

Curriculum Development Grant Report

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Project Title:

Graduate and Undergraduate Courses in Organizational Diversity

This report highlights work done to create syllabi for two courses addressing strategic efforts in organizations to address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. One is a graduate course that was taught in the Spring of 2021. The second is an undergraduate course that has not yet been taught. While the graduate course is designed to equally bridge theory and practice, the undergraduate course is designed to be a service-learning course, and could be used either in the Communication Studies major, or as a general education course that can be used to support students across the university who are engaged in strategic DEI efforts.

Graduate Course

Appendix A offers the new graduate course syllabus. I was able to teach this course in the Spring of 2021, so I have learned and need to make adjustments with future classes.

Syllabus Highlights:

- **Three pedagogical building blocks:**
 - ***Self, Identity, Subjectivity*** focuses on different understandings of identity and the intersections of power and identity. The objective is to have students think critically about their own and others' identities prior to creating systemic interventions around those identities.
 - ***Communicative Constitution of Organizations and Difference*** focuses on taking a communicative approach to organizations, and the inevitable and mutually implicated integration of difference and organizations. The goal is for students to develop an analytical framework for organizations and the ways social bias manifests in organizations.
 - ***Strategies for Change and the Reconstitution of Organizations*** focuses on developing a critical understanding of the variety of approaches to address social bias in organizational contexts.
- **New grading framework** to shift emphasis to weekly engagement rather than final product.
 - ***H(igh Pass), P(ass), U(nacceptable) grading structure:*** designed and implemented to shift focus toward learning process rather than assessment.
 - ***Weekly lower stakes assessments*** were designed to further emphasize the learning process and engagement with ideas on a weekly basis. Ultimately, these give weight to the weekly learning process rather than putting all weight on a final assessment.
- **Praxis vs. Academic tracks** were developed for the final project, allowing students to develop the foundations for either a future research project, or a research based organizational intervention.

Graduate Reading List:

The majority of my time was spent finding and reviewing literature for the courses. I focused on diversity literature in the field of communication studies, intervention specific literature in organizational studies broadly, and resource literature for practitioners. The reading list can be found at the end of the graduate syllabus in Appendix A. The following concerns were addressed in the selection of readings:

- **Balance of communication and broader organizational studies literature** – There is very little communication literature that addresses strategic DEI efforts in the field of organizational communication. I tried to develop a communication framework, that helped us to engage literature from practitioners and other organizational studies fields with a critical eye.
- **Balance of praxis and academic literature** – While the first two blocks focused largely on academic (and limited “gray”) literature to develop theoretical frameworks of analysis, the third block balanced academic literature that specifically assessed organizational interventions, and literature that was designed specifically for practitioners.
- **Balance of identity groups addressed** – While the purpose of the class was to address DEI efforts broadly, much of the academic literature emphasizes a particular identity, even as it moves toward considerations of intersectionality. I made efforts to shift between research that addressed several identities and their intersections.
- **Surveys of literature and case specific literature** – Reading the breadth of literature that addresses how social bias (involving many identities) is built into organizational structures and how people intervene in those structure with comprehensive depth is simply too large of a task for one class. Generally speaking, I tried to find surveys of literature, and then 1-3 more in depth cases, choosing breadth of exposure over in-depth expertise in any particular area. As an MA course, I hope this choice offers an invitation for more in-depth exploration in specific areas.

***I anticipate writing a critical literature review that develops a framework for identifying where bias manifests in organizations, as a result of this review of literature.

Assignments

The graduate course assignment descriptions that I used in the Fall can be found in the syllabus located in Appendix A.

- **Weekly Reading Logs and Participation** were intended to make sure that students engaged the material in detail. While I love engagement with ideas, I wanted to ensure that we were collaboratively working to understand the ideas in the reading, and to use previously established frameworks to engage those ideas critically. *The key to this assignment being successful is ensuring that feedback is given each week.*
- **Partner Paper** was designed as a self-reflexive exercise to help students think critically about how systems position individuals in unique and power laden ways. As an early assignment, it is also designed to get students to develop stronger

relationships with one another. *Key learning here is that students need to be pushed to emphasize the systems, using their experience as an example of the systems, rather than focusing on their own experience, with marginal reference to social systems.*

- **Focus Proposal** was simply designed to get students thinking about what they want to do for their final project and to start assessing potential resources. *Key learning here is that I needed stronger guidelines for the final project.*
- **QMCs** Were designed to help students make progress on their project, but also to develop strategies for how to read academic work efficiently and assess the main ideas rather than taking pieces without whole understanding. *Key learning is that I need to spend more time on how to write this, by addressing it in class.*
- **Presentation** was an opportunity for students to check in on the progress they've made on their final work, and to get feedback from peers and instructor. *Key learning is again that I need to give them a little more structure.*
- **Final Product** was designed to give them the opportunity to apply their learning in a context that was meaningful to each student. *Key learning is structure.*

Undergraduate Course

Appendix B offers the new undergraduate course syllabus. I have not yet been scheduled to teach this class. I created this course as a service-learning course intended to offer support to students who are involved in strategic efforts to create transformational change here at JMU. Ideally, students who are already involved in these strategic efforts would be nominated to take the course, and other students might self-nominate and be matched with initiatives that need student input and support. The class will only meet twice a week, and the third hour will be "lab" time working with their designated initiatives.

