

**Managing Confrontations  
MBA 5061-503**

**Spears School of Business  
Oklahoma State University**

**Instructor:**

Dr. Bryan Edwards, Associate Professor of Management

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Site: Desire2Learn (Online Classroom): <http://oc.okstate.edu>

Technical and administrative support: Spears School of Business Distance Learning Office, 108 Gundersen, spearsdistance@okstate.edu or call (405) 744-4048.

Technical Assistance for Video Lectures:  
[http://ra.okstate.edu/stw\\_ssb/cepd/VideoHelp](http://ra.okstate.edu/stw_ssb/cepd/VideoHelp)

**Overview of the Course**

This course focuses on increasing your comfort and success confronting others that do not meet your expectations. We all know someone who has violated expectations, broken promises, or performed poorly but most of us do not like confrontation and have experienced confrontations that went badly. You will learn to hold someone accountable face-to-face by making a clear and direct connection between action and consequences. By so doing you will be more confident and motivated to improve results and relationships by effectively confronting broken promises and violated expectations.

The overall goal of the course is to help build commitment and accountability towards closing the gap between expected and actual performance. Crucial confrontations directly addresses gaps between expectations and performance with a model that ensures individual and team effectiveness. Learn to hold people accountable, master face-to-face performance discussions, motivate without using power, enable without taking over, and move to action. It will improve the quality of your life and of your organization.

**Course Objectives and Goals**

Most organizational failures, team disasters, and family discord are the natural result of chronic problems people have either failed to confront or confronted poorly. Most people have a negative reaction to confrontation because it is seen as unpleasant, scary, or threatening. This course will teach you to approach confrontations in a different and hopefully more encouraging way. You will learn to hold someone accountable face-to-face by making a clear and direct connection between action and consequences. By doing so, you will be more confident in such situations and motivated to obtain better results and outcomes. Learn to rapidly improve results and relationships by confronting broken promises and violated expectations.

The overall goal of the course is to help build commitment and accountability towards closing the gap between expected and actual performance. By the end of the course, the students are expected to be able to:

<b>Course Objective</b>	<b>Program Learning Goal</b>
Hold anyone accountable—no matter the person’s power, position, or temperament.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork and Leadership</li> <li>• Decision analyses</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> </ul>
Master performance discussions—get positive results and maintain good relations along the way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork and Leadership</li> <li>• Decision analyses</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> </ul>
Motivate without using power—clearly and concisely explain specific, natural consequences and permanently resolve problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork and Leadership</li> <li>• Decision analyses</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> </ul>
Enable without taking over—creatively help others avoid excuses, stay on track, and resolve performance barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork and Leadership</li> <li>• Decision analyses</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> </ul>
Move to action—agree on a plan, follow up and engage in good reporting practices, and manage new expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork and Leadership</li> <li>• Decision analyses</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> </ul>

## Texts and Supplementary Materials

### Required Text

Crucial Confrontations Participant Toolkit. CEPD will purchase the text and make arrangements to get it to you.

## Description of Course Requirements

Three (3) sequential work-through papers (75 points each) = 225 points

Final Examination = 275 points

**Total** = 500 points

## Grading Policy

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following scale.

A	=	90%-100%	Outstanding work	448-500 points
B	=	80%-89%	Very good work	398-447 points
C	=	70%-79%	Acceptable work	348-397 points
D	=	60%-69%	Needs improvement	298-347 points
F	=	< 60%	Unacceptable work	Less than 298 points

## Detailed Explanation of Course Requirements:

### Sequential Papers:

It is important to note that the information delivered in this class are skills that take practice to master. As such, it is my expectation that you complete all the exercises in the book. However, most of these exercises are for your own learning experience and you do not have to turn them in to me. I do, however, want you to turn in three (3) papers for credit that reinforce the skills in managing confrontations. These papers will be based on some of the exercises in your participant toolkit.

