

**MBA – Focusing on Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology Management**

## **Syllabus**

### **Conflict Resolution**

Semester 2/2024-2025

Room 527

March 25 & 30, April 6

16:00–20.30

Teaching Staff:

Instructor: Alla Stremovskaya, PhD [allas@technion.ac.il](mailto:allas@technion.ac.il)

Office Hours: By appointment.

Virtual Office Hours: Sundays and Tuesdays 10:00–12:00

Credits: 1

Study hours per week 1: 9

Study hours per week 2: 4.5

### **Course Goals and Description**

#### Course Goals

- To explore organizational conflict taxonomy
- To analyze conflict stages and models
- To identify key strategies for conflict prevention, reduction, and resolution
- To develop constructive conflict communication skills
- To enhance awareness of mediation in organizational disputes
- To determine specifics of individual and emotional factors affecting conflict management in business
- To identify the role of digitalization in conflict management

The course consists of four main blocks. The initial section offers a concise overview of the various classifications of conflict in a business context, categorized by its level, participants, status and power imbalances, sources, conditions, domain, and effect. Additionally, it covers the primary

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stages of the conflict process, existing conflict models, and potential degree of conflict intensity. The main focus is on conflicts within organizational settings.

The second part is dedicated to the essential strategies for conflict prevention and resolution in business, assessing the suitability of specific conflict management styles for various situations. It emphasizes the importance of communication skills in negotiation, such as effective questioning and responding techniques, reflective listening, overcoming communication barriers, addressing the impact of status inequality on communication, handling constructive criticism, and building trust through communication.

The third part delves into mediation as one of the forms of third-party involvement, its types, appropriateness in labour disputes and main stages. In addition, forms of managerial intervention in employee conflicts are addressed.

The last part covers potential individual, emotional and cultural factors of conflict management style as well as the role of digitalization in conflict management.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The course will help to develop students' communication and conflict prevention, reduction and resolution skills in various organizational and digital settings.

### **Course Content/Topics**

- Introduction
- Main perspectives on the organizational conflict, its taxonomy and sources
- Main stages of a conflict process and conflict analysis models
- Conflict prevention, reduction and resolution strategies
- Necessary conflict resolution communication skills
- Negotiation as a conflict resolution tool
- Mediation as one of the forms of third-party participation in organizational conflict management
- Potential impact of the personality traits, emotional and cultural factors on conflicts and their resolution
- Digitalization and conflict management
- Main conclusions of the course

### **Assignments and Grading Procedures**

The course combines lectures with various activities, such as role-plays and case studies. The final assignment involves a case analysis in written form, where students will need to apply their knowledge gained from the course.

Students will be graded based on their class participation, degree of their involvement in doing all the activities and discussion, as well as the final assignment.

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Grading

1–100

**Class participation:** max. 60%

**Final assignment:** max. 40%

**Total:** 100%

The final assignment for this course will take the form of a case study, which is to be submitted online via the Moodle course webpage. The submission deadline for the final paper is **Wednesday, April 30, 2025, at 23:59 (UTC+2)**. The final paper is an individual assignment. For this assignment, students will need to choose one of the given cases and analyze it in relation to the conceptual and theoretical discussion in the course. The length of a final paper should not exceed 500 words (not including cover page, endnotes, and bibliography). Papers should be written in English in Calibri font, 12 pt, double-spaced, and standard width margins. Students may not consult each other on how to approach the case study. However, students are permitted to share class notes.

Final assignments are to be submitted electronically via the Moodle class website by the deadline noted above. Late submission policies apply. There is a 5% reduction for each 48-hour period of late submission.

**Criteria for the final assignment grading:**

Clarity of analysis	10
Use of the conflict resolution concepts	10
Writing style and correct referencing	10
Logic	5
Adherence to all the guidelines (text limitation, formatting, and bibliography)	5

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### Course Schedule

March 25, 2025

16:00-16:45	Introduction. Main perspectives on the organizational conflict, its levels, taxonomy (Munduate, Medina, & Euwema, 2022; Nambisan & Baron, 2021; Rahim, 2023; Robbins, 2024) and sources (Englund & Bucero, 2019; Sims, 2021)
16:45–17:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Activity: Identifying typical responses to workplace conflicts (Jameson, 2023)</li> <li>➤ Case study: New employee at the Credit Union (Rahim, 2023)</li> </ul>
17:30–17:45	Break
17:45–18:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Main stages of a conflict process (Robbins, 2024)</li> <li>➤ Conflict analysis models (Scharlatt, 2016; Furlong, 2020)</li> </ul>
18:15–19:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Interest-based, rights-based and power-based processes (Furlong, 2020)</li> <li>➤ Case study: The Greek Social Club (Furlong, 2020)</li> </ul>
19:00–19:15	Break
19:15–20:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Conflict prevention and reduction strategies (Piercy, 2019)</li> <li>➤ Conflict resolution strategies (Thomas Kilman conflict modes) (Robbins, 2024)</li> <li>➤ Advantages and disadvantages of different conflict management styles (Bhardwaj &amp; Sharma, 2024)</li> <li>➤ Appropriateness of a situation for a particular conflict management style (Rahim, 2023)</li> </ul>
20:10–20:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Video ‘14 Effective Conflict Resolution Techniques’</li> <li>➤ Video debriefing</li> </ul>