Syllabus Highlights:

- **Service-Learning Component** – All students will be involved in initiatives that address work at JMU. Class will meet only two days a week, and the third hour will be counted in active engagement with a DEI initiative or task force on campus.
- **Similar to the graduate course there are three pedagogical building blocks:**
 - ***Self, Identity, Subjectivity*** focuses on different understandings of identity and the intersections of power and identity. In addition to fostering reflection, we'll focus on some of the skills that students need to manage their work with DEI initiatives so they can be efficient, effective, and ethical.
 - ***Communicative Constitution of Organizations and Difference*** focuses on taking a communicative approach to organizations, and the inevitable and mutually implicated integration of difference and organizations.
 - ***Strategies for Change and the Reconstitution of Organizations*** focuses on developing a critical understanding of the variety of approaches to address social bias in organizational contexts.
- **Flexible segments to adjust to student service learning commitments.-** There are 3 weeks of flexible content in each of the second and third blocks. Readings will be selected based on the initiatives students are a part of, and the emerging needs of the class. There are listed readings to choose from, but additional reading may be selected as appropriate.

- **Define and apply structure to facilitate assignments and discussion of initiatives.** During the second half of the semester, the majority of the weeks focus on understanding the reading the first day of the week, and then applying it to our own experience the second day. These Wednesday application discussions will open space for us to talk about application of the current reading, but also to fully integrate and support the work that students are doing with their initiative through the course content and class time.
- **Assignments designed to bridge theory and practice.**—The assignments are largely developed for students to take class concepts and then apply the learnings to the specific initiative they are a part of. This is often supported by the weekly structure where new content is introduced on Monday, applied in discussion on Wednesday, and then applied in an assignment due the following week.

Assignments

- **Bi-weekly Connections** are designed to ensure that students are making connections between the material we have encountered in class and the work they are doing as part of their initiative. I am considering offering prompts. It will also be an opportunity for the students to learn how to take credit for their work by concisely reporting the work they've completed with their initiative.
- **Partner Paper** is designed as a self-reflexive exercise to help students think critically about how systems position individuals in unique and power laden ways. As an early assignment, it is also designed to get students to develop stronger relationships with one another.
- **Problem Statement** is designed for students to make connections between the work we are reading helping us to identify how social bias is built into organizational structures, and the purpose/problem that their initiative focuses on. This will also help students support their initiative by clearly defining what the problem is, how it is perceived by multiple parties, and how data and current/historical practices and events evidence the problem.
- **Benchmarking Assignment** is designed to have students research how their problem (or similar problems) has been addressed at similar institutions. Students will take a critical approach to best practices as discussed in our class. This will also serve their initiatives by preventing them from reinventing the wheel and bringing potential courses of action to their initiatives.
- **Markers of Success** is an opportunity for students to build on their previous two assignments, as well as course readings on measures of success to develop measures or markers of success for their own initiative. Students will work in partnership with their initiative's leadership to ensure that there is an actionable plan for collecting the data/evidence.
- **Final connections and reflection** will be the culminating report from the students, reflecting on the successes and challenges of their work with their initiative, and connecting that to the literature that we have read and discussed over the course of the semester.
- **Participation Assignments** will be small assignments that help students to master concepts and skills for the class.

Appendices

Appendix A – Graduate Syllabus

Appendix B – Undergraduate Syllabus

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Strategic Advocacy in Organizations

SCOM 665 - Th 2:30 - 5:00 - Fall 2021

In this course we will:

- Develop a critically informed understanding of self as shaped by intersecting historical, institutional, social, and organizational contexts.
- Use a Communicative Constitution of Organization (CCO) approach to understand the intersections of human difference and organizations and analyze the power dynamics that intersection portends.
- Develop a critically informed approach to identifying areas of necessary change and developing strategies to pursue that change.

General course description

The first three weeks of this course will turn the theoretical lens inward. Being involved in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work is not a simple intellectual task—it requires emotional labor, empathy, self-care, and constantly evolving self-awareness. Our first task is to delve deeply into this awareness with careful attention to the ways contemporary and historical systems shape each of us and weave our diverse experiences into a single fabric. Organizational diversity work requires that we work with and through anger, guilt, frustration, despair, hope, love and persistence.

In the second (5 week) block of the class we will be bringing our whole selves to the analysis of both organizations and human differences as phenomena that are created, maintained, and challenged through communicative practices. We'll identify specific communicative processes that build social bias into organizational structures and develop an understanding of how organizations both draw on and reinforce ideas of human difference and corollary power imbalances both in organizations, and in society more broadly.

In the final seven weeks of the class we'll turn our attention to the development of strategic initiatives that are designed to create more just and equitable organizations. We'll address how change looks different depending on the goals, and the point of intervention—people, programs, processes, and organizational culture.

General expectations

As a student in this class you should expect:

- To attend class once a week for a 2.5 hour session.
- To engage in informed self-reflection that will require vulnerability, trust, and humility.
- To do your very best work, and still be challenged in discussions and assignments.
- To invest *at least 3 hours* weekly preparing for class discussion by doing readings, taking notes, developing questions.
- To invest at least an additional 40 hours (1-6 hours a week) over the course of the semester in additional assignments.

Course Instructor

Dr. Jennifer PeeksMease

Roop Hall G-27

Office hours: T/Th 11-11:45, Wed 1-2:30

Webex room: <https://jmu.webex.com/meet/measejj>

Office phone: 568-6788

Assignment	Due Date
Weekly Reading Log – to be posted Wednesdays at noon (half weight)	Every Week
Weekly Class Participation (half weight)	Every Week
Partner paper – 8-10 pages with a partner (Double Weight)	Wed 2/10
Focus proposal	Wed 3/10
QMC - Annotated Bibliography Draft 1	Wed 3/24
QMC - Annotated Bibliography Draft 2	Wed 4/7
Presentation	Wed 4/27
Final Product (Triple Weight)	Tuesday 5/4

PeeksMease's Graduate System of Grading

We will be using a graduate grading “H”igh Pass/ “P”ass/”U”nacceptable system. The purpose of this system is to get your focus off of grades and on engaging the material. If you are thoughtfully and rigorously engaging the material, the grades will come. Do not try to do things “right,” do them in ways that do justice to your strengths while acknowledging weaknesses and developing strategies and processes to address your then. As we used to say in my Ph.D. program, “Ain’t no shame in riding the P train all the way to Masters Town”

- **PASS “P”:** Most assignments will likely receive a grade of Passing. These are assignments that meet the criteria for the assignment and do so well.
- **HIGH PASS “H”:** Occasionally students produce exceptional work. These are assignments where I can find little fault, either in terms of conception or execution.
- **UNACCEPTABLE “U”:** If your work does not meet graduate school standards, you will earn an unacceptable. Unacceptable work can be redone IN A TIMELY MANNER (7 days) to earn a PASS. At some point in the semester, you will likely earn a “U” on something you’ve done. Don’t freak out, just redo the work within 7 days and get your “P”.

