HANDOUT: CALLING IN VERSUS CALLING OUT / CANCEL CULTURE

1. Conversation challenges related to diversity and/or teaching sensitive topics
   Source 1; source 2
   - Lack of time to:
     o Watch over the group’s wellbeing.
     o Reflect on one’s own biases, worldview and teaching practice.
   - Lack of knowledge about the different groups on campus:
     o Stereotypes et over-simplification.
   - University system in place:
     o Monolithic average trend: simpler to only consider the majority.
   - Differences in values, beliefs and perspectives.
   - Poor communication:
     o Little consideration for classroom climate and the importance of keeping the learning environment healthy.
     o Little sharing of expectations, operating norms, expected behaviors and what the "complaint" process is.
   - Discomfort, clumsy classroom and event management:
     o Leads to Calling out and cancel culture.
     o Little prevention, training or authentic dialogue (calling in).

2. Concept: Calling out
   Adapted from Loretta Ross, FSS talk, September 24, 2021
   - Publicly asking others to change their behavior, speech or thoughts.
   - Becomes toxic when:
     - Fear in others of expressing and sharing their perspective; or devaluation of the other’s experience or perspective.
     - Isolating or banishing the person rather than including them in the discussion and rectification of the situation; and not allowing the event to become a moment of learning and growth.
     - Negative impact on classroom climate and group dynamics.
     - The problem becomes uncontrollable and disproportionate to the initial incident.
     - Amplification: Presumption of guilt, unforgivable act; contamination - people permanently sabotaged, no opportunity to explain and change; "us" versus "them" mentality.
     - Unhealthy perfectionism: Alienates people with the pursuit of pure political ideology; assumes only one correct way of looking at an issue; aggravates the issue by being harsh; outraged that the person hasn't been perfect (they should know!);
• **Not looking for dialogue** and action to improve the outcome without making it worse; not looking to build together or for change supported by healthy and respectful interactions.

3. **Concept: Calling in**  
Adapted from Loretta Ross, FSS talk, September 24, 2021

• Ability to approach the issue privately or publicly and have an **authentic** and sometimes difficult **dialogue** with the other person, while respecting rights and differences.
  o **Giving the benefit of the doubt**: considering people as human beings who make mistakes and who should be given a chance to evolve. This encourages moments of **learning** and growth rather than tension.
  o **Types of questions** that can be asked following an incident:
    • What was going on in your life when you said or wrote these words?
    • How do you see the situation now?
    • How do you feel about the event?
    • What can you do to remedy the situation?
    • What do you plan to do to avoid a similar situation in the future?

4. **Suggested strategies:**  
Adapted from Loretta Ross, FSS talk, September 24, 2021

• **Anticipate** what could go wrong:
  o Lack of preparation? Simplistic content? Presence of bias and stereotypes?
  o Does your course material reflect diversity? Strategy: vary gender, culture, race, fields of interest, age, name, etc. in your examples and documents.

• **Be explicit** in the first class about expectations and process:
  o "If I say something that offends you, or share erroneous or biased information or information that simplifies a reality, please let me know in the following way..."
  o Ask for feedback (listen; validate; improve):
    • E.g.: How can we reframe case studies to be realistically inclusive and representative of diversity??
  o **Express yourself** in a positive way to encourage dialogue:
    • E.g.: "We're all part of the same team. We should work hand in hand. No one is perfect. Let's learn and improve together."
    • **Explain** to students what you’re trying to build and why. E.g.: openness to the world and different perspectives; learning from others, etc.

• **Promote** the importance respectful **dialogue**:
  o “Aim to understand each other’s perspective, really listen, share your perspective, agree on an action plan to grow together and evolve.”
  o **Why do students challenge or call out?**
    • Because the person doesn't feel respected or listened to; or the comments offend or exasperate; they want change sooner rather than later (patience running out).
    • Because the person is looking for ideological purity linked to social activism (to improve their social position or ego? Loss of hope or control?).
• They may seek to humble (shaming) or intimidate, to hurt as they themselves suffer, or to shake up a slow-moving change of perspective. The person becomes impatient.

• Avoid the punching approach at all costs (towards the professor; towards the student; or between students):
  o Blaming is not helpful. Taking responsibility and changing the way we do things is.
  o Rather, share the learning space (and therefore power - analogy of the candle: it will always light up even if you light another one).

**Personal notes:**