Leading Diversity in Organizations (LDO)
Thursday 2–5:30pm, Location TBD

MBA Spring B Term (1.5 credits)
Management Division - #589

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TA: TBD

Course Overview

Leading Diversity in Organizations (LDO): In the contemporary knowledge economy, leaders must create sustainable settings for productive exchange and interaction where all members can thrive and put their best foot forward. People in the workplace are constantly interacting with peers, managers, and customers with very different backgrounds and experiences. When harnessed effectively, these differences can be the catalyst for creative and innovative breakthroughs and the pathway to team and organizational learning and effectiveness; but when misunderstood, these differences can challenge employees’ values, performance, workplace relationships, and team effectiveness. This course is designed to help students navigate diverse settings more effectively and improve their ability to create, work within, and lead diverse teams and global organizations. It also offers students the opportunity to develop their critical thinking on topics such as identity, relationships across difference and bias, and equality of opportunity in organizations around the world and how they relate to organizational issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This course builds on the foundational knowledge and skills developed in Lead: People, Teams, Organizations and relates to other leadership electives such as Personal Leadership & Success and Organizational Change.

Class sessions will be experiential and discussion-based, will draw from cutting-edge theory and practice regarding economic, psychological, organizational, and cultural insights, and will require full-participation by students. Readings, self-reflection, case studies, and a final team project will also be emphasized. Guest lectures by diversity experts and practitioners are also planned.

By the end of the course students should be equipped to effectively respond to differences in the workplace and be better able to manage themselves and others toward the goal of collaborative learning and innovation in organizations.
Course Objectives

By the end of this half-semester course, you should be able to:

1) Describe current perspectives on the relationships among diversity and inclusion in global organizations
2) Evaluate the aspects of your identity and personal experiences that shape how you interact and engage with others and how they interact and engage with you in organizations
3) Explain how issues of status, privilege, and bias influence opportunity (e.g., hiring decisions, evaluations, promotions) and effectiveness in global organizations
4) Propose ways to make relationships across differences in organizations more effective
5) Analyze a company’s current approach to leading diversity and use content from this course to propose ways to enhance learning and effectiveness in that company

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Individual Course Contribution (30%): Arrival on time to class, completion of pre-class surveys, engagement and participation in the classroom, and generally upholding the values of the Columbia Core Culture: Be present, prepared, and participating.

Because this course is short and depends a great deal on the experience of in-class discussion class attendance is mandatory. Your grade will be penalized for every unexcused absence. If you must miss a class, it is essential that you notify me as well in advance as possible but at least 24 hours in advance so I can make arrangements for any in-class exercises or activities.

All class sessions involve active discussion, emphasizing both theoretical questions and practical implications. You should be prepared to share ideas and to listen to and interpret the issues presented by others. Most participation will be voluntary; however, individuals will occasionally be called upon “cold.”

Quality discussion comments possess one or more of the following attributes:

• Offer a relevant perspective on the issue
• Provide careful analysis
• Apply the theory and concepts offered in the readings and lectures
• Build on prior contributions with new insights; do not repeat others’ points
• Asking good questions - a skill to practice

Pre-Class Surveys: Before most sessions, you will complete a brief pre-class survey that will help you prepare for the session. All pre-class surveys will be in a link in the calendar and under assignments.

Due Date: Each survey will be due on the night (11pm) before the session.
**Group Project (Diversity Audit) (40%):** For this project, groups of students will choose 2-3 companies or organizations they are familiar with and will perform a comparison between the companies in an effort to identify the organizations’ diversity strategy, processes and procedures. You will identify similarities and differences between the companies and explain why these differences might exist and how these strategies and processes may be affecting the organizations. You will make recommendations for future improvements for each company/organization. More details about the project are provided at the end of the syllabus. Each group will prepare a written analysis of the way diversity operates in the organizations and suggest ways to improve. This analysis should reflect an understanding of basic concepts discussed in class. Papers should be approximately 5-6 pages in length. Presentations Due in class. Papers due during Finals Week.

