UGS 303
Difficult Dialogues: Cultural Identities and Differences
University of Texas at Austin
Fall 2020
(unique number 60730)

Professor: Dr. Pauline Strong
Teaching assistant: Morgan Siewert
Department of Anthropology
University of Texas at Austin

Class meets: TTh, 9:30-10:45, via Zoom
Course mode: Internet (synchronous: class attendance is required)
Office hours via Zoom (to be announced)

SYLLABUS
A syllabus is a detailed description of course activities and expectations. Please read this syllabus carefully—including the sections on University policies and resources on pages 5-7. Be sure to bring any questions you may have to class or office hours as early in the semester as possible.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
In this course we will consider cultural identities and differences, both in the US and in other parts of the world. We will develop ways of thinking critically and analytically about culture, cultural identity, cultural difference, and cultural representation. We will discuss the impact of globalization on cultural identities and differences, and some of the issues that arise between people holding and constructing different cultural identities. Among the topics we will consider are borders and migration, race and incarceration, and class and homelessness.

As a Difficult Dialogues Course, this class is designed to teach you to engage in informed and respectful dialogue with people who have different beliefs, values, perspectives, or ways of communicating. As a UGS Signature Course it is also designed to introduce you to University resources as well as to perspectives and issues that transcend traditional disciplines. Course content draws on the following disciplines: Anthropology. Sociology. Communication. Law. Ethnic Studies.

SIGNATURE COURSE MISSION & COURSE ESSENTIALS
The Signature Courses at the University of Texas at Austin connect students with distinguished faculty members in unique learning environments. By way of this rigorous intellectual experience, students will develop college-level skills in research, writing, speaking, and discussion through an approach that is both interdisciplinary and contemporary.

This course will address the Signature Course essentials in the following ways:

• Oral Communication: Students will develop skills in conducting informed, respectful
dialogues on difficult issues. Students will also work in small teams to facilitate discussions on the course readings. Because of this course’s focus on oral communication, regular class attendance is essential.

- **Writing:** Students will develop experience in writing clearly through preparing several papers. There will be an opportunity to revise one paper.
- **Information Literacy:** Students will seek out current information and perspectives on the topics considered in the readings, and learn to evaluate different kinds of sources.
- **University Gems:** Students will become acquainted with the Blanton Museum of Art through an online experience.
- **University Lecture Series:** Students will attend and write a response paper on the University Lecture Series or a Difficult Dialogues event (to be announced).

**FLAG REQUIREMENTS**

This course carries two "flags," and must be taken for a letter grade in order to fulfill the flag requirements. The University describes the two flags assigned to this course as follows:

- **Cultural Diversity in the United States.** Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization. (In this class we will meet this requirement by focusing on the experience of African Americans and indigenous Mexican migrant workers, among others.)

- **Writing.** Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor and TA to help you improve your writing. You will have the opportunity to revise one assignment, responding to suggestions from the instructor, TA, and your peers. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. (See Assignments, below, for the specific ways this class will meet the Writing flag requirement.)

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

In sum, the objectives of the course are:

- To learn interdisciplinary forms of analysis about culture, cultural identity, cultural difference, cultural diversity, cultural representation, and cross-cultural communication.
- To develop skills in leading and participating in dialogue about controversial issues.
- To develop skills in college level research, writing, discussion, and critical thinking.
- To learn about expectations and resources for college-level work at UT Austin.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

The following books are required, and have been ordered from the University Coop. We will read all of these four books. Additional readings may be posted on Canvas. Please complete the reading before class on the date it is assigned, and be sure to bring the assigned reading to class. (The books will also be available through Perry Castaneda Library, but I recommend that you purchase your own copy if at all possible.)


CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS
- Regular attendance in class
- Coming to class prepared to discuss the assigned material
- Thoughtful and respectful engagement in class activities
- Openness to learning about a variety of perspectives on controversial issues
- Prompt communication with the professor or TA if expectations cannot be met

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING
This course is graded on a scale that includes pluses and minuses. Success in the course depends on timely completion of the reading and writing assignments; attentive, active and respectful participation in class discussions; and thoughtful consideration of the issues considered in the course. The final grade will be based on the components listed below.

- **Attendance and participation (20%)**: Students will engage actively in dialogue, learning to employ various techniques for conducting productive dialogues. You will be expected to come to our online class with discussion questions on certain dates, and these will be part of the participation grade. If you are unable to attend class on a date on which you have a team assignment, it is essential that you communicate with your team and the instructor. Attendance will be taken every day, and unexcused absences will be reflected in the Attendance and Participation grade. The only excused absences are for religious holidays (with advance notice) and emergencies (with prompt notice).

- **Writing assignments (80%)**. The writing component of the grade includes:
  - **Writing Assignment #1** (10%): A 500-word paper that applies the Difficult Conversations model to a topic of your choice. **Due 9/22.**
  - **Writing Assignment #2** (20%): A 750-word paper on the point(s) of view presented in one of the chapters of *The New Jim Crow.* You will serve as a discussion leader for the chapter you are assigned. **Due 10/15.**
  - **Writing Assignment #3** (20%): A 750-word paper on the point(s) of view presented in one of the chapters of *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies.* You will serve as a discussion leader for the chapter you are assigned. **Due 11/5.**
  - **Writing Assignment #4** (20%): A 750-word paper on the point(s) of view presented in one of the chapters or sections of *Evicted.* You will serve as a discussion leader for the chapter/section you are assigned. **Due 11/24.**
  - **Writing Assignment #5** (10%): A 500-word self-assessment of what you learned in the course about conducting learning conversations about controversial issues. **Due 12/7.**

- Optional revision. You may revise Writing Assignment #2 or Writing Assignment #3. Your final grade will be the average of your first grade and your rewrite grade. **Due 12/5 or earlier.**

COURSE SCHEDULE
This schedule is subject to change if necessary, although due dates for assignments will not change. You are responsible for any changes posted on the Canvas website at [https://utexas.instructure.com](https://utexas.instructure.com). Be sure to check both Canvas and your email regularly so that you are aware of any course announcements.
A. Introduction to Dialogue: Create a Learning Conversation

8/27  Introductions. Please read the course syllabus carefully before class and come with your questions.

9/1   Difficult Conversations: pp. 1-5
9/3   Difficult Conversations, pp. 58-82
9/8   Difficult Conversations, pp. 83-128
9/10  Difficult Conversations, pp. 129-162
9/15  Difficult Conversations, pp. 163-216
9/17  Difficult Conversations, pp. 217-234, 268-273
9/22  Blanton Experience

***9/22 (Tuesday) Writing Assignment 1 Due on Canvas***

B. Difficult Dialogue I: Race and Incarceration in the US since the 1960s

9/24  The New Jim Crow, Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-58
9/29  The New Jim Crow, Chapter 2, pp. 59-96
10/1  The New Jim Crow, Chapter 3, pp. 97-139
10/6  The New Jim Crow, Chapter 4, pp. 140-177
10/8  The New Jim Crow, Chapter 5, pp. 178-220
10/13 The New Jim Crow, Chapter 6, pp. 221-262

***10/15 (Thursday) Writing Assignment 2 Due on Canvas***

C. Difficult Dialogue II: Borders, Migration, & Social Suffering

10/15 Introduction to Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies (no reading)
10/20 Fresh Fruit, Chapters 1-2, pp. 1-44
10/22 Fresh Fruit, Chapter 3, pp. 45-87
10/27 Fresh Fruit, Chapter 4, pp. 88-110
10/29 Fresh Fruit, Chapter 5, pp. 111-154
11/3  Fresh Fruit, Chapter 6 & Conclusion, pp. 155-198

