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**Course  
Description**

Despite written statements of values and commitment, occasional trainings, the existence of resource groups for diverse employees, cultural food festivals, and other efforts, many corporations and organizations fall short in enacting their espoused commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Also, women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ employees are severely underrepresented in executive leadership roles at most companies; they tend to experience corporate environments in ways that undermine their performance, sense of belonging, satisfaction, retention, and advancement. Moreover, executives often lack the skills required to lead organizations that employ and serve racially and ethnically diverse clients in the U.S. and other countries; few know what to do when racial and gender crises erupt in their companies. This is attributable, at least in part, to a lack of prior preparation in solving EDI-related problems. Hence, this course aims to expose future leaders to real-life, real-time EDI challenges in business.

In this course, students acquire foundational knowledge and practical skills on a range of EDI topics. Throughout the semester, we will interrogate several highly-publicized EDI issues that recently confronted companies and analyze leaders' responses to these dilemmas. Each student will spend one month working on a live case, a real EDI challenge or opportunity from an actual company. Executives will give feedback to teams on their live case submissions.

**Learning  
Objectives**

As a result of taking this course, students will be able to...

1. Deconstruct the complexities of EDI issues in corporations and other organizations.
2. Explain how structural, cultural, demographic, and political forces shape EDI in companies.
3. Demonstrate skills necessary for strategically solving contemporary EDI problems.
4. Demonstrate team-based consulting skills to make innovative, strategic, and data-informed recommendations to business leaders.
5. Identify which ideas business leaders deem feasible and effective to advance EDI.

6. Clearly articulate personal commitments to EDI, why they believe EDI is essential to successful businesses, and their ideas for what is required to advance EDI in business.

**Course Notes**

The success of this course depends on each student’s active participation in class discussions and out-of-class collaborative work with teammates. Students are expected to exhibit high levels of professionalism and intellectual maturity in interactions with executives who visit the course via videoconference. Additionally, students are expected to use and frequently check their USC Marshall e-mail accounts and regularly use Blackboard as a resource for accessing course documents and submitting assignments.

**Readings**

There are no required books for this course. Articles and reports have been uploaded to Blackboard.

**Grading**

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Personal Diversity History Paper	10	10
Live Case <sup>+</sup>	20	20
Live Case Peer Review	10	10
Podcast Recording <sup>+</sup>	20	20
Peer Assessment of Team Contributions	10	10
EDI Values Script and Digital Recording	30	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>+</sup>Team members will receive the same number of points on these two assignments.

A = 95-100    A- = 90-94    B+ = 87-89    B = 84-86    B- = 80-83  
 C+ = 77-79    C = 74-76    C- = 70-73    D = 69-60    F = Below 60

**Graded Assignments**

**Personal Diversity History** – In 2-3 single-spaced pages, write about aspects of your personal diversity history. Here are some questions for your consideration:

- How did you grow up?
- How was diversity treated and talked about in your family?
- As a young person, what assumptions did you make about people who were different from you, and from where did these assumptions come?
- How diverse were your neighborhood and schools?
- What did you learn in school about people from other racial and religious groups? What did you learn about LGBTQ people?
- Which identities are most salient to you?
- What social, environmental, and familial factors shaped the development of your identities?

- When did you first come to recognize yourself as a raced, classed, and gendered person? How did you come to understand your sexual orientation?
- How did you understand, perform, and experience your identities in college?
- How did your perspectives on diversity evolve during your undergraduate years? What facilitated this?
- What diversity experiences did you have in your pre-MBA jobs?
- What are your present diversity values and commitments?
- How diverse is your friendship group (meaning, the people with whom you spent social time outside of school and work settings)? What kinds of people are missing from your social circle?
- Which aspects of diversity make you uncomfortable, and what about this course makes you nervous?

Please do not treat these questions as a checklist – meaning, there is no need to answer them one by one. They are merely intended to be prompts for your written reflections. Use no references or outside research for this assignment; write it in first person. Upload your paper to Blackboard by noon on Tuesday, January 26.

