Accessing Civility: Arizona Forum on Civil Communication

Friday, February 3, 2012:

3:30  Registration Lobby outside Cochise Room, ASU Memorial Union (MU map)

4:00  Keynote address: "Peacemaking in a World of Difference"
      Stephen Littlejohn, Public Dialogue Consortium and Domenici Littlejohn

4:45  Break

5:00  “Patterns and Determinants of Incivility in Online Discussions”
      Kate Kenski, Kevin Coe, Steve Rains, University of Arizona

This research involves the development of content analytic measures of civility to be used to track levels of civility in online discussions. Our focus will be on the Arizona Daily Star forums attached to news articles, a first step in a broader program designed to understand the extent to which civility and incivility appear in public discourse about political life.

5:30  Spotlight on Civility, Preview of Saturday programs

6:00  Roundtable on Civility

A free-flowing discussion featuring Saturday’s panelists joined by blogger Julie Erfle of “Politics Uncuffed.”

Saturday, February 4, 2012:

8:30  Continental breakfast

9:00  Cochise Room

Session A: “Civil Dialogue as Bridge Builder”
      John Genette, Jennifer Linde, Clark Olson, Arizona State University
      Karma Chavez, Sara McKinnon, University of Wisconsin

Civil Dialogue is a format for dialogue designed to build bridges across the chasm of viewpoints. In a Civil Dialogue session, participants consider a polarizing statement and have the opportunity to embody a position ranging from “agree strongly” to “disagree strongly.” This session includes a discussion of the use of Civil Dialogue in a variety of public and classroom contexts.

La Paz East

Session B: “Embracing Humanity through Constructive Communication”
      Lourdes Lee Vasquez, Bryan Vasquez, Embracing Humanity

How do you view me? How have you come to conclude that? Where did you gather that information? Embracing Humanity fosters an atmosphere to clarify preconceived notions about one another. This self-reflection will help establish a solid foundation, from which we can begin to constructively communicate how we are being affected by the current social issue. Our goal is for people to share their own personal stories regarding that issue in order to unveil the root cause. We first need to move backwards in order to move forwards.

La Paz West

Session C: Research in Progress
      Chair: Jason Zingsheim, Governors State University
      Respondent: Trevor Parry-Giles, National Communication Association
This proposed project will focus on the education and empowerment of Afghan youth to develop a clear understanding of the domestic situation, international environment and peacebuilding process. Understanding and engaging them in dialogue will shape the future of their country.

“Comedy and Civility: Documenting Jon Stewart’s “Rally to Restore Sanity”
Aaron Hess, Art Herbig, Indiana U., Purdue U., Fort Wayne

This presentation offers a complex view into critiques of incivility and the performance of political activism via satire. We hope to offer explanations about the function of humor in political discourse and reflections on laughter as a vital and purifying response to political polarization.

“Citizen Rage: Representative--Constituent Face--Threatening Interactions
In Town Hall Meetings”
Norma Mendoza-Denton, University of Arizona

This research focuses on conflict talk in Town Hall Meetings (THMs), examining ways in which representatives handle disagreements with constituents. I note the interactional dynamics of disagreements as issued by constituents and pay close attention to the tactics used by politicians in handling confrontation.

Rincon
Session D: “Accessing Civility with World Café”
Sharon Flanagan-Hyde, Flanagan-Hyde Solutions, LLC

World Café is both a vision for intentional conversations around questions that matter and a method of dialogue that can be used by people with diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and beliefs to create a common purpose, share knowledge, make more intelligent decisions, and call forth life-affirming action together. This interactive session will describe two Arizona World Café events and present the World Café methodology and design principles.

10:15  Break

10:30  La Paz East
Session A: Facilitating Dialogue Interculturally
Chair: Benjamin Broome, Arizona State University
Respondent: Stephen Littlejohn

To encourage civil dialogue, intercultural dialogue offers a way to help conflicted communities to resolve their cultural issues. This panel is a compilation of papers that provide specific guidelines for facilitation with specific challenges in diverse contexts.

“The Facilitator Competencies of Intercultural Dialogue”
Leslie Ramos Salazar, Arizona State University

“Facilitation with Women Groups in East Asian Countries”
Shuzhen Huang, Arizona State University

“Facilitator’s Role in Stakeholder Dialogue in the U.S. Energy System”
Travis Johnson, Arizona State University

“Does Interactive Management hold Potential for Facilitating Stakeholder Engagement in Water Resource Conflict in the Highlands of Central Arizona?”
Scott McClintock, Arizona State University

“A Facilitator Guide for HIV/AIDS Support Groups in Kenyan Universities”
Gladys Musaya, Arizona State University
La Paz West
Session B: “Veteran-Civilian Dialogue”
Scott Thompson, Larry Winters, Intersections International

The Veteran-Civilian Dialogue is an event of conversation structures between equal numbers of veterans and civilians designed to talk about the impact of war upon both groups—each having something vital for the other. VCD is an important resource for transitioning soldiers back to civilian life as well as providing a place and invitation for civilians to step forward in new and responsible engagement with veterans. It further addresses the need that both groups have for relationship, resiliency and the overlooked struggle with the moral and psychological impact of war upon both groups.

Rincon
Session C: Community Dialogue: Skill-Building or Groupthink?
Chair: Dustin Goltz, De Paul University

“Betwixt and Between the Sound Bite: Facilitating Community Dialogue”
Natalie Dollar, Oregon State University-Cascades

Relying on conceptual foundation of cultural pragmatics, expressive order, and prescriptive and descriptive approaches to dialogue I developed and facilitated community dialogue workshops. This session offers a discussion of data collected during ten of these workshops.

“Accessing Civility: Dialogic Norms and Civil Discourse”
Nola Heidelbaugh, SUNY Oswego

Are rules of politeness necessary to sound public decision making? Do such rules encourage lively and passionate discussion of ideas and solutions or can they lead to an unhealthy silencing and conformity. Or does the value of rules depend on what those rules are? Are rules that are designed to encourage cooperation necessary but not sufficient to good public deliberation? This session offers an examination of notable “dialogue detractors” who pose these types of questions.

12:00 Cochise Room
Luncheon
Welcome: Trevor Parry-Giles, National Communication Association
Closing Remark: Fred Duval, AZ Board of Regents & the National Institute for Civil Discourse

2:00 The Empty Space, 970 E. University in the ASU Performing and Media Arts building (map)
Veteran-Civilian Dialogue Event
Scott Thompson, Larry Winters, Intersections International

Veteran-Civilian Dialogue (VCD) involves conversation structures between veterans and civilians about the impact that war has on both groups. VCD is an important resource for transitioning soldiers back to civilian life and providing a place for responsible civilian engagement about the moral and psychological impact that war has on both groups.

Accessing Civility: Arizona Forum on Civil Communication is sponsored by the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication and the National Communication Association.