Course Description

This course engages students, from one or more cultural identity groups, in facilitated dialogue about the similarities and differences of experience that exist within a group and/or between and across groups. The goal of intergroup dialogue is for students to develop comfort with, and skill in, discourse on difficult topics toward the end of fostering positive, meaningful, and sustained cross-group relationships. Whereas in debate, students learn to listen to gain advantage, in intergroup dialogue, students learn to listen to gain understanding. In so doing, students develop increased multicultural interaction facility, heightened intergroup awareness and sensitivity, and greater commitment to civic engagement. Ultimately, this course is about sharing perspectives and experiences, not about agreement with your facilitators or the philosophy of the program.

Reading Packet—Will be distributed by Monday for the next week, emailed to students or placed on the class website for review.

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General Objectives

1. “Knowing”—Epistemological/Choice: Students will develop increased personal and political awareness of cultural identity affiliation and difference, as well as increased knowledge about equity and diversity;

2. “Know How”—Epistemological/Choice: Students will develop increased communication and conflict exploration skills, as well as growth in perspective taking and complex thinking; students will develop the ability to juxtapose as well as integrate personal narrative and critical academic analysis;

3. “Being”—Ontological/Seeing: Students will develop decreased propensity for stereotyping, a reduction in intergroup interaction anxiety, increased comfort with multiculturalism, greater appreciation for difference, and increased motivation for cross-group bridge-building; and,

Desired Student Outcomes
Upon completion of this course, students will have developed:

1. “Knowing”—Epistemological/Choice: increased personal and political awareness of cultural identity affiliation and difference, as well as increased knowledge about equity and diversity;

2. “Know How”—Epistemological/Choice: increased communication and conflict exploration skills, as well as growth in perspective taking and complex thinking; the ability to juxtapose as well as integrate personal narrative and critical academic analysis;

3. “Being”—Ontological/Seeing: decreased propensity for stereotyping, a reduction in intergroup interaction anxiety, increased comfort with multiculturalism, greater appreciation for difference, and increased motivation for cross-group bridge-building;


Learning Expectations/Methods of Evaluation

1. Dialogue Attendance & Participation—50%

Dialogue Attendance Policy
- Students should be aware that the nature of learning in intergroup dialogue is cumulative (for example, understanding concepts discussed in the third dialogue is, to some degree, contingent upon having attended the first and second dialogues). Therefore, it is crucial that each student attend every dialogue. Attendance will be taken at every session. If you miss a session, your facilitators have the right (per university policy) to ask you to produce documentation of your absence.

- **Students must attend 5 of the 7 dialogue sessions to earn the course credit** *(where the first week’s attendance is not counted due to the add/drop period). Thus, you can only miss ONE class with a bona fide excuse from the remaining six sessions*. There are no exceptions to this policy, and your facilitators are not authorized negotiate with you on this point. If you must miss more than one class (even for documented reasons such as illness), the program’s administrator will ask you to withdraw from the course for issues of equity.

Dialogue Participation Policy
- Each student is expected to contribute to each dialogue and to engage in related activities in each session. While it is perfectly normal and legitimate to have ‘peaks and valleys’ of participation, total silence and lack of engagement with your peers is inappropriate and will be taken into account in this portion of the grade. You will receive fair warning from the facilitators about any lack of participation on your part before the end of the dialogue.

- Being prepared for the dialogue is taken into account as participation. Thus, you are expected to read/view/prepare the materials assigned to you before the dialogue starts. Because dialogues have a small number of participants, your level of preparation will immediately become obvious.
• Note: Your participation grade is NOT based on your agreement or disagreement with the perspectives raised by the facilitators (who often raise multiple perspectives as a part of the dialogue process). The primary goal of dialogue is to create understanding across different perspectives, not converting to or away from any single perspective. All that is asked of you is participation in good faith to the goal of creating understanding across difference.