Also, **if you are encountering circumstances that prevent you from doing your best work possible, please let me know.** While this will not excuse you from completing assignments, or compromise my expectations, I will work with you so that you have the support you need to meet expectations and thrive despite any challenging circumstance you might face.

How will I assign your grade at the end of the semester?

I reserve the right to bump grades up for significant improvement or exceptionally good work at the conclusion of the semester, but this should serve as assurance for those who like to have less uncertainty.

- **A :** To earn an A in the class, more than half of your grades should earn a High Pass, and you have to pass all assignments.
- **A- :** To earn an A- in the class, you will have passed all assignments. You will have shown improvement over the semester, and earned H’s 25-45% percent of your assignments.
- **B+ :** To earn a B+ you will have passed all assignments, but may have had to redo a few of them to pass. You may have a few or more H’s that make up for it.
- **B :** To earn a B you have to pass all assignments, although you many have had to redo several of them. You have not earned more than a few H’s.

- B -: This is the highest grade you can earn if you have any outstanding “U”s in the class, but no more than 3. You cannot earn a U on the partner paper, focus proposal, or either annotated bibliography or your final product.
- C – Is the grade you will earn if you have more than 3-6 outstanding U’s, but have completed all of the assignments.
- D – Is the grade you will earn if you have not completed all of the assignments.
- I’m not going any lower, because I cannot imagine that any of you would earn a lower grade.

Assessments

Weekly Reading Logs (half Weight)

For your weekly reading log you should highlight what you believe to be major take-aways and outstanding questions by drawing on themes and contradictions in the week’s readings. Be sure to show that you’ve completed and understand the reading and be sure to reference specifics from the reading. This is also a place for you to highlight outstanding questions you have for the reading. 200-250 words should be sufficient.

Weekly Participation (Half Weight)

As long as you are showing up to class and demonstrating that you’ve done the reading, you’ll earn a P in weekly participation each week. You’ll earn an H by making insightful well-grounded contributions to class discussion that a clearly in conversation with the class readings.

Partner Paper (Double Weight)

For this paper will require you to work with a partner, preferably one who has identities that differ from your own. The paper will integrate three different voices, each of your voices independently reflecting on how your social identities have shaped your experiences and relationships, and a collective voice that reflects on how your connects experiences through a common social system.

Focus Proposal

Practice Route: This 3-5 page proposal will be written in the format of a business proposal. It will identify a real organization and issue that you believe should be addressed. You will summarize the context (addressing the organization and its history), identify comparable efforts, and offer a list of academic research that may offer insight to the situation.

Academic Route: This 3-5 page proposal will be written in the format of an abstract for a research proposal. You may propose a critical literature review, a theoretical piece, or a research study that draws on already existing data, or a case study. Your proposal should identify a problem within the literature, propose a method for addressing that process, and a timeline for you to finish that final paper before the end of the semester.

Annotated Bibliography also called QMC’s (x2)

For the first annotated bibliography you will identify 8 studies that will help inform your proposed intervention. You must offer an annotation that identifies the question, method and conclusion for each. The second annotated bibliography can include both research studies, and other **approved documents** that address existing diversity initiatives, or change frameworks. In the latter case, you should summarize the context, goals, actions, and theoretical grounding. All annotations should draw a connection to your overall project. You may not use assigned readings in your QMC’s

Presentation

You will offer a presentation of your proposal or analysis two weeks before the due date, while the details may not be fully formed, you should establish you're a clear understanding of your data or organization, clearly articulate the problems you are addressing, demonstrate your theoretical approach to the problem, and identify any particular problems you are having making sense of the work you are trying to accomplish. As a class, we will work together to improve your final product.

Final Product (Triple Weight)

Intervention Proposal (Practice Route) The intervention proposal will be written as a proposed intervention for a client needed to create change. The proposal should be formatted as if you were a consultant proposing a solution, meaning it should be visually appealing, easy to navigate, and well supported with evidence. It should show: an understanding of the organizational context, problem and desired outcomes; a theoretical understanding of the problem, a research and evidence based solution, and a practical road map for achieving that solution. It should include a very brief executive summary up front (3 pages max). the entire proposal should be around 15 pages.

Academic Analysis (Academic Route) Your academic analysis should be written with the intention of submitting it to an academic journal. You should identify an appropriate journal ahead of time. It should show a mastery of the literature, clearly delineate and analyze a set of data, and make a compelling theoretical contribution to our understanding of how to create and sustain organizational fostering diversity, equality, and inclusions.

Attendance & Participation:

This is a graduate seminar, most of the growth and learning comes from the discussions we will hold in class each week. You must be in class to not only for your own benefit, but also for the benefit of your fellow classmates, who depend on you to help bring the material to life and add your own perspective. Missing class for anything short of a personal emergency is unacceptable. If you have professional or major life events that you know will cause you to miss class, please let me know during the first two weeks of the semester. Missing class without making arrangements with me will affect your grade in the class.

Additionally, I expect that with each week you will come to class prepared and ready to engage in discussion. Each week we have guiding question and I expect that you will have consider how the reading for the week inform your response to that question. The reality is, this class will be as rewarding as the commitment you make to thoughtfully engaging the reading with purpose, and the commitment you make to your classmates to respectfully and honestly engage with the ideas.

