

DRAFT

CONF 658
Diversity and Difference in Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Spring, 2008

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Office Hours: By appointment

Class Sessions: February 16th & 17th
April 5th & 6th
May 3rd & 4th
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM – Arlington Campus
Original Building Room 268

Course Description

This course is intended to be an intensive exploration of the most critical elements of cultural diversity while building understanding and awareness of one's self in relation to others. Together we will investigate creative strategies of approaching and dealing with issues of diversity that are intertwined with perceptions of identity, boundaries and worldviews in individuals, communities, organizations and nations. During this course we will consider meaning making, develop an awareness of the dynamics of diversity, and understand the potential impact of critical turning points in conflict situations. We will examine the importance of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, class, age and ability in understanding and mitigating conflict as well as work experientially through self reflection, participant-observation and case studies. We will meet during three intensive weekend sessions, and students will engage in weekly online discussions of reading assignments, other reflective exercises and group projects.

Course Objectives

1. Define what is meant and encompassed by the term diversity;
2. Identify the various characteristics that shape identity;
3. Explore the difference between internal and external perceptions of one's identity;
4. Identify what characteristics of yourself and others make you uncomfortable or uneasy in a way that would interfere with your ability to mitigate or resolve a conflict; and
5. Begin to develop strategies to mitigate diversity based problems.

Basic Course Requirements

1. Students should arrive to sessions on time and be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities. Seminars will involve discussions and activities which require your preparation. The quality of our discussions will depend on the level of preparation by the entire class. *In our pursuit of serious scholarly inquiry we will explore difficult and controversial topics, concepts and issues. It will be our collective responsibility to maintain an intellectually rigorous and respectful environment.*
2. Barring exceptional circumstances, you are expected to attend all weekends for the full time scheduled.
3. Please turn in your assignments on time. In keeping with departmental policy, incomplete grades will be given only in cases of personal or immediate family illness.
4. Written work must be typed, double spaced and in the Times New Roman 12 point font. All papers must have page numbers, and endnotes or footnotes when appropriate. Please remember to put your name and date on the first page of the paper.

University Resources and Assistance

- If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
- The Writing Center is available to all Mason students and offers online and individual consultations as well as workshops and mini courses. Writers at all levels can benefit. Each Mason campus has a Writing Center. You can find them in the Arlington Campus in the Original Building, Room 334C, by phone at 703-993-4491 or online at: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>
- You are responsible for knowing, understanding and following Mason's Honor Code, which is found at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> Be certain that all work submitted is your own and that you use sources appropriately. I strongly recommend that you review requirements regarding use and citation of sources prior to submitting your work.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation and Online Discussions (10%)

- All students are expected to participate in this seminar style class. Absences will be excused only in exceptional circumstances. Online assignments and class participation will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Case Study and Class Presentation (25%)

- The class will be divided into groups to present a case study of diversity dynamics in conflict resolution. Each group will prepare a 40 minute presentation. The presentation should build on the readings and discussions held to date. **Due on Weekend 2, Saturday.**

Write a 500 word op-ed or letter to the editor (10%).

- Class participants will be given basic guidelines for how to write an op-ed and/or letter to the editor on the first day of class. The topic should be approved by the Professor prior to the completion of the assignment. **Due on Weekend 2, Sunday.**

Participant Observation and Interview Exercise (40%)

- Students will engage in participant observation with a religious, ethnic or other group for 2 weeks. For example, students may attend two consecutive religious services. You should select a group with which you are unfamiliar. In addition to attending the religious service, you should arrange to speak with the priest, rabbi, imam, monk or so forth for a 15 -30 minute interview about the group. You will be expected to write a 20 page paper. **Due on Weekend 3, Sunday.**

Diversity Journal (15%)

- Your job is to notice the differences around you (at work, home, school and so forth). Using your insights and reflections, answer the following question: How does my cultural identity affect my communication and participation in conflict situations? The journal must include at least five distinct experiences that you encounter in the course of daily living and the other reflections should be about postings from me and your colleagues online. Reflections in the journal may include thoughts on the assigned readings and activities conducted throughout the course. **Due Weekend 3, Sunday**

Required Readings

Books:

Abrams, Dominic, Michael A. Hogg and Jose M. Marques. Eds.
The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion. Psychology Press: New York 2005 (Cloth \$75.00).

Adams, M. ed. et al, Ximena Zuniga, Heather Hockman, Carmelita Rose Casteneda, Maurianne Adams and Warren J. Blumenfeld.
Readings for Diversity and Social Justice: an Anthology on racism, sexism, Anti-Semitism, heterosexism, classism and ableism. Routledge: London 2000 (Paperback \$38.95)

Avruch, Kevin
Culture and Conflict Resolution. United States Institutes of Peace Press: Washington, DC 1998 (Paperback \$14.95)

Docherty, Jayne
Learning Lessons From Waco: When the Parties Bring Their Gods to the Negotiation Table. Syracuse University Press: Syracuse 2001 (Paperback \$18.95)

Okun, Barbara
Understanding diversity: A Learning-as-Practice Primer. Wadsworth Publishing: 1998 (Paperback \$35.00)

Additional Readings:

McIntosh, Peggy. “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” The Wellesley College Center for Research for Women. Excerpted from Working Paper 189. Wellesley, MA 1988. (1-7). Available on WebCt.

