Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution
SAMPLE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

The Comprehensive Exam is in a two-day, non-proctored format. Students will be able to access the exam at 9:00 am East Coast time on January 21, 2014. You will have 48 hours to submit your answer. The assignment box will remain open until 9:00 am East Coast time on January 23, 2014. This will enable you to plan your time, prepare a draft, edit, and submit your final response.

You may use whatever materials you choose, but you are expected to work alone. You are expected to write the exam answers in your own words and to support your analysis with appropriate references. All references cited in your answer must appear in the reference pages. You should include a reference page in addition to citing within the body of your answer. You may use either APA or Chicago citation styles, but you must be consistent and choose only one style. You must submit original work for the exam, and should not copy work submitted for courses or work with other students. We strongly urge you to submit your answers first to the turn-it-in box so that you can make sure you do not have plagiarized material in your answer. The final submission is to Blackboard Assignment Box area.

You will notice that following the exam question (see next page) is a grading rubric. The grading rubric shows you the expectations of the faculty graders. Please review the rubric carefully. It will assist you in planning and executing your answer. The grading rubric will also be used by the faculty graders in assessing your answer.

It is your responsibility to submit the response prior to the assignment box closing. The assignment box will close at 9:00 am (East coast time) on January 23, 2014. If you miss the deadline, your response will not be considered. Therefore, please plan accordingly. We suggest you do not wait until the last few minutes to submit your answer.

Do not include your name in any part of the document.

Please submit your file in a Word document; do not submit in PDF format.

We all wish you great success!
Choose ONE of the two cases provided. Then, write an essay showing that you can connect theory, research and practice. You may focus your approach on any level of conflict (interpersonal, organizational, or international) you are most confident with. You are not required to do outside research on the background of the case you select.

This question has three integral parts that address theoretical analysis, research and practice. The first part is focused on analyzing and understanding the conflict and includes both theory and research elements. Provide the context for the case analysis and then present three fully explained relevant theories that are useful in this case. Include an explanation of the theories you have chosen and why they help us understand the conflict. Cite major thinkers in the field regarding those theories and connect the substance of the theory to specifics of the conflict.

In the second part of your paper, develop a plan to research some aspect of the above conflict. Include a problem statement related to the context and identify a research methodology appropriate to address that problem. Select one of the research methods you’ve been taught here at DCAR (e.g., phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, survey research, experimental, and so on). Explain what that method is and why you have selected it to help us better understand the nature of the conflict. Be sure to include the research steps you would include. That is, formulate a research question, describe your sampling strategy, as well as how you would collect and analyze data. For example, for a quantitative study, what are your hypotheses, what are the independent and dependent variables and how will you operationalize those variables? If you are taking a qualitative approach, how would you collect data (interviews? focus groups? participant observation?) How would you analyze the qualitative data? Why is this the choice that makes the most sense? The gist of this part of the essay is to communicate how you would go about understanding or “diagnosing” the conflict.

In the third part of your paper, provide a practice application related to this issue, including appropriate practice model/s and sample scenarios to show you understand and know how to apply the model/s. Would you facilitate? Mediate? Negotiate? Advocate for policy changes? Employ dispute systems design or non-violent direct action? Describe in detail why you have chosen the practice application that you have chosen and cite major thinkers associated with that method. Discuss how you would go about implementing your chosen method. For example, if you’re choosing mediation, you might cite Ken Cloke. If you have decided on nonviolent action, you might cite someone like Gene Sharp. The idea here is to convey, now that you diagnosed the conflict above, what you think should be done to resolve or transform it.
You can do the three parts in any order, and, if you choose, base the research on the practice application. Please note that each of the parts mentioned above (theory, research, and practice) is worth 25% of the final grade, with 10% based on the integration of ideas throughout the essay, and 15% devoted to how well you address the following: organization and structure of ideas and arguments, grammar and mechanics of writing, and proper APA/Chicago citation.
This exam is pass/fail. 70% is considered passing. There are five (5) sections to the integrated essay which you will write: an introduction, a theory section, a methods section, a practice section and a conclusion. Approximately 25 pages is an expected length, plus references. Please carefully review the Rubric for Assessment to be sure that you include all required elements. The cases are included following the rubric.