I want you to “practice” the elements of managing confrontations in your everyday life. As such, the projects are designed to have you develop a plan revolving around the principles we are going to learn in this short course. The goal here is to prepare you to hold a confrontation to help enhance your relationships and fulfill your expectations.

There is no page limit for the assignments but I expect everyone can answer the questions within 2 pages of text. Most students do the assignment in 1-1.5 pages. I don't care if you use single or double-spaced text but please use 12-point font. You are also welcome to write it in bullet form, outline form, or in paragraphs but please use complete sentences and proper grammar, spelling, syntax, etc. Because each assignment builds on the previous assignment, the second may be longer than the first and the third assignment will probably be the longest. But, you can certainly borrow text from your previous assignments. **Please retype the questions you are answering or use headers so that it is easy for me to see which question you are addressing.** I have no example assignments for you because you should address each assignment within the context of your own personal confrontation. Remember - you are doing this to practice your skills. I will grade these more or less as pass-fail. The only way you might lose points if you turn in an assignment is if you don't answer all the questions or if you do not provide complete answers (e.g., an entire assignment that is only 5 sentences). There are dropbox folders in D2L where you can turn in your assignments. You may do the assignments in any word processor.

1. First paper – The first paper you need to turn in completes the following exercises/questions. I want you to examine some of the gaps you need to address with someone else that may be causing a poor result or a strained relationship. Choose one of these gaps to work on with your sequential papers.

Part 1: Identify where you are stuck. Use the following questions to help you explore the possibilities. What is a crucial confrontation? Then, please describe a potential confrontation that has been particularly troubling for you or that you have failed to address. To help you identify an example ask yourself what is an example of bad results that you want to fix? What expectations are currently not met? What do you find yourself complaining about at home or at work? Please describe the situation. What are the consequences of not confronting this person? Note that it might help to list the expectation and the observed behavior to help you easily identify the gap.

Part 2: Unbundle with CPR. List the content, pattern, and relationship problem. I want you to think more deeply about the source of the confrontation. Do not easily dismiss it as a content or pattern. If this issue is really bothering you then there is probably a relationship problem. That is, there is probably some lack of respect, perceived competence, or trust.

2. Second paper

- Part 1. When you become angry or frightened, what's your physical response? We all know that fear and anger drive us to fight (violence) or flight (silence), but what exactly happens to our bodies to help us prepare to either run or duke it out?
- Part 2. What happens to the brain's ability to problem solve when adrenaline tries to prepare us to take flight or fight? Do we become cleverer, more analytical, or more capable of dealing with complex problems? If not, why not? How would you intervene to prevent the fight or flight mechanism from engaging (think path to action)?
- Part 3. To answers parts 3-7, return to the confrontation you identified in the first paper. Be sure to reflect on what you wrote for the first paper and integrate this crucial next step with that material. Write out a story you might tell yourself about the other person's motives if you fell into the fundamental attribution error.
- Part 4. Using the six sources of influence, generate new and plausible explanations for the person's behavior. Note: please resist the urge to consider each source and then dismiss it as a possibility! You can come up with an explanation for all 6 sources.
- Part 5: Are you mentally prepared to talk to the other person? Do you see the other person as a villain? Are you curious, or do you want to punish the other person?
- Part 6: As you think about it, which of the six sources of influence may be causing the other person to do what he or she did or is doing?
- Part 7: Describe the gap. Please write what you will say to the person in 2-3 sentences. First, describe the gap – what was expected versus what was observed. Don't forget to end with a question. Start with good intentions. Finally, if you start to tell yourself a story about the other person-share your path. Start with the facts, and then tentatively share your conclusion.

3. Third paper – This last paper is a culmination of the course and skills you will need to efficiently confront the problem you identified in the confrontation you need to address with someone (i.e., the gap to which you need to hold this person accountable). As such, I want you to describe your action plan – what you plan to do in confronting the person. This includes all the information from the previous papers as well as addressing the questions in parts 1 and 2 below (for the third paper). You may also include potential problems you might encounter during the confrontation and what you plan to do about each (e.g., might other issues crop up; do you anticipate having to restore safety?). There really is no right or wrong answers with this assignment. I will be looking to make sure that you have put some thought into your confrontation and that you have learned some of the skills taught in the course.

