

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Organizations

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Lorem ipsum (Course TA)

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**Course Overview**

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) can unlock your leadership capacity in ways that you cannot imagine at this moment. Why? Because becoming a more inclusive leader is about deepening your understanding of who you are and how you lead, challenging those assumptions, and learning new tools to become a more impactful leader. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Organizations is ultimately a class about leadership. Students might walk into this class with beliefs about what DEI is, how it works and why it matters. Perhaps this was learned in your company or in an organization that you lead. Perhaps your personal background has offered you a window into what DEI is and how it works in your life. While your existing ideas offer a critical starting point, we will challenge your assumptions, widen your knowledge base, and offer novel experiences that will allow you to think differently about DEI.

In this course, we introduce students to conceptual frameworks and strategies for how to approach DEI from a leadership perspective. Students learn about the importance of a deep understanding of the organizational, cultural and intergroup contexts in which DEI initiatives arise, which DEI initiatives work and why, the drivers that motivate DEI initiatives, and the opportunities and barriers to building effective DEI initiatives in organizations. Students learn about varieties of differences that you are likely to encounter in your lives and your leadership, including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, gender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ+) groups, religion, social class, able-bodiedness, neurodiversity and political identities. We will examine how these identity differences combine or intersect to create new opportunities and challenges for individuals and global stakeholders. Finally, we will explore how to work across differences to create personal and organizational transformation. Specific course topics include: identity and leadership, leading authentically, understanding and mitigating stereotypes, bias and discrimination, leading diverse teams, leading global teams, organizational drivers of DEI, legal frameworks that affect DEI policies, marketing and DEI, and how companies leverage technology to accelerate DEI initiatives.

This course includes a variety of pedagogical strategies including lectures and case studies, readings, experiential exercises and student presentations designed to integrate cutting-edge research on DEI with hands-on experience. Conceptual frameworks and background knowledge are introduced through readings that are assigned each week. These readings set the intellectual grounding for each class. Often the readings include case studies and/or exercises that will be covered in class. Class time includes lectures that deepen and enhance the readings, discussion of case studies and engagement in experiential exercises. Through class participation, you will have the opportunity to diagnose DEI efforts at the personal, intergroup, and organizational level, and troubleshoot what works and why.

Three projects anchor students’ learning. Each student will engage in the Personal Inclusive Learning Journey. You will identify one way in which you want to become more inclusive, tolerant and/or more authentic, design an action plan, execute that plan and write a reflection paper documenting your journey. Each student will also be assigned to a three- or four person learning team. Each learning team will collaborate for the entire semester to produce two additional course deliverables, the Group Inclusive Learning Journey (group learning activity and team reflection paper) and the DEI Organizational Analysis (group organizational analysis and site visit, team reflection paper and presentation).

All students are welcome to take this course and the greater the diversity of perspectives the more engaging the course will be. We welcome students ranging from those who are skeptical of DEI to those who are unaware of what DEI is to students who have advanced knowledge and expertise about DEI.

When you complete the course, you will have had the opportunity to:

* Develop the mindset needed to be an effective leader in a diverse organization
* Learn core skills for engaging with others of different social identities
* Discover how to manage both one’s privilege and one’s minority status
* Practice tactics for managing conflict across difference
* Understand how to drive broad-scale organization climate and culture change

Dear Student,

Welcome! If you choose to take this course, I will be your fearless leader for the semester. The purpose of this letter is to introduce myself and explain a little more about this course. I hope that this will help you to decide whether this course is right for you.

