



The Civic Mission of the Nation

Civil Dialogue Sample Lesson Plan

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The goal of this lesson should be to explore the concept of civil dialogue, define it in workable and comprehensible terms, and explore its complex dimensions, its implications and constraints. Ideally, the instructor should link this concept to contemporary examples such as the role of social media in fostering or hindering civil dialogue. The current polarized political climate can also be explored within this theme.

Start with a discussion about what is civil dialogue:

Possible discussion questions for students: What does civil dialogue look like? What is civil dialogue not? (link to violence, link to free speech debates in the U.S Context, Supreme Court decisions on free speech, e.g. *Bradenburg v Ohio*).

What are some complex aspects of civil dialogue? What hinders it?

What are some impediments to having a “civil dialogue”? (ideological differences etc.) Link to personal experiences

Does civil dialogue involve “politeness”? If not, why?

What is the role of social media in this space? Is social media a “civil” space? If not, can it become one?

Connect to the scholar essay and video by Keidrick Roy:

Have students read essay and watch video in class

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Discuss both– what did students agree with and what did they not agree with? How can we ensure that we practice “civil dialogue” ? Is this concept necessary for democracy?

“We might think of civil dialogue as a non-violent form of expression that establishes the conditions for further debate or deliberation.” -Roy (2023). Discuss this proposed definition in class (is there ever then a “right answer?”)