Summer 2015  3 credits  
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Meeting Dates June 17, 24, July 1, 8, 10, 16, 23 - Room TBD  

Course Overview  
This course is concerned with an interpretation of dialogue that assumes a fundamental connection and relationship within and between embodiment/direct experience and communication with symbols (words). Characterizations of embodiment and of language necessarily encompass diverse fields and perspectives. This diversity of perspectives is at the heart of the course and is expressed both academically through the readings and discussions therein and phenomenologically through the dialogue practice that we will engage in. It is hoped that participants will embrace both of these methodologies and the systematic comparison and interpolation of their consequences.  

A chief aim of the course is to surface how ordinary communication and discourse relates to the language and behavior of those we deem “leaders”. The theorizing in this course is also central to leadership studies defined as a transdisciplinary endeavor seeking to understand the movement of power, purpose, and influence in human interactions, organizations, and institutions.  

A primary assumption underlying this course is that our speech or language is involved in an oscillating movement between emergent and novel expression and the expression of socially constructed and normative conditioning. A further assumption is that we use our speech and language habitually and that it can become mostly unconscious. It is from this lens that we can think of ourselves as “conditioned” by our circumstances and our practices. We become what we do and the more efficient we are in what we do the more unconscious of the actual doing we may become. And yet underlying this habitual mode of communication is the possibility of emergent and novel speech. The dialogic situation is one in which both poles of communication as described above are active and reflected upon.  

An overarching theme in this course is the relationship between my interpretation of dialogue and the practice of Jesuit pedagogy. Jesuit pedagogy teaches in general that human existence is ideally an ongoing flow of conscious reflection between and among our context, experience, actions, and evaluations. The pivotal role that reflective consciousness plays in this movement between the embodied (context and experience) and the discursive (action and evaluation) is at the heart of the dialogic principles as expressed in this course.  

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 structural/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.

This process can be disconcerting on a number of levels. The type of dialogue we will practice is fundamentally and intentionally uncertain – with no explicit topic or purpose we are left to just listen to the space – listen to each other; and listen to ourselves. Because we are asked to suspend habitual responses to the speech of others we may feel some discomfort. Some people (and I am one of them) that experience this form of dialogue feel an acute 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 point of this practice is first to realize the phenomena of our own social conditioning and then begin to understand how this conditioning affects our interactions and judgments/prejudices. The primary consequence or “end” of this practice is in each one of us taking full responsibility for our perceptions and judgments. This practice of dialogue can help (it is asserted) counter some of the effects of unconscious conditioning and begin to teach us about how better to stay in relationship in a pluralistic, diverse, uncertain, and complex world. This courses’ main contribution to leadership studies is the development of both theoretical and experiential knowledge and insight into fundamental aspects of inter-human communication and its effects on practices, beliefs, and norms. One of the primary assumptions of this course is that people in leadership roles that can engage dialogically are necessarily more relevant and effective in their leadership.

**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, 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 to 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 (see pre-course readings below) 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 one class will result in an incomplete and require either taking the class again or auditing it at some future time.

- Participants are to keep a reflective journal of each class session to be completed as soon after each class as possible. These journal entries should be emailed to me on the day after each meeting (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)

- Pre-course reading: Please see Blackboard for information.

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 also expect 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 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: Please see Grading Rubric on Blackboard**

**Required Texts:**

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