Who am I? I possess such a diverse array of identities that I am not sure where to begin. I am a mom, a wife and a daughter. My father was in the military so I am somewhat of a military kid who lived on military bases. We finally landed in an Italian neighborhood on Long Island and… believe me…I did NOT grow up in the Hamptons! My mother was a school teacher so I am also a teacher at heart. Today, I will say we grew up lower-middle class, but my parents would have none of that. We did not have a lot of money, but my parents raised us to value what we had. I used to play varsity basketball and was competitive until recently. I learned more about leadership from basketball than any business workshop. I am divorced and remarried, and this comes with its own identity challenges. I inherited a 32-year-old son (and his wife), a 24-year-old daughter, and I cannot seem to get rid of my 14-year-old daughter. So, I am also a step-mom, and one of my step children is neuro-diverse. My family is a joy but it also comes with identity demands. My husband is a federal circuit court judge; when I married him, I had no idea that being a judge’s wife is a “thing.” But it is. So, I also now contend with the identity of being “the judge’s wife.” And in case you were wondering, I still get parking tickets and have to pay them! I am African-American. I am a woman. Often these identities lay in the background because I have had these identities all of my life. But they pose their own challenges at work and I will share those when my stories are relevant to the course. My newest identity is that I am “older” because I turned 50. The identity that I worked so hard to earn and love is that of a scientist. I have been a professor for about 18 years and I live and breathe science. I am always at my happiest when I am tinkering in my lab with my students or sharing discoveries with others. I bring all of these identities to this course and how I teach it.

While I think that my credentials as a scholar in the academy are impressive, I have also built my own DEI consulting firm. I used to approach companies as an “egg-head” professor. I know an awful lot about how to foster an inclusive climate in controlled laboratory settings. I naively thought that my science would impress companies and then they would change on their own. I could not have been more wrong.

I have learned through trial and error that companies need three things when it comes to DEI. First, they need knowledge—they need to understand which DEI initiatives work, why and in what contexts. And because the political, economic and cultural landscape constantly changes, they need a consistent infusion of new knowledge. Second, they need strategies. DEI is hard work; effective strategies make it easier. DEI requires smart, highly motivated people to enact personal and organizational change with strategies. It is not enough to understand belonging if you can’t enact a strategy to foster it! Third, they need fearless leaders. They need leaders who can reflect inward and want to be better and be more inclusive. They need leaders with intellect, insight, empathy and perspective. They need leaders who can stand up against stakeholders and political tornadoes to “do the right thing.”

Knowledge. Strategy. Leadership. As I became less focused on just sharing the hot new findings from my lab and really listening to what companies needed, my little consulting firm flourished. Today, I am excited to share what I have learned and continue to learn in our course. I integrate cutting-edge research, background knowledge and historical context, and pragmatics strategies. Most importantly, my goal is to help you find your leadership vision so that you can be the very best inclusive leader that you can be.

Warmly,

Prof. VPG

**COURSE LOGISTICS**

**Classroom:** varies per week (will be announced before each session)

**Office:** 342 Kravis Hall

**Phone:** 908-603-9474 (mobile)

**Fax:** 212-854-3609

**Email:** [vjp12@columbia.edu](mailto:vjp12@columbia.edu)

**Class Slack workspace:** LoremIpsum.slack.com

**OFFICE HOURS**

I will announce regular office hours in class and on Canvas and am available to meet via appointment (schedule via email vjp12@columbia.edu).

Our teaching assistant is Lorem Ipsum. Their office hours will be by appointment via Zoom. To coordinate with them, please schedule via email (LoremIpsum@columbia.edu)

**THRIVING WITH LEARNING CHALLENGES AND SPECIAL NEEDS ACCOMMODATIONS**

My goals and responsibility are to make sure everyone in this course will thrive when they work to the best of their ability. If you require special assistance to thrive, please let me know before the course starts or during the opening weekend. Please contact me, the professor, directly. This includes special needs assistance and any other learning accommodations.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Your course grade will be based on the following four components (proportion of grade is in parentheses):

## Course Engagement (30%)

* Personal Inclusive Learning Journey (20%)
* Group Inclusive Learning Journey - Learning Team (25%)

## DEI Organizational Analysis - Learning Team (25%)

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## ***Class Engagement (30%)***

## Please note that the Class Engagement component will be graded along specific factors including class attendance, level of engagement in exercises, and general level of participation in the course and course activities.