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<tr>
<th>Practice Portion—25 points possible</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>Which practice method was used by the student (mediation, facilitation, negotiation or other)? If so, award up to 5 points.</td>
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<td>Did the student thoroughly and convincingly describe in detail an applied practice method which harmonizes with and makes sense in light of the student’s conflict analysis? If so, award between 9-10 points. If not, award between 0-10 points.</td>
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<td>Did the student thoroughly describe the steps he/she would undertake in the implementation and give an explanation as to why? If so, award between 9-10 points. If not, award between 0-10 points.</td>
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**Total points for Practice**

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<th>Theory Portion—25 points possible</th>
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<td>Did the student thoroughly and convincingly describe in detail three (3) theoretical perspectives? If so, award up to 12 points (4 points per theoretical perspective)</td>
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<td>Did the student demonstrate a clear understanding of each theory? If so, award up to 12 points (3 points per theoretical perspective).</td>
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<td>Did the student make a connection between the two theoretical perspectives?</td>
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**Total points for Theory**

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<th>Research/Methodological Portion 25 points possible</th>
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<td>Which methodology was used by the student (quantitative, qualitative or mixed)? Did the student explain the type of methodology and why he/she selected it in a logical, accurate, and sound manner? If so, award up to 15 points (about 7 points per what and why).</td>
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<td>Did the student develop a viable plan to research and in doing so include the research steps he/she would include? If so, award between about 10 points. If not, award between 0-9 points.</td>
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**Total points for Synthesis and Integration of Ideas 25 points possible**

| Did the student synthesize theory, research and practice—that is, the student explicitly makes links between the analysis piece and the proposed intervention? Is the student’s logic sound? Do the ideas flow logically one from the other? |        |
| If so, award between about 22-25 points. If not, award between 0-22 points. |        |

**Total points for exam**

90-100: Excellent
80-89: Good
79-below: Failure

**Addendum—Students Note Please!**
**Organization, Grammar and Writing Mechanics**—Up to 10 points DEDUCTION possible for errors regarding written mechanics. The following describes, but is not an exhaustive list of, what may cause a deduction. Was there an effective introduction and conclusion? Was the development of argumentation clear? Were thoughts and ideas organized in full and coherent paragraphs? Was the writing clear and free of grammatical and punctuation errors? Were the sources cited based on APA or other format? If not, up to 10 points can be deducted for poor synthesis, writing, organization and mechanics.

CASE #1: VW Plant Opens Door to Union and Dispute
THE NEW YORK TIMES
Volkswagen makes Passats in Chattanooga, Tenn. The factory might adopt the German labor practice of works councils.

By JACK EWING and BILL VLASIC
Published: October 10, 2013

FRANKFURT — The face-off between Volkswagen and the United Automobile Workers over organizing the company’s new plant in Tennessee is rapidly becoming a global clash of cultures.

For months, the U.A.W. has been trying hard to get recognition by Volkswagen to represent workers at its prized assembly plant in Chattanooga.

The effort has unleashed a groundswell of pro- and anti-union sentiment. While some workers are eager for the U.A.W. to come in, state officials and so-called right-to-work groups are just as determined to stop Detroit’s brand of unionism.

Now Volkswagen and its German labor leaders are proposing a solution that is commonplace in Europe, but has yet to be tried in the American auto industry.

The senior labor representative at Volkswagen in Germany, Bernd Osterloh, is planning a trip to the United States to suggest a compromise in what has become a heated battle over the U.A.W.’s relentless drive to organize a foreign-owned auto plant in the American South.

He is expected to push for a German-style works council in the plant — a committee of hourly and salaried employees that gives labor a voice at the management table.

A works council is not like an American union, which can negotiate contracts and authorize strikes. But it does have the advantage of being a familiar form of labor relations for a German car company like VW.

The larger question is whether a works council can satisfy employees and politicians in Tennessee — and give the U.A.W. a foothold in the growing Southern auto industry.

Mr. Osterloh said recently that the Chattanooga plant might have a better chance at landing a hot new sport utility vehicle for the assembly plant, which now produces Passat sedans, if it had a works council to represent it.
In Germany, works councils have a long tradition and are an integral part of the process of mitbestimmung — the right of workers to have a say in corporate decisions. Managers in Germany see the councils as a way to head off labor problems and improve productivity.

To many Americans, the notion of works councils belongs alongside socialized medicine and six-week vacations as examples of the practices that have doomed Europe to near-zero growth. But another way to look at it is that works councils are part of a model that has helped preserve Germany’s industrial base and hold the country’s unemployment to a relatively low level: 5.2 percent, compared with 7.3 percent in the United States.

“It always depends on the people,” said Franz Schabmüller, owner of FS Firmenverwaltung, a group of 10 midsize manufacturing companies based in the Bavarian city of Ingolstadt. “If the works council has people of integrity who have the interests of the company at heart, then it can work well.”

One open question in Chattanooga is whether the 1,600 or so hourly workers at the VW factory would need to belong to a union like the U.A.W. to join a works council.

The U.A.W. said it would welcome a works council, but said that it would be legal only if a majority of workers had opted for a union. And many labor experts agree.

“If the company set up a representation system like that, a union would challenge it and they could probably win their argument that it’s a company-dominated union,” said Richard Hurd, a professor of industrial and labor relations at Cornell University. Such a union set up by the company would violate American labor law, he said.