“From Good Friday to Good Relations: sectarianism, racism, and the Northern Ireland state”
Robbie McVeigh and Bill Rolston
Race & Class 2007; 48; 1 page (1-23)
Available on WebCt

Mac Ginty, Roger. “Ethno-National Conflict and Hate Crime”
American Behavioral Scientist 2001; 45: 639-653
Available on WebCt

Course Schedule

Weekend I - Saturday, February 16th

Diversity: Yours, Mine and Theirs

1. Introductions, approach and expectations;
2. Overview of the course and assignments;
3. Is diversity “code” for being politically correct?
4. A working definition of diversity;
5. Select groups for project; and
6. Housekeeping.

Readings:

Avruch, Kevin, Culture & Conflict Resolution
Parts I, II & III

Adams, Maurianne et. al. Readings for Diversity and Social Justice
Pages 1-219

Okun, Barbara, et. al. Understanding Diversity: A Learning-as-Practice Primer
Entire text

Abrams, Dominic, et. al. The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion
Chapter One

Assignments:

- Begin working on your diversity journal.
- Meet with groups to plan and prepare presentation.
- Check WebCt regularly for postings, announcements and other resources.
- Select topic for your final paper.
- Please keep up to date with your reading assignments.

Weekend I - Sunday, February 17th

Race, Gender, Power and Perspectives

- Check in to discuss questions, comments, etc., from previous seminar;
- There is more to race than black and white;
- Gender and how it is politicized;
- Fault lines and their role in diversity based conflicts;
- Power and the relationship between social identity & social inequality;
- Making meaning - recognizing and understanding worldviews; and
- The role of diversity in conflict settings.

Readings:

Avruch, Kevin, Culture and Conflict Resolution
Part IV

“From Good Friday to Good Relations: sectarianism, racism, and the Northern Ireland state”

McVeigh, Robbie and Bill Rolston
Race & Class 2007; 48; 1 (1-23)
Available on WebCt

Abrams, Dominic, et. al. The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion
Chapters 4, 5 & 11

Docherty, Jayne
Learning Lessons From Waco: When the Parties Bring Their Gods to the
Negotiation Table.
Chapters 1, 2, 3 & the Introduction

Weekend II - Saturday, April 5th

Stereotypes and Media Influence on Identity

- Check in to discuss questions, comments, etc.
- Gender revisited;
- Understanding and respecting difference (gender, sexual identification, race, ability and the concept of beauty);
- Fault lines and their role in diversity based conflicts;
- Boundary behaviors – the factors that influence a group’s willingness to expand or limit its membership;
- Behavioral responses to social exclusion;
- The impact of media on self & group perceptions (*Video: Dispelling Myths, Restoring Hope*): and
- Group Presentations Part One.

Readings:

Adams, Maurianne, et. al. Readings for Diversity & Social Justice
pages 220-318

Abrams, Dominic, et. al. The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion
Chapters 6, 7 & 9

Docherty, Jayne
Learning Lessons From Waco: When the Parties Bring Their Gods to the
Negotiation Table.
Chapters 4, 5, 6 & 9

Mac Ginty, Roger. “Ethno-National Conflict and Hate Crime”
American Behavioral Scientist. 2001; 45: 639-653
Available on WebCt

Assignments:

- Continue working on your diversity journal.
- Be prepared to make group presentation.
- Continue to check WebCt regularly for postings, announcements and other resources.
- Continue working on your final paper.
- Please keep up to date with your reading assignments.

Weekend II - Sunday April 6th

Social Inclusion and Exclusion and Managing Multiple Identities

- Check in to discuss questions, comments, etc.
- Intergroup Contact and Conflict;
- Boundary Behavior – shunning, exclusion and other forms of marginalization;
- Sexism, racism, ageism and ableism and the search for common ground; and
- Group Presentations, Part II.

Readings:

Adams, Maurianne, et. al. Readings for Diversity and Social Justice
pages 319 – 498

Abrams, Dominic, et. al. The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion
Chapters 8, 10 & 12

Assignments:

- Continue to participate in WebCt discussions.
- Continue working on your diversity journal and be prepared to submit it on Sunday, May 4th.
- Continue to work on your final paper and be prepared to submit it on Sunday, May 4th.

Weekend III - Saturday, May 3rd

Race, Power, Economics and Immigration

- Check in to discuss questions, comments, etc. from previous seminar;
- Confronting Immigration;
- What do we know about the new immigrants?
- Challenging our assumptions, fears and anger;
- Power and its role in U.S. immigration policy;
- Immigration and Social Justice; and
- Video viewing: either “El Otro Lado” (The Other Side) or “Innocent Voices”

Readings:

Abrams, Dominic, et. al. The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion
Chapters 13 & 14

Assignments:

- Wrap up discussions on WebCt..
- Complete your work on your diversity journal and be prepared to submit it on Sunday, May 4th.
- Complete work on your final paper and be prepared to submit it on Sunday, May 4th.

Weekend III - Sunday, May 4th

Strategies to Mitigate Diversity Based Problems

- Check in to discuss questions, comments, etc. from previous seminar;
- Discussions about video themes;
- Thoughts about strategies to improve relations between and within groups;
- Discussion of the importance of incorporating realism in long range diversity plans;
- Comments and opinions about the course;
- Celebration and Congratulations; and
- Evaluations to be completed by the class representative and turned in to appropriate office.