DPLS 741 The Art & Practice of Dialogue

Fall 2011 3 Credits
Professor: Chris Francovich, Ed.D.
Office Phone: 509-323-3592
E-mail: francovich@ Gonzaga.edu
Office hours: Please call or email for an appointment
Meeting Logistics -Room TBD
We meet on 9/7, 9/21, 9/28, 10/12, 10/26, 11/2, 11/16, 11/30

Course Overview
This course is concerned with the praxis of dialogue. From the theoretical perspective we will look at language, dialogue, and communication through philosophical, psychological, sociological & physiological lenses. The course readings will suggest a movement from broad social, historical, and philosophical perspectives on language and communication generally rooted in a Cartesian and Symbol view of language to an inquiry into subjective and intersubjective aspects of language, communication, and meaning centered in nonCartesian, and posthumanist perspectives.

The concepts of identity, role, self, other, and object will also be studied in light of global, organizational, and personal perspectives. Throughout the readings we will focus on phenomenological and subjective position of the self and the development of responsibility of that self to the world.

We will also engage in an ongoing ‘radical’ dialogue separate and apart from the theoretical and intellectual approach to the topic. This practice of radical dialogue is an open-ended approach to experiencing and understanding communication that focuses as much or more on the subjective phenomena of being in community (the dialogue circle) as it does on what is actually said by people that choose to speak.

However, this process can be disconcerting on a number of levels. Because no ‘one' definition of what dialogue is or isn’t offered there is a consequent sense of uncertainty and ambiguity about the process. Further, because participants are asked to suspend habitual responses to the speech of others one may feel some discomfort. Some people that experience this form of dialogue feel an acute and sometimes uncomfortable sense of inauthenticity or self-awareness and self-consciousness arising out of either the difficulty of suspending response or the protracted silences that often occur. This can result in reactivity and judgment about the process, the course, and the facilitator. The point of this practice is first to realize the phenomena of our own social and habitual conditioning and then begin to understand how this conditioning affects our social interaction. The practice of dialogue can help (it is asserted) undo some of the conditioning that keeps us from authentic, respectful, and engaged interaction.

This course’s main contribution to leadership studies is the development of both theoretical and experiential knowledge and insight into fundamental aspects of inter-human communication.
Intentions & aims for the course:
• To explore, contextualize, problematize, and make sense of philosophical, psychological, and sociological interpretations of dialogue and communication.
• To review and consider language as a traditional symbol system and as a non-symbolic practice arising from shared experience.
• To develop a working knowledge of the history & concepts of dialogue as they relate to leadership studies, organizational coherence, and civil society.
• To develop a personal sensitivity to the nature of group dialogue. This requires increased sensitivity and receptivity to your subjective gestures and responses in conversation through the practice of the form of dialogue developed in this course.

Course Structure
This course is composed of reading, writing, class discussion, Blackboard discussion, lecture, group activities, and sustained radical dialogue. We will form small working groups during the first class that will remain intact throughout the course.

Most 4-hour classes will open with an overview of the readings. Small group discussions of course notes and readings will then follow. We will generally take a 20-minute break. Following the break we will engage in an approximate 1.5-hour dialogue.

It is also my habit to prepare interpretive notes of selected readings and make them available on Blackboard prior to class. I use these notes to frame my ideas for conversation we meet. I also hope that my interpretations inspire students to interpret and analyze the readings from their own perspectives. I may prepare a number of slides based on my notes to stimulate discussion and/or communicate concepts and ideas.

Assignments
• Please read all assignments and my course notes posted on Blackboard. These notes are meant to be an initial factor in the reading triangulation strategy that involves the author(s) work, your interpretation of that work, my interpretation, and finally our collective interpretation. This process is much more effective when all participants commit to doing the reading.
• Participants will be expected to attend all class sessions. If you miss a class please inform me via email or phone prior to the missed class. Missing more than two classes will result in an incomplete and require either taking the class again or auditing it at some future time.
• Participants will be expected to complete a pre-course reading and writing assignment. Read Robert Grudin’s On Dialogue and write a short response to the prompt on Blackboard (to be posted by mid August). To be turned in by the first day of class. Details are on the Blackboard site under the Assignments link. (20% of grade).
• Participants to keep a reflective journal of each class session to be completed as soon after each class as possible. These journal entries should posted on Blackboard. (20% of grade). Please see Blackboard for more specific guidelines.
• Final Paper: 15 - 20 page paper expressing reflection, analysis, and synthesis. (40% of grade). See Blackboard for specific information.
Participation in the dialogue is assessed only to the extent that you show up and maintain
the principles discussed. There will be no assessment based on what you say or don't say.
The point of this dialogue process isn't necessarily to say anything. (20% of grade)

**Expectations and Assessment**

Assessment of doctoral work in leadership studies is challenging. Interdisciplinary work dealing
with complex and sometimes contested theories and concepts requires (from my perspective) a
tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity, and contingency. I am also struck by the need for a high
degree of self-directed behavior on the part of doctoral students and candidates. I would like my
teaching style, assessment policy, and rubrics to support and facilitate self-direction.
However, behind my questions about assessment and uncertainty in evaluating anyone in an
absolute manner there does reside (in my view) a set of skills that serve to hold and shape work
with language in a complex world. I believe we need a grammar, syntax, and semantics of
clarity, coherence, depth, and breadth. My assumption at the beginning of the term is that all of
the students in this course possess the requisite skills, talents, and propensities needed to be clear,
cogent, and complete. I admit that the standards I refer to are objectively stated and subjectively
enacted. My assessment will be based on the quality and content of expressed thought as
exhibited in both written assignments and classroom presentations and participation.

**Grading Criteria for Written Work (adapted from the DPLS Academic papers rubric)**

**Content Criteria:**
The content of papers should reflect the level and style of content in readings and discussions.
There is an expectation that doctoral students will reach outside of their comfort zone in terms of
appropriation of ideas, concepts, and frameworks. The substance of papers and other writings
will be weighed against the general level of discourse in class meetings and the style and density
of expression of the readings.

**Thought and Expression Criteria**

Student writing should raise vital questions or issues, formulating them clearly and precisely. I
will be looking for evidence of breadth and depth and the insightful, in-depth analysis of
complex ideas. Main points should be developed and supported with relevant information and
references that are appropriately incorporated.

The organization and logic of your writing is critical. The expectation is for well focused, well
organized, and well reasoned conclusions. The writing should flow with the reader not getting
lost or having to work to determine what you are saying.

There is also an expectation that your writing/thinking has an open and inclusive character when
exploring alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as appropriate, their
assumptions, implications, and/or practical consequences.

**Technical Criteria**

Your writing should be clear and demonstrate a high level of vocabulary through careful word
choice. Sentences should be constructed skillfully and purposefully. Transitions between
paragraphs and sections are important and will be evaluated for their efficacy in weaving your
concepts, themes, and purposes together. Summaries and conclusions are also vital elements of good writing and will be evaluated based on their appropriateness and effectiveness.

Of course grammar, punctuation, and spelling are expected to be flawless. Careful proof reading of your paper is a basic expectation.

Papers are to be completed in APA style. References should be cited properly within the text and a complete reference list must be provided. Appropriate use of headings will also be noted.

**Point/Grade correspondence:**

- 95-100% = A
- 90-94.99% = A-
- 85-90% = B
- 80-84.99% = B-

**Required Texts**

These books should all be available in the bookstore by the first day of class.


Other Readings will be provided via Blackboard

The Course Schedule will be available on Blackboard by Mid-August and will be part of the final course syllabus. The readings for this course are as reflected above and will not change.