I understand that you are either enrolled in, or on the waitlist for, the intensive Negotiations course that I am teaching at GMU law school during two weekends this fall. Given the unique nature of this course, I want to inform you in advance about the schedule and requirements and my pedagogical approach, so that you can decide whether you want to take the course, and, if so, so that you can be prepared to hit the ground running when the course gets underway.

As you know, the course will meet during two weekends, August 23-25 and September 27-29, Friday through Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with a paper due a few weeks after each weekend (see below). In addition, students will participate in a relatively simple negotiation, by email only, outside of class during the week of September 19-26.

Students must attend every class in order to obtain credit. If a student cannot attend all of the class sessions – even for unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control – the student will not be eligible to receive credit and may be required to withdraw from the course.

There is this exception, however: if during one of the weekends, there is an emergency that closes the school (e.g., hurricane, etc.) or I am otherwise unable to teach the course, then I have reserved October 4-6 as an emergency backup weekend (and you would need to be available then as well).

One of the central features of the course is its emphasis on experiential learning: students will participate in, and reflect upon, a number of role-play exercises – usually two such exercises every day. Generally, I will hand out the role play instructions (which will range between 1-5 pages in length) no later than the day before the exercise is conducted in class. Prior to each class, students should have read and prepared for the role plays – and in some instances, students may be required to submit a “preparation document” (~ 1 page).

In addition, students are expected to have done the reading assigned on the syllabus for each class. Most of the reading assignments come from the course text, Robert Mnookin et al, Beyond Winning, which is modestly-priced and quite readable. In addition, students must purchase from the copy center a supplemental reading package (~ 18 pp) and are also expected to read several other short pieces (on TWEN). Given the condensed format, I suggest that you do the reading for each weekend before the first class of that weekend. Given the need to prepare for the role plays between classes, I also recommend that you not make other commitments during the scheduled weekends.

Your final grade for the course will be based on the following components: (1) A short paper (< 5 pages), due two weeks after the first weekend (i.e., September 9), which will count for a total of 25% of your grade; (2) A final paper (~10 pages), in which you discuss your experiences in the course and the themes of the course that were raised in the class discussions and the readings – this paper is due about two weeks after the second weekend (i.e., October 15) and will count for 50% of your grade; (3) Class participation, contribution and application of skills (including completion of "preparation documents"), which will count for the remaining 25% of your grade.

I must limit the class size to 16 students. If, on August 23, you are on the waitlist and are still interested in taking the course, I recommend that you come to the first hour of the class to see if there are any last minute openings in enrollment.

Despite all of these caveats, I hope that you will remain interested in taking this course, because I believe that it will be a valuable, stimulating and enjoyable experience. If you have any other questions, please contact me at: 703-585-0619 or sjackson@igc.org.