

DIALOGUE, ETHICS, AND SOCIAL GOOD (DISG)

DISG 1000 Centering Dialogue as a Leadership Strategy

Dialogue is a central imperative to cultivating leadership in higher education and engaging in problem-solving. We have seen how miscommunications and a lack of dialogue can erode relationships and organizations. Conversely, dialogue can provide constructive opportunities to understand why decisions are being made and the varying perspectives people may hold. Dialogue is a lever that can be used to create change in stubborn situations. In this increasingly digital age, the role of dialogue is even more important and complex. This course will explore the foundations of dialogue. We will define and explore what dialogue is and what it means to be in conversation with others in a variety of contexts. We will discover how dialogue is central to leadership, building and maintaining cohesive relationships, and sustaining communities of learners that connect effectively to one another. This course will engage philosophical, theoretical, and practical approaches to dialogue.

1 Course Unit

DISG 1100 Introduction to Social Difference in American Society

In this course, we will consider matters relating to the origin, persistence, and change of social norms, the composition of diverse populations, and the meanings attached to the social construction of various social problems, including racial, class, and gender inequality. This course is designed to provide you with a broad introduction to social difference using contemporary America as a case study. We will engage with a collection of readings each week, which will highlight important issues, theories, concepts, and methodologies. We will focus on several aspects of American society including, race, education, gender, social class, the family, and poverty. In the long term, the exposure to the sociological approach to social problems will provide a more thorough and nuanced understanding of public issues that affect humans on both macro and micro levels. Foundational Requirements Contributions # Analytical and Critical Skills # Communication # Cross-Cultural Interactions & Diversity

Spring

1 Course Unit

DISG 1500 Cultural Capital and Social Spaces

This course will explore the intersections of race, cultural capital, and social spaces, with a focus on professional and organizational spaces.

1 Course Unit

DISG 1600 Race and Ethnicity in Organizations

As we adapt to meet our individual and collective needs within increasingly diverse organizations, it is important to study the ways race and ethnicity affect our day-to-day experiences. These critical concepts often impact how we build organizational culture. They can also influence where we find belonging—particularly within professional spaces that reflect larger societal structures. This course will focus on evidence-based examples that clarify why race and ethnicity matter for a variety of organizations. We will turn to historical case studies, contemporary reports, and ongoing research that help us identify practical strategies for advancing equity in the workplace. By the end of the course, students will build a collection of foundational approaches for exploring the social realities of race and ethnicity across organizations.

Fall

1 Course Unit

DISG 1700 Gender and Sexuality in Everyday Life

It's no secret that gender and sexuality shape our social realities, even when we don't explicitly acknowledge their influence. Both can significantly affect where and with whom we build community, how we're compensated for our time and labor, how we're represented in popular culture, as well as impacting our lives in many other ways. In this course, we'll explore some of the ways gender and sexuality operate within diverse social contexts. We'll dig into examples of gender performances, sexual identities, intersectional experiences, and a spectrum of other concepts that show up in contemporary media, historical case studies, and ongoing research across the arts and sciences. Along the way, this course will help us think deeply about how we express power through everyday applications of gender and sexuality in society. It will also help us grow our capacity for critical reflection through daily practices that affirm who we are and how we care for each other. Essential Questions: To help model pathways for inquiry in this class, the course will revolve around five guiding questions, including: Why is it important to study gender and sexuality in different critical and creative contexts? What ways might we use existing research to explore how gender and sexuality show up within our personal and professional lives? How have gender and sexuality influenced media and popular culture? How can varying social locations and contexts impact the ways we think about identity, community, and communication? Which structural factors can we address to help advance sustainable forms of care and belonging in everyday life while centering gender and sexuality?