Emotions in the plant are also rising. Recently the U.A.W. said it had signatures in support of union representation from a majority of the plant’s workers.

But some workers who signed cards have since balked at being part of the organizing effort. With the aid of an anti-union foundation, they are challenging the validity of the cards to the federal National Labor Relations Board.

Now workers opposed to the U.A.W. are circulating their own petition, supported by 30 percent of the plant’s workers.

To some opposed to the union, an attempt to bring European business practices to Chattanooga is a distraction from the bigger issue of whether the U.A.W., based in Detroit, can get a foothold in the South. Two other German automakers, BMW and Daimler’s
Mercedes-Benz unit, also have factories in the South, in Spartanburg, S.C., and Vance, Ala. Neither plant is unionized or has an elected works council.

In Germany, works councils are not the same as unions, though the two often cooperate. The councils, whose members are elected by employees, have a right to be consulted on job cuts or other decisions about working conditions. They are barred by law from negotiating over wages. That is the prerogative of labor unions, which typically bargain on an industrywide basis.

In Germany, there is also no clear demarcation between unionized and nonunionized companies. Any person can join a union. The union acquires power only if enough employees join to form a critical mass able to call a strike or otherwise exert pressure on management.

At all but the smallest German companies, workers can elect committees that have a right to weigh in on policies that affect working conditions. At large companies, worker representatives even sit on supervisory boards that choose the chief executive and approve major decisions. If a company has at least 200 employees, it must pay the salary of a full-time worker representative.

And as things now stand, every Volkswagen factory in the world has a works committee except one: the plant in Chattanooga.

Even in Germany, corporate executives sometimes grumble about having to listen to employees and share information. But they also concede that the system allows bosses and employees to cooperate more effectively in times of crisis. One study showed that worker-management cooperation helped contain unemployment during a sharp economic downturn in 2009.

“Like all systems, it has advantages and disadvantages,” said Martin Leutz, a spokesman for Gesamtmetall, an industry association that negotiates wage agreements for many German manufacturers, including Volkswagen. “Fundamentally, we are of the view that mitbestimmung has proved its value.”

But would mitbestimmung work in America? Mr. Osterloh, the head of VW’s works council, thinks so.

But VW’s Chattanooga workers may be a tough sell. Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee and Gov. Bill Haslam are both conservative Republicans, no friends of trade unions. Mr. Corker
told The Chattanooga Times Free Press that unionization of the VW plant “would be a negative for the future economic growth of our state.”

An earlier trip by the German labor leaders was called off for unrelated reasons. Mr. Osterloh said this week that he was trying to reschedule it and that Mr. Corker and Mr. Haslam were receptive to a meeting.

“I don’t even know if they know what a works council is,” Mr. Osterloh said in a telephone interview.

A spokesman for Mr. Haslam said on Thursday: “One of the things that makes Tennessee great is that it is a right-to-work state. Volkswagen is an outstanding employer that puts a lot of focus on employee satisfaction, and the company has been incredibly successful with the current structure in Chattanooga.”

Volkswagen, partly owned by the German state of Lower Saxony, has a long history of worker cooperation, and Mr. Osterloh is practically a member of top management. He said he spoke at least once a week to Martin Winterkorn, the VW chief executive.

“When there are problems with production, productivity or quality, those are all things that are talked about with the works council,” Mr. Osterloh said.

Jack Ewing reported from Frankfurt and Bill Vlasic from Detroit. Steven Greenhouse contributed reporting from New York.

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**CASE 2: Rival Factions in Strike Underscore the Fissures in Post-Chávez Venezuela**

*THE NEW YORK TIMES*


CIUDAD GUAYANA JOURNAL
CIUDAD GUAYANA, Venezuela — Rival union groups squared off outside this country’s biggest steel mill last week, arguing over whether to continue a lengthy strike at the government-run plant. Each faction blasted its message at top volume over loudspeakers, trying to drown the other out. Pushing and shoving ensued, along with dueling renditions of the national anthem.

And then the region’s chief government official, a former general, showed up with another set of loudspeakers to tell everyone that they should all just go back to work.

The workers shouted him down, too.
President Nicolás Maduro has insinuated that the strike at the company with about 14,000 workers is part of an American plot to destabilize the country, and last week he expelled the top American diplomat in Venezuela and two other embassy officials amid dark warnings of a conspiracy. As evidence Mr. Maduro pointed to a visit the diplomats made to this industrial city last month, when they met with labor leaders and members of the political opposition.

But he offered no proof that the diplomats’ visit had anything to do with the strike, which was already under way. Union leaders adamantly denied any link to the embassy.

The strikers’ main demand is that the government-owned company, the Orinoco Steelworks, also known as Sidor, pay millions of dollars in bonuses and other benefits they say were wrongly calculated.

