MANAGING DIVERSITY IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

A course outline for institutions of higher learning in Uganda

Contents

COURSE TITLE: MANAGING DIVERSITY IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

Credit hours: 60   Credit units: 04

1. BACKGROUND

While our diversity across families, communities and nations is a source of wealth, this diversity needs to be managed for the good of all and, as the world increasingly becomes a global village, intolerance rooted in ethnicity, religion, political affiliation and social class becomes especially perilous.

Since 2009, the Pluralism Knowledge Programme has brought together Ugandan universities and civil society organisations to better understand the challenges associated with managing diversity, and translated this knowledge into strategies for promoting pluralism in practice. This course outline, which institutions of higher learning are encouraged to adapt to their own needs, arises from a collaborative effort between representatives from 5 Universities and several civil society organisations[1].

2. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course on 'Managing Diversity in a Global Society' provides the student with a critical understanding of theories of diversity, tolerance and pluralism, as well as with an opportunity to examine how these can be applied in a practical context. In particular, the student will examine relevant theories and the importance of identity and its multiple dimensions in a global society. The course also focuses on issues of diversity and its relationship with marginalization, oppression and human rights. It explores how an inclusive and pluralistic perspective can influence the notion of development and highlights the implications for development practice, illustrated by the current situation in Uganda and beyond. Lastly, the course examines various methods that can be used to manage diversity for a pluralistic society, including in a work environment.

3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

General objective

To expose the student to theories of diversity, tolerance and pluralism and to examine how these can be applied in a practical context.

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[1] The contributions from Stella Laloyo and Daniel Komakech (Gulu University – Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies); Anna Akwango (DENIVA); Agnes Nambatya (Nkumba University); HabibMaliamungu and Sultan JumaKakuba (Islamic University in Uganda); Patrick Mutegeki (Kampala International University); Ronald KakunguluMayambala (HURIPEC – Makerere University); and Emily Drani and John De Coninck (Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda) are gratefully acknowledged.

Specific objectives

1. To analyse the major theories of pluralism; their similaritiesand points of divergence.

2. To examine the manifestations of diversity and the importance of identity perception and construction in the elaboration of a pluralistic society.

3. To explore diverse perspectives on marginalisation and oppression and their implications for a tolerant and global society.

4. To explore diverse notions of human rights in relation to pluralism, including African approaches to rights and diversity.

5. To enhance an understanding of development from a perspective of diversity and its implications for practice.

6. To equip the student with knowledge and skills to manage various forms of diversity, especially in the learning and work environments.

4. EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Apply major theories of pluralism to a variety of situations.

2. Demonstrate an understanding of managing diversity and its importance in constructing a pluralistic society.

3. Illustrate diverse perspectives on marginalisation and oppression and their implications for a tolerant and global society.

4. Appreciate diverse notions of human rights in relation to pluralism.

5. Demonstrate a practical understanding of development from a perspective of diversity.

6. Practice different methods of managing various forms of diversity, including in a University setting.

5. MODE OF DELIVERY

1. Lectures
2. Guest lectures
3. Presentations
4. Discussions
5. Debates
6. Role plays
7. Documentaries
8. Research
9. Problem solving method
10. Fieldwork/case studies
11. Discovery / reflections
12. Attachment to relevant organisations

6. DETAILED COURSE CONTENT

Topic A: Introduction to Diversity, Tolerance and Pluralism

- » Historical overview: Pre- and post-World War II conceptions of pluralism; civil liberties and social movements;the global economy and the information age
- » Theoretical approaches:
- » Diversity theories
- » Tolerance theories; theories of integration
- » Pluralism Theories
- » Fundamental principles
- » Theory of integration
- » Neo-pluralism
- » Capability theory
- » Critical theory
- » African perspectives *(Ubuntu,Afrikology, Afrocentricism)*
- » Elite theory; Neo-corporate school
- » Liberal pluralist theory
- » Interest Group theory
- » Definitions of diversity, tolerance and pluralism

References

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Topic B: Identity and Pluralism

- » Definitions and perspectives on the concept of identity
- » Dimensions of identity
- » Religious
- » Racial
- » Ethnic
- » Class
- » Gender
- » Identity construction
- » My identity and others

References

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Topic C: Marginalisation and Oppression

- » General introduction to the concepts of marginalisation, oppression and diversity
- » Diversity, power, inclusion and exclusion
- » Culture, social class, and social identity in development
- » Perceptions and attitudes: De-humanisation, racism, fanaticism, ethnocentricism
- » Oppression and social justice
- » Institutional and systemicpractices of oppression
- » International, African and national perspectives on marginalisation and oppression

References

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Topic D: Diversity, Tolerance andInclusion

- » Tolerance, relativism in context
- » Approaches to multiculturalism
- » Equal opportunities and affirmative action
- » Actors, spaces and knowledge
- » International, African and national perspectives of tolerance and diversity

References

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Topic E: Human Rights, Diversity and Pluralism

- » Human rights, diversity and pluralism: the linkages
- » Relevance of human rights in a pluralistic community
- » Universality vs.cultural relativism; Human rights and diversity
- » Indigenous peoples and minority rights
- » African approaches/perspectives on human rights and diversity
- » Evolving national perspectives on human rights, diversityand pluralism
- » Ethnic minorities and diversity in Uganda

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Topic F: Pluralism and Inclusive Development

- » An introduction topluralism and inclusive development
- » Human development and the capability theory
- » Sustainable development and pluralism
- » Governance in an ethnically and culturally diverse polity
- » Religion, ethics and development
- » Case study on managing diversity in contemporary Uganda

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Topic G:Managing diversity – experiences and methods

- International and African approaches to managing diversity
- Mechanisms for fighting intolerance in a diverse community
- Managing diversity – the Ugandan experience
- Dialogue (rationale, types, approaches, benefits, limitations, and best practices)
- Mediation (negotiation and arbitration)
- Alternative dispute resolution
- Conflict sensitivity
- Alternatives to violence
- Experience sharing
- Verbal judo

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Topic H: Practical approaches to managing diversity at the workplace

- » From diversity and tolerance to pluralism
- » Models and paradoxes of toleration
- » Diversity change process; Diversity management; Diversity drivers in a workplace
- » Strategies for managing human resource diversity: From resistance to responses
- » Managing diversity: Lessons from the private and public sectors.
- » Implementing diversity in a workplace: Principles and best practices across the globe
- » Managing diversity in a university setting

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