

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Organizations

Professor Valerie Purdie-Greenaway

*Bidding Syllabus*

## Course Overview

### For Bidding Purposes only Spring 2023

In this course, we introduce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) from a leadership perspective. DEI can help you unlock your leadership capacity in ways that you cannot imagine. While your existing ideas about DEI (whether through work or personal experience) offer a critical and important starting point, we are here to help you more deeply understand who you are and how you lead, challenge those assumptions, guide you through a series of novel individual and team experiences and widen your knowledge base. This course will help you to understand not only conceptual frameworks and strategies for how to approach DEI from a leadership standpoint, but also novel research in the behavioral sciences that reveals the hidden mechanisms underlying DEI.

This course starts with an exploration of each of us. We will 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. We will explore how to work across differences to create personal and organizational transformation. The course then evolves to focus on organizational drivers of DEI. We will learn about 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.

One guiding principle that we will use throughout the course is to “follow the science.” Organizations are often very good at planning for and executing DEI initiatives. But rarely does a leader really know the science behind DEI — the “why”. To be an authentic and inspirational DEI leader, it helps to be able to articulate the “why” behind the “how”. By discovering the science about human beings and what makes a workplace positive and inclusive, you will be able to lead from a place of purpose and deeper meaning. The “why” enables a DEI vision to truly come alive in a workplace — to inspire other managers and colleagues to rally behind DEI efforts, and make employees feel included and cared for.

By connecting with the “why” through this course, you have the power to affect real change with a more intimate understanding of your own leadership style and the underlying mechanisms of what makes a positive and inclusive workplace culture.

### Pedagogical Strategies

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.

Two projects anchor students’ learning. Each student will be assigned to a six-person learning team. Each learning team will collaborate for the entire semester to produce two course deliverables: 1) DEI organizational case studies and recommendations; and, 2) a “team learning journey field trip” and accompanying individual reflection paper.

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.

### Course Objectives

When you complete this 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
- 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 and the only Court above him is the Supreme Court of the United States of America! 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 lie 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 turn 51 in October. And, as it turns out, this is a THING too. And yes, when no one is home I do try to squeeze into my 14 year old's jeans. This is the weirdest part about being older and something I am ashamed to share! But likely your parents did this too!

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:** TBD

**My Office:** 342 Kravis Hall

**My Email:** [vjp12@columbia.edu](mailto:vjp12@columbia.edu) or [vjp12@gsb.columbia.edu](mailto:vjp12@gsb.columbia.edu) (goes to same place)

**Course TA:** TBD

## OFFICE HOURS

Professor office hours are Thursdays, 5:30–7:00PM in Kravis 342. I am also available to meet via appointment (schedule via email [vjp12@columbia.edu](mailto:vjp12@columbia.edu)).

## THRIVING WITH LEARNING CHALLENGES AND SPECIAL NEEDS ACCOMMODATIONS

My goal and responsibility is 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 during the initial week of the course. Please contact me, the professor, directly. This includes special needs assistance and any other learning accommodations. There will be no timed exams in this course but we will have assessments related to the readings at the beginning of some of the classes.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

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

- Class Participation (35%)
- DEI Organizational Case Studies (40%)
- DEI Learning Journey Field Trip (25%)

***Class Participation (35%)*** – Please note that the Class Participation 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.

- Reading assessments, assignments in class (15%) - On occasion, we will have short assessments at the start of class related to the weekly readings and these will be graded. We will also have assignments due in class such as an “identity leadership map.” There will be 5-10 of a combination of reading assessments and in-class assignments throughout the course. They will be graded as follows: (check +, check, check -)

- Attendance (15%) - Attendance is required and will be taken at each class. One point will be taken off of class participation for each unexcused absence. In accordance with GSB school policies, there is no virtual option this fall.
- Engagement (5%) - A final 5% of class participation is the way you engage with the material related to your questions, comments, engagement with other students, participation on Canvas or SLACK channels.

***DEI Organizational Case Studies (40%)*** – See detailed [assignment instructions here](#)

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. This project is modeled after a consulting firm team structure. Your learning team will consist of six students. Teams will be assigned by the instructor using random assignment. You will NOT be able to select into a learning team so if this is a challenge for you, it is not a good idea to take this course!

Your learning team (6 people) will choose 3 organizations that you are collectively familiar with or wish to learn more about – one Fortune 500 company, one startup, and one other organization type (e.g., school, nonprofit, foundation, family business). Your team of six (6) will then break up into three pairs – each will conduct a critical case study of one organization. Your learning team of six students will meet regularly and work through the case studies sub-assignment together.