Summer Term

1 Course Unit

DISG 2000 Organizational and Institutional Power

Power structures often order our personal and professional lives—from macro level institutional frameworks governed by collective laws and policies, to micro level organizational relationships shaped through individual actions and practices. Some of these structures are designed to offer clear, open, and equitable social benefits for diverse populations. Others are situated within systems that obscure their harmful effects on specific, historically marginalized, groups. This course will offer learners a critical lexicon for identifying, describing, and engaging with organizational and institutional expressions of power. In addition to examining mixed-methods research, historical examples, and contemporary case studies that demonstrate relationships between power, structural hierarchies, and difference, learners will participate in simulations that highlight the personal “power maps” each of us navigate in social landscapes—across real-world professional spaces—every day. Foundational Requirements Contributions # Analytical and Critical Skills # Communication # Cross-Cultural Interactions & Diversity # Historical Perspectives

Fall

1 Course Unit

DISG 2100 Cultural and Social Identity

Social identity shapes the way that we see the world and how others see us. Assumptions about our own identity and those of others can hinder our ability to meaningfully understand, collaborate, and connect with one another in our diverse society. In this course, students will explore the concepts of cultural and social identity, examine their relationship to systemic inequality, and cultivate practical skills for communicating across difference to foster cultures of equity and belonging. This course will examine foundational concepts and theories of cultural and social identity, including their roots, historical influences, and contemporary impacts. Students will also build skills for understanding the power of identity to reinforce or challenge larger social structures of inequality and connect with others meaningfully. This course builds on 1000 level SDEI offerings by extending the emphasis on applied practices and introductory theoretical foundations that speak to student identities. More specifically, students will have the chance to explore the power and impact of their own identities within current social structures. Interdisciplinary by design, this course will engage theories, frameworks, and best practices from various academic fields, including sociology, communication, and psychology, in an applied study of social identity and social systems. The course will also model adaptive approaches for supporting generative dialogue and engagement beyond our shared asynchronous learning environment.

Fall

1 Course Unit

DISG 2500 Race, Place, and Space

In this course, our collective aims are to understand race as a dynamic social and political construct that evolves through time and space and to recognize how race as a social construct relates to social stratification, intergroup and intragroup relations, and economic and political hierarchies within U.S. society. The general purpose of this course is to introduce you to the study of race within the contemporary U.S. context and to provide a better understanding of how and why race continues to be such a powerful stratifying agent. We will explore the enduring persistence of racism and discrimination across Space and Place and how race as an ascribed, master status remains a key organizing principle in American society. We will focus on the power of Place as intrinsically linked to the social significance of race, racial identity, and racism for several underrepresented racial minority groups including Blacks, Indigenous Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans; we will study how race affects these groups in different ways based on their historical and present-day positions within the racial hierarchy. For the purposes of this class, Place is defined as the permanent physical locations we inhabit throughout the life course and become socialized within including the family, school, neighborhood, and work. We will also explore in-depth the power of Space as those indefinite, liminal locations individuals construct and traverse daily based on their racial vantage points and interpretations of race as a significant factor in their upbringing, attitudes, worldview, and experiences as social and numerical minorities. To that end, we will explore how race and competing intersectional social identities such as gender, sexuality, social class, nativity, skin color and generational status affect individuals' worldviews, racial consciousness, and self-concept, as well as their perceptions of racial climates, intraracial solidarity and hierarchies within their own racial groups and across the racial spectrum. In conclusion, we will analyze the power of intersectionality and the complexity of racialization along the color line for individuals within the aforementioned groups. Equally important, we will study the lexicon(s) of difference that individuals of all backgrounds must become fluent in to better understand the lived experiences of marginalized others in all contexts and to make meaningful, sustainable change to ensure equality for all. We will also host guest lecturers throughout the semester. Foundational Requirements Contributions - Analytical - Communication - Cross-Cultural - Historical No textbook is required. All course information is available on CANVAS. Students are required to take both SDEI 1100 and SDEI 2500 to take higher level SDEI courses.

