6.979 Multi-Stakeholder Negotiation for Technical Experts
Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00 p.m., Room 33-116
(Draft Syllabus from Dec 2019)

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TBD - Contact

Overview
Engineering requires negotiating with many stakeholders: internally and externally. All technical innovators, leaders, and members of diverse teams, need to align efforts and overcome differences. Learn experientially the strategies and proven techniques that improve communications, relationships, and decision-making in groups - using simulations, role-plays, case studies and video analysis. Students who took 6.978 in the Fall term will enhance their toolkit of intra and inter personal reflection and negotiation skills; expanding their knowledge to applications of multi-stakeholder negotiation. However, no prior experience in negotiation is required.

Technical experts don’t just negotiate one-on-one. Engineering team members and leaders are required to deal with their own team, other stakeholders within their organizations and many external parties. This is true of academic lab settings, and also of commercial technology development environments, government projects, certification and regulation. When the number of stakeholders increases, so do the complexities associated with communications, relationships, cultural differences and power dynamics. Effective professionals need to be able to map a multi-stakeholder situation and decide when and how to negotiate, facilitate, build winning coalitions, resolve conflicts and strive for consensus.

Targeted to graduate students in engineering and joint engineering-business programs such as SDM, IDM, and LGO. This course is offered through the Gordon-MIT Engineering Leadership Program. Limited to 36 students.
Permission of instructor required (but no prior experience in negotiation is required).

Course Units: 6 credits, 2-0-4
Readings
2. Case Materials
3. Additional reading materials provided by date via the Learning Modules Course Site.

Learning Objectives
Students completing this class will become more confident and capable in:
- Be able to describe the theory underlying multi-party negotiation situations
- Understanding dynamics of multi-stakeholder decision making and negotiation
- Helping to facilitate better group discussions and team meetings
- Supporting group leadership: when to follow, lead, postpone, or leverage an external facilitator
- Building skills for creating alignment of interests of multiple stakeholders and resolving conflict
- Developing a reflective model of their own personal theory of practice for multi-party relationship management

Course Format
Our class meets for 12, 2 hours sessions over the spring term of 2020. Class sessions will be of two types. In half of the sessions, students will participate in an experiential, complex, major multiparty role play simulation that will require the full time of the class (on-time attendance is key); The other half of the sessions will review the most recent simulation’s critical moments and outcomes (as selected by negotiation observers), followed by an instructor led discussion of the class’s experiences, and presentation of additional material. Additional material will include shorter exercises, related case studies from current events, and linked aspects of multiparty negotiations. Examples of major learning activities include:

**Negotiation Exercises:** The course is built around a series of experiential negotiation simulations, exercises, and case studies. We will practice negotiating in groups during class sessions. The readings and discussions led by the instructors will provide additional knowledge for maximize your personal style and learning from these negotiation simulations. In these exercises, you should approach the role through the perspective of the designated person, even if the role feels at odds with your own inclinations. After negotiation exercises, students will complete a reflection paper.

**Role Play Preparations:** The use of experiential learning exercises rests fully on students being prepared for each negotiation simulation, and on being fully present during the negotiation. For some exercises, you will be required to submit a negotiation planning document in class. In every situation, you will need to prepare in advance of the exercise.

**Negotiation Debriefs and Reflections:** These activities will follow each exercise in order to enhance your learning from the experiences. As part of the learning experience, the teaching
team will engage with you via feedback on reflection papers you submit after certain negotiation simulations. Over the course, students will also take turns acting as an observer to negotiation exercises. Observers will record, review, and edit footage of their groups negotiation process, enabling them to capture critical moments in very brief video analysis assignments which will be shared with the class during debrief sessions.

**Personal Learning**: There is no “best way” to negotiate or exercise influence over group dynamics. This course aims to provide you with the tools, experience, and space to discover what works for you as an individual in various situations and coalitional dynamics. This requires experimenting with new behaviors, expanding out of your comfort zone, and, occasionally, failing. The teaching team will do everything in their power to ensure the class environment lends itself to exploration and personal development and asks that you contribute to an environment of discovery and creativity. Be mindful of your personal strengths and weaknesses and try to monitor your opportunities for personal development, both in and out of class.

**Major Course Activities and Grading**

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<td>Post-Negotiation Reflections</td>
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<td>30%</td>
<td>Video Analysis Submissions</td>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>Personal Theory of Practice</td>
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**Class Participation**

Participation grades are based on preparation and participation in negotiation simulations and contributions to classroom discussions.

