PSYC 675: Advanced Group Methods: Intergroup Dialogue

Department of Psychology
University of Tennessee
Spring 2015

Class times: Thursdays, 12:40 PM – 3:25 PM
Location: 308 Austin Peay
(Note: Beginning on Thursday, February 19th, students will be facilitating intergroup dialogue groups from 3:40 PM – 4:55 PM, immediately after our scheduled class time, locations TBD)

Instructor: Joe Miles, Ph.D.
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Office Address: 410C Austin Peay Bldg
Office Phone Number: (865) 974-4183

Course Texts


Maxwell, K. E., Nagda, B. A., & Thompson, M. C. (Eds.). (2011). Facilitating intergroup dialogues: Bridging differences, catalyzing change. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing. (Full text available online through the UTK Library)


Recommended:


Other required course readings will be available on reserve, through the UTK library, or on Blackboard at Online@UT.
Course Description

This course is intended to build on students’ knowledge, skill, and awareness related to the theory, research, and facilitation of group interventions, with a specific focus on multicultural and social justice issues in groups. The course includes instruction in the theory and practice of intergroup dialogue, a small group intervention that brings together individuals from social identity groups with a history of tension/conflict (e.g., People of Color and White People; Women and Men), with the goals of raising consciousness regarding personal and social identities (and associated privilege and oppression), developing knowledge of social systems that serve to perpetuate the status quo of inequality, building increased capacities for sustained communication across groups, and strengthening individual and collective capacities to promote social justice (see Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Walker, 2007).

Students will gain knowledge of the theory and research that guide intergroup dialogue practice, and will develop skills and techniques for engaging group members in productive intergroup dialogue. Additionally, students will continue to build on their knowledge in group intervention (e.g., group counseling) theory, and their group facilitation skills. They will learn how to incorporate this knowledge and skill into intergroup dialogue facilitation, along with the other basic helping skills they already possess. Finally, students will continue to develop their multicultural competence by building on their awareness of social systems and inequalities; and their awareness of power, privilege, and oppression as they relate to the experiences of individuals from different social identity groups. This will also include continuing to develop self-awareness as to their own social identities, and any privilege and oppression associated with these identities. While intergroup dialogue is a specific group intervention in and of itself, the course will also talk about how dialogic techniques can be incorporated into psychotherapy groups, outreach, and other professional activities of counseling psychologists.

This course will involve both a traditional seminar format (Thursdays from 12:40 to 3:25), as well as the experience of co-facilitating an intergroup dialogue (Thursdays from 3:40 to 4:55, beginning February 19th and running through April 23rd). Each dialogue will be composed of approximately 8-10 students enrolled in PSYC 435: Multicultural Psychology.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students should:

• Have an understanding of intergroup dialogue as a small group intervention, and the similarities and differences between intergroup dialogue and other forms of group interventions (e.g., group psychotherapy) and intergroup communication (e.g., debate)
• Have knowledge of the theory and research that guides intergroup dialogue practice
• Have the ability to develop and co-facilitate an intergroup dialogue between members of social identity groups that have had a history of tension or conflict
• Have increased knowledge and skill regarding processes involved in group interventions, including factors that lead to an effective group intervention, tasks of the facilitator, the development of the group over time, how to work with a co-facilitator, and how to work with intense emotions and challenges that arise intergroup dialogue in the here-and-now
• Have built on their basic understanding of the processes of socialization, social identity development models, and the social construction of identities
• Have an increased awareness of social systems and inequalities
• Have an increased awareness of privilege, power, and oppression and their effects on intergroup relations
• Have increased awareness of what it means to be a member of one’s own and others’ social identity groups, including the privilege/oppression associated with these group memberships

Course Techniques and Environment

This course will take the form of a traditional graduate seminar. Given the content of the course, collaborative learning is expected, as catalyzed by interactions with others in the course. As such, students are expected to attend every class, to be on time to class, to have completed the required readings for each class, and to participate fully in class discussions and activities.

