
Professor Michael S. Spencer (E-mail: spencerm@umich.edu)
Office: SSWB 2728 Phone: 764-7224
Wednesday, 9:00-12:00 PM
Office hours: Thursday, 10-12, by appointment
Winter 2006

Course Description:

This course is designed to give students a foundation in the awareness, knowledge, understanding, and skills needed to effectively carry out multicultural social work practice with populations who are culturally diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, ability status, and national origin. In particular, students will gain skills in facilitating multicultural group interactions and in resolving conflicts or resistance that may emerge due to cultural misunderstandings or oppressive dynamics. The topics of this course include social identity group development; prejudice and stereotyping and their effects on groups; difference and dominance and the nature of social oppression; our personal and interpersonal connections to power, privilege, and oppression; understanding and resolving conflicts or resistance; methods of dialoguing and coalition building across differences; and basic group facilitation skills and their applications in multicultural settings.

Course Design:

Like the learning environment you will be expected to create for dialogue participants, this class will strive to foster a learning environment where each student can reflect critically on their beliefs and perspectives and where your multiple perspectives can be understood, respected, and critically examined.

Facilitation training in this course will involve participation in dialogue-like exercises during class and practice sessions in facilitation skills. In addition, readings, journal writing, self-reflection assignments, and consultations with the instructor will enhance your training and learning in this course. More critical than your learning of dialogue facilitation skills in this course, however, is your learning of the content on cultural diversity and social justice. This will provide you with some of the knowledge, awareness, and skills that social workers need to possess in order to work in a multicultural society. Before you can facilitate dialogues on issues of cultural diversity and social justice, you will need to examine these issues for yourself and reflect on your own identities, issues, and experiences around oppression. This course will provide a forum to critically examine how our multiple identities shape our beliefs, assumptions, behaviors, and life experiences. Special attention will also be given to assess how our multiple
identities and different experiences with oppression enhance or hinder our work with diverse populations. Application of this knowledge will then be used in the learning of dialogue facilitation skills.

**Course Objectives and Guidelines for Learning:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be better able to:

1. **Demonstrate personal dialoguing skills around issues of multiculturalism and oppression.** Students will learn how to engage in dialogue with others about cultural diversity and social justice across our differences, using respectful and inquisitive forms of active listening, self-reflection, and critical consciousness. Special attention will be given to learning how to discuss the difficult issues of stereotypes, prejudices, conflicts, and the pain we experience because of oppression when it is most difficult to engage in these discussions.

2. **Demonstrate dialogue group facilitation skills.** Students will learn how to create a space for respectful dialogue across differences, how to engage students in a process of multicultural learning and dialogue, and how to address group dynamics and processes that enhance or hinder dialogue.

3. **Demonstrate knowledge of multiple identities and the diversity within identities.** Students will develop a clear understanding of multiple social identities (i.e., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, ability status, age), as well as an understanding of the many ways that our multiple identities intersect to create remarkably diverse identity groups (e.g., being an able-bodied woman of color, a Christian Latino gay male, a disabled white man).

4. **Understand the interconnections between forms of oppression.** Students will recognize that there is no hierarchy of oppression that supports one form of oppression or serves to perpetuate other forms. Students will also understand how the cumulative effects of multiple forms of oppression can create additional burdens.

5. **Understand dynamics of difference and dominance.** Students will understand what the dynamics of difference and dominance/oppression are (e.g., systems of inequity and inequality, power and status differences, and relative differences in power/privilege or oppression), and how they impact human functioning and social relations within and across diverse groups. In addition, students will understand how structural differences in society are shaped by historical, psychological, social, and political factors.

6. **Demonstrate skills for multicultural social work practice,** including respect and validation of others’ experiences and perspectives, critical consciousness of oppressive socializations and awareness of one’s own biases, recognizing our personal role in oppression, and learning how to interrupt oppression and work for social justice through alliance and coalition building across differences.

7. **Develop critical consciousness and understand its implications for social work practice.** Awareness of how the beliefs, feelings, and behaviors that emerge from our multiple identities (and their corresponding experience with dominance or oppression) enhance or hinder our abilities to work with diverse and disenfranchised groups. Students will also become more aware of the oppressive assumptions, biases, and prejudices that they hold.
towards other groups or their own group (internalized oppression), and how these influence their interactions with others, through conscious and unconscious beliefs, assumptions, emotions and behaviors.

8. **Recognize that this learning is continuous.** Develop methods for continuing this life long process of recognizing our biases, learning how to change our oppressive behaviors, and building a more socially just multicultural society.

