

## **CONF 202 – Dialogue and Difference**

Semester: Spring 2009

Section/CRN: 001/11316

Class Time: Mondays 1:30 – 4:10 p.m. [ELI students 3:45]

Location: Robinson Hall B 111

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 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. Pop quizzes may be utilized, so be prepared.

### 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:** Monday 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:

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 2010"
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](mailto:ereserves@gmu.edu).

## Required Readings

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)

Beyond Language: Cross Cultural Communication, by Deena R. Levine and Mara Adelman. (Available in the Bookstore)

Course packet available through electronic reserve.

## **Weekly Themes, Readings and Assignments**

### **WEEK 1 MONDAY JANUARY 25**

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#### **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

#### **Readings:**

“Dialogue: Something Old; Something New” by Glenna Gerard and Linda Ellinor:  
<http://www.thedialoguegrouponline.com/whatsdialogue.html>

“Intergroup Dialogue: Democracy at Work in Theory and Practice”, in *Intergroup Dialogue*, pp. 1-21.

### **Week 2 Monday February 1**

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

#### **Readings:**

“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 MONDAY FEBRUARY 8**

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

#### **Readings:**

“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. (29 pages)

Beyond Language: Cross Cultural Communication, Chapter 1, “Cross-Cultural Contact with Americans,” pp. 6 – 16, and Chapter 2, “Cross-Cultural Conflict and Adjustment,” pp. 37 – 46.

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**WEEK 4      MONDAY FEBRUARY 15**

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

**Dialogue skills exercises**

**Readings:**

“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. (38 pages)

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**WEEK 5      MONDAY FEBRUARY 22**

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

**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)

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**WEEK 6      MONDAY FEBRUARY 29**

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**Dialogue #1: Race & Ethnicity**

**Screening: “Crash”**

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

**Readings:**

Chapter 6 Voices of Discovery: *Intergroup Dialogue* at Arizona State University, Intergroup Dialogue, pp. 87-97.

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**WEEK 7      MONDAY MARCH 8**

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**Spring Break – No Class**

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**WEEK 8      MONDAY MARCH 15**

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**Dialogue 2: Social Implications of Reproductive Technologies**

**Readings:** TBD

**DUE: Dialogue 1 Reflection Assignment**

**WEEK 9      MONDAY MARCH 22**

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**Dialogue 3: Middle East Conflict/The Muslim World and the West**

**Screening: “Encounter Point”**

[Note: the running time for this movie is 80 minutes.]

**Readings:**

Spend ½ - 1 hour exploring on-line news sources. Be prepared to discuss what you found.

**DUE: Dialogue 2 Reflection Assignment**

**WEEK 10      MONDAY MARCH 29**

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**Dialogue 4: Gender Roles in the Family and Workplace**

**Readings:**

Beyond Language: Cross Cultural Communication, Chapter 5, “Relationships: Friends and Acquaintances,” pp. 135 – 146, and Chapter 8, “Work: Practices and Attitudes,” pp. 243 – 258.

Chapter 14 Dialogue Throughout an Organization, Intergroup Dialogue, pp. 210-221.

**DUE: Dialogue 3 Reflection Assignment**

**WEEK 11      MONDAY APRIL 5**

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**Dialogue 5: Immigration**

Screening: “Farmingville”

[Note: The running time for this movie is 78 minutes.]

**Readings:**

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

**DUE: Dialogue 4 Reflection Assignment**

**WEEK 12      MONDAY APRIL 12**

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

**Readings**

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

### **DUE: Dialogue 5 Reflection Assignment**

**WEEK 13                      MONDAY APRIL 19**

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#### **Dialogue and Democracy**

##### **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]

#### **Power and Dialogue**

##### **Readings:**

Chapter 18 A Celebration of Power, Intergroup Dialogue, pp. 280-293

**WEEK 14                      MONDAY APRIL 26**

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#### **Dialogue Process Design/Dialogue and Action**

##### **Readings:**

“Design consideration in Intergroup Dialogue” p. 306-327 and “Adapting Intergroup Dialogue Processes for Use in a Variety of Settings, p. 328-344 in Schoem and Hurtado *Intergroup Dialogue*

“From Resolution to Transformation: The Role of Dialogue Projects” by Norbert Ropers. Available at [http://www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/ropers\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/ropers_handbook.pdf)

Chapter 19: Extending Intergroup Dialogue: From Talk to Action, in Schoem and Hurtado *Intergroup Dialogue*, pp294-305.

**WEEK 15                      MONDAY MAY 3**

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#### **Dialogue & Art**

##### **Readings:**

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

Reflection and Celebration!!!

Final Paper Due