

MANAGING WHEN DIFFERENCES MATTER

Spring 2014

Syllabus

Description

This intensive course takes as an assumption that real differences in interests, needs and standpoint often create tangible and important barriers to successful management and public policy. We will make constructive uses of this particular group's talents and agendas and pay careful attention those professional practices which are hospitable in the presence of difference. We will also study a variety of dispute resolution procedures as viable strategies for working with and through conflict. American legal, constitutional and historic traditions which impact collaborative work will also receive attention. After the class weekend each student will conduct an individual case study of a particular public conflict. Readings for those projects will be chosen by students individually, in consultation faculty, and might include materials on dialogue, on culture, on violence, on peace-making and on communication as well as on the topic itself.

Activities during class

The weekend's work will be a mixture of relatively formal lectures, interactive lecture/discussions and workshops. There will be a workshop on conflict styles along with a basic discussion of temperament and the "natural" sides our responses to challenges in the workplace. There will be some practical work on creating hospitable working spaces. On Saturday afternoon we will join up with the Food Policy class for a simulation "game" led by Art Costantino, former VP for Student Affairs. The lectures will also take us those of this country's ethical and procedural traditions which continue to shape our conduct of challenging conditions in our work with colleagues and our professional relations with citizens, the media etc. The detailed schedule will only be available when we meet that first weekend.

Activities after class

The in-class sessions for this course take place early in the quarter so as to give you enough time to carry out a significant piece of individual work without crowding the end of term paper crunch. None of the work on this research need precede the weekend's class session, but it would be smart to reflect on a difficult policy or community issue you might track, focusing on issues where "differences" between the parties really matter. In other words the difficulties that you see in this issue are not simply a result of a communication breakdown. You will be asked to write a paper about your chosen topic, supported by theoretical reading, and documented to the best of your ability with budgets, news coverage, interviews etc. that demonstrate the different facets of the issue you are studying.

Readings and resources

Once you are registered for this course you will receive an email listing several websites that make it possible to do a quantitative self-assessment in conflict styles. You will need to do 2-3 hours work on these sites before the first class. During the weekend you will be given two very short readings each evening as prep for the next days class. The majority of the required reading will be related to your individual research project. You will need to produce a proposed bibliography by the end of the week after our class sessions.

Questions? I am in Berkeley for the rest of winter quarter. Email is the best way to make contact