1 Course Unit

DISG 2600 Addressing Inequity through Art and Design

This course explores issues related to systemic inequality through the lens of art and design. We will closely observe and discuss works by contemporary artists who critique social inequity through painting, sculpture, video, and site-specific installation. Students will explore works by some of today's more important and impactful U.S. artists such as Kehinde Wiley, Kara Walker and others. Each week, the course will connect these contemporary artworks with artifacts of the past to visualize processes that created and continue to support systemic inequality. Weekly content is organized around key themes related to forms of inequity and inequality, including but not limited to: • Representation and power • The legacy of slavery • Immigration and the legacy of colonialism • Cultural appropriation • Indigeneity • Environmental and housing discrimination • Mass incarceration Our study is developed for students of diverse educational backgrounds and does not require specialized knowledge of art terminology. Key terms and explanation of art and design processes will be included in our study. Each weekly theme will incorporate an instructor-led video lecture, readings, videos, and podcasts. Optional weekly office hours will also be available.

Spring

1 Course Unit

DISG 3000 Spaces of Creativity and Social Action

In this course, we will explore examples of spaces that support individual and collective social action through creativity, developing analytical tools to identify the ways in which these spaces and actions support goals of equity and inclusion.

1 Course Unit

DISG 3500 Qualitative Methods

In this course, students will develop a foundation in understanding how researchers from the social sciences and humanities use qualitative methods to analyze and understand society and culture, with attention to empirical research in these areas focusing on social difference, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Students will learn the principles of sound qualitative research, and will be able to apply these principles to critical readings of published research literature.

1 Course Unit

DISG 3550 Quantitative Methods

In this course, students will develop a foundation in understanding how researchers from the social sciences and humanities use quantitative methods to analyze and understand society and culture, with attention to empirical research in these areas focusing on social difference, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Students will learn the principles of sound quantitative research, and will be able to apply these principles to critical readings of published research literature.

1 Course Unit

DISG 4000 Designing Critical Futures

In her Nebula award-winning novel *Parable of the Talents*, Octavia Butler writes that "(w)e can, each of us, do the impossible as long as we can convince ourselves that it has been done before." But what if this "before" is located somewhere in critical futures? Why should these futures matter to people who are concerned with practicable strategies for building a more just world? DIGC 320 invites students to imagine what "each of us" can do to reframe the possible by engaging with: (1) creative labor from sonic, literary, and visual artists; (2) critical labor from scholars, media experts, and non-profit professionals; and (3) social movement labor from activists, journalists, and civic participants. Along the way, students will design visions of critical futures that speak to the communities they hope to serve outside of the course. The course is organized around four essential units that each culminate in a creative project. The first unit focuses on place-making efforts that connect speculative design to community organizing and civic engagement. The second thickens these connections through discussions of queer community, liberatory imagination, and feminist praxis. The third centers mutualistic collaboration and critical play as radical practices for advancing equity and affirming generative difference. These practices set up the final unit which invites students to make a digital object that engages with a critical future of their design. Each unit will frame speculative work and other materials as case studies for designing critical futures.

1 Course Unit

DISG 4400 Intersectional History of Sexuality

In this course, we will consider the impact of social, economic, and political conditions on social constructions of sexuality, from the classical world of Greece and Rome, to the early modern West, to the streets of Victorian London and 1920s New York, to 21st-century movements for gender and sexual equity and inclusion. We will pay special attention to the ways that race, class, religion, ethnicity, and gender come together to shape power dynamics through the development, change, and continuity in sexual roles, norms, and relationships.

1 Course Unit

DISG 4500 Advanced Topics in Social Difference, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Advanced Topics in Social Difference, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

1 Course Unit

The courses listed on this page are exclusive to the LPS BAAS degree (<https://lpsonline.sas.upenn.edu/features/what-bachelor-applied-arts-and-sciences-degree/>) and LPS Online certificates (<https://lpsonline.sas.upenn.edu/academics/certificates/>).