BLOCK 1: Self, Identity, Subjectivity**Week 1: Who are we? What are we doing here? How will we talk to each other about who we are?**

Mease, J. (2011) "Teaching difference as institutional, and making it personal: Moving among personal, interpersonal, and institutional constructions of difference," In *Reframing Difference in Organizational Communication Studies: Research, Pedagogy, Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication. (This is an introduction to me, and the basic concepts of Self, Identity, and Subjectivity that we will use throughout the semester.)

***Before you do the reading** please select three songs: 1) Is a song that you love and think represents who you are well; 2) A song that you love, but you are embarrassed to say you love, and 3) a song you love, but you might not want your grandmother to know you listen to. Please bring all of them to class ready to play.*

Week 2: How do the constructed identities of the world come to shape who we (believe we) are?

- Fixmer-Oriaz, N. and Wood, J. T. (2019) Chapter 2. Theoretical approaches to gender development, in *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture*. Boston, MA: Cengage.
- Muhonja, B.B. (2020). Eco-Agency and Unbowed Personhood: A Decolonial Imagining of Equity, in *Radical Utu: Critical Ideas and Ideals of Wangari Muta Maathia*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Kuhn, T and Simpson, J. (2020) Discourse, Communication, and Identity, in *The Oxford Handbook of Identities in Organizations*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- West, C. and Fenstermaker, S.S. (2013). Doing Difference, in *Doing Gender, Doing Difference: Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change*. New York, NY: Routledge Press. (This article was originally published in 1995)

Week 3: How do my identities shape my awareness of difference and my access to power?

- Cruz, J., McDonald, J., Broadfoot, K., Kai-chun Chuang, A., & Ganesh, S. (2020). “Aliens” in the United States: A collaborative autoethnography of foreign-born faculty. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 29(3), 272-285.
- Dubois, W.E.B. (1903) Of our spiritual strivings, in *The Souls of Black Folk*. The Library of America.
- Moon, D. G. (2016). “Be/coming” White and the Myth of White Ignorance: Identity Projects in White Communities. *Western Journal of Communication*, 80(3), 282-303.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2016.1143562>
- Harding, S. G. (2004). Introduction: Standpoint theory as a site of political, philosophic and scientific debate. In *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies* (pp. 1-15). Routledge.
Introduction available in Google books:
https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Feminist_Standpoint_Theory_Reader/qmSySHvly5IC?hl=en&gbpv=0
- Collins, P.H., and Maldonado, L. A., Takagi, D. Yi, Thorne, B., Weber, L, and Winant, H. (2013) Symposium on West and Fenstermaker’s “doing difference,” in *Doing Gender, Doing Difference: Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change*. New York, NY: Routledge Press. (This article was originally published in 1995)

BLOCK 2: Communicative Constitution of Organizations and Difference

Week 4: What do we mean by the Communicative Constitution of Organization? How do organizations change?

- Boivin, G, Brummans, BHJM, and Barker, JR (2017) The institutionalization of CCO scholarship: Trends from 2000 to 2015. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 31(3), pp 331-355.
- Mumby, D. K., & Mease, J. J. (2011). Organizational Discourse. In T. A. V. Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction* (2nd ed., pp. 283-302). Sage.
- Putnam, L. (2019). Constituting order and disorder: Embracing tension and contradictions. In C. K. Vasquez, Timothy (Ed.), *Dis/organization as communication: Exploring the disordering, disruptive, and chaotic properties of communication* (pp. 17-35). Taylor and Francis.
- Lewis, L. K. (2019) Chapter 2: Defining Organizational Change, in *Organizational Change: Creating Change through Strategic Communication*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Week 5: How do we identify the ways that difference is built into organizational structures?

- Rodriguez, J. K., Holvino, E., Fletcher, J. K., & Nkomo, S. M. (2016). The Theory and Praxis of Intersectionality in Work and Organisations: Where Do We Go From Here? *Gender, Work & Organization*, 23(3), 201-222. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12131>
- Acker, J., & Sayce, S. (2012). Gendered organizations and intersectionality: Problems and possibilities. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 31(3), 214-224.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151211209072>

- Parker, P. S. (2014). Difference and organizing, in *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research, and Methods*, pp. 619-637. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Ashcraft and Mumby (2004). Chapter 1: Feminist organizational studies in the wake of the discursive turn, In *Reworking Gender: A Feminist Communicology of Organization*, pp. 1-30. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- McDonald, J. (2015). Organizational Communication Meets Queer Theory: Theorizing Relations of “Difference” Differently. *Communication Theory*, 25(3), 310-329.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12060>

Week 6: How can organizational norms create and sustain social bias?

- Adams, A. F. (2012). The discursive construction of professionalism: An episteme of the 21st century. *ephemera: theory and politics in organization*, 12(3), 327-343.
- Compton, C. A., & Dougherty, D. S. (2017). Organizing Sexuality: Silencing and the Push-Pull Process of Co-sexuality in the Workplace. *Journal of Communication*, 67(6), 874-896.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12336>
- Joseph, J., & Jagannathan, S. (2015). Organizing insecurity: marginal subjects and narratives of injustice. *Culture and Organization*, 22(4), 365-381. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2014.1000325>
- Mease, J. J., & Terry, D. P. (2012). [Organizational (performance) of race]: The co-constitutive performance of race and school board in Durham, NC. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 32(2), 121-140.

Week 7: How does bias affect organizational entry and advancement?

