

Good Talk

The Purpose, Practice, and Representation
of Dialogue Across Difference

Dr. Sarah Ropp

Tuesdays/Thursdays
3:30 - 5:00 pm
Room TBD

COMM 290 - 302
Spring 2022

Course Information

COURSE

<i>Title</i>	Good Talk
<i>Course Number</i>	COMM 290 - 302
<i>Pre-requisites</i>	none
<i>Cross-listings</i>	<u>SNF Paideia designated course</u>
<i>Day / Time</i>	Tues & Thurs, 3:30-5:00pm
<i>Room</i>	TBD

PROFESSOR

<i>Name</i>	Sarah Ropp, PhD
<i>Pronouns</i>	she/her/hers
<i>What to Call Me</i>	Sarah or Dr. Ropp
<i>Email Address</i>	sropp@sas.upenn.edu
<i>Office Location</i>	PCPSE Room 340 (36th & Walnut)
<i>Office Hours</i>	TBD and by appointment

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Please purchase the following texts or borrow from a library. Edition doesn't matter (digital/ebook is OK, too). All other course materials will be available on Canvas.

- ***Alienation*** by Inés Estrada (2019)
- ***Lissa: A Story about Medical Promise, Friendship, and Revolution*** by Sherine Hamdy and Coleman Nye (2017)
- ***The Reason I Jump*** by Naoki Higashida (2007)
- ***Good Talk: A Memoir in Conversations*** by Mira Jacob (2018)
- ***Angels in America Part I: Millennium Approaches*** by Tony Kushner (1988)
- ***Undeliverable*** by Isaac Lipschits (1990)
- ***Everything Sad Is Untrue*** by Daniel Nayeri (2020)
- ***The Magic Fish*** by Trung Le Nguyen (2020)
- ***Binti*** by Nnedi Okorafor (2015)*
- ***Binti Home*** by Nnedi Okorafor (2017)*
- ***Harbor Me*** by Jacqueline Woodson (2018)

*Can be purchased separately or together in ***Binti: The Complete Trilogy***.

Course Description

PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE

This course is an exploration of **dialogue across difference** through 3 lenses: **theory**, **practice**, and **representation**. Our goal will be to **think in community** with one another towards **individual understanding**. Rather than prescribe a particular model of what dialogue should look like and accomplish, the course exposes you to a **diverse range of ideas and narratives** related to dialogue. You will leave the course having begun to formulate and practice **your own theory of dialogue** that is **relevant to your values** and **meaningful** for the kinds of scholarly, community-based, professional, or personal work you are committed to.

Theory

What **qualifies** as "good talk"?
How do language, culture, identity, and experience shape **how and why** we talk to each other?
What are alternative ways to **imagine** "dialogue"?

Practice

What different dialogue **models** exist, and what are the origin, goals, and structure of each?
What are the specific **skills** involved in dialogue?
How can we safeguard against **violence** in discourse?

Representation

How can **representations** and **performances** of dialogue expand our understanding of both **what's at stake** and **what's possible** when communicating across many different lines of difference?

METHODS

Read and respond in writing to assigned theory & representations (individual reflection or collaborative annotation).

Participate in student-led classroom dialogues in a variety of formats (pair, small group, whole group) and modes (oral, written, visual, embodied).

Experiment with new dialogue models + practice target dialogue skills each week. Reflect on alignment with your goals/values.

Take turns to lead class dialogues: design purpose, format, structures, and criteria for success according to your values/goals/interests.

The Archive . . .

THEORY

Short excerpts, read in class

- *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (1970)
- *Metaphors We Live By* by Lakoff & Johnson (1980)
- *Borderlands/La Frontera* by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987)
- *Testimony* by Felman & Laub (1992)
- *Teaching to Transgress* by bell hooks (1994)
- *Difficult Conversations* by Stone, Patton, & Heen (1999)
- *Stop Talking* by Mercurieff and Roderick (2000)
- *How to Talk About Hot Topics on Campus* by Nash, Bradley, & Chickering (2008)
- *The Art of Communicating* by Thích Nhất Hạnh (2013)
- *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence* by Sue (2015)
- *Free Speech on Campus* by Sigal Ben-Porath (2017)
- *It's Time to Talk (and Listen)* by Kim & del Prado (2019)

This is our working archive of texts. We will critically review, supplement, and substitute as needed / desired throughout. Together, we build the archive.

