

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

Semester: Spring 2012

Section/CRN: 001/16698

Class Time: Mondays 1:30 – 4:15 p.m.

Location: Robinson Hall A 105

Office Hours: Thursdays, 11:00 AM - 12 PM, Robinson B 365

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 (25%)**

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 (20%)**

Students will engage in five facilitated dialogue sessions and will complete four 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.

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

Students will work in small groups to design a dialogue session, including designing format and preparing questions.

**D. Final Paper (25%)**

Final paper that integrates the dialogue experience, lectures, class exercises and the readings. **Final Paper Due on May 14, by 11:59 pm via email.** If you do not receive a confirmation email by May 15 at 10 AM, please contact me ASAP to ensure that I have received your paper.

## **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:**

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 325-001] and instructor [Staff]
  - a. The section and faculty are opposite of what is on the schedule
  - b. Be sure it says “Spring 2012”
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**

Linda Ellinor and Glenna Gerard in *Dialogue: Rediscovering the Transforming Power of Conversation*. (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.

“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]

“Chapter 1: Intercultural Conflict” by Stella Ting-Toomey and John G. Oetzel in *Managing Intercultural Conflict Effectively*, pp. 1-26. [Ereserve]

“Chapter 2: Intercultural Conflict: A Culture-based Situational Conflict Model” by Stella Ting-Toomey and John G. Oetzel in *Managing Intercultural Conflict Effectively*, pp. 27-62. [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]

“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.” [Ereserve]

“Communal Art-making and Conflict Transformation” by Paolo J. Knill in *Art in Action: Expressive Arts Therapy and Social Change*, edited by Ellen Levine and Stephen Levine, pp. 53-77. [Ereserve]

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

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]

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

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

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

### **WEEK 1        MONDAY JANUARY 23**

#### **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    MONDAY JANUARY 30**

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

**Readings Due:**

“Part I: Chapter 3: What is Dialogue?” and “Part I: Chapter 4: Where Does Dialogue Come From?” in *Dialogue: Rediscovering the Transforming Power of Conversation*, pp. 19-35.

“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 6**  
**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.

“Chapter 1: Intercultural Conflict” by Stella Ting-Toomey and John G. Oetzel in *Managing Intercultural Conflict Effectively*, pp. 1-26. [Ereserve]

**WEEK 4          MONDAY FEBRUARY 13**  
**Dialogue Skills Workshop: Part II Suspension of Judgment & Identification of Assumptions**

**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.

“Chapter 2: Intercultural Conflict: A Culture-based Situational Conflict Model” by Stella Ting-Toomey and John G. Oetzel in *Managing Intercultural Conflict Effectively*, pp. 27-62. [Ereserve]

**WEEK 5          MONDAY FEBRUARY 20**  
**Dialogue Skills Workshop: Part III Facilitation & Techniques for Group Dialogue**

**Quiz on the 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 MONDAY FEBRUARY 27**

**Dialogue #1: Comedy and Culture (instructor-led dialogue)**

**DUE: Dialogue 1 Reflection Assignment – Friday March 2 (by 11:59 PM)**

**NOTE: Class will meet in Johnson Center 326 - Assembly Room B**

**Screening: “Just Like Us”**

**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]

“Part II: Chapter 5: Non-verbal Communication and Dialogue.” in *Dialogue: Rediscovering the Transforming Power of Conversation*, pp. 128-141.

**WEEK 7 MONDAY MARCH 5**

**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.” [Ereserve]

“Communal Art-making and Conflict Transformation” by Paolo J. Knill in *Art in Action: Expressive Arts Therapy and Social Change*, edited by Ellen Levine and Stephen Levine, pp. 53-77. [Ereserve]

**WEEK 8 MONDAY MARCH 12**

**Spring Break – No Class**

**WEEK 9 MONDAY MARCH 19**

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

**NOTE: Class will meet in Johnson Center 326 - Assembly Room B**

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

**Readings:**

“Part IV: Intro” and “Chapter 1: Synchronicity and Dialogue” and “Chapter 2: Collective Energy Fields” in *Dialogue: Rediscovering the Transforming Power of Conversation*, pp. 239-256.

**WEEK 10      MONDAY MARCH 26**

**Dialogue 3: Crime and Punishment**

**NOTE: Class will meet in Johnson Center 326 - Assembly Room B**

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

**Readings:**

“Part IV: Chapter 3: Holding Paradox” and “Chapter 4: Fuzzy Logic, Polarities, and Fuzzy Agreements” in *Dialogue: Rediscovering the Transforming Power of Conversation*, pp. 257-267.

**WEEK 11      MONDAY APRIL 2**

**Dialogue 4: Immigration**

**DUE: Dialogue 3 Reflection Assignment – Friday, April 6 (by 11:59 PM)**

**NOTE: Class will meet in Johnson Center 326 - Assembly Room B**

**Readings:**

“Part IV: Chapter 5: Shadow and Dialogue” and “Chapter 6: Difference and Dialogue” in *Dialogue: Rediscovering the Transforming Power of Conversation*, pp. 268-281.

**WEEK 12      MONDAY APRIL 9**

**Dialogue 5: The Muslim World and the West**

**NOTE: Class will meet in Johnson Center 326 - Assembly Room B**

**[Note: Dialogue 4 Reflection Assignment is not due until Monday, April 16]**

“Part IV: Chapter 7: On-line Conversations” and “Chapter 8: Moving Through Learning Edges” in *Dialogue: Rediscovering the Transforming Power of Conversation*, pp. 282-304.

**WEEK 13      MONDAY APRIL 16**

**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]

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      MONDAY APRIL 23**

**Dialogue and Society/Dialogue and Action**



**Readings:**

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

**WEEK 15            MONDAY APRIL 30**

**Dialogue & Art**

**Final Paper Due on May 14**

**Readings:**

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

Reflection and Celebration!!!