2. **Journal Reflections—20% for four reflections (5% each)**

**Journal Process**

• At the conclusion of most of the dialogue sessions, students will be expected to write a reflection on the experience of that day’s dialogue. The length of these reflections should be determined by the content, not the reverse. **Most reflections that receive full points are about two pages (double spaced).** The purpose of the journal is to give you an opportunity to reflect on your personal narratives on the session (with a critical analysis of the readings) AND to have an opportunity for feedback from the facilitators. Reflections should be thoughtful and should do at least 5 of the following 7 items for full credit (5 points):

• **Journal Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Within The Journal</th>
<th>Point Range</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Self Reflection:</strong> Examples include self critique or analysis, an awareness of self and/or self impact, explaining and expand on an ‘a-ha!’ moment you had related to the topic, session and/or reading</td>
<td>2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Group Dynamics:</strong> Examples include comment on the contributions of other participants in the session, analyze the unspoken social and/or conversational dynamics of the dialogue or experience</td>
<td>2-3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C. Intellectual Theorizing:</strong> Examples include integrating relevant information from academic sources/readings, bringing in related narratives from other sources (friends, family, etc.), and/or framing the conversation within a broader context of social justice</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Rubric Logic: The rubric is purposely weighted to favor category A higher than category B, and category B higher than category C. Based on quality of your work, your journal will be assigned a point value for each category you choose to undertake, but not more than the range allows. A wise student will undertake all three categories where possible, because the minimums for the three combined categories total 5 points. However, you are not obligated to write about all of the three categories. If you chose not to undertake a particular category, you bear the risk of not getting full credit. Also, even if you do all three categories very well, you will **not** be given a total of 9 points, because journals are only worth 5 total points.

• Journals During Absence: if you miss a dialogue, you can still turn in a journal (and you are explicitly encouraged to do so). You will only be able to do categories A and C, because category B postulated your attendance. It is still possible to obtain 5 points for this journal, but that means that your work in categories A and C must be better than minimum effort.

• To give students a sense of what facilitator feedback looks like before it counts, the first reflection will be given comments, and will **not** count toward the final grade. It is an opportunity to learn how to do a good reflection. Students will be expected to produce four
journals for grading for sessions 2, 3, 4, and 6. You will not have a journal due for the last session 7 (because you have another assignment due).

- **Disputing a Journal Grade**
  - All journals will be graded for critical self-analysis, thoughtfulness, and substance according to the above rubric, NOT for whether you agree or disagree with the facilitators on social issues or ideas. The Words of Engagement Intergroup Dialogue Program is absolutely committed to the goal of free expression. You are free and encouraged to provide your opinions (politically correct or not) in your journals and are asked to support them with your ideas AND to interrogate them from the perspective of someone who intelligently disagrees with you. In other words, you should be able to discuss your opinions from several perspectives, some with which you may disagree.
  - If you feel that a journal has been graded unfairly, you may ask that your journal be re-graded by the program administrator. Once you have appealed this journal, the administrator’s grade is final.

3. **Out of Comfort Zone Experience—30%**
   - The dialogues are designed to get you to step outside your comfort zone. Thus, this assignment asks you and another person in the dialogue to attend an event, provide a service, or do something that you might not otherwise do that is related to the topic of your dialogue. Your facilitators will put you in pairs (or trios, depending on numbers). You and your partner(s) need to propose something for facilitator review by the third dialogue. All suggestions must be vetted and approved by your facilitators.
   - Upon completion of your Out of Comfort Zone Experience, you are to write a three-page reflection on the experience and what you learned. All Out of Comfort Zone experiences are due by the last dialogue. Experience suggests that getting this assignment done early is in your best interest.
   - The structure of the Out of Comfort Zone Experience is identical to the journal, but is worth much more than any individual journal (six times the value, to be precise). Out of Comfort Zone Experiences will be graded using the same rubric as the journal, but the point values will differ.

