

University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center
Department of Communication

Difference Matters and Organizational Communication
CMMU 5250 001
Spring 2007 T 5:30 – 8:20 WSC 235

Professor: Dr. Brenda J. Allen
Office Hours: T 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm, and by appointment
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Course Description

This graduate seminar will focus on theoretical and practical issues regarding relationships between communication processes in contemporary U.S. organizations and socially constructed aspects of identity. Specifically, we will concentrate on gender, race, sexual identity, social class, ability, and age. The primary theoretical foundation of this course is social constructionism, which basically contends that humans create reality through interaction.

Based upon the idea that individual/group differences make a difference (they “matter”), course materials and activities will address a variety of related concerns (“matters”). These include theoretical perspectives, socio-historical developments, research issues, and practical issues. To explore these issues, the course focuses on how systems of power and privilege help shape perceptions of salient social identity groups within the United States, and how individuals and groups resist and transform those systems.

The course also delves into communication issues relevant to ways that we learn about social identities from such sources as our families, the media, and organizations. To explore these matters, we will take a critical approach, which means looking for power dynamics, including domination, compliance, and resistance. We also will self-consciously delve into our personal perceptions, perspectives, and experiences as related to course materials. In addition, we will discuss implications of our studies for social change.

We will analyze and discuss work from several disciplines, including communication, sociology, organizational behavior, ethnic studies, psychology, education, disability studies, and philosophy. We will consider diverse types of organizations, such as corporations, educational institutions, non-profits, and media conglomerates. And, we will address many modes of communication.

We will explore how communication helps to create and sustain understandings of ourselves in relationship to different and similar others in society and in organizational contexts. We will engage the term ‘organization’ as a noun and a verb by investigating how communication occurs *in* organizations as well as how it *functions to organize* social and organizational relationships.

Required Readings

Allen, B.J. (2004). *Difference matters: Communicating social identity*. IL: Waveland.

Additional readings on Blackboard. <https://blackboard.cudenver.edu/> Please be sure to post your current email address in your profile for the course.

Recommended Resources

Williams, J. M. (2002). *Style: Ten lessons in clarity and grace* (7th ed.). New York: Longman.
[available through online sources and local bookstores; OK to get an earlier edition]

Check Blackboard for additional resources. Please send me any resources you’d like to post.

Assignments and Evaluation

You must complete and be prepared to discuss all assigned readings by the date indicated on the syllabus. Also, you must submit assignments by the beginning of the class session on designated due dates. Your course grade will be based upon the following:

<i>Participation and attendance</i>	25%	250 points
<i>Reflection Papers</i>	30%	300 points
<i>Final Project</i>	30%	300 points
<i>Oral Presentation</i>	10%	100 points
<i>Post Test</i>	5%	50 points

Point Scale	Letter Grade
	1000-950 A
	900-949 A-
	870-899 B+
	835-869 B
	800-834 B-
	770-799 C+
	735-769 C
Below 735	C-

Grading System for Graduate Courses

A = Excellent

A- = Very good

B+ = Good

B = Satisfactory

Grades below B WILL NOT BE COUNTED toward the M.A. or M.S. degree

Participation and Attendance

Active student participation is imperative to maximize the learning potential of this course. Therefore, you should attend each class. Please inform me if you are not able to come to class, and we can negotiate whether or not and how you might receive partial credit.

You should always be prepared to participate fully in class. Grading criteria for participation include the following behaviors: seems prepared; listens actively; offers thoughtful comments and responses; asks thoughtful questions; allows and invites others to speak; solicits feedback; responds well to feedback; demonstrates cumulative learning; and, shows initiative.

Reflection Papers: Details forthcoming. (Worth 100 points each)

Final Project: Research Paper. This 15-20 page paper must present a fully developed research argument, correctly follow APA style, and have few, if any, grammatical errors. I will require you to meet with me at least twice before your oral presentation to discuss drafts of your paper. You will complete assignments leading to the paper throughout the semester. Also, I will give you detailed grading criteria for the final project and presentation.