The negotiation simulations are carefully curated and constitute the central learning experiences in this course. You will need to be fully prepared for each day to ensure you are able to capitalize on the time we share. **Your participation is critical for the learning experience of your peers.** We trust that, as a member of the class, you are committed to come to class prepared to provide your negotiation partner with the best possible learning opportunity. If you are unprepared, your negotiation partner’s learning will suffer. Your, and your peers, learning experiences in the class are of paramount importance to the teaching team - disregard for your peers will affect your participation grade.

In addition to negotiation simulations, this course has a large debrief and discussion element. Participation in these discussions is required, and is evaluated on **quality over quantity**. The teaching team does not track the number of hand raises, but rather that you intend to make insightful contributions to class learning. We recognize that everyone may have different styles of thoughtful reflection, and look forward to hearing your perspective.

The teaching team will be devoting considerable time to curating your learning experience. Missing classes, tardiness, and lack of preparation will mean not only that your learning experience is diminished
but also that your peers’ learning opportunities will be reduced. A tardiness to class of more than 5 minutes will result in half the attendance grade for that session. If for any reason you cannot meet the expectations noted above, please contact the teaching team as early as possible.

**Post-Negotiation Reflections**

These one-page (maximum) papers are a crucial tool for developing your ability as a negotiator and their importance is reflected in the percentage of your overall grade. Reflection papers should address some of the key issues noted below. These papers will be treated as confidential among participants and the teaching team.

Reflection papers should not be detailed chronologies of the negotiation process. Instead, they should focus on analysis and insights. Discuss how the concepts and assigned readings informed your reflections on the negotiation.

*Other issues that can be addressed include:*

1. How did the negotiation process and outcome compare to your plans and/or expectations? What were the critical strategies or turns of events?
2. What surprised you most about your behaviors and/or emotions? About those of the other parties in the negotiation?
3. Who exercised the greatest influence and control over the negotiation process? How and why?
4. What are the main takeaway lessons from the negotiation?
5. How was this negotiation unique from those in past exercises or experiences?
6. If you had an opportunity to do this over again, with the same people, what would you do differently?

*These reflection papers will be evaluated on:*

1. Your ability to synthesize and integrate information from the readings.
2. The quality of your answers to selected questions noted above.
3. The quality and usefulness of the feedback pertaining to others.
4. Overall evidence of insight and personal learning.

Papers will be due, via Learning Modules, on Friday by 11:59AM each week following a simulation.

**Video Assessment Assignments**

Each student will act as an observer to one or two of the major negotiation exercises. Observers will record, review, and edit footage of their group’s negotiation process, enabling them to capture critical moments in very brief *video analysis* assignments which will be shared with the class during debrief sessions.
For example, a short 3-minute video on the topic of ground rules and trust in multiparty negotiation may include an analyses and edited video that highlight the following key moments:

- a statement made early in the negotiation agreeing to a ground rule for discussion, then
- an exchange later in the negotiation that contradicted that agreement, and
- the ensuing escalation and loss of trust that ensued.

Video Assessment Assignments will be due **each week following a simulation on Friday by 11:59AM.**

**Video Assessment Submission Process**

Students should upload their edited, 3-minute video assessment to a shared Dropbox folder (that will be shared with all participants on the first day of class). In addition, students should share a direct link to their video via Learning Modules, under assignments.

**Personal Theory of Practice**

A key element of being an effective negotiator and leader is the ability to incorporate skills, strategies, and techniques developed over the course of the semester with a nuanced understanding of your bias, preferences, and negotiating style. The final assignment for this class will be to review your journey - via your reflections and the feedback you received - to construct a document outlining your personal theory of practice in the field of multiparty negotiation and facilitation.

This document should be no longer than two pages (double spaced) and should explore your personal style of engagement with key aspects of the course, which have been uncovered in reflections and through peer-feedback on your reflections. Examples of core competencies include, but are not limited to: engaging in distributive bargaining; your ability to creatively collaborate to solve problems; being able to build and manage coalition dynamics; claiming value created at the negotiating table; identifying your values and ethics; understanding and engaging with your emotions efficiently; and balancing power imbalances while influencing others.

An impactful personal theory of practice should build on your experiences in the class and also be oriented to help you meet future challenges. Use this as an opportunity to discuss what near future opportunities and obstacles you anticipate encountering - and how your personal theory of practice will inform your strategy for success.

