



SPRING 2026 COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Number: 279-001

Course Title: Mediation

Credit Hours: 2

Grading Mode: Letter graded

Meeting Time(s): Wednesday 11:20a-1:20p

Meeting Mode: On campus

Exam Time(s): N/A

Exam Mode: Final paper

Prerequisite(s): N/A

Corequisite(s): N/A

Instructor(s):

Brian Hirsch

Renee Kostick Reynolds

Contact Information and Office Hours:

bhirsch3@gmu.edu

rreynol@gmu.edu

Reading(s) & Supplement(s):

Suzanne McCorkle and Melanie J. Reese, *Mediation Theory and Practice*, Third Edition., and Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to Yes*, Third Edition.

Course Overview:

This course will focus on the theories and skills involved in the mediation process. Students will observe Harvard University mediation videos. Students will practice dispute resolution and mediation skills and will use these skills in various role play exercises, simulation activities, and interactive lectures. The class will focus on both the perspective of the neutral party/mediator working with parties who are trying to resolve a dispute in mediation and the attorney representing the client. The course will also

address the roles of bias, emotions, gender, race, and culture in mediation, as well as ethical issues.

Course Learning Outcomes:

During the course and by the end of the course, students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the basic principles of negotiation and mediation;
- Learn and practice dispute resolution skills and apply these skills in regular role play exercises;
- Learn the basic similarities and differences between negotiation, litigation and mediation, and be able to discuss the pros and cons of each method;
- Be able to apply the course information and negotiation/mediation skills learned to real world situations; and
- Have a greater appreciation and understanding of the roles bias, emotions, gender, and culture play in negotiation and mediation.

Grading Policies:

Grading will be based upon class attendance and participation (30%), a journal entry randomly selected from six required entries (15%), a mediated agreement (15%), and a final research paper (40%).

Classroom Policies:

Attendance: Per AR 3-1.4, “maintenance of matriculation requires regular class preparation, participation and attendance, registration in the course of study required for the student’s program (full-time or part-time), successive registration for each fall and spring term of each academic year until study is completed, and compliance with all other relevant requirements.”

Absences: Per AR 4-1.1, “if a student is absent for any reason for more than 20 percent of the sessions of a course, the student is not eligible for credit in that course. A student who is not present for at least 75 percent of a session of the course is absent from that session.”

Participation & Preparation:

Regular and timely attendance and completion of all reading assignments are mandatory in order to receive full credit for this class. **Active participation is essential in order to learn the skills and concepts that make up this course. You are expected to attend and participate in all scheduled classes.** Excused absences will

be granted in the case of a medical or family emergency, illness, or religious holiday. It is the student's responsibility to inform us in advance if you will be absent from class. It is also the student's responsibility to collect information distributed during your absence. All assignments must be submitted on time. Any assignments submitted late will result in a significant impact on the grade. Because the course is interactive and experiential, we may alter the syllabus to reflect class interests and to enhance learning opportunities.

Writing Assignments:

Each student will be required to keep and bring to class a typed conflict resolution journal for the first six classes. The journal entries should be concise and thoughtful rather than rambling. Each of the first six weeks you will be required to make at least one entry that is relevant to topics discussed during a previous class. The journal entry may be in the form of an insight that you have gained regarding a specific issue. All six entries will be collected in the seventh week and one entry will be selected at random and graded, which will be the same entry for all students. A mediated agreement will be drafted by the students based on an in-class role play and will be graded. **A final 10-page research paper will be due on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 no later than noon, submitted by email. Final paper outlines must be submitted in class by Wednesday, March 25, 2026.**

Use of Technology & AI:

Strict Use Policy: The use of generative AI tools is not permitted for any coursework in this course. Unauthorized use will be treated as a violation of academic standards.

Use of Electronic Text Books During Exams:

Students are permitted one laptop computer for exam taking purposes. Additional laptop computers or any other electronic data storage devices are not allowed in an exam room, unless permitted by the course instructor's *written* exam instructions. Electronic text books (e-books) may be used during exams that are designated as open book by the instructor, and the instructor allows text books to be used during the exam and allows access to a student's computer files during the exam (open exam). E-books may not be used in exams where the instructor does not allow students to access their computer files during the exam (secure exam) even if the instructor permits access to text books. If the instructor has blocked access to the internet or computer files, you must bring a hard copy of the allowed text book(s) you wish to consult. Students will need to borrow or otherwise locate a hard copy of the e-book or print resources needed from the e-book to take into the exam room. The instructor determines the length of the examination and whether or not it is secure or open and what, if any, study materials

are permitted during the exam. Students are responsible for adhering to the instructor's standards for all examinations, which are included in the examination materials.

Course Schedule & Assignments

Week 1:

Date: January 14, 2026

Topic: *Mediation Theory & Practice*, Chapter 1

Week 2:

Date: January 28, 2026

Topic: *Getting to Yes*, Chapters 2 through 5

Week 3:

Date: February 4, 2026

Topic: Handouts

Week 4:

Date: February 11, 2026

Topic: *Mediation Theory & Practice*, Chapters 2, 4 and 6

Week 5:

Date: February 18, 2026

Topic:

Mediation Theory & Practice, Ethical Considerations and Tactical Preparations, Chapters 3 and 5

Mediation Observation Week, no class on February 18 due to watching Harvard mediation videos

Week 6:

Date: February 25, 2026

Topic: *Mediation Theory & Practice*, Chapter 7

Week 7:

Date: March 4, 2026

Topic:

Mediation Theory & Practice, Chapter 8

All journal entries due by start of class.

Week 8:

Date: March 18, 2026

Topic: *Mediation Theory & Practice*, Chapter 9

Week 9:

Date: March 25, 2026

Topic:

Mediation Theory & Practice, Chapter 10

Home Away Mediated Agreement Due by March 28, 2026 at Midnight

Week 10:

Date: April 1, 2026

Topic:

Mediation Theory & Practice, Chapter 11

Final Paper Outlines due before class

Week 11:

Date: April 8, 2026

Topic: *Getting to Yes*, Chapters 6 through 8

Week 12:

Date: April 15, 2026

Topic: Court Connected Mediation/Policy Concerns, Handouts

Week 13:

Date: April 22, 2026

Topic: Ethical Issues, Handouts

Final Paper due by Noon on April 29, 2026.

Student Resources

[Antonin Scalia Law School Academic Regulations](#)

[GMU Common Course Policies Addendum](#)

[Mason Square Services](#)

[Mason Square Police](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room 110

Emergency - Dial 911

Escort Services - 703-993-8070

Dispatch – 703-993-2810

[Student Support and Advocacy Center \(SSAC\)](#)

Mason Square Sexual Assault Services:

Van Metre Hall, Room 222D

703-993-8186

Notice of Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, Interpersonal Violence, and Stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If a student wishes to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. Students may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

[Mason Square Clinic](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room B102

703-991-2831

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)

[Student Disability Services](#)

[Student Conduct](#)

[University Life](#)