Additionally, the instructor and the students will share in the responsibility of creating and maintaining an environment that is conducive to learning for all students. This is especially important given the sensitive nature of some of the topics (e.g., social identity, power, privilege, and oppression). I ask that students use appropriate language and behavior that does not demean or dehumanize any individual or group, whether or not such individuals or groups are present, respect one another’s diverse experiences and perspectives, and maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the other students in the course.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

Attendance and Participation (25% of grade)

All students are expected to be active agents in their own learning in order to get the most out of this course, and it is imperative that students attend and participate in every class session.

Participation includes coming to class with all readings completed, discussion of the course readings, discussion of intergroup dialogue facilitation experiences, and experiential activities. Students will also be asked to participate in on going self-reflection and evaluation of the intergroup dialogues by completing measures regarding each dialogue session. In addition, students will choose one class during which they will co-facilitate a dialogue on a “hot topic” relevant to their intergroup dialogue group. Co-facilitators will be expected to provide a reading to the class on this hot topic one week prior to their scheduled dialogue (this reading should be a reading that the co-facilitators plan use in their actual intergroup dialogue group). Dates will be assigned during the first weeks of class.

Intergroup Dialogue Facilitation and Supervision (25% of grade)

Each student will co-facilitate one, nine-week intergroup dialogue. Intergroup dialogues will meet for one hour and fifteen minutes (3:40 PM – 4:55PM Thursdays) per week, beginning Thursday, February 19th and ending Thursday, April 23rd.

The intergroup dialogue groups will consist of approximately seven to ten undergraduate students enrolled in Joe Miles’ section of PSYC 435: Multicultural Psychology. The topics for the intergroup dialogues will be determined in the first few weeks of the semester and will depend both on the social identities of the students enrolled in the course and student interest.
The topics may include (but are not limited to) ability status, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, and social class.

Co-facilitators will be responsible for assigning readings to their intergroup dialogue group for each of the “hot topic” weeks. These articles should be about “hot topics” as related to the social identities of the co-facilitators’ intergroup dialogue group, as determined by the co-facilitators and/or the students enrolled in the dialogue (E.g., “hot topics” in a race/ethnicity dialogue might be “affirmative action” or interracial dating; “hot topics” in a social class dialogue might be welfare or minimum wage). Co-facilitators are encouraged to select readings from the book, Readings for Diversity and Social Justice, the news, the popular media, etc. This will be discussed further in class as we prepare for the dialogue facilitation.

Following each intergroup dialogue session, each co-facilitator team will post a process note regarding their intergroup dialogue, reporting on the events that transpired in their most recent session, any observations on the group process, and any challenges or successes encountered in the session. Co-facilitators may also note any questions or concerns that they would like to discuss in individual or group supervision. Only one note needs to be turned in each week for each co-facilitator pair.

During the second half of the semester, half of each class time will be devoted to group supervision of the intergroup dialogues. While time will be devoted in each class session to any co-facilitator pair who needs it, each co-facilitator pair will be responsible for one informal case presentation to the class about their dialogue group.

For their case presentation, co-facilitators should discuss:
• The topic of their dialogue group
• The make-up of their group
• The development of the group norms and group climate
• Challenges and successes for the group or the co-facilitators
• Any “hot topics” covered to date and how these sessions went
• Their plan for moving forward
• Questions for the group

Should consent be given to audio or video tape the dialogue group, co-facilitators should also plan to play a short video or audio clip of their session during their case presentations.

Reading Reactions (25% of grade)

For each class students are asked to write a brief (i.e., about a paragraph) reaction to the assigned readings, including at least one discussion question. The reactions may cover issues from the readings that you found particularly interesting, things you agreed or disagreed with, concerns you have about something you read, etc. These reactions and questions will be used to facilitate our discussion. Reactions should be posted to the course Blackboard site by 12:00 PM each Wednesday (the day before class).
Pre- and Post-Dialogue Self-Reflective Essays (25% of grade)

Prior to their first intergroup dialogue session, students will complete a pre-dialogue self-reflective essay in which they are asked to reflect on the following:

- How do you feel about your ability to co-facilitate an intergroup dialogue?
- What strengths will you bring to your intergroup dialogue experience?
- What learning goals do you have for your intergroup dialogue facilitation experience?
- What are your hopes regarding your upcoming intergroup dialogue experience?
- What are your fears or concerns regarding your upcoming intergroup dialogue experience?
- What are your expectations regarding the overall outcome of your intergroup dialogue?