REPRESENTATION

Read or watch (mostly) at home

Graphic Novel/Graphic Memoir

- *Lissa* by Sherine Hamdy & Coleman Nye (2017)
- *Good Talk* by Mira Jacob (2018)
- *Alienation* by Inés Estrada (2019)
- *The Magic Fish* by Trung Le Nguyen (2020)

Memoir

- *Undeliverable* by Isaac Lipschits (1990)
- *The Reason I Jump* by Naoki Higashida (2007)
- "That's Amore" by David Sedaris (2008)
- *Everything Sad Is Untrue* by Daniel Nayeri (2020)

Drama

- *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner (1988)

Picture Book

- *Fish Is Fish* by Leo Lionni (1970)

Novella/Novel

- *Binti* (2015) & *Binti Home* (2017) by Nnedi Okorafor
- *Harbor Me* by Jacqueline Woodson (2018)

Social Media

- @alokvmenon Instagram account (excerpts)
- @ramy Instagram account (excerpt)

Talk Show/Podcast

- *Red Table Talk*, hosted by Jada Pinkett Smith (episode)
- *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man*, hosted by Emmanuel Acho (episode)
- *Man Enough*, hosted by Justin Baldoni (episode)

. . . and the Repertoire

DIALOGUE SKILLS

- Building community and trust
- Establishing norms for dialogue
- Active and deep listening
- Reflecting on positionality and communication style
- Identifying and coping with "quakes" (aka triggers)
- Determining purpose and goals
- Identifying stakeholders
- Designing a dialogue question set
- Working through conflict
- Responding to challenging behaviors
- Inclusion and accessibility
- Aligning format and structure to purpose
- Using technology to support dialogue
- Dialogue in multiple modes (oral, visual, written, embodied)
- Assessing effectiveness
- Responding to feedback (formal and informal, during and after dialogue)

Week by week, we'll build a repertoire of essential participation and facilitation skills for dialogue.

Learning Goals

Define and describe clearly your understanding of dialogue, including its purpose, its key challenges, and necessary skills for participating in dialogue effectively.

1

Participate in and facilitate dialogue effectively and with increased confidence in a variety of formats (oral, written, visual, and embodied) and with a range of group sizes.

2

Reflect critically on your own assumptions, attitudes, and positionality and how they inform your participation in, and facilitation of, dialogue across lines of difference.

3





Analyze the representation of dialogue in a range of texts, focusing on the complexities, challenges, and possibilities related to dialogue across various forms of difference.

4

Carry out a dialogue process from beginning to end, including goal-setting, determining criteria for success, identifying stakeholders, planning, facilitating, and reflection.

5

Assessment & Grading

ASSESSMENT VENUE	PERCENT OF FINAL GRADE	ASSOCIATED LEARNING GOALS
<i>Participation in class dialogues (including completion of text-based pre-work)</i>	30%	
<i>7 short (2-3pp) reflection papers (you choose which 7 out of 10 eligible weeks)</i>	20%	
<i>Facilitation of an in-class dialogue (including planning, facilitation, and reflection)</i>	20%	
<i>Final project: design, plan, and execute a campus or community dialogue project</i>	30%	

GRADING SCALE

Assignment components add up to 100 total points. No half points.

A 93-100	B+ 85-89	C+ 75-79	D+ 65-69	F 59 and below
A- 90-92	B- 80-84	C- 70-74	D- 60-64	

Assignments

TEXT-BASED PRE-WORK

You'll prepare observations and questions about the week's assigned reading to bring into the class dialogue. Pre-work assignments might vary, but each is worth 1 point and will be checked for completion at the beginning of class. Pre-work counts for 1/3 of your participation score, or 10% of your total grade.

REFLECTION PAPERS

You'll write 7 short papers reflecting on texts and concepts in relation to your own goals/values. The first 3 RPs are on specific topics and required in weeks 3, 4, and 5. For the other RPs, you choose the topic and which 4 of 7 eligible weeks to turn it in. Each RP is worth 3 points x 7 = 20% of the final grade. (RP1 = 2 pts.)

FACILITATION OF AN IN-CLASS DIALOGUE

You'll sign up in week 2 or 3 for your turn facilitating one of our in-class dialogues. This includes completion of a planning document (worth 7 points), day-of facilitation (6 pts), and completion of a reflection document afterwards (7 pts), for a total of 20 points/20% of your grade.

FINAL PROJECT

You will conceptualize, plan, execute, and assess the effectiveness of your own dialogue project. Rough draft of your vision plan is due in week 8 (worth 5 points); the final plan is due in week 13 (5 pts). The execution piece (10 pts) and 5-page final reflection (10 pts) must be done by April 29. 30 pts/30% of final grade.

