

GG102x: Bridging Differences



<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

Course Syllabus

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Instructors

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Course Description

We encounter differences every day—differences in race, politics, gender, faith, and more. How can we connect across these differences, especially at a time of deep social polarization?

In this course, you will learn core research-based principles and strategies for fostering positive relationships, dialogue, and understanding across lines of difference. Created by UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center (GGSC), the course offers best practices that draw on scientific findings and case studies from real-world programs. It will zero in on how these evidence-based strategies can be applied to the divisions and conflicts that show up in our everyday relationships and in various sectors, with a particular focus on university and college campuses. The course builds on the GGSC's popular Bridging Differences Playbook, which has already been used widely by leaders in government, education, corporate, and other settings.

It is taught by Professors Allison Briscoe-Smith and Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton—gifted and engaging teachers who draw on a wealth of knowledge in the science and practice of bridging differences. Joining them are researchers and practitioners who have led efforts to bridge racial, religious, political, and other divides in higher education and other settings.

Learners who register for the Verified Track will receive additional guidance in developing their own programs for bridging differences, particularly on college campuses.

Join us to make real and resonant shifts in your life, community, or campus, finding new ways to connect across lines of difference.

The production of this course was supported by a generous grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, with additional support provided by the Einhorn Collaborative.

Course Contact

You can email questions or problems to BridgingCourse@berkeley.edu and a member of the course team will make every effort to assist you. Due to the high number of students registered for this course, the co-instructors themselves will not be able to reply to individual emails about the course content.

Course Outline

Module 1: Introduction to Bridging Differences

Gets the learner oriented to this course and motivates them to charge ahead. We'll explain what bridging differences is all about and why it's so timely and important, especially on college campuses today. We'll also provide some important caveats and cautions about the limits of bridging.

Module 2: Challenge Your Views

Focuses on the "inner" (intrapersonal) skills we need to bridge differences, which we can work on even outside of our interactions with others. We'll explore the psychology of stereotyping and unconscious biases, and how they can affect who you choose to engage with and how you relate to them. We'll suggest ways to challenge some of the preconceptions and biases that often get in the way of bridging.

Module 3: Active Listening

Explores the most basic and essential of bridging skills: listening. We'll dive into the practice of active listening and how it can help you better understand those who are different from you.

Module 4: Compassionate Speaking

How to share your own perspectives in a way that does not put people on the defensive and allows them to really understand where you're coming from.

Module 5: Shared Identities and Values

Highlights the importance of finding shared identities and values with others. We'll cover how we can identify and articulate the commonalities we have, even with those who seem very different from us.

Module 6: Identify Common Goals

The power of finding and working toward common goals with people from other groups, and we'll provide strategies for helping you identify common goals in ways that can help you bridge differences.

Module 7: Intergroup Contact

We'll discuss how contact between groups doesn't always go as planned. We'll take a step back and look at the conditions that are key to ensuring that intergroup contact is actually successful -- which is especially important for people who are in a position to bring different groups together.

Module 8: Applying These Practices to Your Life

Helps learners map out how they'll apply all of these research-based practices to their own life and work, on college campuses and beyond.

Grading

Throughout the course there are quizzes at the end of each module. For Modules 1 through Module 7, the quizzes are worth 70% of your grade for the course. For Module 8, the final quiz is worth 30% of your grade for the course.

Students who want a higher level of proof that they have completed the course, such as for their school or employer, can pay for a Verified certificate of completion. Students must earn a total grade of at least 50% in order to pass the course and earn their certificate.