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:**

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be fundamental to this course. Students will develop a clear understanding of multiple social identities (i.e., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, ability status, age), as well as an understanding of the many ways that our multiple identities intersect to create diverse identity groups.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be central themes in the study of dialogue facilitation skills for multicultural social work practice. Special emphasis will be given to studying how dialogues can be used to interrupt oppression and work for social change and social justice through alliance and coalition building across differences.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be addressed through applications and discussions in this course. Students will learn how multicultural practice skills can be applied to their field of practice interests and how cultural competence enhances the capacity of diverse groups being able to access the services and programs they need in culturally relevant forms.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research** will comprise many of the course readings and will provide a foundation for learning the theories, frameworks and models of social identity development, intersections of multiple identities, intergroup relations, difference/dominance dynamics, cycles of oppression, and cultural competence methods.

**Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:**

This course will address the social work ethics and values from the NASW Code of Ethics, including the social work values of social justice, the importance of human relationships, and competence (in multicultural practice), as well as the ethics related to cultural competence and social diversity (1.05) and to social and political action (6.04). This course develops multicultural competency skills to work with disenfranchised and oppressed groups in culturally competent ways and to address social injustice due to discrimination and oppression. Training in dialogue facilitation promotes sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural diversity, as well as increases the personal and group capacity to work for social and economic equality and justice around differences in race/ethnicity, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation, and ability status. This course also addresses the social work value of the importance of human relationships through developing skills in dialogue and alliance building across differences, which both foster intergroup relations and support the belief that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for social change. Finally, this class supports social work ethics that social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression (1.05) and that social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of difference, while working for equity and social justice for all people (6.04).
Grading/Course Requirements:

This is a graded, 3-credit, course. Students will be graded on the assignments described below. The following guidelines and descriptions are intended to help you meet the expectations for the assignments.

A major part of your grade for written assignments is based on your clarity and thoroughness. All written assignments should be carefully proofread for typos and clarity of content. A paper with lots of errors is difficult to read and will be marked down. All assignments should be double-spaced, using 12-point font, no less than 1-inch margins.

You should turn in all written assignments on time. Having assignments in on time will assist me in reading and grading them in a timely manner. On time is defined as turned in at the start of class on the due date. In general, a paper will be marked down for each day it is late. Exceptions will only be made for extreme circumstances. If you expect that you are going to be late turning in an assignment, let me know as soon as possible so I can plan accordingly.

Please try to anticipate your responsibilities and start your assignments well in advance of the due date. Be sure to have a backup copy on disk in case I misplace your work (which I hope is not the case!). Your grades will be distributed along the following scale:

- 100-98 A+
- 97-94 A
- 93-90 A-
- 90-89 B+
- 87-86 B
- 83-82 B-
- 80-79 C+
- 77-76 C
- 73-70 C-
- 69-60 D
- 59 and below F

Assignment 1. Attendance and Participation (20%)

Attendance and participation in all class sessions are critical for the learning process in this course. For this reason, students are expected to attend all class sessions. One point out of a possible 10 will be deducted for each missed class. Exceptions will only be made for extreme circumstances. Opportunities to make up for missed classes are possible, but must be completed promptly (within two weeks of the missed class), it is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor and arrange for appropriate make-up material within one week of the missed class.

Weekly Readings
Readings for each class session will be assigned from the course texts. Participation will be impacted by how extensively you are prepared to discuss the readings in class. As we find readings that are useful, we will either pass them out or make them available at the SW library. If you find good readings, pass them on and we can make them available to the class as well.

Required Texts:


Additional readings will be available to you on C-tools.
Recommended Texts:


Assignment 2. **Bi-weekly Journal Entries (20%)**

In order to deepen your process of learning in this course, I want you to spend some time reflecting on the class discussions and the readings by writing in a bi-weekly journal. It should serve as a log of your own experiences and reactions to the class exercises, discussions, readings and assignments, with special attention and reflection given to how your identities and knowledge/experience around oppression may be shaping your reactions and learning process. You will be required to turn in a 2 page, typed, double-spaced journal entry every other week. You are encouraged to write on your reflections over the past two weeks. The first journal is due the third week of class for a total of five entries this term. I will return your journal entries the week after you turn them in with comments and feedback on options for how you may address certain learning challenges or issues you discuss. These will not be graded for their descriptions of what you are learning (everyone will learn differently). Instead, they will be graded for completeness, for their depth of insight and reflection, and incorporation of readings and classroom activities/discussions. Journals will be given a score on a 10 point scale, and your grade for the journals will be the average score over the five journals, weighted 25%. Clarity and careful proofreading are necessary.

