

University of Massachusetts at Boston Graduate College of Education Critical and Creative Thinking Program



CrCrTh 616

Spring 2006 Syllabus

Instructor: Olen Gunnaugson, Adjunct Online Professor, CCT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Structured as an online learning community, the core objective of this course is to cultivate practical know-how and theoretical knowledge of generative dialogue. Building from the contributions of David Bohm and Bill Isaacs work with the MIT Dialogue Project in the early 90s, this course will focus on Otto Scharmer's subsequent work on generative dialogue and presencing. The course offers complimentary learning spaces designed to develop our individual and collective capacities for bringing significant changes in how we think, communicate and learn together. In addition to online inquiry, there are weekly skill and capacity building exercises, coaching triads, collaborative assignments and a real-world component where participants conduct a dialogue-based project within their own organization or community. The course will be delivered through WebCT, phone coaching, web-based synchronous meetings, web-based audio and video files, and other possibilities that draw on participants' insights, wisdom and novel ideas.

COURSE OVERVIEW

From the middle of the twentieth century leading into the 1990s, the use of dialogue exploded across disciplines, bringing about a broad and eclectic set of interpretations regarding what dialogue is and how it is applied. In this course, we will begin with a brief examination of different conceptions of dialogue. This will prepare the foundation for our exploration of Scharmer's more recent contribution of generative dialogue. Informing our semester long inquiry will be weekly online inquiry, as well as an assortment of skill-building exercises and practical assignments enabling participants to apply these set of new learning tools within the contexts of everyday fields of conversation within their schools, organizations, and workplaces.

COURSE GRADING

Grades will be based on the following:

Online Participation, Assignments & Readings 35%

Evidence of your immersion in the readings will be reflected in your participation in the weekly asynchronous inquiry. My criteria for participation is based on the quality of process and content of postings (see asynchronous inquiry guidelines). As the course is not self-paced, participants are expected to work on their own and together in order to complete assignments on time.

Dialogue Coaching & Coaching Journal 25%

Weekly coaching interactions are designed to build and develop key foundational and in-the-moment practices of conversation that are central to Scharmer's models of generative dialogue and presencing. Criteria for participation is that participants undertake 2 weekly ½ hour coaching calls with their peers and keep an online coaching journal to document their growth and development through the course (see coaching journal guidelines).

Final Project 40%

Your final project is expected to grow in part out of your online threaded inquiry, coaching calls, coaching journals. The project will cover a key aspect of generative dialogue that is meaningful and important to you in your professional and/or personal life. Further details concerning the final project will be announced in week 3.

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

The course is divided into a series of twelve online sessions that correspond to each week.

Session 1. Launching our cyber learning community

The first session will begin with everyone submitting their 1-2 page autobiographical sketches online (due February 1st).

Beginning Monday January 30th, I invite you to:

- a) familiarize yourself with the course homepage
- b) visit the Course Lounge for follow-up virtual conversations beginning February 2nd
- c) establish a time with me for a brief virtual office hour check-in (via Skype) on either Wednesday, Thursday or Friday afternoon/evening (3pm-9pm EST) (note my regular virtual office hours below).
- d) after reading the introductory lecture, participants will choose their dialogue artist to read up on during our office hour check-in.

Session 2. Historical Overview of Generative dialogue

The second session will offer a brief overview of the historical lineage of generative dialogue. During this session, students will investigate a dialogue practitioner within or outside this lineage, which will lead to completing a (2 page double spaced) summary portrait of a particular dialogue artist (due Wednesday February 8th). This week will also feature the launch of the Coaching Corner, where students will join a coaching group for semester-long peer-coaching exercises.

Session 3-7 Generative Dialogue & Presencing

Sessions three through seven will introduce Scharmer's practice of generative dialogue and presencing. Each week will explore inquiry threads specific to the model within the WebCT online environment. We will examine a broad developmental cross section of modes of listening and speaking, conversational fields, communication habits that reinforce or break these fields, significance of each stage and the evolution of the conversational container. Readings (both mandatory and optional) will be drawn from a cross section of PDF and DOC files, as well as online articles. Dialogue audio or videos with key theorists will be introduced wherever possible. Foundational and In-the-moment practices for facilitation will be introduced through the coaching modules. Dilemmas and difficulties of each field of conversation will be addressed through different course exercises, coaching calls, synchronous online chats, and online asynchronous inquiry.