The goals of your analysis are to:

- Apply course concepts and personal insight to evaluate the effectiveness of DEI processes in these organizations, comparing and contrasting among the organizations
- Design specific, actionable recommendations for each organization to increase the effectiveness of their DEI strategy

There are five sub-assignments that make up this project:

- 45-minute team talk
- Research and synthesis
- Assessment
- Presentation and recommendation
- Post-activity reflection

Please see assignment instructions for details and key dates.

**DEI Learning Journey “Field trip” (25%)** – See [detailed assignment instructions here](#).

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 six-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 mock “team field trip”, or an event that you would plan at work to encourage team bonding. Some examples may be visiting a museum, attending a concert or live event, viewing a film screening, or engaging in another communal activity. The general spirit of the activity is that it should be a stretch or growth experience for the team. For instance, going to Dinosaur BBQ or Baylander for dinner is less of a growth experience than eating at a restaurant in a neighborhood that you have never visited in one of the five boroughs of Manhattan. 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.

Your entire Learning Team **MUST** 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 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 an **individual** reflection paper that includes the following elements:

- Description of the experience your learning team selected, why you chose it, and how you decided as a team what to do.
  - This part of the analysis should discuss what elements of difference your team was curious about, individual strengths and improvement areas as inclusive leaders, and why your chosen experience addresses these topics.
- Description of your takeaways:

- From the experience itself (e.g., what did you do? Where did you go? What was it like?)
- From your Learning Team discussion after the experience(e.g., What were your learnings and what insights emerged individually or jointly after the learning team discussion? How does this connect to being a more inclusive leader?)

Please see assignment instructions for details and key dates.

### **OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINES**

**\*\*Professor VPG will create recordings discussing the details of each assignment and post in Canvas early on in the course. We will also go over the details in class.**

- DEI Organizational Case Study Team Talk and Team Contract, due February 16th
- DEI Organizational Case Study Research Presentation and Recording, due March 2nd
- DEI Learning Journey Field Trip Individual Reflection Paper, due March 30th
- DEI Organizational Case Study Assessment Paper, due April 6th
- DEI Organizational Case Study CEO Presentation (slides only), due April 20th
- DEI Organizational Case Study Individual Reflection and Academic Citations, due April 27th
- DEI Organizational Case Study CEO Presentation (recording), due April 27th

See detailed assignments here: [DEI Organizational Case Studies](#) and [DEI Team Event](#)

## COURSE TOPICS

\*\* Readings can be found in Canvas. Each week we will have a word document with an overview of each reading and approximate reading time. This allows me to calibrate reading volume and content. Readings will be posted two weeks in advance.

\*\*For some classes, I will include videos for you to watch. I will make it clear each week whether the videos are optional or required.

### CLASS 1: Introduction – Yes, DEI actual can and does work – Thursday, January 26th

- Introduction, history and evolution of DEI and contemporary frameworks
- Readings:
  - Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2022). A Dream Delayed. In *Getting to Diversity: What Works and What Doesn't*. Harvard University Press. p. 1-11. **Estimated reading time:** 20 minutes
  
  - Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2020). Getting serious about diversity. *Harvard Business Review*, 98(6), 114-122. **Estimated reading time:** 20 minutes
  
  - Dixon-Fyle, S., Dolan, K., Hunt, V., & Prince, S. (2020). Diversity wins: How inclusion matters. *McKinsey & Co.*, May. pp. 1-56 **Estimated reading time:** 90 minutes
- Will use as reference throughout the course:
  - American Psychological Association. (2021). *Inclusive language guidelines*.

### CLASS 2: Inclusive Leadership - The ground that you stand on (Part I) – Thursday, February 2nd

- Micro-focused: how to be a more inclusive person
- Readings:
  - “The Complexity of Identity: ‘Who am I?’” by Tatum, pp. 9-14. **Estimated reading time:** 15 minutes
  
  - Seeing Difference by Martin Davidson, pp. 95-1123. In *The End of Diversity as We Know It: Why Diversity Efforts Fail and how Leveraging Differences Can Succeed*. 95-124. **Estimated reading time:** 30 minutes

Crossing the Divide: Do Men Really Have It Easier? These Transgender Guys Found the Truth is More Complex by Tara Bahrapour. The Washington Post. June 2018.