***Personal Inclusive Learning Journey (20%)***

This exercise is designed to enhance your personal leadership abilities. The goal of this personal inclusive learning journey is to leverage personal education, action plan execution, and self-reflection to become a more inclusive leader. Each student will identify their personal learning journey to embark on for the semester. Please see example learning journeys below:

* “I have very little understanding of DEI and religion. I will educate myself about what the Muslim community needs to feel supported in the workplace.”
* “I have never thought about myself as a privileged person. I will educate myself about my own racial and class privilege and how I can be a better ally.”
* “As a person of color, I will learn how to become a better ally for the next generation of students of color.”
* “I will understand my own biases and stereotypes related to gender and work towards minimizing them.”
* “I want to understand what being transgender means, why it matters and how I can be an ally for transgender people.”
* “Political divisions are becoming worse. I want to learn more about political perspectives other than my own American, liberal, Northeastern politics.”

After identifying their personal inclusive learning journey, each student will design an action plan to become more inclusive, tolerant, and/or authentic in this specific journey. This action plan must include specific, trackable items related to personal education, self-reflection, and putting into action everything that you have learned. This plan will be developed with the professor and your Learning Team.

Every student’s personal inclusive learning journey will be unique and tailored to the individual, but all action plans must include the following:

1. Academic research on your chosen topic
2. A personal experience (such as meeting with someone, interviewing someone)
3. An experiential element (such as going to a museum, going to a place of worship, watching a movie, listening to a podcast).

After you execute your plan, you will write a 4–6-page (double spaced) paper to reflect on and crystallize your experience and learning related to your personal inclusive learning journey. The goal of this paper is to encourage reflection on the completed action plan and to articulate the insights you gained throughout your learning journey as related to course concepts and reading. Please be candid in describing the experience of undertaking the learning journey and being in the class, including your reactions, perceptions, behaviors, and feelings. *This paper is a confidential document between you and the professor.*

Guidelines:

* Your paper should discuss and elaborate on the three to four most important lessons and insights from your personal learning journey, as you will take these lessons with you out into the world beyond the classroom.
* Papers should clearly articulate these lessons and discuss how they relate to course readings and concepts by incorporating course content as relevant. Papers should discuss how this experience and the course concept changed your ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving as related to your journey.
* Papers will provide concrete examples that illustrate how you are applying (or intend to apply) the lessons and insights you gained from your personal learning journey.

***Group Inclusive Learning Journey - Learning Team (25%)***

This exercise is designed to leverage *experiential learning* as a key factor in broadening our limited understanding of the differences that are present in our communities. Together with your 3-4 person Learning Team, you will choose an experience to undertake as a group that will illuminate one or more dimensions of “difference.” In this course, the dimensions of difference are defined broadly, including gender difference, racial difference, cultural difference, generational difference, differences in sexuality, differences in neurodiversity, differences in ability, etc.

This experience should be selected as a novel learning experience and can take many forms, including but not limited to visiting a museum, attending a concert or live event, viewing a film, or engaging in another communal activity. Your Columbia ID card grants you free or heavily discounted access to a variety of experiences and events in New York, including museums, performing arts events, cultural events, landmark sites, and film screenings.

Ideally, your entire Learning Team would share the experience together, synchronously. After you engage in the experience, please find time to meet together to reflect on the experience, what you learned, what you say, what made you uncomfortable, and/or what inspired you.

If it is not possible to engage in the experience as a team (for example, you decide to go to a film screening but must go to showings at different times), your team must minimally meet to discuss the experience you had after everyone participated. This team experience and reflection is the most important element.

After your Learning Team engaged in the experience and met for discussion, you are to submit a Learning Team deliverable that includes the following elements:

1. Description of the experience your Learning Team selected, why you chose it, and how you decided as a team what to do.
   1. This part of the analysis should discuss what elements of difference your team was curious about and why your chosen experience addressed that curiosity.
2. Description of your takeaways:
   1. From the experience itself
   2. From your Learning Team discussion after the experience, your learnings and any insights that may have emerged individually or jointly.

Your deliverable should be submitted to Canvas in any format that your Learning Team desires; creativity is welcomed and encouraged.

***DEI Organizational Analysis - Learning Team (25%)***

To close out the course, your Learning Team will apply your insights and knowledge of the course concepts to real-world DEI design, strategies, and practices in an organizational context. Your Learning Team will conduct a critical analysis of these topics in one company or organization that you are familiar with or wish to learn more about.