**Live Case** – Each student will work on a team to research and respond to one real EDI-related problem or opportunity in an actual company. Every team will receive a 1-2 page description of a problem, as well as a 2-3 sentence challenge statement written by an executive. The challenge statement is an articulation of what that company’s executive is asking students to do and the solution they expect the team to provide in its written response. Teams are highly encouraged to be innovative and approach the case with creative, yet sensible and realistic solutions.

Each team will receive its live case on Tuesday, February 16. Written submissions (1750-2000 words) must be uploaded to Blackboard in Microsoft Word (not PDF) by 12pm on Tuesday, March 16. Late submissions will not be considered and zero points will be awarded.

Submissions will be forwarded to the executive who wrote each team’s respective case. Poorly written papers, especially those with typos and lingering track changes, will not be forwarded; teams will receive zero points. At some point during our four final class sessions, executives will join us via videoconference to offer feedback on the strengths, weaknesses, feasibility, and usefulness of each team’s submission.

**Live Case Peer Review** – Each student will write a 1-2 single-spaced page response to another team’s live case submission – specifically commenting on the strengths, weaknesses, feasibility, and usefulness of the other team’s ideas. Submissions will be distributed on March 30. Peer reviews must be uploaded to Blackboard in PDF by 12pm on April 6.

**Podcast Recording** – Students will work in teams to record a 30-minute episode for a podcast series on EDI in business. Everyone will remain on the same teams as those formed for the live case assignment. During the episode recording, one team member will serve as the host, the others as panelists. Each team will propose three **very different** potential topics on February 23; one will ultimately be selected for the episode emphasis. Teams will submit a topic agenda and bulleted list of talking points on March 30. All episodes will be recorded in class on April 13. Professional audio producers will assist each team on recording day.

**Assessment of Team Contributions** – Because 40% of the grade for this course depends on teamwork (the live case assignment and podcast), each student will evaluate the contributions and reliability of their fellow teammates. Peer assessment forms will be distributed via an anonymous digital questionnaire on April 20.

**EDI Values Script and Digital Recording** – Each student will develop a written script for a two-minute recording on EDI. In these scripts, students will clearly articulate their personal commitments to EDI, why they believe EDI is essential to successful businesses, which 3-4 actions they feel are required to advance EDI in business, and what their approaches to EDI will be when they lead companies in the future. Scripts will be due by 12pm on March 2. Based on the instructor’s feedback, students will revise their scripts. Students will later video record themselves articulating their statements. Videos must be uploaded to Blackboard by 12pm on April 27.

**Course  
Schedule**

**Week 1 – January 19**

**Introductions, Course Overview, and McDonald’s Discrimination Kickoff Case**

**Week 2 – January 26**

**Recognizing and Reducing Implicit Bias**

Readings

Delta Airlines Statement

Johnson, C. Y. (2016, October 14). The disturbing reason why we don’t believe young, Black women are really doctors. *Washington Post*.

Siegel, R. (2018, May 29). Starbucks’s bias training finally happened. Here’s what it looked like. *Washington Post*.

Assignment Due

Personal Diversity History

**Week 3 – February 2**

**Engaging in Productive Conversations About Race in the Workplace**

### Readings

Allen, T. (2020, June 4). Five conversations credible leaders must have in this moment. *Forbes*.

Connor, J. (2000). It wasn't about race. Or was it? *Harvard Business Review*, 78(5), 37-46.

Harper, S. R. (2020, June 16). Corporations say they support Black Lives Matter. Their employees doubt them. *Washington Post*.

### **Week 4 – February 9**

#### **Hiring and Strategically Diversifying the Workplace**

### Readings

Kalache, S. (2019, March 6). Six ways to diversify your workforce. *Forbes*.