- Kossek, E. E., Su, R., & Wu, L. (2016). “Opting Out” or “Pushed Out”? Integrating Perspectives on Women’s Career Equality for Gender Inclusion and Interventions. *Journal of Management*, 43(1), 228-254. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316671582>
- Webster, L. C., & Brown, H. Q. (2019). Enablers and Barriers Influencing African American Administrators’ Career Advancement at Predominantly White Institutions of Higher Learning. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 19(4), 87-110.
- Berger, L., Benschop, Y., & van den Brink, M. (2015). Practising Gender When Networking: The Case of University-Industry Innovation Projects. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 22(6), 556-578.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12104>

Possible Additions

- Skiba, M. O. H., Patrick Hope, Andrea. (2019). The opaque glass ceiling: Five forces affecting the progress of professional female workers in the U.S. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 19(1), 53-65.
- Botelho, T. L., & Abraham, M. (2017). Pursuing Quality: How Search Costs and Uncertainty Magnify Gender-based Double Standards in a Multistage Evaluation Process. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 62(4), 698-730. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839217694358>

Week 8: How does organizational bias show up in relationships?

- Staats, C., Capatosto, K., & Tenney, L. M., Sarah. (2017). *State of the science: Implicit bias review*. T. O. S. University.

Three part reading:

- Allen, B. L. (1998). Black womanhood and feminist standpoints.. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 11(4), 575-586.

- Ashcraft, K. L. (1998). "I wouldn't say I'm a feminist but...": Organizational micropractice and gender identity. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 11(4), 587-597.
- Spradlin, A. L. (1998). The price of "passing": A lesbian perspective on authenticity in organizations. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 11(4), 598-605.

Additional Reading:

McCord, M. A., Joseph, D. L., Dhanani, L. Y., & Beus, J. M. (2018). A meta-analysis of sex and race differences in perceived workplace mistreatment. *J Appl Psychol*, 103(2), 137-163.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000250>

Sims, C. M. C., Angie D. . (2019). Revisiting Parker & olgilvie's African American women executive leadership model. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 19(2), 99-112.

BLOCK THREE:

Strategies for Change and the Reconstitution of Organizations

Week 9: What is the history of diversity work with organizations?

Kelly, E., & Dobbin, F. (1998). How affirmative action became diversity management. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 41(7), 960-984.

Dobusch, L. (2017). Diversity discourses and the articulation of discrimination: the case of public organisations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(10), 1644-1661.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2017.1293590>

Trittin, H., & Schoeneborn, D. (2015). Diversity as Polyphony: Reconceptualizing Diversity Management from a Communication-Centered Perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 144(2), 305-322. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2825-8>

Bolden, R., Adelaine, A., Warren, S., Gulati, A., Conley, H., & Jarvis, C. (2019). Inclusion: The DNA of leadership and change. In. Bristol Leadership and Change Centre, UWE Bristol.

Additional Readings:

Luna, Z. (2016). "Truly a Women of Color Organization". *Gender & Society*, 30(5), 769-790.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243216649929> (like b/c grounded in WOC perspective.)

Ashcraft, K. (2018). Critical complicity: The feel of difference at work in home and field. *Management Learning*, 49(5), 613-623.

Doerfel, M. L., & Gibbs, J. L. (2020). Organizing inclusion: Top-down and bottom-up approaches. In M. L. Doerfel & J. L. Gibbs (Eds.), *Organizing inclusion: Moving diversity from demographics to communication processes* (pp.). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429450495>

Zanoni, P., Janssens, M., Benschop, Y., & Nkomo, S. (2010). Unpacking diversity, grasping inequality: Rethinking difference through critical perspectives. *Organization*, 17(1), 9-29.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508409350344>

Week 10: Toward what ends? Measures and the Business Case for Diversity

Trener, B., Franklin, H., & Paradies, Y. (2010). *Review of audit and assessment tools, programs and resources in workplace settings to prevent race-based discrimination and support diversity*. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth). (Stop at training)

Holmes, O. I., Jiang, K., Avery, D. R., McKay In-Sue Oh, P. F., & Tillman, C. J. (2020). A meta-analysis integrating 25 years of diversity climate research. *Journal of Management*.
<https://doi.org/10.4119727/016439200639230943545447>

Howard, T. L. Ufrets G. (2020). The changing value of diversity in organizations. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 20(2), 61-73.

Mease, J. J., & Collins, B. L. (2018). Asset, liability, possibility. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 37(7), 664-682. <https://doi.org/10.1108/edi-05-2017-0114>

Sample metrics:

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/toolkits/SampleMetricsList-StateGov-2.9.21-Final.pdf>

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/toolkits/Sample-Metrics-List---Higher-ed.pdf>

Additional reading:

Kirby, E., & Harter, L. (2001). Discourses of diversity and the quality of work life: The character and cost of the managerial metaphor. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 15, 121-127.

Holmes, O. I., Jiang, K., Avery, D. R., McKay In-Sue Oh, P. F., & Tillman, C. J. (2020). A meta-analysis integrating 25 years of diversity climate research. *Journal of Management*.
<https://doi.org/10.4119727/016439200639230943545447>

Week 11: Diversity Training (Individual as problem and solution)

Trener, B., Franklin, H., & Paradies, Y. (2010). *Review of audit and assessment tools, programs and resources in workplace settings to prevent race-based discrimination and support diversity*. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth). (Finish)

Kowal, E., Franklin, H., & Paradies, Y. (2013). Reflexive antiracism: A novel approach to diversity training. *Ethnicities*, 13(3), 316-337. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796812472885>

Parker-Toulson, S., & Harrison, A. (2010). *Anti-racism & diversity trainers: Core competencies and leading training practices*. (read 12-43 closely, skim remainder)

Additional reading

Chang, E. H. M., K. L. Gromet, D. M., Massey, C., Duckworth, A. L., & Grant, A. M. (2019). The mixed effects of online diversity training. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*, 116(16), 7778-7783.

<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1816076116>

Ramasubramanian, S., Sousa, A. N., & Gonlin, V. (2017). Facilitated difficult dialogues on racism: a goal-based approach. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 45(5), 537-556.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2017.1382706>

Week 12: What are strategies and goals for creating change at a programmatic level?