Session 8 Overview of Generative Dialogue & Presencing

For this session, we will look at Generative Dialogue and Presencing and explore obstacles and opportunities for implementing these methods in different educational, social and organizational settings. We will also address criticisms of these methods and explore best practices to bring back to our personal and professional lives.

Session 9-11. Projecteering & Learning Journeys

These final sessions are primarily based on applying what we have learned in the course through peer-to-peer learning, evaluation and team work. Participants can choose a solo or group collaborative generative dialogue project that will go deeper into practical in-the-world contexts (personal, interpersonal & group). Participants will be encouraged to create internal partnerships with others at their work to deepen learning experiences. The option to facilitate a dialogue of their own will also be encouraged. Through this real-world component, participants will have an opportunity to apply their new knowledge, set up experiments, and bring the results back to our learning community.

Session 12-13. Presentations & Reflections

Students will present their offline projects to the group and reflect on their learning within these projects and the course as a whole.

REQUIREMENTS

The course will be delivered through a series of thirteen online weekly sessions, with each week taking multiple interactive forms including weekly readings, asynchronous inquiry, phone coaching, web-based audio and video files, web-based synchronous meetings and other emerging possibilities. Following the format of this being an *online* learning community, this course will rely greatly on the energy and inputs of participants to make this a transformative experience for everyone. Regular participation and online presence is *vital*.

Required Course Text:

Senge, P; Scharmer, C.O.; Jaworski, J.; Flower, B.S. (2004). *Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future* Society of Organizational Learning, MIT

Recommended Texts:

Bohm, D. (1996). *On Dialogue* London and New York: Routledge Publishers
Isaacs, W.N. (1999). *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*. New York: Currency Doubleday

Internet Phone Meetings

We will be meeting periodically over the semester through internet phone calls, internet peer-phone coaching and online asynchronous and synchronous conversations. The dates and times of these virtual and phone meetings will be announced in advance and wherever possible, be kept flexible to best meet the needs of everyone. Please try to arrange your schedule so you can participate in these meetings, which factor in to your course grade. We will not be meeting at all as a group on campus as many of you know I'm stationed out of Vancouver, Canada.

OFFICE HOURS

I will hold my virtual office hours every Tuesday from 12-3pm EST via Skype internet phone. Please email me in advance to schedule a time.

Email: gunnlaugson@hotmail.com

Skype ID: [Trifoss](#)

PLUG-INS, SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE

You will need the free adobe acrobat reader to open the pdf documents contained in this course. You can find this at <http://www.adobe.com> where you have to search around for the free one or at <http://www.downloads.com> You will also need a copy of Skype Internet Phone. You can download a copy of Skype at www.skype.com

You will also need to purchase a headset with microphone (average cost \$5) for your computer to use Skype. My Skype Username is: Trifoss

GETTING HELP WITH WEBCT

A Quick start guide and other helpful info is available at http://www.lms.umb.edu/webct_students.htm. If you need help resetting your password, send an e-mail to lmsadminstudent@umb.edu

COMMUNICATING WITH ME

Instead of sending me e-mail with general questions regarding this course, please post them in the Q & A folder (link through site map here) found in the Discussions section instead. I will respond to any questions posted in the within 48 hours (except on weekends). This is the best place to post all non-private questions that pertain to the course since other members of the class will benefit from the answers as well.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

Each weekly session will officially start every Monday at 9am EST. The specific plans for each week will be hidden until this time. Please visit the homepage at the beginning of each week to review the plan for the week so you can budget your time accordingly. I will not be sending you e-mail reminder. It is therefore imperative that you log on to WebCT in order to begin the activities planned for the week. You should plan on logging onto the course web site **3 -4 times each week** to contribute to threaded inquiry and other activities that may be underway. Plan on spending 5 or more hours each week on this course (including readings, inquiry threads, coaching assignments & coaching calls, and so forth).

LIBRARY

Accessing the UMB Library Virtually

Participants enrolled in a UMB online course are eligible to receive a barcode for access to Healey Library resources located at <http://www.lib.umb.edu> UMB library is a rich and valuable academic online resource which will allow you to do most of your research work off-campus. To access most of the resources there campus, you will need your barcode number found on the reverse of your student id card. If you don't have a student ID card or are unable to read the bar code number you can send an e-mail request to: Library.circulation@umb.edu. Your request should include your first and last name, Social Security number (or student ID number), course name and number and semester. You will receive address of the library website. Barcode access terminates at the end of the semester. (**Note:** This service is available Monday - Friday 9 - 5 PM)