- **Out of Comfort Zone Experience Rubric**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Within The OoCZE:</th>
<th>Point Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Self Reflection:</strong> Examples include self critique or analysis, an awareness of self and/or self impact, explaining and expand on an ‘a-ha!’ moment you had related to the topic, session and/or reading</td>
<td>12-24</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B. Group Dynamics:</strong> Examples include comment on the contributions of other participants in the session, analyze the unspoken social and/or conversational dynamics of the dialogue or experience</td>
<td>12-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Intellectual Theorizing:</strong> Examples include integrating relevant information from academic sources/readings, bringing in related narratives from other sources (friends, family, etc.), and/or framing the conversation within a broader context of social justice</td>
<td>6-12</td>
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Criterion for Evaluation and Grading

- Students will be evaluated on dialogue attendance and participation, and the completion of all other learning expectations. Students will be graded on the quality of their contributions to the dialogue— their creativity, the degree to which they demonstrate their effort to understand and grow from the dialogues/activities/readings/reflections, the degree to which they work to share and develop their thinking, and their timeliness in completing assignments (*1 points per day will be subtracted for lateness on the assignments*)— and not on the content of their opinions.

Grading Rubric

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 59% or less
- W = You will receive a W for Withdrawing should you not attend 5 of the last 6 sessions.

Impact Statement

- In the discussion of politically complex and charged issues, like those at focus in this course, interpersonal as well as intellectual discomfort may arise. It is necessary to engage in discussion of these issues in order to come to a comprehensive, critically conscious understanding of how prejudice and discrimination operate in our lives and the larger world around us. It is only by engaging in the open and honest discussion of inequity that we can learn how to build inclusive and socially just communities both on-campus and beyond. If you become particularly distressed about any discussion please speak to the course facilitator(s) immediately, and/or take advantage of the services offered by the campus’ Counseling Center located in the Susquehanna Building.

Equal Educational Opportunity Policy Statement

- In accordance with federal, state, local, and university policies (especially with respect to the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act) and the philosophy of the Words of Engagement Intergroup Dialogue Program, access to equal educational opportunity is paramount. Thus, every effort will be made to arrange for reasonable accommodations to ensure that such opportunity exists and is measurable in terms of equality of outcomes for every student on the basis of race; ethnicity; language; geographic origin; socioeconomic class, sex and gender; gender identity and expression; sexual orientation; physical, developmental, and psychological ability; religious, faith-based, spiritual, and/or secular affiliation; age and generation; and physical appearance; among other categories of identity.

Statement on Academic Integrity

- The university has approved a Code of Academic Integrity available on the web at [www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html](http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html). The code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. The code strives to promote a “community of trust” on our campus. The Words of Engagement Intergroup Dialogue Program supports this code and asks its students to abide by it.
A Word About Junk E-Mail Filters

- If you have an Internet Service Provider (ISP) that has junk e-mail filters, or you have set-up your local e-mail software to filter out junk e-mail, the e-mails sent to the entire class may get kicked out of your e-mail in-box. This is because the e-mails sent to the class have multiple recipients and may, therefore, be perceived by your filters to be junk e-mail. To avoid this problem, turn off your filters for the duration of the course or make sure to check your junk e-mail folder for course communications.
Statement on Review of the Syllabus

After having read the syllabus, I understand that I am responsible for the following:

1. I acknowledge that enrolling in a dialogue means that I am willing to engage in conversation with my fellow students about difficult or uncomfortable topics.

2. I must attend 5 of the latter 6 sessions to receive a credit (even if I have a documented illness that prevents me from attending class).

3. If I do not attend 5 of the latter 6 sessions, I acknowledge that the dialogue program administrator will ask me to withdraw from the dialogue for reasons of equity, and that I will have a W on my transcript as a result.

4. I must complete four journals for sessions 2, 3, 4, and 6 to be turned in to my facilitators via a method of their choosing.

5. I must complete an Out of Comfort Zone experience and paper by the last dialogue session.

6. I have an opportunity to involve myself in extra credit events as outlined in the syllabus.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have fully read and understand the requirements of the Words of Engagement Intergroup Dialogue Program as stated in the syllabus for my course. Please fill in the information and sign below. Then turn this page in to your dialogue facilitators.

___________________________________________
Dialogue, Semester, and Year

___________________________________________
Student Name Printed

___________________________________________
Student Signature

___________________________________________
UID

___________________________________________
Date