



Course Syllabus: **INTR3501 Conflict Management**  
AgathonU Professor(s): Bradley W. Maston, PhD  
Daniel Starcevich, PhD  
Christopher Cone, PhD, PhD, ThD  
For Program: Bachelor of Biblical Education – 120 hrs  
Revision Date: 03/31/2026

Policies (Links)      [Enrollment Agreement](#)      [Writing Style Policy](#)  
[Standards of Intellectual Honesty](#)      [Withdrawal and Refund Policy](#)

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

INTR3501 – Conflict Resolution is an undergraduate course that equips students to understand and navigate conflict through a thoroughly biblical framework. Using Scripture as the primary text, the course examines the root of conflict in the human heart, the role of sin in interpersonal breakdown, and the various types of conflict seen throughout the Bible and everyday life. Students will develop practical skills for communication, dealing with difficult people, negotiation, and wise compromise, while giving careful attention to the necessity of forgiveness and reconciliation. The course also situates human conflict within the larger spiritual battle addressed by Christ’s redemptive work, culminating in the ultimate resolution of all conflict in His kingdom.

## II. AGATHON PROFESSOR(S) BIO

**Dr. Christopher Cone, ThD, PhD, PhD**, is a dedicated, transformative educator, writer, leader, and organizational developer. Dr. Cone is president of [Agathon University](#), former president of Tyndale Seminary and Calvary University, has served in several pastoral roles, and has taught at multiple universities and colleges. He has three doctorates, a ThD in Biblical Studies from Scofield Graduate School, a PhD in Theology from Trinity School of Theology (Kerala, India), and a PhD in philosophy from the University of North Texas. He is the executive editor of the *Journal of Transformative Learning and Leadership* and is the author or general editor of more than twenty books. He is the host of the show *The Transformative Pursuit* on Grace Global Radio and [VyrityTV](#), and has written several hundred articles hosted at [drcone.com](#).

**Dr. Bradley W. Maston, PhD**, serves as Executive Vice-President as well as a professor at Agathon University of Applied Faith, bringing over 15 years of pastoral experience as the head pastor of Fort Collins Bible Church. With a deep love for God’s Word and a passion for global ministry, Dr. Maston has also been actively involved in missions work across various countries, equipping leaders and encouraging believers worldwide. His teaching is grounded in a conservative, dispensational framework, combining rigorous biblical scholarship with a shepherd’s heart. Dr. Maston’s commitment to the authority and sufficiency of Scripture shapes his approach to training students for faithful and effective ministry, inspiring them to grow in both theological depth and practical service for Christ.

**Dr. Dan Starcevich** is the academic dean and a professor of transformative learning and leadership at Agathon University. Dan has served as a pastor and professor of Bible and Theology at Tyndale Theological Seminary and Biblical Institute. He is the president of TheoFaith, a Bible teaching ministry. He received his BS in Business from Hawaii Pacific University, an MS in Management from the University of Southern California, a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, and a PhD and DMin from Tyndale Theological Seminary. Dan is the author of *Lord and Land: The Sovereignty of God and the Land of Israel*, has contributed several articles to academic publications, and has taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels. His website is [www.theofaith.org](http://www.theofaith.org), and TheoFaith can also be found on YouTube.

### III. COURSE TEXTS AND RESOURCES

#### Required Texts:

1. All AU/AUA courses use the Bible as a primary textbook. Translations used for coursework include any of the following: NASB, ESV, KJV, and NKJV. Other translations/versions may be used for complementary study and research.
2. Sande, Ken. *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.
3. Sande, Ken. *The Peacemaker Personal Study Guide*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.  
[Peacemaker Study Guide | PDF | Forgiveness | Idolatry](#)
4. Sande, Ken, and Dave Edling. *Peacemakers: Biblical Conflict Resolution*. Orlando, FL: Reformed Theological Seminary, 2008.
5. Relational Wisdom 360. *Guiding People Through Conflict* and Related Resources. Billings, MT: RW360, n.d. Available at: [Guiding-People-Through-Conflict-1.7.pdf](#)

### IV. COURSE SCHEDULE AND OUTLINE

#### Module 1 – The Reality of Conflict in a Fallen World

**Dr. Bradley Maston**

This module will discuss conflict as a universal human experience, The entrance of sin and its relational consequences, first human conflict (Cain and Abel) and Internal vs. external conflict.