Part 1: What motivation elements may be present?

- i. Personal motivation:
  - 1. is the behavior you want from the other person intrinsically satisfying?
  - 2. Is it noxious, boring, repetitive, etc.?
- ii. Social motivation:
  - 1. Are others, including the boss, encouraging the right behavior?
  - 2. What might you or others be doing to actually produce the bad behavior?
- iii. Structural motivation:
  - 1. How about the formal reward system?
  - 2. Is the person rewarded for doing something other than the desired behavior?
- iv. Does the other person understand the consequences? If not, what will it take to make the invisible visible?

Part 2: What ability elements may be present?

- i. Personal ability
  - 1. Does the person have the knowledge required?
  - 2. Does he or she have the required intellectual and physical skills?
- ii. Social ability
  - 1. Are other providing the necessary information?
  - 2. Are others providing help, resources, and materials?
- iii. Structural ability
  - 1. Is the work layout and designing adequate?
  - 2. Do systems, policies, and other *things* help or hinder?

Final Examination:

The final examination will be posted to D2L and it is due by midnight on the due date below.

**University Policy**

Drop Policy

Information about university drop policy and dates is at this website:

<http://registrar.okstate.edu/>

Click on “class schedules,” and “short, internet, and outreach courses”

To drop this course, contact the Registrar’s office, (405) 744-6876, or drop through SIS (Student Information Services).

Academic Integrity

Oklahoma State University is committed to the maintenance of the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct of its members. This level of ethical behavior and integrity will be maintained in this course. Participating in a behavior that violates academic integrity (e.g., unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, multiple submissions, cheating on examinations, fabricating information, helping another person cheat, unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, and fraudulently altering academic records) will result in your being sanctioned. Violations may subject you to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination or course, receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript (F!), and being suspended from the University. You have the right to appeal the charge. Contact the Office of Academic Affairs, 101 Whitehurst, 405-744-5627, <http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu/>.

Accessibility

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact the instructor as soon as possible, so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunity. For more information about OSU Student Disability Services, please go to: <http://sds.okstate.edu/>



**Tentative Schedule**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Due</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	Introduction and syllabus; Lesson 1: Get Unstuck; Lesson 2: Start with Heart	First paper	April 10 <sup>th</sup> by midnight CST
<b>Week 2</b>	Lesson 3: Master my stories; Lesson 4: Describe the Gap; Lesson 5: Make it Safe	Second paper	April 17 <sup>th</sup> by midnight CST
<b>Week 3</b>	Lesson 6: Diagnose; Lesson 7: Make it Easy; Lesson 8: Make it Motivating	Third paper	April 24 <sup>th</sup> by midnight CST
<b>Week 4</b>	Lesson 9: Move to Action	Final Exam	April 28 <sup>th</sup> by midnight CST

**Internet Netiquette Guidelines**

A melding of the words "network" and "etiquette", **netiquette** refers to the manner in which communication is conveyed in an electronic environment.

Here are some guidelines for communication within this course:

- REFRAIN FROM USING ALL CAPS. It is considered SHOUTING when communicating online.
- Do not post or forward offensive or racially insensitive jokes or comments.
- Be careful with humor and sarcasm.
- Don't respond to personal attacks: Contact the instructor for action and referral.
- Always add in the subject line a concise statement describing the email or discussion post.
- Respect others' opinions. If you disagree with what another has said, post your thoughts in an objective, respectful manner. Do not make remarks that can be taken personally.
- Reflect upon the text you have entered before posting.
- Keep the discussion within the scope of the course material.
- Communication should be grammatically correct. Adhere to correct sentence structure, grammar, and spelling conventions. Proofread for errors before posting a message.
- Before you respond to a threaded message, read all the messages related to that message that have been previously posted.
- Send out an email to a group using the blind carbon copy field – BCC does not allow your recipients to view who was sent the email.