***11/5 (Thursday), Writing Assignment 3 Due on Canvas***

D. Difficult Dialogue III: Class and Homelessness

11/5  Introduction to Evicted (no reading)
11/10 Evicted, Prologue and Chapters 1-8, pp. 1-110
11/12 Evicted, Chapters 9-12, pp. 111-166
11/17 Evicted, Chapters 13-21, pp. 167-258
11/19 Evicted, Chapters 22-24 and Epilogue, pp. 259-314
11/24 Discussion: creating a learning conversation (no reading)

***11/24 (Tuesday), Writing Assignment 4 Due on Canvas***

Thanksgiving Break

12/1  Writing and consultation day
12/3  Writing and consultation day

***12/5 (Friday), Last day to turn in optional rewrite of Writing Assignment 2 or 3 on Canvas***

***12/7 (Monday), Writing Assignment 5 Due on Canvas***
OTHER IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION RELATED TO THIS CLASS

COVID-19 Updates:

“Keep Learning” Resources
This course may be offered in a format to which you are unaccustomed. If you are looking for ideas and strategies to help you feel more comfortable participating in our class, please explore the resources available here: https://onestop.utexas.edu/keep-learning/

Zoom Etiquette
- Dress professionally for class and conference sessions.
- Be mindful of your surroundings when on camera. We want to make sure we avoid as much distraction as possible.
- Mute yourself unless you are speaking. This will cut down on background noise and limit any distractions.
- Use the “raise hand” button to indicate a desire to speak.
- Use the chat only to initiate or participate in classroom-related discussions.
- Turn off your camera if you are leaving the meeting temporarily.
- If the video or audio is choppy, try turning off your video. Please always use reliable private or enterprise WiFi.

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited
No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University’s Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

Class Recordings
Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

Communicating with the Professor and TA
It is important that you remain in good communication with the instructor and teaching assistant. Please attend office hours at least once during the semester. It is important to inform us personally or by Canvas email if illness, an emergency, a disability, or an unavoidable conflict is affecting your work in this course. Remember that professors and TAs appreciate respectful forms of address (i.e., “Dear Professor, Dear Dr. Strong, or Dear Ms. Siewert).

Academic Integrity
Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code:

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

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Plagiarism is taken very seriously at UT. Therefore, if you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. You are responsible for understanding UT’s Academic Honesty and the University Honor Code which can be found at the following web address:
https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/standardsofconduct.php

Q Drop Policy
If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you’ll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see: http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop

University E-mail
It is your responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in your e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

COVID-19 Update: You are encouraged to stay up-to-date on the latest news as related to the student experience. https://coronavirus.utexas.edu/students

Services for Students with Disabilities
This class respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities. If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, please let me know. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, but I can only do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions. Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. For more information, visit http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/.

Counseling and Mental Health Center
Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by following public health recommendations, eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support.
http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/individualcounseling.html

The Sanger Learning Center
Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center’s classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc.
BeVocal
BeVocal is a university-wide initiative to promote the idea that individual Longhorns have the power to prevent high-risk behavior and harm. At UT Austin all Longhorns have the power to intervene and reduce harm. To learn more about BeVocal and how you can help to build a culture of care on campus, go to: https://wellnessnetwork.utexas.edu/BeVocal.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Behavior Concerns Advice Line
If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, call BCAL (the Behavior Concerns Advice Line): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn’t feel right – it probably isn’t. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

Title IX Reporting
Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university’s relevant policies (https://titleix.utexas.edu/relevant-policies/).

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Senate Bill 212 requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one-on-one conversations) must be reported. **I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX related incidents that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one.** Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit http://www.titleix.utexas.edu/, contact the Title IX Office via email at titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.

Although graduate teaching and research assistants are not subject to Texas Senate Bill 212, **TAs and RAs are mandatory reporters under Federal Title IX laws** and are required to report a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct, including the types of sexual misconduct covered under Texas Senate Bill 212. The Title IX office has developed supportive ways to respond to a survivor and compiled campus resources to support survivors.