Assignment 3. **In-Class Practice in Dialogue Facilitation (20%)**

Each student will have an opportunity to group facilitate an in-class exercise once during the semester. We will begin with group facilitation from about week 6 through week 12. Students will be assigned to 4-5 member groups in week 2 and will stay with this group throughout the term for most group activities. Groups will sign-up during the third week of class for the topic area they are interested in facilitating. Students will assume responsibility for one hour of class on the day that their issue topic is scheduled. Student will deliver an activity related to the issue (not more than 30 minutes, shorter activities are highly recommended) and facilitate dialogue following it (again, for not more than 60 minutes). Students will develop a plan with the instructors and are strongly encouraged to use the Adams, Bell & Griffin text as a resource. If special resources or space is necessary, you need to let me know asap. An additional 30 minutes will be allocated for classmates to provide students with feedback on their facilitation.

Students are expected to turn in a facilitation plan one week prior to the activity. The facilitation plan should be a minimum of two pages and include the goals and objectives of the activity and subsequent dialogue, details of what you plan to do and the steps you will be taking, how long you expect each activity to take, the logistics of your plan (who is doing what), key issues for the dialogue, and potential questions that might arise. Additionally, a 3-5 page self-assessment of your plan and your experience will be turned in the week following your facilitation. The self-
assessment should include not only your own critical assessment of how you did, but should include what you thought you did that was useful, what was not so useful, what you might have done differently, and areas you would like to grow. Grades will be based on the thoroughness and clarity of your group’s facilitation (e.g. attention to ground rules, conducting an effective debriefing of an exercise, and efforts to include all participants in the discussion) and your self-assessment.

Assignment 4. Out-of-Class Observation Exercise (20%)

Each student will observe at least one group that is facilitated outside of class. We will look out for opportunities for this, but you should be able to find plenty of opportunities on campus or in the community. You should attend/participate in the group and make note of the setting, the facilitation style, things you thought the facilitator did that was useful or not useful, your own experience as a member of the group, your observation of other group members, and of course the content of the group. The group should be related to one of the topics of the course, that is diversity and social justice. This does not include lectures, but could include anything from interactive forum to an actual dialogue or workshop on diversity and social justice. Following your observation, you should write up a 3-5 page summary of the things you noted in the group. Turn it in the week following your observation. Be prepared to share your experiences with the class.

Assignment 5. Out-of-Class Facilitation Exercise (20%)

In addition to an in-class facilitation exercise, students will practice their facilitation skills outside of class. I will inform you of opportunities as they arise or can help you find opportunities if you are having difficulty finding them. Facilitation exercises can be completed individually, in a pair or in small groups. They can be done here in the School of Social Work, at your field placement or place of employment, or in the larger community.

As with the in-class assignment, you will produce a facilitation plan and self-assessment. Your facilitation plan will also be due two weeks prior to the planned activity. Feedback will be provided one week prior to the group. A 3-5 page self-assessment of each group member’s experience and the final facilitation plan will be turned in the week following your exercise. The self-assessment should include your own critical assessment of how you thought you did, but also what you thought you did that was useful, what was not so useful, what you might have done differently, and areas you would like to grow. Grades will be based on the thoroughness, clarity, and creativity of your facilitation plan and your self-assessment.

Weekly Schedule & Course Outline

In order to prepare students to facilitate intergroup dialogues, attention must be given to both content and process issues. In addition to group facilitation skills, dialogue facilitation requires us to reflect on our own experiences with oppression and privilege and to be prepared for issues that often arise given the emotional and controversial nature of social justice issues. This course is structured to provide opportunities for us to engage with activities and readings designed to stimulate dialogue and increase our consciousness related to power issues. These shared activities will also serve as examples for us to illustrate and practice skills for facilitating intergroup dialogue.

Week 1 January 11, 2006
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- **Opening:** Announcements
- **Activity & Dialogue:** Opening Activity—Setting the tone
- **Break**
- **Application:** Syllabus, Assignments, Texts & Readings, Weekly Agenda, Groups & Logistics
- **Hopes and Fears**
Week 7  
February 22, 2006

Readings:  Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 7
            Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 38-45
Opening:  Announcements, Turn in Journal #3
Activity & Dialogue:  Student In-class Facilitation on Race/Ethnicity

Week 8  
NO CLASSES--SPRING BREAK (March 1, 2006)

Week 9  
March 8, 2006

Readings:  Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 8
            Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 46-59
Opening:  Announcements
Activity & Dialogue:  Student In-class Facilitation on Gender

Week 10  
March 15, 2006

Readings:  Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 9
            Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 21-31
Opening:  Announcements, Turn in Journal #4
Activity & Dialogue:  Student In-class Facilitation on Sexual Orientation