Oral Presentation

You will develop and conduct an oral presentation of your final project to the class.

Due Dates: **February 27 RP #1**

March 1 Declare Research Topic

March 27 RP #2

May 8 Oral Presentations

May 10 Final Project and RP #3

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 16 Intro and Overview

January 23 Theoretical perspectives continued

Difference Matters Chapter 1, 2

Mumby, D. (2001). Power and politics. In: F.M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.) *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 585-623). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lull, J. (2003). Hegemony. In: *G. Dines and J.M. Humez (Eds.) Gender, race, and class in media: A text-reader* (pp. 61-66). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Allen, B.J. (2005). Social constructionism. In: S. May & D. Mumby (Eds.) *Engaging organizational communication theory and research: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 35-53). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

January 30 GENDER MATTERS

Difference Matters, Chapter 3

Trethewey, A. (2003). Revisioning control: A feminist critique of disciplined bodies. In: P. Buzzanell (Ed.), *Rethinking organizational & managerial communication from feminist perspectives* (pp. 107-127). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hearn, J., & Collinson, D. (2006). Men, masculinities, and workplace diversity/diversion. In: A. Konrad, P. Prasad, & J. Pringle (Eds.), *The handbook of workplace diversity* (pp. 299-322). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Mumby, D. K. (1998). Organizing men: Power, discourse, and the social construction of masculinity in the workplace. *Communication Theory*, 8, 164-183.

February 6 Gender continued

Hsieh, C., & Winslow, E. (2006). Gender representation in the federal workforce: A comparison among groups. *Review of Public Personnel Management*, 26, 276-294.

Pyke, K.D., & Johnson, D. (2003). Asian American women and racialized femininities: "Doing" gender across cultural worlds. *Gender & Society*, 17, 33-53.

Harter, L. (2004). Masculinity(s), the agrarian frontier myth, and cooperative ways of organizing: contradictions and tensions in the experience and enactment of democracy. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 32, 89-118.

February 13 RACE MATTERS

Difference Matters, Chapter 4

Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge.

Hall, S. (2003). The whites of their eyes: Racist ideologies and the media. In: *G. Dines and J.M. Humez (Eds.) Gender, race, and class in media: A text-reader* (pp. 89-93). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Proudford, K. L., & Nkomo, S. (2006). Race and ethnicity in organizations. In: A. Konrad, P. Prasad, & J. Pringle, (Eds.) *The handbook of workplace diversity* (pp. 323-344). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Ashcraft, K. L., & Allen, B. J. The racial foundation of organizational communication. *Communication Theory* 13: 5-33.

February 20 Race continued

Allen, B.J. (2005). Allen, B.J. Communicating race at WeighCo. In J.T. Wood and S. Duck (Eds.) *Composing relationships: Communication in everyday life* (pp. 150-156). Wadsworth.

Carillo Rowe, A., & Malhotra, S. (2006). (Un)hinging Whiteness. In: M.P. Orbe, B.J. Allen, & L.A. Flores (Eds.). *The same and different: Acknowledging the diversity within and between cultural groups. International and Intercultural Communication Annual XXX.* (pp. 166-193). Washington, D.C.: National Communication Association.

Yep, G. A. (2002). My three cultures: Navigating the multicultural identity landscape. In: *Readings in intercultural communication: Experiences and contexts* (pp.60-66). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Tovares, R. (2002). Mascot matters: Race, history, and the University of North Dakota's "fighting Sioux" logo. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 26, 76-94.

February 27 SOCIAL CLASS

Difference Matters, Chapter 5

Nesbit, T. (2005). Social class and adult education. In: T. Nesbit (Ed.) *Class concerns: Adult education and social class* (pp. 5-14). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Magnus, S. A., & Mick, S. S. (2000). Medical schools, affirmative action, and the neglected role of social class. *American Journal of Public Health*, 90, 1197-1201.