Learners understand that conflict is not accidental—it is rooted in the Fall and must be interpreted theologically.

1. *Reading Assignment*
  - Genesis 3; Genesis 4:1–16; James 4:1–2
  - The Peacemaker: Chapter 1 “Conflict Provides Opportunities”6
  - RW360: “Guiding People Through Conflict” – Introduction + Section 1
2. *Reading Content Assessment*
  - Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering reading content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)
3. *Module Assessment*
  - Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering module content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

**4. Interaction Assessment**

- Learners will create an initial, substantive post on (2) of the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond to at least one other post(s) by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

**5. Interaction question(s)**

- In Genesis 3–4, what specific changes take place in human relationships after sin enters the world?
- How does James 4:1–2 explain the universal nature of conflict in a way that challenges common cultural explanations?
- Where do you most commonly see the effects of the Fall producing conflict in everyday life?

**Module 2 – The Heart of the Problem: Sin and the Human Condition Dr. Christopher Cone**

This module will discuss how conflict originates in desires, pride, and self-will, The role of lust, envy, and selfish ambition, and Sin as both vertical (against God) and horizontal (against others). Learners will learn to diagnose conflict at the heart level—not merely behavior.

**1. Reading Assignment**

- Jeremiah 17:5–10, Mark 7:14–23, James 3:13–4:10
- The Peacemaker: Chapter 2 “Live at Peace”
- RW360: “Guiding People Through Conflict” – Introduction + Section 1 Chapter 4 (selected) – “Get the Log Out of Your Eye” (first half)
- Workbook (10–15 pages): “Responsibility in Conflict”

**2. Reading Content Assessment**

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering reading content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

**3. Module Assessment**

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering module content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

**4. Interaction Assessment**

- Learners will create an initial, substantive post on (2) of the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond to at least one other post(s) by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

**5. Interaction question(s)**

- According to Mark 7:20–23, why is it insufficient to blame circumstances or other people for conflict?
- How do desires (“lusts”) function as the driving force behind conflict in James 4?
- Can you identify a recent conflict where the real issue was internal rather than external? What does that reveal?

**Module 3 – Categories of Conflict in Scripture****Dr. Daniel Starcevich**

This module will discuss the interpersonal conflict (Abram/Lot), Ministry conflict (Paul/Barnabas), Foolish vs. wise responses (Nabal, Abigail, David), and misunderstanding vs. moral conflict. Learners can identify different types of conflict and respond appropriately.

1. *Reading Assignment*

- Genesis 13, 1 Samuel 25, Acts 15:36–41, Philippians 4:2–3
- RTS Notes: Section: Types of Conflict & Case Studies
- RW360: Section on relational dynamics and conflict styles
- Workbook (10–15 pages): “Responsibility in Conflict”

2. *Reading Content Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering reading content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

3. *Module Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering module content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

4. *Interaction Assessment*

- Learners will create an initial, substantive post on (2) of the assigned question(s)/topic(s), and will respond to at least one other post(s) by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

5. *Interaction question(s)*

- Compare Abram/Lot (Genesis 13) and Paul/Barnabas (Acts 15). What makes these conflicts different in nature?
- What role does wisdom play in Abigail’s handling of conflict in 1 Samuel 25?
- Why is it important to correctly identify the type of conflict before attempting to resolve it?

**Module 4 – Conflict Within: The Battle of the Inner Life****Marty Cochran**

This module will cover the internal conflict between flesh and Spirit, the emotional and spiritual turmoil, and the role of identity in Christ in resolving inner conflict. Learners will understand that unresolved internal conflict often fuels external conflict and with prescriptive actions, overcome these conflicts.