Schedule at a Glance

WEEK	TEXT(S) Read at home. Read in class.	SKILLS	DUE
w1: <u>TH Jan 13</u>	Syllabus. Lakoff & Johnson. Short representations.	community building	
w2: <u>Jan 18, 20</u>	Harbor Me. Felman & Laub. Levy. Freire.	testimony + defining a dialogic ideal	Pre-work.
w3: <u>Jan 25, 27</u>	Binti. Pujol. Thich Nhat Hanh. hooks.	deep listening + dialogue with the self	Pre-work. RP 1/7 (testimony).
w4: <u>Feb 1, 3</u>	"Where I'm From" poems. <i>Fish Is Fish.</i> Stone, Patton, & Heen.	positionality + identity quakes	RP 2/7 (dialogue with the self).
w5: <u>Feb 8, 10</u>	Good Talk. Sue. 9 Models.	dominant paradigms + dialogic models	Pre-work. RP 3/7 (positionality).
w6: <u>Feb 15, 17</u>	Alienation. Mercurieff & Roderick.	core values + purpose + norms	Pre-work. RP eligible.
w7: <u>Feb 22, 24</u>	Undeliverable. "That's Amore." Kim & del Prado.	stakeholders + audience	Pre-work. RP eligible.
w8: <u>Mar 1, 3</u>	Binti Home. Ben-Porath. Inclusive Freedom event replaces class on Tu 3/1.	inclusion + accessibility	Rough draft of dialogue plan.
SB: <u>Mar 5-13</u>	<u>SPRING BREAK. NO CLASS</u>		
w9: <u>Mar 15, 17</u>	Nash, Bradley, & Chickering. Everything Sad Is Untrue.	designing questions for dialogue	Pre-work. RP eligible.
w10: <u>Mar 22, 24</u>	Amin visit. Lissa.	format + structure	Pre-work. RP eligible.
w11: <u>Mar 29, 31</u>	The Reason I Jump OR Angels in America OR student-elected place-based text	assessing dialogue + criteria for success	Pre-work. RP eligible.
w12: <u>Apr 5, 7</u>	Anzaldúa. The Magic Fish.	working through conflict + challenge	Pre-work. RP eligible.
w13: <u>Apr 12, 14</u>	Podcasts + Instagram accounts.	formal and informal feedback	Final draft of dialogue plan.
w14: <u>Apr 19, 21</u>	Student-elected texts TBD.	reflecting + responding	RP eligible (last week).
w15: <u>TU Apr 26</u>	Reflections. Short texts TBD.	reflecting + responding	Final project due Fri 4/29 (all parts).

Community Responsibilities

ATTENDANCE

Your presence matters. You will be missed if you're not here. There is no extra penalty beyond missing participation points (but remember that participation is 30% of the final grade!).

LATE WORK

Pre-work cannot be made up if not completed by the start of class, but can be submitted if you're absent. For other assignments, decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please follow the Penn [Code of Academic Integrity](#). Assignments are based on your subjective responses and ideas. It would take a lot more effort to cheat, lie, or misrepresent yourself.

COMMUNICATION

Please reach me via email. I promise to answer within 1 work day. I do not promise to be available evenings and weekends -- and I will never expect you to respond to me outside of M-F 9a-5p.

RECEPTIVITY

Please be open to the diverse ideas, methods, and people you will encounter in this class. Please strive for a meaning-oriented mindset rather than a critique-oriented mindset.

RESPONSIVENESS

We are all responsible for building an inclusive, supportive learning community. Please be responsive to others' needs, preferences, identities, and boundaries.

Accessibility & Inclusion

ACCOMMODATIONS AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT

This course follows principles of [Universal Design for Learning](#) in an attempt to be maximally accessible regardless of recognized or documented disability status. Please work with me to help you + contact [Disability Services at Penn](#) if you need accommodations or other forms of academic support.

NAMES AND PRONOUNS

I will happily honor your request to call you by a different name than the one that appears on my roster and by the gender pronouns that you use, whether publicly or only privately. It is never too late to let me know or to change your preferences.

WELLNESS

You are more than your academic performance! Please take care of yourself. wellnessatpenn.com is a hub for campus resources related to physical, emotional, social, intellectual, environmental, financial, occupational, and spiritual wellness. Consider letting me know if you're facing major challenges.

SENSITIVE TOPICS

We will discuss topics in this class that are difficult and vulnerable to talk about. I employ a trauma-informed approach that includes content warnings, opting out, anonymity, predictability, and responsiveness, among other practices. You may feel challenged or uncomfortable at times in this class, but I will not tolerate assaults on anyone's dignity, humanity, or right to be here and to learn.