

CONF 202 – Dialogue and Difference

Semester: Spring 2011

Section/CRN: 001/10893

Class Time: Wednesdays 1:30 – 4:15 p.m.

Location: Innovation Hall, Room 132

Office Hours: By Appointment

Instructors: Leila Peterson, Undergraduate Program in Conflict Analysis and Resolution lpetersh@gmu.edu & Michael P. Smith English Language Institute msmit2@gmu.edu

Course Description and Objectives

Communicating across differences of age, gender, language, culture, and political orientation, and in different contextual situations, is a useful skill for every individual. It is also integral to the success of any attempt to resolve conflict, whether individual, group/institutional, or global. An important part of this course is the collaboration between the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and the English Language Institute (ELI). By offering a context for students to learn with individuals from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, we will all gain insight into the role of culture in dialogue. An understanding of culture and its influence on our perspectives is essential for effective communication.

Through interactive exercises, students will develop an understanding of the challenges of communicating across differences and the skills required to communicate effectively. Students will engage in a workshop on dialogue skill-building and multiple dialogue sessions with the ELI students, first learning the theory and skills that underlie successful participation and facilitation of dialogue and then applying them in the exploration of issues such as gender, religion, and international affairs.

Objectives:

- Understand the conflict resolution theory supporting dialogue, including identity and the construction of difference, the role of dialogue in democracy, and the role of dialogue in conflict resolution.
- Build individual communication skills related to cross-cultural communication and dialogue.
- Become familiar with a variety of dialogue models and group process techniques and be able to apply them in designing and implementing dialogues.

Course Requirements

A. Participation, Knowledge of Course Materials and Contributions in the Classroom (30%)

Students are expected to participate fully in all exercises and complete all weekly, required readings in preparation for class discussion. There will be several in-class quizzes on the readings.

B. Reflection papers on dialogue sessions and completion of associated assignments (35%)

Students will engage in five facilitated dialogue sessions. Students will complete a paper (2-3 pages) reflecting on *each* dialogue session. In addition, each student will also be asked to help design a dialogue session, including designing format and preparing questions.

C. Final Paper (35%)

Final paper that integrates the dialogue experience, lectures, class exercises and the readings.

Class Policies and Procedures

Students are responsible for completing individual and group assignments on time. You will be penalized the equivalent of a 1/2 letter grade for each day the assignment is late.

Some class assignments and readings will be sent via e-mail and students are responsible for checking GMU email and keeping up-to-date with these. Incomplete grades will not be granted save in cases of personal or immediate family illness or emergency.

Please familiarize yourself with the Honor System and Code, as stated in the George Mason University *Undergraduate Catalog*. When you are given an assignment as an individual, the work must be your own. Some of your work may be collaborative; source material for group projects and work of individual group members must be carefully documented for individual contributions. For an overview of the Honor Code, see: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

University Resources and Assistance

Writing Center: The Writing Center provides tutors who can help you develop ideas and revise papers at no charge. It can sometimes accommodate walk-ins, but generally it is best to call for an appointment. The services of the Writing Center are also available online.

Location: Robinson Hall A, room 114. **Contact:** (703) 993-1200 or <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

Hours: Wednesday through Thursday from 9:30 to 7:30. Friday hours are 9:30 to 2:30.

Disability Resource Center: The Disability Resource Center assists students with learning or physical conditions affecting learning. Students with learning differences that require special conditions for exams or other writing assignments should provide documentation provided by the Disability Resource Center. Please see one of the instructors the first week of classes.

Location: SUB I, Room 222 **Contact:** 703-993-2474 www.gmu.edu/student/drc/

Electronic Reserves

Adobe Acrobat must be installed on your computer to view and print some E-Reserves Readings. E-Reserves permit students to access Course Readings remotely from home or office, and allow students to view and print materials using Adobe Acrobat Reader. All users of the E-Reserves must comply with the University Policy and Copy Right Law (Title 17, United States Code)

Accessing E-Reserves:

1. Go to <http://oscr.gmu.edu>
2. Click on the magnifying glass (Search electronic reserves)
3. Using the drop-down boxes, select the course [CONF 202-001] and instructor [Staff]
 - a. The section and faculty are opposite of what is on the schedule
 - b. Be sure it says "Spring 2011"
4. Enter in the password (**to be given in class**) and click submit to view the item
5. To view and print an article click on the small PDF button or the Link button if available

If you experience problems with an electronic reserve item or need additional help please contact the E-Reserves Coordinator at 993-9043. If you need additional assistance please e-mail ereserves@gmu.edu.

Required Readings

The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation, by Daniel Yankelovich. (Available in the Bookstore)

The Little Book of Cool Tools for Hot Topics: Group Tools to Facilitate Meetings When Things are Hot, by Ron Kraybill & Evelyn Wright. (Available in the Bookstore)

Course packet available through electronic reserve.

Weekly Themes, Readings and Assignments

WEEK 1 WEDNESDAY JANUARY 26

Introduction to Dialogue

Introductions and expectations; Group norms; Overview of course and syllabus; The principles of dialogue

Theories of Dialogue

The role of dialogue in conflict resolution and social change; philosophical and theoretical approaches to dialogue

Week 2 Wednesday February 2

Identity and the Construction of Difference

Readings Due:

“Dialogue: Something Old; Something New” by Glenna Gerard and Linda Ellinor.
[Handout]

“The Complexity of Identity: ‘Who am I?’” by Beverly Daniel Tatum, p. 9-14 & “The Cycle of Socialization” by Bobbie Harro, p. 15-21. *Readings for diversity and social justice: An Anthology on Racism, Sexism, Anti-semitism, Heterosexism, Classism and Ableism*, Edited By Maurianne Adams, et al. [Ereserve]

“Constructing Categories of Difference” by Karen Rosenblum and Toni-Michelle Travis (eds) from *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race, Sex, Gender, Social Class and Sexual Orientation*, pp. 1-33. [Ereserve]

WEEK 3 WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 9

Culture and Communication Workshop – Part I (Listening Skills) Inquiry and Reflection

Quiz on readings

Readings Due:

“Chapter 1: Overcoming the Dialogue Deficit”, in *The Magic of Dialogue*, pp.9-31.

