

## **CONF 325 – Dialogue and Difference**

Semester: Fall 2015

Section/CRN: 002/82705

Class Time: Wednesdays 10:30 – 1:10 p.m.

Location: Global Salon A

Office Hours: By Appointment.

Instructors: Leila Peterson, Undergraduate Program in Conflict Analysis and Resolution [lpetersh@gmu.edu](mailto:lpetersh@gmu.edu) & Michael P. Smith English Language Institute [msmit2@gmu.edu](mailto: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 INTO. 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 INTO 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 (20%)**

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. Students will occasionally be asked to participate in blog posts.

### **B. Reflection Papers (30%)**

Students will engage in six facilitated dialogue sessions and will complete five reflection papers. Students will complete a paper (2-3 pages) reflecting on *each* dialogue session, except for the week before your turn to lead the in-class dialogue.

**Students are required to integrate concepts from the course readings into ALL reflection assignments.**

### **C. Design and Implement a Dialogue (30%)**

Students will work in small groups to design a dialogue session, including developing the format and preparing questions. Each student will complete a 2-3 page reflection on the dialogue.

### **D. Final Paper (20%)**

Final paper that integrates the dialogue experience, lectures, class exercises and the readings. **Final Paper Due on December 16 by 11:59 pm via email.** If you do not receive a confirmation email by December 17 at 10 AM, please contact me ASAP to ensure that I have received your paper.

Extra Credit: There will be several opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester. These include participation in the Dialogue and Difference Campus-wide Dialogues and the INTO Field Trip.

## Class Policies and Procedures

**Cell Phones and Computers:** Please keep cell phones OFF during class. Use of computers is only permitted during lectures for note-taking. Computers should be shut off during class discussions, student presentations, exercises, and exams.

**Late Assignments:** 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.

**GMU Email:** 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.

**Honor Code:** *"To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: **Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.**"* For an overview of the Honor Code, see: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at [academicintegrity.gmu.edu](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu). All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

S-CAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it."

## 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/](http://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:** Are now available via BlackBoard.

## Required Readings

Stella Ting-Toomey in *Understanding Intercultural Communication*. (Available in the Bookstore)

Intergroup Dialogue: Deliberative Democracy in School, College, Community and Workplace. Edited by David Schoem and Sylvia Hurtado. (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)

Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives, by Howard J. Ross (Available in the Bookstore)

*Course packet available through electronic reserve.*

“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]

“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]

“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]

“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]

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

## Weekly Themes, Readings and Assignments

### WEEK 1 WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 2

#### **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 SEPTEMBER 9

#### **Identity and the Construction of Difference**

##### **Readings Due:**

“Dialogue: Something Old, Something New.” Copyright The Dialogue Group [Handed out in class]

“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]

Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives, by Howard J. Ross. Introduction: Blinded by the Light of our Bias, pp. xi-xxii. Chapter One: If You are Human, You are Biased, p. 1-16.

### WEEK 3 WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 16

#### **Culture and Communication Workshop – Part I (Listening Skills)**

#### **Inquiry and Reflection**

*Quiz on the readings*

##### **Readings Due:**

“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]

Chapter 1: Why Study Intercultural Communication? in *Understanding Intercultural Conflict* by Stella Ting-Toomey.

“Chapter 2: What is Intercultural Communication Flexibility?” in *Understanding Intercultural Conflict* by Stella Ting-Toomey.

**WEEK 4        WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 23**  
**Dialogue Skills Workshop: Part II Suspension of Judgment & Identification of Assumptions**

**Readings Due:**

“Chapter 3: What are the Essential Value Patterns?” in *Understanding Intercultural Conflict* by Stella Ting-Toomey.

“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]

**WEEK 5        WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 30**  
**Dialogue Skills Workshop: Part III Facilitation & Techniques for Group Dialogue Quiz on the 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](http://www.openspaceworld.com/users_guide.htm)

**WEEK 6        WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 7**  
**Dialogue #1: Instructor-led dialogue**  
**DUE: Dialogue 1 Reflection Paper – Friday, October 9 (by 11:59 PM)**

**Readings:**

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

“Chapter 6: What is the Connection between Verbal Communication and Culture?” in *Understanding Intercultural Conflict* by Stella Ting-Toomey.

“Chapter 7: What are the Different Ways to Communicate Nonverbally Across Cultures?” in *Understanding Intercultural Conflict* by Stella Ting-Toomey.

**WEEK 7        WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 14**  
**Facilitation and Process Design**

**Readings:**

“Chapter 16: Embracing the Paradox: Dialogue That Incorporates Both Individual and Group Identities” and “Chapter 17: The Content/Process Balance in Intergroup Dialogue” by Ruby L. Beale and David Schoem, in *Intergroup Dialogue*, pp. 247-279.”

Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives, by Howard J. Ross. Chapter 2: Thinking about Thinking, pp. 17-40.

**WEEK 8            WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21**

**Dialogue 2: Gender in the family and workplace**

**DUE: Dialogue 2 Reflection Assignment – Friday, October 23 (by 11:59 PM)**

**Readings:**

“Chapter 4: What are the Keys to Understanding Cultural and Ethnic Identities? and “Chapter 8: What Causes us to hold biases against outgroups?” in *Understanding Intercultural Conflict* by Stella Ting-Toomey

Chapter 13 Dialogue in Corporations, pp. 194-209. Schoem and Hurtado.

**WEEK 10            WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 28**

**Dialogue 3: Crime and Punishment**

**DUE: Dialogue 3 Reflection Assignment – Friday, October 30 (by 11:59 PM)**

**Readings:**

“Chapter 9: How Can We Manage Intercultural Conflict Flexibly?” in *Understanding Intercultural Conflict* by Stella Ting-Toomey

**WEEK 11            WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 4**

**Dialogue 4: Immigration**

**DUE: Dialogue 4 Reflection Assignment – Friday, November 6 (by 11:59 PM)**

**Readings:**

Chapter 9: Engaging the Whole Community in Dialogue and Action: Study Circles Resource Center., p. 137-150. Schoem and Hurtado.

**WEEK 12            WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 11**

**Dialogue 5: Gun Control/Weapons**

**DUE: Dialogue 5 Reflection Assignment – Friday, November 13 (by 11:59 PM)**

**Readings:**

“Chapter 11: What are the Communication Issues Facing a Global Identity?” in *Understanding Intercultural Conflict* by Stella Ting-Toomey

**WEEK 13            WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 18**

**Dialogue 6: The Muslim World and the West**

**[Note: Dialogue 6 Reflection Assignment is not due until Wednesday, November 25]**

**Readings**

Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives, by Howard J. Ross. Chapter 6: Like Water for Fish: Networks of Bias in Everyday Life, pp. 85-100. Chapter 7: Shifting to Neutral: How We Can Learn to Disengage from Bias, pp. 101-120.

**WEEK 14                      WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2**

**Dialogue and Society/Dialogue and Action**

**The Role of the Media and Technology in Public Discourse**

**Readings:**

“Chapter 20: Design Considerations in Intergroup Dialogue” by Ruby L. Beale and David Schoem, in *Intergroup Dialogue*, pp. 306-327.”

**WEEK 15                      WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 9**

**Dialogue & Art**

Reflection and Celebration!!!

**Final Paper Due on December 16, 2015 (Wednesday)**