March 30, 2025

16:00-17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Activity (open-class): Words that create, decrease or avoid conflict (Devlin, 2015)</li> <li>➤ Group conflict communication patterns (Jameson, 2023)</li> <li>➤ Roadblocks to communication: Activity (Pollack, 2020), video examples and their analysis</li> </ul>
16:45–17:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establishing trust through communication (Jameson, 2023)</li> <li>➤ Activity (pair-work): Reframing practice (Jameson, 2023)</li> </ul>
17:30–17:45	Break
17:45–18:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Barriers to effective listening (McCorkle &amp; Reese, 2017; Jameson, 2023)</li> <li>➤ Activity (pair-work): Non-evaluative listening (Jameson, 2023)</li> <li>➤ Dealing with constructive criticism: video (Tracy)</li> </ul>

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	➤ Video debriefing
19:00–19:15	Break
19:15–20:00	➤ Role-play: Handling customer conflict on delivery and functioning issues
20:00–20:30	➤ Role-play debriefing

### April 6, 2025

16:00–16:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Workplace mediation (Algert, 2020; Feehily, 2022; Munduate, Medina, &amp; Euwema, 2022)</li> <li>➤ Case study: Mediating employee conflict (Jameson, 2023)</li> </ul>
16:45–17:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Role-play: Mediating conflict on a key project component</li> <li>➤ Role-play debriefing</li> </ul>
17:30–17:45	Break
17:45–18:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Potential impact of the personality traits on conflict management (Bhardwaj &amp; Sharma, 2024; Espinoza et al, 2023).</li> <li>➤ Emotional factor in conflicts and conflict resolution (Olekalns &amp; Rees, 2020; Ngcobo, 2023)</li> </ul>
18:30–19:15	Role of culture in conflict management negotiations (Brett, 2024)
19:15–19:30	Break
19:30–20:10	Digitalization and conflict resolution (Bhardwaj & Sharma, 2024; Jameson, 2023, etc.)
20:10–20:30	Necessary conflict management skills: Main conclusions of the course

### Course Requirements & Course Policies

Since the course will be conducted in English, students are expected to have a proficient command of the language.

### Core Readings

1. Myers-Briggs Company (2022). *Conflict at work* (pp. 2–5). A research report. Executive summary. August.
2. Rahim, M.A. (2023). *Managing conflict in organizations* (15–34). (5th ed.). Routledge. Ch. 2. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003285861>

### Recommended Readings

1. Bhardwaj, B., & Sharma, D. (2024). *Managing and Negotiating Disagreements: A Contemporary Approach for Conflict Resolution* (pp. 39–49). Emerald Publishing Limited.

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2. Brett, J. M. (2024). Culture and Conflict and Negotiation Strategy. Gelfand, M. J., & Erez, M. (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Cross-Cultural Organizational Behavior*, 428–452. Oxford University Press.
3. Edwards, P., & Hodder, A. (2022). Conflict and control in the contemporary workplace: Structured antagonism revisited. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 53(3), 220–240.
4. Espinoza, J. A., O'Neill, T. A., & Donia, M. B. (2023). Big five factor and facet personality determinants of conflict management styles. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 203, 112029, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2022.112029>
5. Feehily, R. (2022). Approaches to mediation. In *International Commercial Mediation: Law and Regulation in Comparative Context* (pp. 83–103). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
6. Furlong, G. T. (2020). Stairway (Interests/Rights/Power) Model. In Furlong, G. T. *The conflict resolution toolbox: Models and maps for analyzing, diagnosing, and resolving conflict*. 2nd ed. John Wiley & Sons.
7. Jameson, J. K. (2023). *Communication for constructive workplace conflict* (pp. 21–36; 151–174; 195-210). John Wiley & Sons.
8. Munduate, L., Medina, F. J., & Euwema, M. C. (2022). Mediation: Understanding a constructive conflict management tool in the workplace. *Revista de Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones*, 38(3), 165–173. <https://doi.org/10.5093/jwop2022a20>
9. Nambisan, S., & Baron, R. A. (2021). On the costs of digital entrepreneurship: Role conflict, stress, and venture performance in digital platform-based ecosystems. *Journal of Business Research*, 125, 520–532. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.06.037>
10. Ngcobo, M. T. (2023). Navigating the emotional landscape of mediation: An exploration of the role of emotions in conflict resolution and the strategies for effective management. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 41(3), 327–335. <https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.21409>
11. Robbins, S. P. (2024). *Organizational behavior* (pp. 476–511). T. Judge, Ed.; 19th edition. Pearson Education Limited. Ch. 14.

### Videos

1. *5 types of conflict in the workplace and how to handle them* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7-bbd1F9bk>
2. *What are the roadblocks to communication?* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jLtLE2hnnq>
3. Tracy, B. *The best way to accept constructive criticism.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJA2vk19XYo>
4. *14 effective conflict resolution techniques* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4sby5j4dTY>