1. *Reading Assignment*

- Romans 7, Galatians 5:16–26, Psalm 73
- The Peacemaker: Chapter 4
- Workbook: Self-examination / heart evaluation exercises

2. *Reading Content Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering reading content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

3. *Module Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering module content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

4. *Interaction Assessment*

- Learners will create an initial, substantive create an initial, substantive post on (2) of the assigned question(s)/topic(s) and will respond to at least one other post(s) by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical

thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

5. *Interaction question(s)*

- How does Romans 7 describe the internal struggle of the believer, and how might this fuel outward conflict?
- In Psalm 73, what internal conflict does Asaph experience, and how is it resolved?
- What practical steps help bring internal struggles under the control of the Spirit (Galatians 5)?

**Module 5 – Communication: The Power of Words in Conflict**

**Marty Cochran**

This module will cover the destructive and healing power of speech, listening vs. reacting, Tone, timing, and truthfulness, and avoiding gossip, slander, and careless words. Learners will gain practical tools for godly communication under pressure.

1. *Reading Assignment*

- James 3:1-12, Proverbs 10:19; 12:18; 15:1–4; 18:13, 21, Ephesians 4:25–32
- The Peacemaker: Chapter 7 – “Clarify Responsibilities” (focus on communication principles)
- RW360: Communication and listening sections

2. *Reading Content Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering reading content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

3. *Module Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering module content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

4. *Interaction Assessment*

- Learners will create an initial, substantive post on (2) of the assigned question(s)/topic(s) and will respond to at least one other post(s) by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

5. *Interaction question(s):*

- According to James 3, why is the tongue so powerful in shaping the outcome of conflict?
- What does Proverbs 15:1 teach about the relationship between tone and escalation?
- Think of a conflict you’ve witnessed—how might it have changed if biblical communication principles had been applied?

**Module 6 – Dealing with Difficult People**

**Dr. Christopher Cone**

This module will explore the Biblical categories: fool, scoffer, wise person, Recognizing patterns of behavior, responding with wisdom, patience, and boundaries, and When to engage vs. when to withdraw. Learners will develop discernment and strategy for navigating challenging personalities.

1. *Reading Assignment*

- Proverbs (selected: 9; 14:7; 22:24–25; 26), Matthew 7:6, 2 Timothy 2:23–26, Titus 3:9–11
- RTS Notes: Section: Handling difficult individuals & mediation
- Workbook: Case study exercises

**2. Reading Content Assessment**

*(Delete the assignments not relevant to the course level)*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering reading content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)
- Graduate: Learners will write a 300-500-word summary on *each* assigned reading and highlight one way in which the reading was helpful or informative.
- Doctoral: Learners will write a 700-1000-word summary on *each* assigned reading and offer a justification or critique for the writer's perspective.

**3. Module Assessment**

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering module content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

**4. Interaction Assessment**

- Learners will create an initial, substantive post on (2) of the assigned question(s)/topic(s) and will respond to at least one other post(s) by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

**5. Interaction question(s)**

- How do Proverbs distinguish between a wise person, a fool, and a scoffer—and why does that matter in conflict?
- What does it mean to be “gentle” and “patient” (2 Timothy 2:24–26) without being passive or compromising truth?
- When is it wise to disengage from a conflict rather than continue pursuing resolution?

**Module 7 – Principles of Negotiation and Wise Compromise****Trent Boyd**

This module will cover Biblical humility and preference of others, when compromise is righteous vs. sinful, Peacemaking vs. peacekeeping, seeking mutual benefit without sacrificing truth. Learners will learn how to pursue resolution without abandoning conviction.

**1. Reading Assignment**

- Genesis 13 (review), Matthew 5:9, 23–26, Romans 12:14–21, Philippians 2:1–11
- The Peacemaker: Chapter 8 – “Overlook Minor Offenses”
- The Peacemaker: Chapter 9 – “Reconcile Relationships” (first half)
- RW360: Peacemaking strategies

**2. Reading Content Assessment**

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering reading content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

**3. Module Assessment**

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering module content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

**4. Interaction Assessment**

- Learners will create an initial, substantive post on (2) of the assigned question(s)/topic(s) and will respond to at least one other post(s) by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

5. *Interaction question(s)*

- What principles guided Abram’s approach to resolving conflict with Lot in Genesis 13?
- How do Philippians 2:1–4 and Romans 12:18 balance humility with personal conviction?
- Where is the line between godly compromise and sinful compromise, and why is that distinction critical?