March 6 Social Class continued

Segura, D. (2003). Navigating between two worlds: The labyrinth of Chicana intellectual production in the academy. *Journal of Black Studies*, 34, 28-51.

George, D. (2006) Social class and social identity. *Review of Social Economy*, 64, 429-445.

Elliott, J.R., & Sims, M. (2001). Ghettos and barrios: The impact of neighborhood poverty and race on job matching among Blacks and Latinos. *Social Problems*, 48, 341-361

March 13 SEXUALITY MATTERS

Difference Matters, Chapter 6

Yep, G. (2003). The violence of heteronormativity in communication studies: Notes on injury, healing, and queer world-making. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 45, 11-59.

Raley, A. (2006). Stereotype or success? *Journal of Homosexuality*, 51, 19-38.

Raymond, D. (2003). Popular culture and queer representation: A critical perspective. In: G. Dines and J.M. Humez (Eds.) *Gender, race, and class in media: A text-reader* (pp. 98-110). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Russ, T.L., Simonds, C.J., and Hunt, S.K. (2002). Coming out in the classroom...an occupational hazard? The influence of sexual orientation on teacher credibility and perceived student learning. *Communication Education, 51*, 311-324.

March 20 SPRING BREAK.

March 27 Sexuality continued

Nicholas, C.L. (2006). Disciplinary-interdisciplinary glbtq (identity) studies and Hecht's layering perspective. *Communication Quarterly, 54*, 305-330

April 3 ABILITY MATTERS

Difference Matters, Chapter 7

Zola, I. K. (2003). Self, identity, and the naming question: Reflections on the language of disability. In: T. Ore (Ed.), *The social construction of difference and inequality* (pp. 437-448). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Coopman, S. (2003). Communicating disability: Metaphors of oppression, metaphors of empowerment. In: P. J. Kalbfleisch (Ed.). *Communication yearbook, 27* (pp.). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Nelson, J. (2000). The media role in building the disability community. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 15*, 180-193.

Cherney, J. L. (2003) Sport, (dis)ability, and public controversy: Ableist rhetoric and Casey Martin v. PGA tour, Inc. In: R. S. Brown and D.J. O'Rourke (Eds.) *Case studies in sport communication*. Westport, CN: Praeger.

April 10 Ability continued

Holmes, J. (2003). Small talk at work: Potential problems for workers with an intellectual disability. *Research on Language & Social Interaction, 36*, 65-84.

Drainoni, M., Lee-Hood, E., Tobias, C., Bachman, J., Andrew, J., & Maisels, L. (2006). Cross-disability experiences of barriers to health-care access: Consumer perspectives. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies 17*, 101 – 117.

Braithwaite, D. O., & Eckstein, N. J. (2003). How people with disabilities communicatively manage assistance: helping as instrumental social support. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 1 – 27*.

April 17 AGE MATTERS

Difference Matters, Chapter 8

McCann, R., Dailey, R. M., Giles, H., & Ota, H. (2005). Beliefs about intergenerational communication across the lifespan: middle age and the roles of age stereotyping and respect norms. *Communication Studies 56*, 293 – 313

Bergstrom, M. J., & Holmes, M. E. (2004). Organizational Communication and aging: Age-Related Processes in Organizations In: Coupland, J. (Ed.), *Handbook of communication and aging research* (pp. 305-327). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

April 24 Age continued

DiRomualdo, T. (2006). Geezers, grungers, gen-Xers and geeks - a look at workplace generational conflict. Online Available: <http://wistechnology.com/article.php?id=3224>.

MayoClinic.Com (2006). Workplace generation gap: Understand differences among colleagues. Online Available: www.mayoclinic.com/health/working-life/WL00045

May 1 Course Wrap Up

May 8 PRESENTATIONS

May 10 Final and Reflection #3 Due

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