“The Living Technology of Dialogue: Listening; Inquiry and Reflection” by Linda Ellinor and Glenna Gerard in *Dialogue: Rediscovering the Transforming Power of Conversation*, pp. 98-127. [Ereserve]

WEEK 4 WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 16

Dialogue Skills Workshop: Part II Suspension of Judgment & Identification of Assumptions

Quiz on readings

Readings Due:

“The Living Technology of Dialogue: Suspension of Judgment; Identification of Assumptions” by Linda Ellinor and Glenna Gerard, in *Dialogue: Rediscovering the Transforming Power of Conversation*, pp. 59-97. [Ereserve]

“Chapter 2: What Makes Dialogue Unique?” & “Chapter 3: The Billion-dollar Dialogue,” in *The Magic of Dialogue*, pp.35-57.

WEEK 5 WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 23

Dialogue Skills Workshop: Part III Facilitation & Techniques for Group Dialogue

Quiz on readings

Readings:

“Chapter 2: Basic Tools,” pp. 7-25 and “Chapter 4: Tools for Gathering Ideas and Options” and Chapter 5: Tools for Dialogue” in *The Little Book of Cool Tools for Hot Topics* by Ron Kraybill and Evelyn Wright (pp. 30-76)

“A Brief User’s Guide to Open Space Technology”,
http://www.openspaceworld.com/users_guide.htm

WEEK 6 WEDNESDAY MARCH 2

Dialogue #1: Race & Ethnicity (instructor-led dialogue)

Screening: “Crash”

[Note: This movie has a running time of 112 minutes]

Readings:

“Chapter 4: Introducing Dialogue into Routine Meetings” and “Chapter 5: Transforming Casual Encounters Through Dialogue,” in *The Magic of Dialogue*, pp. 58-89.

DUE: Dialogue 1 Reflection Assignment – Sunday March 6 (by 11:59 PM)

WEEK 7 WEDNESDAY MARCH 9

Dialogue 2: Social Implications of Reproductive Technologies

Readings:

“Chapter 6: Planned Dialogue” and “Chapter 7: The Long and the Short of It,” in *The Magic of Dialogue*, pp. 90-128.

DUE: Dialogue 2 Reflection Assignment – Sunday, March 20 (by 11:59 PM)

WEEK 8 WEDNESDAY MARCH 16

Spring Break – No Class

WEEK 9 WEDNESDAY MARCH 23

Dialogue 3: The Muslim World and the West

Readings:

“Chapter 8: Ten Potholes of the Mind” and “Chapter 9: Cultural Fault-lines,” in *The Magic of Dialogue*, pp. 129-158.

DUE: Dialogue 3 Reflection Assignment – Sunday, March 27 (by 11:59 PM)

WEEK 10 WEDNESDAY MARCH 30

Dialogue 4: Gender Roles in the Family and Workplace

Readings:

“Chapter 10: Proxy Dialogues” and “Chapter 11: The Blind Spot and Other Resistances,” in *The Magic of Dialogue*, pp. 159-176.

DUE: Dialogue 4 Reflection Assignment – Sunday, April 3 (by 11:59 PM)

WEEK 11 WEDNESDAY APRIL 6

Dialogue 5: Immigration

[Note: Dialogue 5 Reflection Assignment is not due until Wednesday, April 13]

Readings:

“Chapter 12: Dialogue as a Path to Public Judgment” and “Chapter 13: From Expert Knowledge to Wisdom,” in *The Magic of Dialogue*, pp. 177-200.

WEEK 12 WEDNESDAY APRIL 13

The Role of the Media and Technology in Public Discourse

Readings

“Media and International Conflict” by Eytan Gilboa in *The Sage Handbook of Conflict Communication: Integrating Theory, Research, and Practice*, pp. 595-625. [Ereserve]

DUE: Dialogue 5 Reflection Assignment

WEEK 13

WEDNESDAY APRIL 20

Dialogue and Democracy/Power and Dialogue

[WATCH FARMINGVILLE]

Readings:

Broome, B. J. and Jakobsson Hatay, A. (2006). Building Peace in Divided Societies: The Role of Intergroup Dialogue, in John Oetzel and Stella Ting-Toomey (eds), *Handbook of Conflict Communication*, pp. 627-662, Sage Publications. [Ereserve]

WEEK 14

WEDNESDAY APRIL 27

Dialogue Process Design/Dialogue and Action

Media portrayal of Muslims – Guest Speaker

Readings:

“Chapter 14: The Struggle for the Soul of America,” pp. 201-218.

“The Content/Process Balance in Intergroup Dialogue” by Ruby L. Beale and David Schoem, in *Intergroup Dialogue*, pp. 266-279.” [Ereserve]

WEEK 15

WEDNESDAY MAY 4

Dialogue & Art

Final Paper Due

Readings:

“Interview: Paulo Freire: Discussing Dialogue” pp. 276-293. in *Dialogues in Public Art* by Tom Finkelpearl & Vito Acconci. [Ereserve]

Reflection and Celebration!!!