The pre-dialogue self-reflective essay is due before class on February 12th.

Following their last intergroup dialogue session, students will complete a post-dialogue self-reflective essay in which they are asked to reflect on the following:

- What was the most important thing that happened in your intergroup dialogue over the course of the semester?
- Why was this important for you?
- What was successful or went well in your intergroup dialogue this semester?
- What was unsuccessful or do you wish would have been different in your intergroup dialogue this semester?
- Did your hopes and/or fears for your intergroup dialogue come true? Why or why not?
- Were your expectations for your intergroup dialogue confirmed? Why or why not?
- What were your strengths as an intergroup dialogue facilitator?
- What are your growth edges as an intergroup dialogue facilitator?

The post-dialogue self-reflective essay is due before class on April 23rd.

**Policy on Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to recognize and uphold the highest standards of intellectual and academic integrity. Students are advised to read the official University Academic Standards of Conduct, which discusses plagiarism, cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification, and multiple submissions of material for credit without permission. Students will be held to the standards set forth in the University Honor Statement:

> An essential feature of the University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, this affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.

Failure to abide by the honor statement or otherwise engage in academic dishonesty may result in failure of the course.
Disability Policy

Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately at the beginning of the semester to discuss specific needs. The Office of Disability Services (located in Dunford Hall; 865-974-6087) can help to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Grading Scale

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COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1: January 8, 2015

Introduction to the Course
- No assigned readings. Review syllabus and course structure. Discuss relationship to PSYC 435 course and review PSYC 435 syllabus. Decide on case presentation and practice facilitation dates. Discuss dialogue topics and preferences.

Week 2: January 15, 2015

NMCS (No class, but reading reflections still due)

Foundations of Intergroup Dialogue: Critical Multicultural Education

Social Identities and Socialization
Week 3: January 22, 2015

Diversity and Social Justice in Group Work: A Dialogic Perspective


Dialogue: An Introduction and Overview


Week 4: January 29, 2015

Foundations of Intergroup Dialogue: Research and Theory on Intergroup Relations


The Social Construction of Identities


Week 5: February 5, 2015

Intergroup Dialogue in Higher Education: A Critical-Dialogic Model

Privilege and Oppression


Week 6: February 12, 2015
Pre-Dialogue Self-Reflective Essay Due

Intergroup Dialogue Process


Privilege and Oppression (Continued)


Week 7: February 19, 2015
Intergroup Dialogue @ 3:40 PM
Session 1: Coming Together; What is “Dialogue?”

Intergroup Dialogue Process


Hot Topic

• Readings TBA

Student Facilitators:
Week 8: February 26, 2015
Intergroup Dialogue @ 3:40 PM
Session 2: Exploring Commonalities and Differences; Social Identities and Socialization

Intergroup Dialogue Process

Hot Topic
- Readings TBA

Student Facilitators:

Week 9: March 5, 2015
Intergroup Dialogue @ 3:40 PM
Session 3: Exploring Commonalities and Differences; Privilege and Oppression

Intergroup Dialogue Evaluation

Hot Topic
- Readings TBA

Student Facilitators:

Week 10: March 12, 2015
Intergroup Dialogue @ 3:40 PM
Session 4: “Hot Topics”

Critical Incidents in Intergroup Dialogue

Hot Topic
- Readings TBA

Student Facilitators:
Week 11: March 26, 2015
Intergroup Dialogue @ 3:40 PM
Session 5: “Hot Topics”

Dialogue to Action


Week 13: April 2, 2015
Intergroup Dialogue @ 3:40 PM
Session 6: “Hot Topics”

Case studies in Intergroup Dialogue (Select two)

Week 14: April 9, 2015
Intergroup Dialogue @ 3:40 PM
Session 7: From Dialogue to Action

Adapting and Extending Intergroup Dialogue Processes into a Social Justice Framework for Group Counseling and Other Settings


Week 15: April 16, 2015
Intergroup Dialogue @ 3:40 PM
Session 8: From Dialogue To Action

Evidence, Criticisms, and Implications for Practice, Theory, and Research


Week 16: April 24, 2015
Post-Discussion Self-Reflective Essay Due
Intergroup Dialogue and Course Wrap-Up with Entire Class @ 3:40 PM