**Estimated reading time:** 20 minutes

CLASS 3: Inclusive Leadership – Leading Authentically (Part II) – Thursday, February 9th

- Micro-focused: how to be a more authentic leader
- Readings:  
“The Authenticity Paradox: Why feeling like a fake can be a sign of growth” by Herminia Ibarra, Harvard Business Review, 2015. **Estimated reading time:** 20 minutes

Chapter 1. Introduction, pp. 1-13 AND Chapter 10. 165-180. Turning Biases and Stereotypes in Your Favor by Laura Huang, pp. 95-1123. In *The Edge: Turning Adversity into Advantage*. **Estimated reading time:** 35 minutes

CLASS 4: Interpersonal Dynamics - What gets in the way of individuals and organizations being more inclusive? (Bias, Stereotypes, Prejudice, Microaggressions) – Thursday, February 16th

- Micro-focused: bias, prejudice, stereotyping, microaggressions
- Readings:  
Kaplan, M., & Donovan, M. Chapter 5. Unconscious Bias pp, 102-122. In *The Inclusion Dividend: Why investing in diversity & inclusion pays off*. 2016. **Estimated Reading Time:** 25 minutes

Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. Chapter 1. Rethinking Diversity and Harassment Training, pp. 12-34. In *Getting to diversity: What works and what doesn't*. pp. 12-34. **Estimated Reading Time:** 25 minutes

Guhigg, C. If GoDaddy Can Turn the Corner on Sexism, Who Can't? New York Times (2017). **Estimated reading time:** 20 minutes

CLASS 5: Interpersonal Dynamics - What you can do to protect yourself and others against being the target of prejudice – Thursday, February 23rd

- Micro-focused: contending with bias, prejudice, stigma, stereotyping, more and less effective strategies that individuals engage in
- Readings:

Livingston, R. (2021). Chapter 12: How Leaders and Organizations Can Create Greater Racial Equity, pp. 238-262. In *The conversation: How seeking and speaking the truth about*

*racism can radically transform individuals and organizations.* Currency. **Estimated reading time:** 35 minutes

Monteith, M. J., Burns, M. D., & Hildebrand, L. K. (2019). Navigating successful confrontations: What should I say and how should I say it?. In *Confronting prejudice and discrimination* (pp. 225-248). Academic Press. **Estimated reading time:** 30 minutes

Yoshino, K. (2007). Preface, pp. ix -xii and Gay Covering, pp. 74- 107. In *Covering: The hidden assault on our civil rights*. Random House Trade Paperbacks. **Estimated reading time:** 35 minutes

#### CLASS 6: Intergroup Dynamics – Leading diverse teams – Thursday, March 2nd

- Micro-focused: leading diverse teams
- Readings:

Meyer, E. (2014). Introduction: Navigating Cultural Differences and the Wisdom of Mrs. Chen and Chapter 2: The Many Faces of Polite: Evaluating Performance and Providing Negative Feedback. In *The culture map: Breaking through the invisible boundaries of global business*. Public Affairs. **Estimated reading time:** 40 minutes

Page, S. (2017). Chapter 5: The Empirical Evidence. In *The diversity bonus: how great teams pay off in the knowledge economy*. Princeton University Press. **Estimated reading time:** 30 minutes.

**\*\*March 9th: No class, Business School holiday**

**\*\*March 16th: No class, Business School holiday**

#### CLASS 7: Intergroup Dynamics – Leading global teams - Thursday, March 23rd

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

#### CLASS 8: Organizational Dynamics – Putting it all together...: How to troubleshoot your DEI eco-system - Thursday, March 30th

- Macro-focused: organizational drivers that accelerate or hamper DEI initiatives/ how to assess what is working and what is not
- Readings: (will include two-three readings for this class)

CLASS 9: DEI Organizational Case Study Work Session – Thursday, April 6th

- Students will work in their learning teams for the entire class to make progress on their case analyses.
- Readings: No readings

CLASS 10: Legal Dynamics – Lawyers as partners not naysayers of DEI –Thursday, April 13th

- Macro-focused: the basics of the US legal framework as it pertains to DEI; how to build partnerships with your legal team/what should they do for you!
- Readings: (will include two-three readings for this class)

CLASS 11: DEI Organizational Case Study presentations – Thursday, April 20th

- Presentations of each Learning Team’s DEI Organizational Analysis

CLASS 12: Special topics: Technology and DEI & How do we ensure DEI is both global and local? – Thursday, April 27th

- Relationship between artificial intelligence, big data and DEI: what are companies doing? What works (and what does not)?
- What are organizational strategies that ensure DEI penetrates non-Western Markets? What are companies doing, and is it successful?
- Readings: (will include two-three readings for this class)

END.