Sims, C. M. C., Angie D. . (2019). Revisiting Parker & O'Gilvie's African American women executive leadership model. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 19(2), 99-112.

Sebastian, J., Reyes, T., Reitman, M., & Keleher, T. (2017). *Restaurant Equity Toolkit*

Powell & Powell Rey (2019). The leadership factor in management education: Examining the impact of an industry speaker series on leadership efficacy in a minority serving MBA program. *Journal of Business Diversity* 19(4), 53-59.

Week 13: What does it mean, and what does it take to impact organizational culture?

Chin, J. L., Desormeaux, L., & Sawyer, K. (2016). Making way for paradigms of diversity leadership. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 68(1), 49-71.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000051>

Jenkins, J. J. (2014). A “Community” of Discipline: The Paradox of Diversity Within an Intercultural Church. *Western Journal of Communication*, 78(2), 134-154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2013.845793>

To practice based readings: a

Awake to woke to work: Building a race equity culture, by “equity in the center”

Confronting Racial bias at work, by race forward.

Additional reading:

van den Brink, M., & Benschop, Y. (2017). Gender Interventions in the Dutch Police Force: Resistance as a Tool for Change? *Journal of Change Management*, 18(3), 181-197.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2017.1378695>

Week 14: Research presentations.

Organizational Communication: Constituting Equity and Inclusion

SCOM 413 – Advanced Topics in Communication Studies

In this course we will:

- Use a critically informed approach as we engage in an advocate for change on JMU's campus.
- Gain tools to reflect on our own identities and roles in organizations and society.
- Use a Communicative Constitution of Organization (CCO) approach to understand the intersections of human difference and organizations and analyze the power dynamics that intersection portends.

General Course Description

The pursuit of equity and inclusion is not just a matter of changing minds and hearts—it also requires changing organizational and social structures. In this course we will learn to identify the many areas where change is needed among organizational contexts, and the multitude of strategies that help pursue those changes. This will require more than memorizing concepts or learning theories, it will require you to engage in efforts that are actively pursuing change. We will use a communication approach to develop a principled and theoretically informed approach to that work.

As part of this course you will be working with a DEI initiative here on campus (either one you are already involved in, or one we will match you with). Think of this as a lab, where you will apply the concepts and ideas we are learning, learn about their strengths and weakness, and fine tune your ability to advocate and create change in organizations. Additionally, you will be working on a semester long project for the class that will support your DEI initiative, and hone your specific area of expertise. It will require you to make connections between your project, theory, and work that has been done in other institutions.

This class will be difficult—it will require investments of intellect, emotion, time, and patience—but it will also be rewarding. We'll learn in real-time and you'll have the opportunity to make a real difference. You will face challenges that help you to define who you are and want to be, and you will do it with an entire class at your side. Think of it as an opportunity to build part of your own legacy here at JMU. We'll be learning more than information, we'll be learning a particular way of being in organizations, and you will find your own way of being the change.

General expectations

As a student in this class you should expect:

- To be challenged in discussions and assignments.
- To attend class twice a week for 50 minutes.
- To meet 1+ hours with your DEI initiative collaborators each week.
- To invest 3+ hours weekly preparing for class (completing readings, or participation assignments) or completing work for your DEI initiative (email, additional meets, researching, preparing presentations)
- To spend 30+ hours over the course of the semester to complete your major assignments for class.

Course Instructor

Dr. Jennifer PeeksMease

Roop Hall G-27

Office hours: T/Th 11-11:45, Wed 1-2:30

Webex room: <https://jmu.webex.com/meet/measejj>

Office phone: 568-6788

Assignment	Due Date	% of final grade
Bi - Weekly Connections	Every Other Week	15%
Partner paper – 8-10 pages with a partner	Week 4	15%
Problem Statement	Week 9	15%
Markers of Success Statement	Week 12	15%
Benchmarking	Week 14	10%
Final Connections and Reflection	Finals Week	20%
Participation Assignments	Various Times	10%

Assessments

Please see canvas form more complete descriptions.

Bi-weekly Connections

Every other week you will submit a log of the time you spent on your initiative, and a reflection on how your work connects with course content. The purpose is for you to take credit for the work you are doing on your initiative, and to take time to consider how our course content informs your work.

Partner Paper

This paper will require you to work with a partner, preferably one who has identities that differ from your own. The paper will integrate two short sections where each of you independently reflect on how your social identities have shaped your experiences and relationships. The majority of the paper will draw on a collective voice that reflects on how your experiences are each uniquely positioned by one social system—and thereby interdependent.

Problem Statement

For this assignment you will concisely present the problem that your initiative is attempting to address. This will include evidence of the problem, history and context of the problem at JMU, and research that connects this problem to a broader social context.

Benchmarking

For the benchmarking assignment you will need to research how other institutions have defined, addressed, and assessed progress addressing a problem similar to the one you are addressing. You will need to assess at least 3 other organizations, and then synthesize the major lessons or insights they offer to your own project and initiative.

Markers of Success Statement

For this project you will define what success looks like for your organization. What are the measures or indicators of success? How should the institution go about collecting the data or information to know if they have been successful? Additionally, you should show how the specific

efforts you are measuring are connected to the actions your initiative is taking or plans to take in the future.

Final Connections and reflections

For your final project you will reflect on the work you've done to show how the concepts and ideas we've covered in class have helped you to make strategic change here at JMU. Your final reflection should not only show how you have worked in theoretically informed ways, it should also summarize the most valuable lessons that you will take with you as you continue to advocate for equity and inclusion here at JMU and in future organizations you will be a part of.

Participation Assignments

There may be additional assignment between classes or in class. These should take no more than 20-30 minutes.

