

## UNDERGRADUATE SYLLABUS

### **Alternative and/or Extra Credit Assignment (and/or additional academic credit option): Intergroup Dialogue Option**

Intergroup dialogue engages participants from one, two, or more “social identity groups” in a collaborative learning experience. More specifically, intergroup dialogue is a collaboratively structured form of group conversation characterized by participants’ willingness to “listen for understanding.” It is different from discussion, where participants generally engage in serial monologuing—each offering their perspective on a given topic, as well as from debate, where participants typically learn to “listen to gain advantage”—each seeking to trump the perspectives offered by others on a given topic. The goal of intergroup dialogue is for participants in it to build increased intra- and cross-group awareness, knowledge, and understanding leading to collective engagement in action for social justice.

Intergroup dialogue programs on college and university campuses emerged in response to undergraduate student focus group research results in which students across race expressed dissatisfaction with campus curricular and co-curricular diversity efforts. While most students cited university demographic diversity as a major factor in their decision to enroll, once on campus, many students felt the sting of self-segregation and believed the institutional multicultural education programs and courses did little to enable them to develop skill in, and comfort for, cross-group interaction and relationship building.

- Each intergroup dialogue meets for two hours once a week, for eight consecutive weeks. Students are required to attend all eight sessions to earn one academic credit.
- The eighth week meeting brings together student participants in all the dialogue topics for a culminating experience

Intergroup dialogue topics include, but are not limited to:

People of Color/White People (race)  
Black/Latina/o  
White/Latina/o  
Men/Women (gender)  
Interfaith/Secular  
Socioeconomic Class  
LGBT/Heterosexual  
Emergent Theme (topics are determined by participants)  
Black Women/White Women  
Multiracial Greek/Multiracial Non-Greek

Research on the benefits of intergroup dialogue indicate that students who participate in them are hired more readily, are promoted faster, earn more money sooner and, acquire more advanced critical thinking skills than their peers who do not participate in them. (Milem & Hakuta, 2000)

Milem, J. & Hakuta, K. (2000). “The Benefits of Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education.” In D. Wilds (Ed.), *Minorities in Higher Education, 1999-2000: Seventeenth Annual Status Report*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education, pp. 39-67.