**Module 8 – Forgiveness and Reconciliation****Dr. Bradley Maston**

This module will discuss the theological basis of forgiveness, Distinguishing forgiveness from trust and reconciliation, The cost of unforgiveness, and Steps toward restoration. Learners will understand forgiveness as central—not optional—in Christian conflict resolution.

1. *Reading Assignment:*

- Matthew 18:21–35, Luke 15, Ephesians 4:31–32, Colossians 3:12–14
- The Peacemaker: Chapter 9 (remaining portion), Chapter 10 – “Forgive as God Forgave You”
- Workbook: Forgiveness exercises

2. *Reading Content Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering reading content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

3. *Module Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering module content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

4. *Interaction Assessment*

- Learners will create an initial, substantive post on (2) of the assigned question(s)/topic(s) and will respond to at least one other post(s) by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

5. *Interaction question(s)*

- Based on Matthew 18:21–35, what motivates genuine forgiveness in the believer?
- What is the difference between forgiveness, reconciliation, and restored trust?
- Why is unforgiveness so spiritually destructive, both personally and relationally?

**Module 9 – Church Conflict and Matthew 18****Dr. Christopher Cone**

This module covers Biblical process for addressing sin in the church, Accountability and restoration, Conflict in leadership and congregational settings, Avoiding lawsuits and public division. Learners are equipped to handle conflict within the body of Christ with order and grace.

1. *Reading Assignment*

- Matthew 18:15–20, 1 Corinthians 6:1–8, Galatians 6:1–5, Acts 6:1–7
- RTS Notes: Church discipline and mediation
- Workbook: Structured reconciliation process

2. *Reading Content Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering reading content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

3. *Module Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering module content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

4. *Interaction Assessment*

- Learners will create an initial, substantive post create an initial, substantive post on (2) of the assigned question(s)/topic(s) and will respond to at least one other post(s) by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

5. *Interaction question(s)*

- What is the purpose of the process outlined in Matthew 18:15–17, and how is it often misunderstood?
- How does 1 Corinthians 6 challenge the way believers handle disputes with one another?
- What are the dangers to a church when conflict is ignored rather than addressed biblically?

**Module 10 – The Ultimate Conflict and Final Resolution**

**Dr. Daniel Starcevich**

This module will discuss the cosmic conflict: God vs. sin, death, and Satan, The cross as the decisive victory, Christ as the ultimate reconciler (2 Corinthians 5:18–21), and the final restoration of all things. Learners see all human conflict in light of the greater redemptive story and the coming peace of Christ’s kingdom.

1. *Reading Assignment*

- Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 53, Colossians 1:15–20; 2:13–15, 2 Corinthians 5:18–21, Revelation 19–22
- The Peacemaker: Final chapter – “Peacemaking as a Lifestyle”
- RW360 (5–10 pages): Summary/application section

3. *Reading Content Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering reading content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

4. *Module Assessment*

- Undergraduate: Learners will complete a 20-question multiple choice quiz/test covering module content (faculty must provide/create the quiz/test)

5. *Interaction Assessment*

- Learners will create an initial, substantive post create an initial, substantive post on (2) of the assigned question(s)/topic(s) and will respond to at least one other post(s) by Faculty and/or Learners. Initial posts should address the question/topic, should reflect appropriate critical thought, should be well formatted and communicated, and should be gracious and edifying (even if critical).

6. *Interaction question(s)*

- How does Genesis 3:15 introduce the larger spiritual conflict that runs through all of Scripture?
- In what sense does Colossians 2:13–15 describe the cross as a victory over conflict?
- How should the promise of final peace in Revelation 19–22 shape the way we handle conflict today?