Attendance & Participation:

We will be learning as a community, therefore your attendance in class is necessary. When any person is not present, the entire class suffers. I will take attendance—but I understand that there are good reasons to miss class. For this reason, I will allow 3 absences no questions asked. These are for days when you might be sick, need a break, or have important family events to attend. On the 4th absence, and every additional absence your grade in the class will drop 3%. Additionally, you cannot make up any participation assignments that you miss while you are not in class.

In a few circumstances, students need to miss more than 3 days—which is also unpredictable. For this reason, please keep documentation of all of your absences—including your first three—so that we can address this if it becomes an issue. Please let me know if there are issues preventing you from doing your best work in this class. I will work with you, if you continue to be in communication with me.

BLOCK 1: Self, Identity, Subjectivity

Week 1: Who are we? What are we doing here? How will we talk to each other about who we are?

Goals:

- *To get to know one another.*
- *To begin exploring how society shapes who we are.*

Core Concepts:

Self, Identity, Subjectivity

Readings & Assignments Due:

M: Introductions and review the syllabus

W: Bring three songs ready to play on a device, and headphones. The three songs should be:

Week 2: How do the constructed identities of the world come to shape who we (believe we) are?

Goals:

- *To identify the many different identities that shape who we are.*
- *To understand various assumptions/theories regarding how social identities are mapped on to individuals.*

Core Concepts:

Utu, Identity Development, Dimensions of Difference, Social Learning, Performativity,

Readings & Assignments Due:

M.: Fixmer-Oriaz, N. and Wood, J. T. (2019) Chapter 2. Theoretical approaches to gender development, in *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture*. Boston, MA: Cengage.

W: Review *Dimensions of Diversity Charts* and bring to class – Complete the POGO worksheet and bring to class. (It will ask you to compare and contrast charts, and ask to you to describe the distinct characteristics of each of the identity categories.)

Week 3: How do my identities shape my awareness of difference and my access to power?

Goals:

- To develop an understanding of how our social identities shape our perspective on the world.

Core Concepts:

Privilege, systemic racism, power of normal (normalization), power of benefit of the doubt, Power of accumulated power; Normative Theory, epistemology, standpoint vs. situated knowledge, androcentric, subject vs. object, relativism.

Readings & Assignments Due:

M: Collins, C. (2018). What is white privilege, really?: Recognizing white privilege begins with truly understanding the term itself. *Teaching Tolerance*, 60. Available at:

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2018/what-is-white-privilege-really>

Also, look around this website and read/watch 2-3 items:

<https://library.northshore.edu/c.php?g=1056535&p=7676306>:

W: Harding, S. G. (2004). Introduction: Standpoint theory as a site of political, philosophic and scientific debate. In *The feminist standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies* (pp. 1-15). Routledge.

Introduction available in Google books:

https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Feminist_Standpoint_Theory_Reader/qmSySHvly5IC?hl=en&gbpv=0

Week 4: What is my role in this? How do I begin to make an impact?

Goals:

- To identify practices that may be needed to sustain you in this work.

Core Concepts:

Organizational identification, self-care, boundaries, Meeting roles, agendas, principles for effective meetings,

Readings & Assignments Due:

M: meet with initiative leadership and come prepared to introduce your initiative and the problem it attempts to address to the class. If there are others in the class who are part of the same initiative you should work together. This is a participation assignment.

Also, read <https://diversityis.com/a-beginners-guide-for-practicing-diversity-practicing-self-care-for-diversity-practitioners-in-independent-schools>

W: Read the following article: <https://www.atlassian.com/blog/teamwork/how-to-run-effective-meetings> AND google and read one other article on how to run effective meetings.

ALSO, Google and read 2-3 articles on “roles in meetings”—be prepared to use your HANDWRITTEN notes to answer questions about meeting roles in class.

BLOCK 2:

Communicative Constitution of Organizations and Difference

Week 5: What do we mean by the Communicative Constitution of Organization? How do organizations change?

Purpose:

- *To identity different assumptions/theories of communication and its relationship to organizing.*
- *To develop your own position about change and organizing, based on basic theoretical ideas about organizational change.*

Core Concepts:

Discourse, communication, CCO, Information transfer, transactional, communication as community, strategic control, standard vs. punctuated model of change, innovation, adoption, diffusion, implementation, types of change.

Readings & Assignments Due:

M: Eisenburg, E, Trethewey, A, LeGrecco, M & Goodall, B., (2017). Chapter 2: Defining organizational communication, in *Organizational Communication: Balancing Creativity and Constraint*. Macmillian, NY, NY.

W: Lewis, L. K. (2019) Chapter 2: Defining Organizational Change, in *Organizational Change: Creating Change through Strategic Communication*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Week 5: How do we identify the ways that difference is built into organizational structures?

Goals:

- *To understand the interconnections between social identity constructs and the communicative construction of organizations*

Core Concepts:

Neutral abstract worker, gendered substructures, gendered subtext, gendered logic. Intersectionality.

Readings & Assignments Due:

M: Acker, J., & Sayce, S. (2012). Gendered organizations and intersectionality: Problems and possibilities. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 31(3), 214-224. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151211209072>

W: We will apply the concepts from Monday's class to our own experience so review notes

Weeks 6, 7, 8: How is social bias and oppression built into organization structures?

Goals:

- To develop a theoretically grounded analytical approach to identifying how social bias and oppression is built into organizational structures.
- To apply our analytical frame to our own experience and to JMU as a whole.

Readings & Assignments Due:

Each Monday: 1-2 Readings will be selected from the following list based on the initiatives that the group is involved in, and the areas of focus of those initiatives.