And despite the charges of outside meddling, the scene here on Friday was quintessential Venezuela — unruly and loud, with lots of shouting and little or no listening. Yet it might never have occurred under Mr. Maduro’s predecessor and mentor, the charismatic socialist Hugo Chávez, who led the country for 14 years until his death in March.

“Sidor is a little Venezuela, with its elites and its divisions, with its pro-government people and its opposition people, and where changes are taking place,” said Leonel Grisett, a member of the union’s executive committee. “The workers realize that the great leader is not here anymore.”

Since Mr. Chávez’s death government leaders have repeatedly called for unity, urging their followers to stick together at all costs against a common foe. But there are growing signs that the message is not getting across as severe economic problems, including soaring inflation and shortages of basic goods, make many loyal Chavistas waver. Mr. Chávez, a former soldier and a father figure beloved by many, maintained discipline and commanded respect, something Mr. Maduro has struggled to achieve as he seeks to continue his predecessor’s self-declared revolution.

The strike creates an especially knotty problem for Mr. Maduro, who calls himself the worker president and frequently points to his past as a union leader in the Caracas transit system.

Ciudad Guayana, 325 miles southeast of Caracas, the capital, was created in the 1960s as a planned city and a home to Venezuela’s heavy industry. Today it still has the broad avenues and modern apartment blocks dreamed up by planners from Harvard and the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but it also has extensive slums. And while its vast, government-run mills and smelters continue to employ tens of thousands, they suffer from declining production, corruption and meager investment.

Sidor grew along with the city. Founded by the government in the 1960s, the company was privatized in the 1990s before being nationalized by Mr. Chávez in 2008. But production has plummeted by about 60 percent since the government takeover, and analysts blame mismanagement, corruption and a lack of investment and maintenance.

The strike at Sidor began in mid-September with protests by rank-and-file workers who walked off the job, angered by a long delay in negotiating a new contract to replace the one that expired three years ago and by the allegations that for years the company had underpaid annual bonuses.

That grass-roots beginning and the lengthy strike itself are noteworthy in a country where most unions have a cozy relationship with the government and its Socialist political party, especially at government-run companies like Sidor.

After the work stoppage spread, most union leaders took up the cause.

But a faction opposed the strike and closed ranks behind Mr. Maduro and Sidor’s bosses, setting up a political struggle within the union and an unusually public divide among pro-Chávez forces.

That set the stage for Friday’s battle of the loudspeakers. Around 6 a.m., following the routine of recent days, union leaders of the pro-strike forces gave speeches broadcast over loudspeakers while hundreds of workers milled about.
But on this day the dissident faction set up its own speakers some 30 feet away. With the volume cranked to earsplitting levels they preached against the strike.

One worker, Hugo Navarro, 29, stood in between, as if dazed.

“You can’t understand any of it,” he said.

At one point the antistrike contingent played a recording of Mr. Chávez singing the national anthem, as its adherents belted out the tune.

As soon as the recording ended the pro-strike unionists, who far outnumbered their opponents, broke into their own full-throated rendition.

Just as it seemed things might calm down, a truck drove up carrying Carlos Osorio, a retired general and a former confidant of Mr. Chávez who is the top government minister in the region and the president of the Venezuelan Corporation of Guayana, a kind of government holding company that controls Sidor and other state-run companies.

The truck contained an array of black speakers much bigger than those already deployed by the rival factions. Mr. Osorio climbed onto the roof of the vehicle and tried to address the crowd.

But, in another tellingly Venezuelan moment, there was a technical glitch and the speakers produced only a muffled sound.

“Can you hear me?” Mr. Osorio said over and over as the strikers taunted him.

Mr. Osorio eventually made his way to the small stage used by the strikers, where he took a microphone.

“All of us who are here are here thanks to Chávez,” he said.

He urged the strikers to go back to work. The company was prepared to pay some additional benefits, he said, but he refused to meet the strikers’ main demand for a recalculation of bonuses, insisting that they had been paid properly in the past.

The strikers responded with hoots and chants. “We’re Chávistas but we want our money!” they shouted.
The union leaders took back the microphone and berated Mr. Osorio. They pledged their allegiance to Mr. Chávez’s memory and his revolution, but they vowed that the strike would go on.

In the end the episode may have served as a kind of machismo-fueled courtship ritual. Before Mr. Osorio left, the two sides agreed to restart talks, which continued through the weekend.

On Friday night Mr. Maduro, speaking on live television from Caracas, again took up the theme of the expelled diplomats.

“They went with their suitcase full of dollars to buy off union leaders at Sidor, to keep Sidor shut down,” he claimed.

Calling the strike illegal, he warned that if it continued much longer he would take “drastic measures.”

His words highlighted the distance between the presidential palace and the plant gate. “That guy doesn’t know the reality here,” said Eduardo Brito, 28, a forklift operator.