

BOSTON COLLEGE – Advancing Studies
AD73101 – Overcoming Gender and Generational Barriers in the Workplace
SPRING 2012 Thursdays 6:45-8:30 p.m. – Fulton 245

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Course Description:

To succeed in these times of economic uncertainty, organizations must maximize their human capital. The challenge in today's workplace, where four generations of men and women work side by side, is to build from this diversity a stable core of productive employees. Achieving this requires overcoming gender and generational barriers that impede individual and group performance. Course generational topics include improving intergenerational communication; building cohesive teams; and employing targeted strategies for motivation, rewards, recruitment and retention. Gender topics include strategies for overcoming male and female conversational style differences; the glass ceiling challenge; sexual harassment avoidance, and the work-life balancing act.

Required Texts:

DeLaat, Jacqueline. *Gender in the Workplace: Case Study Approach (Second Edition)*. California: Sage Publishing, 2007.

Tannen, Deborah. *Talking from 9 to 5: Women and Men at Work*. New York: Quill, 2001.

Student Obligations:

Participants are required to attend all classes, contribute to discussions, participate in class activities, assignments and projects. Students' work-life experience will be incorporated into the class discussion. Students will give a presentation to the class based on primary research or a student-developed case study. Topic must be approved by Feb. 15.

Grades will be determined by:

Attendance and class participation	25%
Written assignments	25%
Mid-term exam	25%
Final project:	25%

WEEKLY TOPICS

Jan. 19: Introduction

Shifting workplace dynamics – both subtle and obvious – create new challenges in the workplace. How to recognize the issues, avoid roadblocks, and find solutions.

Jan. 26: Is Gender Disparity Ancient History?

Myths and accomplishments of the feminist movement. The continued existence of the glass ceiling. How do we get beyond surface judgments. Avoiding the baggage and getting a handle on what each team member brings to the table.

Feb. 2: Micro-Inequities

Body language, cultural misunderstandings, and other subtleties can lead to a pattern of negative messages that reinforce stereotypes and discourage productivity. What they are and how we use and abuse them.

Feb. 9: Office Romance – Occupational Hazard?

Working closely can bring people together. How do you identify it as a problem, when should it be kept a secret, what are the consequences, positive and negative?

Feb. 16: The Work-Family Balance

Family commitments create pressure, not only for the parent, but for the co-workers who may resent the perception of special treatment for some. Issues to consider to keep most, if not all, workers happy and still get the job done.

Feb. 23: Communication Breakdown – When Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus

Good management requires both speaking and listening, with an awareness of cultural, behavioral and language barriers. Agreeing to disagree is not necessarily a negative.

March 1: Mid-term exam**March 15: Do What I Mean, Not What I Say**

Indirect conversation and hierarchical organizations. When an understanding, or misunderstanding of your position on a team can have major consequences.

March 22: Generation Gap: Mixing it Up

The Greatest Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y. Recognizing and valuing different approaches to work

March 29: Managing the Mix

Getting everyone in the band, each with their own unique instrument, to play the same song, in the same key, at the same time.

April 12: Four Opportunities for Success

Taking advantage of the range of experience and opinions to achieve the most success.

April 19: Collaboration and competition

Creative tension can fuel the entrepreneurial spirit in an organization. How to guide a multigenerational and multicultural group without scaring them to death.

April 26: Final Project Presentations

Student presentations of final projects

May 3: Final Project Presentations

Student presentations of final projects