Singletary, M. (2020, September 18). Yes, I was hired because I was Black. But that's not the only reason. *Washington Post*.

Thomas, D. A. (2004, September). Diversity as strategy. *Harvard Business Review*.

### **Week 5 – February 16**

#### **Retaining and Advancing Employees of Color to Leadership Roles**

### Readings

Cheeks, M. (2018, March 26). How Black women describe navigating race and gender in the workplace. *Harvard Business Review*.

Gee, B., & Peck, D. (2017). *The illusion of Asian success: Scant progress for minorities in cracking the glass ceiling from 2007-2015*. New York: Ascend.

Pace, C. (2018, March 31). How women of color get to senior management. *Harvard Business Review*.

### **Week 6 – February 23**

#### **Being an Anti-Racist Ally at Work**

### Readings

Harper, S. R. (2020, June 16). The irony of 'Corporate Chucks' marching for Black lives. *theGrio*.

Harper, S. R. (2020, June 17). Black Lives Matter, according to Meg. *Ebony*.

Melaku, T. M., Beeman, A., Smith, D. G., & Johnson, W. B. (2020, November-December). Be a better ally: How white men can help their marginalized colleagues advance. *Harvard Business Review*.

#### Assignment Due

Podcast 3 Proposed Topics

### **Week 7 – March 2**

#### **Understanding Women’s Gendered Workplace Experiences**

##### Readings

Benard, S. (2012, April). Why his merit raise is bigger than hers. *Harvard Business Review*.

Ewing-Nelson, C. (2020). *Four times more women than men dropped out of the labor force in September*. Washington, DC: National Women’s Law Center.

Graf, N., Brown, A., & Patten, E. (2019, March 22). The narrowing, but persistent, gender gap in pay. *Fact Tank, Pew Research Center*.

Parker, K. (2018, March 7). Women in majority-male workplaces report higher rates of gender discrimination. *Fact Tank, Pew Research Center*.

#### Assignment Due

EDI Values Script

### **Week 8 – March 9**

#### **Eliminating Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**

##### Readings

Atwater, L. E., Tringale, A. M., Sturm, R. E., Taylor, S. N., & Braddy, P. W. (2019, September-October). The #MeToo backlash: New data shows negative effects for women. *Harvard Business Review*.

Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2020, May-June). Why sexual harassment programs backfire, and what to do about it. *Harvard Business Review*.

Harwell, D. (2017, February 27). Hundreds allege sex harassment, discrimination at Kay and Jared jewelry company. *Washington Post*.

Paquette, D. (2015, November 12). What a creepy Bloomingdale’s ad tells us about America’s understanding of rape. *Washington Post*.

### **Week 9 – March 16**

## **Advancing Women to Senior Leadership Roles**

### Readings

Catalino, N., & Marnane, K. (2019, December). When women lead, workplaces should listen: The most valuable lessons of women's leadership programs are those that show organizations where to improve. *McKinsey Quarterly*.

Devillard, S., Hunt, V., & Yee, L. (2018, March). Still looking for room at the top: Ten years of research on women in the workplace. *McKinsey Quarterly*.

### Assignment Due

Live Case Submission

## **Week 10 – March 30**

### **Disrupting Homophobia, Heterosexism, and Transphobia**

### Readings

Fidas, D., & Cooper, L. (2018). *A workplace divided: Understanding the climate for LGBTQ workers nationwide*. Washington, DC: Human Rights Campaign Foundation.

McGregor, J. (2016, April 5). Corporate America's embrace of gay rights has reached a stunning tipping point. *Washington Post*.

### Assignment Due

Podcast topic agenda and talking points

## **Week 11 – April 6**

### **Managing Intergenerational Tensions and Age-Related Conflicts**

### Readings

Beachum, L. (2019, November 13). AARP executive on 'OK boomer': 'Okay, millennials, but we're the people that actually have the money.' *Washington Post*.

Davey, L. (2018, July 16). The key to preventing generational tension is remembering that everyone wants to feel valued. *Harvard Business Review*.

