

difficult dialogues

course offerings
spring 2007

Difficult Dialogues is a campus-wide initiative aimed at developing skills and awareness of dialogue, and encouraging discourse across differences in both our classrooms and community. Clark is one of 27 institutions selected by the Ford Foundation from 675 colleges and universities nation-wide to participate in this initiative.

Our own DD program includes a faculty development process, and a series of campus-wide launch events in late October and early November. Starting in January 2007, a yearlong symposium of lectures, panels, workshops, and arts events will explore four areas of common concern (the state of our democracy, race and ethnicity, religion and tolerance, and issues of power).

As part of the DD program, courses with an emphasis on dialogue will be offered in both the Spring and Fall of 2007. These courses will approach the process of dialogue in a variety of ways and across a number of disciplines; they will all draw on the symposium programming in the content of the course. Please explore the course offerings in the listings below; for further information on the Difficult Dialogues program and opportunities, go to the website at www.clarku.edu/difficultdialogues. If you have questions about the program as a whole, please feel free to contact Sarah Buie at sbuie@clarku.edu or Jane Androski at jandroski@clarku.edu. For specific queries on the individual courses, please contact the faculty member listed.

dialogue courses

DD course – PHIL 105.01 Personal Values

This course will be a philosophical study of fundamental human value concerns with a special emphasis on dialogue as an approach to addressing them. Students will learn some important moral theories, methods for reasoning philosophically about moral questions, and skills of dialogue for working with contested questions. Professor Walter Wright

DD course – ENG/Theater/Education 209 Writing out Loud

In this course, students will learn to listen and consider how the application of spoken word and performance strategies can strengthen their written work. Writing Out Loud is a workshop course designed to help writers listen and will emphasize dialogue. Class limit of 15; the class is by permission only and it is not open to first-year students. Students must submit a portfolio of writing for review. Professors Anne Geller and Gino Dilorio

DD course – COMM 101 Communication and Culture

Examines the ways in which communication creates and represents ideology, social orders and cultural identities. Emphasis is on critical analysis of communication in contemporary society, and particularly on constructive dialogue about contentious political, religious, racial and cultural issues. Subjects include culture-based metaphor, nonverbal communication, computer-mediated communication, advertising, print media and television. Professor Matt Malsky

DD course – ENG 196 - Strategic Speaking

Centers on oral presentation of current controversial issues and response to rhetorical dilemmas. Topics include: rhetorical situations and audience analysis; forms of argument in persuasive speaking; development of arguments with evidence; ethical communication practices, and dialogue processes to achieve better understanding of complex controversial issues. Students prepare three major speeches and complete a number of exercises. This course has been modified for inclusion in Clark's current dialogue project. Professor Fern Johnson, English

DD course – GOV 268 Peace and War

An examination and analysis of the various theories in the field of international relations as related to the origins, duration, and conclusion of wars and the establishment of peace. Looking at both historical and contemporary cases, we will assess the factors that contribute to the outbreak of war, both interstate and intrastate (i.e., nationalism, territory, economics, and security dilemmas), as well as the emergence of peace (i.e., international institutions, alliances, and the balance of power). The course concludes with an exploration of the challenges for preventing future wars and enhancing the possibility of peace in the post-Cold War period. This course will emphasize the practice of dialogue, in conjunction with the Difficult Dialogues initiative and symposium. Professor Kristen Williams

DD course – SOC 294 Global Ethnographies

This course focuses on emergent ethnographic concerns in an attempt to capture fluid cultural processes and connections as they unfold in contemporary global arenas. It will be explicitly dialogic both in examining these liquid cultural processes through ethnographic lens, and in the methods of fieldwork that will be developed in the second part of the semester. We will dialogically explore the ethnographies of movement, displacement, and replacement, and the global traffic in culture. This involves an analysis of traditionally produced ethnographies and ethnographic methods of the founding pioneers - including the work of the famous Clark University ethnographer - Franz Boas. How can we examine transnational connections and commodity circuits that most of us are a part of in the early 21st century? What are the dialogues and "tracking" methods that we implement to capture these fluid domains and borderless cultural and economic spaces? This course will explore through dialogue the process of decoding and establishing connections with ethnographic sites and biographical cultural locations. Dialogue as content and method will be emphasized throughout course, in conjunction with the Difficult Dialogues initiative and symposium. Professor Parminder Bhachu