The goals of your analysis are to:

1. Apply course concepts and personal insight to evaluate the effectivity of DEI processes in these organizations, comparing and contrasting among the organizations
2. Design specific, actionable recommendations for each organization to increase the effectivity of their DEI strategy
3. Extract and synthesize insights from your analysis that may help Columbia Business School as an organization aiming to enhance their own DEI practice effectivity.

Your analysis should be submitted as in two formats. First, as a PowerPoint presentation (saved as a PDF) of no more than ten slides, inclusive of 0-2 slides for exhibits. Class session 12 will be reserved for the presentation of all Learning Teams’ Organizational Analyses. Second, your learning team will write a 8-10-page (double spaced) paper that reflects more in depth content from your presentation. More information about this assignment is in Canvas.

Guidelines:

* Begin by gathering information on the organizations’ existing DEI “stories.” In order to do this, your team may decide to talk to people in the organization with whom you can discuss diversity issues. You may also use your personal observations and research. You are encouraged to be creative in gathering the information to highlight each organization’s DEI story.
* Once you have considered each organization’s individual practices regarding DEI, create a critical analysis among organizations that compares and contrasts the effectivity of their DEI strategies. This should include analysis of why similarities and differences might exist in these specific organizations. This analysis should also include explanations as to why and how these differing strategies and processes are affecting the organizations.
* Next, synthesize your findings and insights to inform 3-5 recommendations for each organization to improve their DEI effectiveness and better leverage difference in their organization. These recommendations should follow logically from the analysis presented in the previous bullet. These recommendations should be tailored to each organization, not the same recommendation sent to every organization.
* Finally, outline what Columbia Business School could learn from the organizations you studied. Utilize your unique and powerful perspective as soon-to-be alumni of the school, use your insights from this critical organizational analysis, and offer your best wisdom to Dean Costis Maglaras and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

**DETAILED COURSE OVERVIEW**

CLASS 1: Introduction

* Introduction, history and evolution of DEI and contemporary frameworks
* Readings: (will include two readings for this class)

CLASS 2: Inclusive Leadership - The ground that you stand on (Part I)

* Micro-focused: how to be a more inclusive person
* Readings: (will include two readings for this class)

CLASS 3: Inclusive Leadership – Leading Authentically (Part II)

* Micro-focused: how to be a more authentic leader
* Readings: (will include two readings for this class)

CLASS 4: Interpersonal Dynamics - What gets in the way of individuals being more inclusive?

* Micro-focused: bias, prejudice, stereotyping
* Readings: (will include two readings for this class)

CLASS 5: Intergroup Dynamics (Part I)

* Micro-focused: leading diverse teams
* Readings: (will include two readings for this class)

CLASS 6: Intergroup Dynamics (Part II)

* Micro-focused: leading global teams
* Readings: (will include two readings for this class)

CLASS 7: Organizational Dynamics

* Macro-focused: organizational drivers that accelerate or hamper DEI initiatives
* Readings: (will include two readings for this class)

CLASS 8: Legal Dynamics

* Macro-focused: the basics of the US legal framework as it pertains to DEI
* Readings: (will include two readings for this class)

CLASS 9: Marketing and DEI

* External facing aspects of DEI: marketing to diverse consumers, product design, communication and messaging to stakeholders
* Readings: (will include two readings for this class)

CLASS 10: Special Topics: Technology and DEI

* Relationship between artificial intelligence, big data and DEI: what are companies doing? What works (and what does not)?
* Readings: (will include two readings for this class)

CLASS 11: Special topics: How do we ensure DEI is both global and local?

* What are organizational strategies that ensure DEI penetrates non-Western Markets? What are companies doing, and is it successful?
* Readings: (will include two readings for this class)

CLASS 12: DEI Organizational Analysis presentations

* Presentations of each Learning Team’s DEI Organizational Analysis

**ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINES**

***The specific dates and deadlines for the assignments will be updated when the Registrar determines the course schedule.***

* Individual Personal Learning Journey Plan, due TBA
* Individual Personal Learning Journey Reflection, due TBA
* Group Personal Learning Journey Reflection, due TBA
* DEI Organizational Analysis Presentation, due TBA
* DEI Organization Analysis Reflection Paper, due TBA