- Adams, A. F. (2012). The discursive construction of professionalism: An episteme of the 21st century. *ephemera: theory and politics in organization*, 12(3), 327-343.
- Berger, L., Benschop, Y., & van den Brink, M. (2015). Practising Gender When Networking: The Case of University-Industry Innovation Projects. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 22(6), 556-578. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12104>
- Botelho, T. L., & Abraham, M. (2017). Pursuing Quality: How Search Costs and Uncertainty Magnify Gender-based Double Standards in a Multistage Evaluation Process. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 62(4), 698-730. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839217694358>
- Compton, C. A., & Dougherty, D. S. (2017). Organizing Sexuality: Silencing and the Push-Pull Process of Co-sexuality in the Workplace. *Journal of Communication*, 67(6), 874-896. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12336>
- Joseph, J., & Jagannathan, S. (2015). Organizing insecurity: marginal subjects and narratives of injustice. *Culture and Organization*, 22(4), 365-381. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14759551.2014.1000325>
- Kossek, E. E., Su, R., & Wu, L. (2016). “Opting Out” or “Pushed Out”? Integrating Perspectives on Women’s Career Equality for Gender Inclusion and Interventions. *Journal of Management*, 43(1), 228-254. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316671582>
- McCord, M. A., Joseph, D. L., Dhanani, L. Y., & Beus, J. M. (2018). A meta-analysis of sex and race differences in perceived workplace mistreatment. *J Appl Psychol*, 103(2), 137-163. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000250>
- Mease, J. J., & Terry, D. P. (2012). [Organizational (performance) of race]: The co-constitutive performance of race and school board in Durham, NC. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 32(2), 121-140.
- Sims, C. M. C., Angie D. . (2019). Revisiting Parker & olgilvie’s African American women executive leadership model. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 19(2), 99-112.
- Skiba, M. O. H., Patrick Hope, Andrea. (2019). The opaque glass ceiling: Five forces affecting the progress of professional female workers in the U.S. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 19(1), 53-65.
- Webster, L. C., & Brown, H. Q. (2019). Enablers and Barriers Influencing African American Administrators’ Career Advancement at Predominantly White Institutions of Higher Learning. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 19(4), 87-110.

Each Wednesday: We will take our learning from the reading and apply it to our individual work with specific initiatives at the university.

BLOCK THREE:

Strategies for Change and the Reconstitution of Organizations

Week 9: What is the history of diversity work with organizations?

Goals:

- Understand the history of diversity work broadly.

- Finalize the histories and problem statements of our specific initiatives.

Core Concepts:

Executive orders, Affirmative action, EEOC, Diversity Management, Civil Rights Act,

Readings & Assignments Due:

M: Kelly, E., & Dobbin, F. (1998). How affirmative action became diversity management. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 41(7), 960-984.

W: Problem statements are due.

Week 10: Real talk about emotional labor of DEI work.

Goals:

- To understand the different forms of emotion work that are involved in DEI work.
- To identify ways of engaging in self-care and care for others as part of DEI work.

Core concepts:

Emotional work, emotion management, emotion labor

Readings & Assignments Due:

M: Miller, K. I., Considine, J., & Garner, J. (2007). "Let me tell you about my Job": Exploring the terrain of emotion in the workplace. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 20(3), 231-260.

W: Read the following and explore the resources on self-care:

Week 11: Toward what ends? Measures and the Business Case for Diversity

Goals:

- To understand the different ways to measure or assess diversity work
- To apply those principles of measurement to your own initiative.

Core concepts:

Audit, Assessment, SMART goals, outputs vs. outcomes

Readings & Assignments Due:

Monday:

Trenerry, B., Franklin, H., & Paradies, Y. (2010). *Review of audit and assessment tools, programs and resources in workplace settings to prevent race-based discrimination and support diversity*. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/toolkits/SMART-Goals-Worksheet---Higher-ed.pdf>

Also review these sample measures from the state of Virginia:

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/toolkits/SampleMetricsList-StateGov-2.9.21-Final.pdf>

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/toolkits/Sample-Metrics-List---Higher-ed.pdf>

W: Create 3-5 markers of success, and methods for measuring that you think are appropriate to you initiative. We will work on these in class.

Week 12, 13, 14, : What are strategies others have used to pursue and create change?

Goals:

- Draw on research to find possible practices, challenges, and concerns that should inform you initiative's intervention.

Readings & Assignments Due:

Each Monday: 1-2 Readings will be selected from the following list based on the initiatives that the group is involved in, and the areas of focus of those initiatives.

- Chang, E. H. M., K. L. Gromet, D. M., Massey, C., Duckworth, A. L., & Grant, A. M. (2019). The mixed effects of online diversity training. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*, 116(16), 7778-7783.
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1816076116>
- Denniissen, M., & Benschop, Y. v. d. B., Marieke. (2020). Rethinking diversity management: An intersectional analysis of diversity networks. *Organization Studies*, 41(2), 219-240.
- Ramasubramanian, S., Sousa, A. N., & Gonlin, V. (2017). Facilitated difficult dialogues on racism: a goal-based approach. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 45(5), 537-556.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2017.1382706>
- Denniissen, M., & Benschop, Y. v. d. B., Marieke. (2020). Rethinking diversity management: An intersectional analysis of diversity networks. *Organization Studies*, 41(2), 219-240.
- McDonald, J., & Kuhn, T. R. (2016). Occupational branding for diversity: managing discursive contradictions. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 44(2), 101-117.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2016.1155725>
- McDonald, J., & Kuhn, T. R. (2016). Occupational branding for diversity: managing discursive contradictions. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 44(2), 101-117.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2016.1155725>
- van den Brink, M., & Benschop, Y. (2017). Gender Interventions in the Dutch Police Force: Resistance as a Tool for Change? *Journal of Change Management*, 18(3), 181-197.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2017.1378695>

Each Wednesday: We will discuss how the reading(s) from the week inform the work we are doing.

Week 15: Bringing it all together

Goals:

- Reflect on the concepts we've learned and their utility (or not).
- Share reflections with the class.

Readings & Assignments Due:

M&W: Each student will share do a short 3-5 minute presentation on lessons learned which will serve as the foundation for your final reflection.