Week 11  
March 22, 2006

Readings:  Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 10
            Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 60-72
Opening:  Announcements
Activity & Dialogue:  Student In-class Facilitation on Religious/Spiritual Identification

Week 12  
March 29, 2006

Readings:  Adams, Bell, & Griffin—Chapter 11
            Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 73-85
Opening:  Announcements, Turn in Journal #5
Activity & Dialogue:  Student In-class Facilitation on Ability Status

Week 13  
April 5, 2006

Readings:  Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 86-95
           Process facilitation and Action Planning

Week 14  
April 12, 2006

Opening:  Announcements, Turn in final paper/taping assignment.
Activity & Dialogue:  Closing Activity/Potluck/Evaluation
Additional C-Tools Readings

Week 2. Dialogue/Debate/Discussion

Huang-Nissen, Sally Defining the Principles of Dialogue Blue Hill, ME : Medicine Bear Pub. 1999


Zuniga, Ximena Dialogue groups: An innovative approach to multicultural learning Westport, CT : Praeger 1993

Week 3 Conflict and Resistance

Speech as Non-violent Action (Handout)

Collins, Patricia Hill Toward a Politics of Empowerment New York : Routledge 2000

Reed, Beth G Interpersonal practice beyond diversity and toward social justice: The importance of critical consciousness Needham Heights, MA Allyn & Bacon 1997


Week 4 Conflict Mediation and Negotiation

Brigg, Morgan Mediation, power, and cultural difference 2003

D'Amico, Lynne C Cultural Considerations When "Setting" The Negotiation Table 1999

Meyer, Manu and Davis, Albie Mediation Hawaiian Style

Wall, James A Mediation: A current review 1993

Week 5 Facilitation

Banks, James A Diversity within unity: Essential principles for teaching and learning in a multicultural society 2001

Week 6 Race/Ethnicity

None

Week 7 Gender

Feinberg, Leslie Are you a guy or a girl? Boston, MA : Beacon Press

Lombardi, Emilia L Gender Violence: Transgender Experiences with Violence and Discrimination 2001

McPhail, Beverly T Questioning Gender and Sexuality Binaries: What Queer Theorists, Transgendered Individuals, and Sex Researchers Can Teac 2004


Neevel, Neeve "Amy" Me Boy 2002

New, Caroline Oppressed and Oppressors? The Systematic Mistreatment of Men 2001

**Week 8 No Class**

**Week 9 Sexual Orientation**

Conley, Terri D Mistakes That Heterosexual People MakeWhen Trying to Appear Non-Prejudiced: The View from LGB People 2001

Maran, Meredith Bi as I wanna be (with apologies to Dennis Rodman)


Patrick, EJ Bi: We're not confused 2000/2001 Dec/Jan

Rust, Paula C Rodriguez Bisexuality: A Contemporary Paradox for Women 2000

**Week 10 Religion/Spirituality**

Peace Seeds (Handout)

Major World Religions (Handout)

Boal, Mark Muslim students feel the backlash 2001

Bullock, K. The Hijab Experience of Canadian Muslim Women 1998

Dalrymple, William Islamophobia 2004

Mulrine, Anna Escape from the Taliban 2001

**Week 11 Ability**

Gallagher, Hugh What the Nazi "euthanasia program" can tell us about disability oppression 2001

Schriner, Kay Disability and institutional change: A human variation perspective on overcoming oppression 2001

**Week 12 Class**

Megivern, Deborah Supposed to know better: On accepting privilege Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole 2005
Week 13 Social Action

Hirsch-Dubin, Phoebe Web guide for social justice sites Santa Barbara, CA : Center for Teaching for Social Justice


Parsons, Talcott The Role of Ideas in Social Action Glencoe, IL : The Free Press 1954

Williamson, Marianne Mystical Politics New York : Touchstone 2000

Suggested Readings


Porter, L. Giving and receiving feedback; It will never be easy, but it can be better. Reading book for human relations training (pp. 42-45).


*The syllabus and course outline for Training in the Methods and Process of Dialogue Facilitation were developed by Mike Spencer, David Martineua, Anna Yeakley, and Julica Herman, based on examples and models from similar courses offered through the Program on Intergroup Relations, Conflict and Community (IGRCC) at the University of Michigan (developed by Ximena Zuniga, Todd Sevig, Ratnesh Nagda, Monita Thompson, Teresa Graham-Brett and Charles Behling, Ruby Beale, Jackie Simpson) and through the University of Washington School of Social Work (developed by Ratnesh Nagda).*