**Reflection Paper (15%):** At one point in the class, you will reflect on the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion from previous sessions around a particular topic. The goal is to push you to think even beyond the class discussion and lend your own insights and personal experiences to the topic. Choose one of the topics below and submit at the date listed.

**Length:** Your paper will be a maximum of 600 words (about two double-spaced pages).

**Due Dates and Topics:**
- What is the Relationship between Diversity, Power and Status? Can they be disentangled? Week 2
- What is Authenticity and Do We Really Want It in the Workplace? Week 3
- Intersectionality – Can Diversity Be Studied by Looking at One Category at a Time? Week 4

**Who Am I Exercise (15%):** This exercise is designed to help you think about how who you are affects the way you behave, how others see you, and how you see the world. There are three parts to this exercise, each with a series of questions that you will answer about yourself. The assignments will be submitted and there will be time to discuss your responses in class.
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<td><strong>UNDERSTANDING THE LOGIC AND IMPACT OF DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONS</strong></td>
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Case: Take a couple implicit bias tests: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/  
SKIM Starbucks Bias Training Team Guidebook                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Getting to know you exercise  
Invisible knapsack exercise  
**Who Am I Exercise Part 3**  
**Reflection Paper***                                                                                                           |
| **Thursday April 25**             | (1) E. Castilla, 2016. “Achieving meritocracy in the workplace.” *MIT Sloan Review*  
(2) J. C. Williams, M. Multhaup, & S. Mihaylo, 2018. “Why companies should add class to their diversity discussions” *HBR*  
**Guest Speaker: TBD**  
**Reflection Paper***                                                                                                           |
| **Thursday May 2**                | (1) F. Dobbins, & A. Kalev 2016. “Why diversity programs fail and what works better.” *HBR*  
(2) S. Correll Video “Creating a Level Playing Field”  
**Presentations Due from the students on group projects**                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 6 Steps  
1. Educate  
2. Establish clear criteria for evaluation  
3. Scrutinize your criteria  
4. Hold decision-makers accountable  
5. Be transparent  
6. Vouch for competence, sponsorship                                                                                             |
INCLUSION, ACCOMMODATIONS, AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

At Columbia Business School, we believe that diversity strengthens any community or business model and brings it greater success. Columbia Business School is committed to providing all students with the equal opportunity to thrive in the classroom by providing a learning, living, and working environment free from discrimination, harassment, and bias on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or ability.

Columbia Business School will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact the Columbia University’s Office of Disability Services for information about registration. Students seeking accommodation in the classroom may obtain information on the services offered by Columbia University’s Office of Disability Services online at www.health.columbia.edu/docs/services/ods/index.html or by contacting (212) 854-2388.

Columbia Business School is committed to maintaining a safe environment for students, staff and faculty. Because of this commitment and because of federal and state regulations, we must advise you that if you tell any of your instructors about sexual harassment or gender-based misconduct involving a member of the campus community, your instructor is required to report this information to a Title IX Coordinator. They will treat this information as private, but will need to follow up with you and possibly look into the matter. Counseling and Psychological Services, the Office of the University Chaplain, and the Ombuds Office for Gender-Based Misconduct are confidential resources available for students, staff and faculty. “Gender-based misconduct” includes sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and gender-based harassment. For more information, see http://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/gender-based-misconduct-policy-students.

We collectively have a unique opportunity to create the kind of classroom culture that will allow you and your classmates to thrive here at Columbia Business School and beyond. The purpose of the Columbia Core Culture is to promote a consistent classroom environment of mutual respect, preparation and engagement. On our first day of class we will also take some time to think about classroom norms that may be especially important given the focus of this course. Our expectation of you in class is to be:

**Present:** Your success depends on being on time and present for the entire class every session. Attendance will be part of your grade for class participation and students are expected to sit in their assigned seats.
**Prepared:** Complete any pre-work needed for class discussion. Bring your nameplate and download poll everywhere on your smartphone. Expect the professor to cold call in class.

**Participating:** Active participation calls for no electronic devices such as laptops, tablet computers, or smartphones during class, except if the professor tells you that the use of these devices is a part of in-class work.