**Course Content Assessment**

Undergraduate: Learners will complete a multiple-choice cumulative exam (faculty must provide the exam, which should include 5 questions from each module quiz or topic)

**Competency Assessment**

Learners will select and complete any 1 of the 3 competency assignments. Specifics of the assessment *must* be preapproved by the Mentoring Professor:

1. Practical Engagement Component – a practical social engagement of 1-1.5 hours applying principles covered in the course, and a 1000-word report discussing: (1) Introduction of the Engagement, (2) Methodology, (3) Summary of What Happened, and (4) Benefits and Implications
2. Writing Component – a publishable quality paper of 3000-5000 words on an approved topic related to the course material.
3. Teaching Encounter Component/Video – preparing, delivering, recording, and submitting a 30-40 minute teaching to a live audience on an approved topic related to the course material.

**V. LEARNING OUTCOMES****Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)**

- **Analyze** the root causes of interpersonal conflict by evaluating the role of sin, human desires, and heart motivations using key biblical texts.  
*(Aligns with Program Outcomes: Biblical Interpretation; Theological Understanding)*
- **Differentiate** between various types of conflict presented in Scripture and contemporary life and **assess** appropriate biblical responses for each.  
*(Aligns with Program Outcomes: Critical Thinking; Biblical Application)*
- **Demonstrate** effective conflict resolution skills—including communication, negotiation, and dealing with difficult individuals—through case studies and applied exercises.  
*(Aligns with Program Outcomes: Ministry Skills; Interpersonal Competence)*
- **Integrate** the doctrines of forgiveness, reconciliation, and Christ's redemptive work into a coherent framework for resolving personal and communal conflict.  
*(Aligns with Program Outcomes: Spiritual Formation; Theological Integration)*

**Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)**

1. To prepare Learners for roles in transformative education teaching and service roles in applied faith contexts.
2. To provide Learners with a foundation for effective individual and organizational leadership in diverse environments in applied faith contexts.
3. To help Learners express the Biblical worldview foundation for empowering people and building communities.
4. To strengthen Learners in formulating a Biblical approach to transformative learning and leadership in applied faith contexts.

**Agathon UAF Learning Outcomes (ALOs)**

1. *Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Research* – Learners will demonstrate ability to think critically from a Biblical worldview platform, solve problems, and conduct interdisciplinary research at a level appropriate to their program, and in a way that is gracious and beneficial to those operating within other worldviews.

2. *Personal Growth* – Learners will understand how learning is related to personal growth, and will be challenged to grow in their thinking, communication, conduct, and engagement with others.
3. *Skills Development* – Learners will advance in skills related to their area of learning, demonstrating a level of competency appropriate to their program.
4. *Social Responsibility* – Learners will appreciate the diversity in and value of others as designed by our Creator and will grow in willingness and capability to serve others.
5. *Worldview Applications* – Learners will become capable at thinking from a Biblical worldview perspective and will understand the relationship of description and prescription, so that they can ground their actions in sound principles.

**VI. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING RUBRIC (1000 POINTS)**

Module Assessments	(20 points each x 10)	200 Points	CLO # / PLO # / ALO #1,2
Reading Content Assessments	(20 points each x 10)	200 Points	CLO # / PLO # / ALO #1,2
Interaction Assessments	(10 points each x 10)	100 Points	CLO # / PLO # / ALO #2
Course Content Assessment		250 Points	CLO # / PLO # / ALO #3,5
Competency Assessment		250 Points	CLO # / PLO # / ALO #4,5
Total Available Points		1000 Points	

[View the Agathon UAF Grading Policy and Assessment Rubrics Here](#)

**VII. GRADING SCALE**

Letter grades are given, which represent the following percentages:

- A - 94-100% - Excellent
- B - 86-93% - Above Average
- C - 78-85% - Average
- D - 70-77% - Inferior
- F - Below 70%)
- WP - Withdrew passing
- WF - Withdrew failing

Students receiving “D” or “F” grades in any course will be notified in the middle of the semester.

**VIII. CARNEGIE UNIT CREDIT HOUR EQUIVALENT**

Total Hours of Module Content:	20hours
Total Hours of Reading Content:	40 hours
Total Hours of Minor Assessments:	40 hours
Total Hours of Major Assessment:	35 hours
Equivalent of 3 Credit Hours (45 hours of total course time per credit hour)	