- **A draft of your personal theory of practice will be due on March 17th, 2020.**
- **Peer feedback for personal theory of practice is due on April 14th, 2020.**
- **Your final personal theory of practice is due on May 12th, 2020.**
General Course Expectations

**Preparation**
Come to class with assigned materials reviewed and ready to contribute to class discussions.

**Proactivity**
Be proactive in both planning and working. If you are experiencing - or anticipate experiencing - any problems, difficulties, or uncertainties, let the teaching team know as soon as possible, our goal is to promote your and your peers’ learning experience.

**Punctuality**
Plan to start class and complete all assignments *on time*.

**Personal Responsibility**
We expect all students to take responsibility for their learning and all course obligations, especially those aligned with MIT’s Academic Integrity. If you have questions about MIT’s Academic Policy visit [https://integrity.mit.edu/](https://integrity.mit.edu/). In addition, this course thrives on debate and discussion, which requires respect and civility for your peers and the teaching team.

**Confidentiality**
This course hinges on experiential learning which requires trust and experimentation with your personal boundaries - this can lead to emotional conversations about your experiences in and out of the classroom. Participants are expected to respect and care for the feelings of their peers - content of the simulations, personal reflections, and discussions of the class should remain private to the class. To help with future iterations of the class please do not share any of the materials, exercises, or video footage with folks outside of the class.

**Students with Disabilities**
If you need disability-related accommodations, please let us know early in the semester. If you have not yet been approved for accommodations, contact the Student Disability Services at sds-all@mit.edu for more information. We look forward to working with you to assist with approved accommodations.

**Inclusive Learning**
MIT and GEL values an inclusive learning environment. We aim to create a sense of community in our class; a place where everyone will be treated with respect and where everyone feels safe to share their ideas and perspectives. We welcome individuals of all backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, religious and political affiliations – and other visible and nonvisible
differences. Participants are expected to contribute to an open and inclusive environment for every other participant. If you feel this standard is violated or moving in this negative direction, please let us know (Adapted from guidelines recommended by the MIT Teaching and Learning Lab at http://tll.mit.edu/).

Academic Integrity

Because a fundamental principle of academic integrity is that you must fairly represent the source of the intellectual work that you submit for credit, it is important that individual contributions to the team effort be properly identified. The student’s initials in the subheading of the sections, wiki contributions and/or slides that s/he contributed is sufficient. In addition, all referenced materials must be fully annotated, and a complete bibliography is expected for each written assignment and major presentation. Visual communications (i.e., tables, figures, simulations, visualizations) are highly encouraged. Each student must access, read and certify that they abide by the MIT Academic Integrity Handbook and Conduct for all class assignments https://integrity.mit.edu

Schedule of Topics
More details, activities and reading assignments for each class will be posted in the January 2020 update to the syllabus. Syllabus may change to accommodate unplanned opportunities or circumstances

Feb 4 - Introduction to Negotiation of Two and More Stakeholders
  Session 1: Introduction to Negotiation Skills for Future Technical Experts and Leaders

Feb 11 - Stakeholder Decision Making
  Session 2: Introduction to Multi Party Negotiation

Feb 25 - Stakeholder Decision Making
  Session 3: Navigating Criteria and Process in Multiparty Discussions, Negotiations, and Decision Making

Mar 3 - Multiparty Negotiations
  Session 4: Backtables and Internal Stakeholders (Part 1)

Mar 10 - Multiparty Negotiations
  Session 5: Backtables and Internal Stakeholders (Part 2)

Mar 17 - Multiparty Negotiations
  Session 6: Multiparty Negotiation, No Facilitation (Part 1a)

Mar 31 - Multiparty Negotiations
  Session 7: Multiparty Negotiation Facilitated (Part 1b)

Apr 7 - Multiparty Negotiations
  Session 8: Multiparty Negotiation (Part 2)

Apr 14 - Building Consensus
  Session 9: Multi-stakeholder Consensus and Spoilers (Part 1)

Apr 28 - Building Consensus
  Session 10: Multi-stakeholder Consensus and Spoilers (Part 2)

May 5 - Managing Disputes
  Session 11: Dispute Resolution and Mediation (Part 1)

May 12 - Managing Disputes
  Session 12: Dispute Resolution and Mediation (Part 2)