DD course – MGMT 100 The Art and Science of Management

The Art and Science of Management introduces students to management. Students learn about the primary functions that comprise an organization, and about the structure and processes that facilitate communication within organizations, and between the organization and its environment. The course is taught using a combination of tools, among them, role plays, experiential exercises, computer simulation, service learning, and case analyses. A foundation of the course is the use of dialogue, both as an approach to class interactions and as a practice to be taught. Professor Barbara Bigelow

DD course – SCRN 290 Gender and Film

Explores the ways that gender is produced by the "social technologies" of film and video. Examines concepts of sexual difference (masculinity and femininity) and organizing representation, narrative and spectatorship in Hollywood and alternative cinemas, and in some television and video. Readings will be primarily theoretical and critical. This course will emphasize the practice of dialogue, in conjunction with the Difficult Dialogues initiative and symposium. Professor Marcia Butzel

DD course – GOVT262 Representation and Deliberation Theory

Representative democracy rests upon two competing expectations - first, that elected officials faithfully represent the views of their constituents; and second, that elected officials deliberate amongst each other about policy outcomes. This course examines the tension between these two expectations - under what circumstances should representatives ignore the views of their constituents? How should they act when they conclude that their constituents do not know what is best for them? And how can they represent the views of minorities? The course will draw equally from theoretical works on representation and deliberation and from applied work on contemporary problems in representation and deliberation - subjects include difference in voting and legislative systems, redistricting, and representation of racial and ethnic minorities. This course will be taught in conjunction with the Difficult Dialogues initiative. Professor Mr. Boatright

DD course – ARTS 204 Sacred Space (of Dialogue)

Spatial archetypes are by nature dialogic – they all embody the play of dualities, and the creative energy released in that play. This course explores these archetypes in the natural world, the built world, and our inner, psychic spaces. Emphasis is on understanding the interdependent nature of these three aspects of our experience, and its significance to our relationship to the environment. Included are universal patterns (threshold, path, sacred geometry, mandala), natural archetypes (cave, mountain, river, tree) and the relationship between built and natural environments. We will develop skills of dialogue, both in class discussions and creative projects, in order to enter the space of archetype more fully. Class limit 15, and by permission only. Professor Sarah Buie

DD course – ID 264/ IDCE 30222: Advanced Topics in Development Theory: Conversations with the Ghost of Marx

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the end of the Cold War ostensibly signified the triumph of capitalism and democracy. Yet at the beginning of the 21st century, capitalism and attempts to bring democratic modernity around the world have had mixed results at best for poor and marginalized peoples or led to the escalation of violent social conflict. There is much talk about finding alternatives to capitalism and working towards social justice among social scientists (and Clark students). Eric Wolf, the late anthropologist notes that, "... the social sciences constitute one long dialogue with the ghost of Marx." The participants of this seminar will engage in dialogues with Marx's ghost through careful textual exegesis and critical reflection of the primary works of one of capitalism's most ardent critics. In the second half of the semester, students will draw upon the writings of other social theorists who have extended or built upon Marx's works. The aim of these dialogues is to gain a historical and political understanding of capitalism, development, and democracy as a precursor to imagining just alternatives. Open to graduates and advanced undergraduates. (Permission required). Professor Kiran Asher

DD course – ID 131 Local Action, Global Change

Recognizing the linkages between local and global concerns, this course introduces the central issues; poverty, racism, the environment, class, gender, rights, democracy, autonomy, war. Conceptually, students will see examples of problems and solutions, and reflect in group interactions on the differential distribution of privilege by class and color. Practically, the class will become familiar with aspects of the above issues that translate into forms of civic action, and will work together in intercommunicative teams to assist social service organizations do what they do better to address serious social problems in the Worcester area. The course examines the paradigm of service-learning (and related forms of volunteerism), both locally and internationally, and students gain a sense of how to best contribute to resolving problems in communities. Class engagement builds concrete dialoguing skills to better communicate with fellow students, the general public, service organizations and their diverse clientele, as well as intellectual skills to work with others to improve our global condition locally, and reflect upon experiences locally to increase a sense of global participation, empathy, and responsibility. Professor Duncan MacLean Earle

DD course – Theatre Arts 213 Theatre Studio

A scene-study course applying the methods, theories and approaches discussed in Actor as Thinker to working on stage, film and video. Students are required to present several scenes of different periods and styles for dialogue, critical written review and further development by classmates and director. Content varies each time the course is taught. May be repeated for credit. Lab and crew hours are required. Prerequisite TA 212. Professor Ray Munro

At Clark, Difficult Dialogues is cosponsored by the Higgins School of Humanities and the International Development, Community and Environment program (IDCE)