

UGS 303
Difficult Dialogues: Cultural Identities and Differences
University of Texas at Austin
Fall 2014

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Class meets:

Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-11am
SAC 5.102

Office hours:

Monday, 2:00 – 3:30 pm
SAC 4.130

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

In this course we will consider cultural identities and differences, both in the US and abroad. We will develop ways of thinking analytically about culture, cultural identity, cultural representation, and cultural difference. We will discuss the impact of globalization on cultural identities and differences, and some of the issues that arise between people holding different cultural identities. Among the topics we will consider are violence, trauma, and reconciliation; borders and migration; and hierarchy, marginalization, and social suffering.

As a Difficult Dialogues course, this course is designed to teach you to engage in informed respectful dialogue with people who have different beliefs, values, perspectives, or ways of communicating. As a UGS signature course it is also designed to introduce you to University resources as well as to perspectives and issues that transcend traditional disciplines. Course content draws on the following disciplines: Anthropology. Sociology. History. Psychology. Creative Writing. Communication. Law. Public Health. Ethnic Studies. Women's and Gender Studies.

SIGNATURE COURSE MISSION & COURSE ESSENTIALS

The Signature Courses at the University of Texas at Austin will connect students with distinguished faculty members in unique learning environments. By way of this rigorous intellectual experience, students will develop college-level skills in research, writing, speaking, and discussion through an approach that is interdisciplinary, collaborative, experiential and contemporary.

This course will address the Signature Course essentials in the following ways:

- **Information Literacy:** Students will conduct research on a controversial issue, preparing a memo that contributes to their group presentation.
- **University Gem:** Students will visit a Texas Performing Arts performance, "Basetrack," and write a 500-word response paper (#1) on its point(s) of view.
- **Writing:** Students will keep a course journal; write and revise two response papers, and complete in-class writing assignments. Assignments involving writing comprise 60% of the final grade.
- **Oral Communication:** Students will develop skills in conducting informed, respectful dialogues on difficult issues. Students will also work in small groups to prepare an oral

presentation on a current issue related to the course content. Assignments involving oral communication comprise 40% of the final grade.

- **University Lecture Series:** Students will attend and write a 500-word response paper (#2) on the University Lecture, "Innovations and Ethics in Health Care" or on the Difficult Dialogues public forum. Details to be announced.

CORE OBJECTIVES

This course carries two "flags":

- **Cultural Diversity in the United States.** Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.
- **Writing.** Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING POLICY

This course is graded on a scale that includes pluses and minuses. Success in the course depends on timely completion of the reading and writing assignments, active and respectful participation in class discussions, and thoughtful consideration of the issues considered in the course. Attendance at two evening events is required. The final grade will be based on the components listed below.

- **Discussion (20%):** Students will engage actively in dialogue, learning to employ various techniques for conducting productive dialogues.
- **Oral presentation (20%):** Students will work in small groups to prepare and present a presentation on a current issue related to the course content. Groups may explore any issue involving cultural identity and difference.
- **Quizzes and in-class writing assignments (20%):** There will be unannounced quizzes and in-class writing assignments on course concepts.
- **Journal (10%):** Students will keep a journal in which they reflect regularly on course readings, concepts, and activities.
- **Gems of the University (15%):** Students will visit a campus performance, "Basetrack," and write a response paper (#1) on its point of view. You will have an opportunity to revise this assignment after receiving comments from the instructor.
- **University Lecture Series (15%):** Students will write a response paper (#2) on one of the University Lectures or on the Difficult Dialogues public forum. You will have an opportunity to revise this assignment after receiving comments from the instructor.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following books are required, and have been ordered from the University Coop. Additional readings will be posted on Canvas. Please complete the reading *before* class on the date it is assigned, and bring the assigned reading to class.

- Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen. *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*, 2nd edition. New York: Penguin Books, 2010.

- Christine Dumaine Leche, ed. *Outside the Wire: American Soldiers' Voices from Afghanistan*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2013.
- Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This is an approximate schedule. You are responsible for any changes announced in class or posted on Canvas. Be sure to check the email registered with the University so that you are aware of any announcements posted on Canvas.

I. Introduction to dialogue & academic freedom

Aug 28. Introduction to course.
 Sept 2. *Difficult Conversations*, pp. 1-20
 Sept 4. *Difficult Conversations*, pp. 21-43

II. Difficult dialogue I: Violence, trauma & peacemaking

Sept 9. Read materials on "Basetrack" posted on Canvas. Class visit by producer Anne Hamburger.
 Sept 11. *Outside the Wire*, Preface and pp. 1-19

*****8pm: Attend Basetrack performance, McCullough Theater.*****

Sept 16. *Outside the Wire*, Preface and pp. 20-49.

*******RESPONSE PAPER 1 DUE*******

Sept 18. *Outside the Wire*, pp. 50-80
 Sept 23. *Outside the Wire*, pp. 81-109
 Sept 25 *Outside the Wire*, 110-139. Class visit by author Christine Leche.

III. Dialogue & academic freedom, continued

Sept 30. *Difficult Conversations*, pp. 44-57

*****Sept 30, 7pm: University Lecture Series: "Innovations and Ethics in Health Care," Bass Concert Hall.*****

Oct 2. *Difficult Conversations*, pp. 58-82
 Oct 7. *Difficult Conversations*, pp. 83-108.

*******RESPONSE PAPER 2 DUE*******

Oct 9. *Difficult Conversations*, pp. 109-128
 Oct 14. *Difficult Conversations*, pp. 129-162
 Oct 16. *Difficult Conversations*, pp. 163-200
 Oct 21. *Difficult Conversations*, pp. 201-234

Oct 23. AAUP Statement on Academic Freedom (Canvas)

IV. Difficult dialogue II: Borders, migration, & social suffering

Oct 28. *Fresh Fruit*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-29
 Oct 30. *Fresh Fruit*, Chapter 2, pp. 30-44
 Nov 4. *Fresh Fruit*, Chapter 3, pp. 45-87
 Nov 6. *Fresh Fruit*, Chapter 4, pp. 88-110
 Nov 11. *Fresh Fruit*, Chapter 5, pp. 111-154
 Nov 13. *Fresh Fruit*, Chapter 6, pp. 155-181
 Nov 18. *Fresh Fruit*, Conclusion, pp. 182-198

V. Practicing dialogue: student presentations

Nov 20. Presentations

Nov 25. Presentations

Nov 27: Thanksgiving holiday

Dec 2. Presentations

Dec 4: Course conclusion and course-instructor survey.

*******ALL PAPER REVISIONS DUE*******

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Communicating with the Professor

It is important that you remain in good communication with me. Be sure to discuss your ethnographic research topic with me personally during office hours. Please inform me personally or by email or telephone if illness, an emergency, a disability, or an unavoidable conflict is affecting your work in this course. I am generally available in my office after class; if this is not convenient, please contact me and we will schedule a time for a meeting.

Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code:

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are **learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility**. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through **integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community**.

Any work submitted in this course for academic credit must be the student's own work. The work of others must be referenced correctly. Students who violate the Honor Code through plagiarism or other forms of cheating will receive no credit for the assignment or quiz, and may be referred to the Dean for disciplinary action.

Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students

It is your responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in your e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Please notify the instructor as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible, or if other disability-related accommodations are required. See SSD's website for more disability-related information: http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are concerned about yourself or another person, please consult the instructor or call the Behavior Concerns Advice Line, 512-232-5050.

Q drop Policy

Please be aware that the State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6).

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire

alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instructor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services official.