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**EXERCISES, RESEARCH, AND LEARNING**

Many of the learning points in this course have been developed and refined through extensive prior classroom and research experiences. Just as prior students have made this course possible by sharing their experiences, you have the opportunity to contribute to the education of future students by sharing your own experiences. If you consent to allow your responses (including those from the leadership multi-rater feedback activity, negotiations exercises, and from other exercises in this course and other courses, as well as surveys by Career Services and other school offices) to be used for research purposes and for future refinement of course materials, your information will be kept strictly confidential. Any information derived from this research that would identify you would not be voluntarily released or disclosed without separate consent.

This research takes place under the Columbia University IRB Protocol for “Management and negotiations research” (protocol number AAAA6074). The following individuals and/or agencies will be able to look at and copy your research records:

- The investigator, study staff and other professionals who may be evaluating the study
- Authorities from Columbia University, including the Institutional Review Board (‘IRB’)
- The United States Office of Human Research Protections (‘OHRP’).

The Principal Investigator for this protocol is Professor Katherine Phillips (kp2447@columbia.edu, 212-854-5621). There are no foreseeable risks to you and the proposed research does not present any additional risk beyond what you are already doing as part of the course. The benefits of the exercises are the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills in negotiating and leading effectively. Classroom debriefing aims to help you learn not only from your own experience but also from the experience of classmates.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withhold your materials from research purposes at any time without an effect on your course grade. If at any time you have comments regarding the conduct of this research or questions about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Columbia University Institutional Review Board by email at askirb@columbia.edu or by phone at 212-851-7040. If you do not want your responses and outcomes for exercises in this course used for research purposes, please notify the instructor.
“DIVERSITY AUDIT” GROUP PROJECT

For this project, you will work in groups. The instructor will assign you to groups of three to five members.

The project will involve performing an informal diversity audit of 2-3 organizations you are familiar with, comparing the similarities and differences in their strategies and processes and making recommendations for improving the organizations’ management of diversity.

You will be assigned on day 2 of class and will be given some time in class to discuss the organizations you will compare and contrast. You might find it helpful to talk to people in the organization with whom you can discuss diversity issues. However, in some cases, it may be possible to complete the project with your own insights and publicly available information about the organization.

The project will involve applying concepts covered in the class to analyze and constructively compare and contrast the organizations you have chosen. Depending on your interests, you may choose to focus on certain types of diversity within the organization (e.g., gender equity), diagnosing and posing resolutions for specific tensions currently evident within the organizations (integrating cultural diversity in a global environment), or evaluating the organizations diversity policies and practices (e.g., hiring and promotion, participation in decision-making).

The first step will be to gather information about the organization you choose. Be creative. Some information (e.g., policy statements) may be readily available from the company’s website. More in depth information may come from personal discussions with managers and/or other employees, requesting quantitative data from the organization’s HR department (e.g., the number of EEOC-related complaints over the years, the demographic composition of the organization over time, the presence and number of affinity groups, etc.), and analyzing the organization’s written materials related to diversity (e.g., mission statements, diversity definitions, PR materials, etc.). What is actually available publicly? What does this compare to other organizations? What does this say about the firm?

You might want to choose a firm you are interested in working at or one that you have worked for in the past. You might also choose a non-profit organization, your alma maters, or even Columbia University.

In the last part of this project, your group will formulate recommendations to the organizations based on your learnings.

Each group will be responsible for preparing a written report on their chosen organizations. The report should provide an analysis of the way diversity operates in the organizations, comparing and contrasting the organizations on as many dimensions as possible. Reports should be approximately 5-6 double-spaced pages in length.

**Group Presentation:**

During Week 6, each group will make a 5-minute high-level powerpoint presentation followed by 5 minutes of discussion. The presentation should focus on the most important results from your diversity audit. Each group member should have floor time during the presentation and be prepared to answer questions.

**Grading of Project:** Group Presentation 30%  
Written Report 70%
SUGGESTED BOOKS


