



## Sample Assignments

### Facilitating an In-Class Conversation

You will join a small group of students to facilitate a conversation for 30 minutes or more on a topic of your choice OR pre-selected by your instructor, following a dialogue model (Study Circles, Living Room Conversations, National Issues Forum). In preparation:

- Write a solo-authored 3-5 page paper that demonstrates understanding of the topic (ex: immigration policy, public health needs, incarceration practices, free speech, reconciliation) that your group will focus on with a summary of the key points of related readings on the topic.
- Join your group in collectively writing a plan that explains the facilitation model you will use or adapt and why.
- Plan on meeting as a group more than once to practice the roles you will each take to make sure we have a strong conversation, do the required writing, arrange for materials you may need for the classroom conversation, etc.
- Submit your written work (individual research paper *and* group facilitation plan) *and* meet as a group with your professor in advance of your scheduled facilitation.

After your in-class facilitation:

- Write a short, individual reflection paper and submit within 24 hours that includes:
  - Your assessment of the group process, including an honest account of who contributed to the effort, in what ways, and in what general percentages.
  - What you would do differently next time, and what you thought were the best parts of your facilitation.

Your final grade will include detailed, written feedback on your individual paper, group plan and actual facilitation, incorporating your reflections and your peers' feedback. Note that not everyone in your group will necessarily receive the same grade.

### Analysis of Public Conversation

Our community and campus convene public conversations all the time around a variety of topics. You will need to attend a public meeting of local/global interest to observe and analyze. The point here is two-fold. First, it's important that you attend public meetings to witness and/or participate in community conversations. Second, by participating in this way you can learn what works/what doesn't work in organizing a public meeting, drawing on your experience AND course readings.

The guidelines here should help you write a strong, short paper (3-5 double-spaced typed pages) so be sure to include:

- Your name and the date, time (start and end), and location of the meeting.
- Format of the meeting including room set up, welcome/registration (if any), and flow (agenda, time spent on various parts of the meeting, etc.).
- Audience Analysis—who was there including the number of people and as best you can tell the composition of the audience according to age, gender, interests, political leanings, other relevant information.

- Highlights of the meeting for you. I would like you to focus on the content of the meeting here, though I realize sometimes a person or episode not directly related to the meeting content may surface which you can also discuss.
- Commentary on how the conversation reflected (or not) ethical and effective communication? Offer evidence for your view, based on concepts from several different class readings and comments offered during the meeting.
- Conclude with some overall analysis—was it a good, productive meeting? If so, why and what contributed to that? If not, what accounted for that as well? Also, if you were asked to be part of a post-reflection team, what would you recommend that this group do differently next time to draw a larger or different crowd, create conditions for a different outcome, and/or improve on their process?

Some upcoming events you may want to attend for this assignment include:  
(FILL IN)

### **Final Conversation and Pre-Planning Paper: A Conversation that Matters to You**

Working in pairs, plan and organize a conversation surrounding a contested public issue of your choice.

In preparation:

- Similar to what you did for your group in-class conversation, but a bit expanded, write a solo authored 4-7 page paper that demonstrates a solid understanding of the issue at the heart of your planned conversation, including information about the issue, the points of controversy, and varying perspectives. Include, as well, a series of 6-8 strong discussion questions to guide your conversation. Here you will need to incorporate at least 3 outside sources from your own research. You may also want to weave in class readings, if appropriate.
- Join your partner in collectively writing a plan that explains the facilitation model you will use or adapt and why. Be sure to incorporate 2 or more class readings into your facilitation plan.
- Submit your written work (individual research paper *and* co-written facilitation plan) at least 5 days prior to your actual presentation date.

For the conversation:

- Plan for at least 35 minutes, maybe more, as time permits. You can present this conversation in class or make arrangements with me to present it to your peers in the residence hall, in the community, or in another public space (bonus points awarded for presenting outside of class, so keep this in mind!). If you are presenting outside of class, you should try to secure 45-60 minutes for the presentation, but not less than 35 minutes.

After your in-class facilitation:

- Write a short, individual reflection paper and submit online within 24 hours that includes:
  - Your assessment of the conversation & process, including an honest account of your effort and your partner's contributions.
  - What you would do differently next time, and what you thought were the best parts of your facilitation.