Litt, M. (2018, March 14). How millennial CEOs are adapting to Generation Z. *Forbes*.

McGregor, J. (2017, July 23). What millennials want from their CEOs: Activism. *Washington Post*.

### Assignment Due

Live Case Peer Review

**Week 12 – April 13**  
**Podcast Recordings**

Readings

None

Assignment Due

Podcast Recordings

**Week 13 – April 20**  
**Navigating Partisanship Diversity and Political Polarization at Work**

Readings

Feldman, B. (2020, October 7). Don't let election passions roil your workplace. *Harvard Business Review*.

Harvard Law Review. (2014). Citizens United at Work: How the landmark decision legalized political coercion in the workplace. *Harvard Law Review*, 128, 669-690.

McGregor, J. (2017, May 3). All the office talk about politics since Trump's election is stressing workers out. *Washington Post*.

Assignment Due

Peer Assessment of Team Contributions

**Week 14 – April 27**  
**Evolving Brands with Customer Demographics and Changing Times**

Readings

Givhan, R. (2020, August 31). Fashion's racial reckoning. *Washington Post*.

Miller, J. C., Stanko, M. A., & Diallo, M. D. (2020, November-December). When your brand is racist. *Harvard Business Review*.

Assignment Due

EDI Values Digital Recording

**Assignment Submissions** Unless otherwise indicated, please submit all team assignments via Blackboard by 12pm on Tuesdays. Unless there are extreme emergencies or religious holidays, late papers will not be accepted – students will receive zero points for assignments not turned in on time.



<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	Students requiring academic accommodations for a disability is respectfully asked to articulate their needs to Professor Harper immediately following the first class session. Appropriate and mutually agreeable accommodations will be offered. Every effort will be made to be supportive.
<b>Religious Holidays</b>	Students who will be tardy to or absent from class, or need to submit assignments late because of religious holidays must alert Professor Harper at least two weeks in advance. Appropriate and mutually agreeable accommodations will be offered. Every effort will be made to be supportive.
<b>Stressful Content</b>	We will occasionally discuss trends and problems that may engender discomfort and possibly distress. You are encouraged you to contact the professor if you need confidential support or modification to your participation. You may also pursue confidential assistance at USC’s Student Counseling Services (SCS) – 1031 W. 34th Street, 213-740-7711. More information about SCS and other support services is provided on Page 11 of this syllabus.
<b>Sexual Harassment and Assault</b>	Sexual harassment and assault are wrong. They also are violations of University policies. Students who experience or observe any form of harassment involving USC students, employees, or affiliates/visitors (including recruiters) that occur on or off campus (including at internship sites) are encouraged to report incidents to Professor Harper, who is required to report such incidents to appropriate University officers.
<b>Paper Formatting</b>	Please use Calibri, 12-point font with one-inch margins on all sides of the paper. Do not use alternative font sizes or alter the margins. Format references, footnotes, and endnotes in APA style, 6th edition.
<b>Academic Conduct</b>	Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <a href="https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/">https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/</a> . Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct: <a href="http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct">http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct</a>
<b>Campus Support Systems</b>	<p><b>Student Counseling Services (SCS)</b> – 213-740-7711 – 24/7 on call</p> <p>Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <a href="https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling">https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling</a></p> <p><b>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline</b> - 1-800-273-8255</p> <p>Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <a href="http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org">http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org</a></p>

**Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services** – 213-740-4900 - 24/7 on call  
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp>

**Sexual Assault Resource Center**

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu>

**Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance** – 213-740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu>

**Bias Assessment Response and Support**

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support>

**The Office of Disability Services and Programs**

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

**Student Support and Advocacy** – 213-821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa>

**USC Emergency Information**

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu>

**USC Department of Public Safety** – UPC: (213) 740-4321 / HSC: (323) 442-1000

24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. <https://dps.usc.edu>