Options and Requirements:**

**No Grade Requested (NGR):** Just show up for class.

**Credit/No Credit:** Students answer a short version of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) questionnaire and receive a confidential assessment. We will discuss in class how Myers Briggs can be used to understand and adapt to differences in communication styles. (All students will be offered the questionnaire whether or not you take the course for credit.) An additional requirement for Credit is the submission of a one- to two-page description of a conflict situation that you have experienced or are currently engaged in. Please submit these short papers in the first two weeks, as I will select some of these for discussion and analysis in class sessions while keeping the student’s identity and organizational affiliation anonymous.

**Letter Grade:** Students must complete the requirements for Credit (see above) AND use concepts from the course to analyze a conflict situation you have recently or are currently involved in and describe how you might approach resolving or managing the conflict going forward. This paper, including the problem description, should be 3 to 5 pages in length and is due Friday October 23 so that we can discuss some of these papers in the final class meeting. Confidentiality of the author and organizational affiliation, if requested, will be honored.
Weekly Outline

**Session 1: Understanding Conflict; Leadership Styles; Conflict Theory**

Introductory concepts
- Definitions of conflict
- Cognitive versus affective conflict
- Recognizing the signs of conflict
- Alternative approaches to conflict
- Default and dysfunctional modes of handling conflict
- Leadership styles that stimulate and diminish conflict
- Special cases: the bully, the narcissist, and the passive-aggressive

Theoretical framework
- Historical perspective on conflict
- The Adversarial System
- Game Theory and the Prisoner's Dilemma

**Session 2: Underlying Issues and Problems in Conflict Situations**

- Organizational versus interpersonal conflicts
- Knowing what outcome you want
- Motivational factors
- Getting to shared goals
- Identifying the real issues
- Cognitive traps and biases
- Short case studies and/or examples

**Session 3: Emotions/Listening and Communication Skills**

Role of emotions in conflict situations
- How the brain works--limbic system and fight/flight response
- Understanding one’s own emotions
- Masking and managing emotions
- Empathy and emotional intelligence

Listening and communications skills
- Common listening problems
- Settings and body language
- Open ended questions
- Reflective listening, paraphrasing, summarizing techniques
- Hearing the other party’s perception
- Understanding and incorporating differences
Session 4: Dealing with Conflict

Methodology
- Leadership strategies for overcoming conflicts and impasses
- Concession, compromise and cooperation
- Identifying and choosing the best options
- Reaching agreement and getting closure
- Establishing accountability

Special Considerations
- Hierarchies, bureaucracies, and risk-averse cultures
- Gender and conflict
- Cultural influences
- Use of third party facilitators/arbitrators
- Devils advocates and breaking down “groupthink” behavior
- Short case studies and/or examples

Session 5: Putting It All Together

- Discussion of examples/problems presented by students
- Review of conflict management model and role of leaders
- Preventing conflicts and conflict escalation