

**WORKSHOP ON IMPLICIT COMMUNICATION  
PROGRAMME AND SCHEDULE**

**Geneva, 29-30 March 2017**

**Day 1 – Wednesday, 29 March**

**9.30-9.45 – Introduction to the workshop**

Introduction to Dr Biljana Scott who will facilitate the workshop, "tour de table" of participants, presentations and review of expectations.

**9.45-10.15 - The importance and significance of implicit communication**

This session will focus on recognising the range of motivations for, and consequences of, resorting to the unsaid, both in interpersonal and professional communication.

**10.15-11.00 - Session 1: The gaps between intended and inferred meaning**

This session looks at the role of context and inference in understanding intended meaning. We start with visual images and the gap between evidence and uptake, then focus on linguistic gaps, before concluding with a look at irony, and the gap between word-meaning and speaker-meaning. The aim of this first session is to recognise and capitalise on the many gaps to be found in language, which we often bridge unwittingly.

*The exercises in this session will alert us to where gaps arise, how we bridge them, and above all, how we can lead people to bridge gaps in prescribed ways. If diplomacy is 'the art of letting others have things your way,' then the manipulation of inference is central to this art.*

**11.00-11.30 - Coffee break**

**11.30-12.40 - Session 2: The power of compelling narratives**

It is said that Donald Trump rose to power on the back of a compelling narrative. Obama was famous for his story-telling. A strong narrative can structure our interlocutor's perceptions and influence their actions while appealing directly to their identity, sympathy and loyalty. In this session, we look at narratives embedded in everyday language: metaphors, connotations and proverbs.

*The exercises will show how stories can be used to win hearts and minds, and focuses on the subliminal narrative power of metaphors, connotations and proverbs.*

**12.40 – 13.30 – Lunch break**

**13.30-14.15 - Session 3: How to make ambiguity work to your advantage**

This session looks at the types of ambiguity found in various official documents, ranging from vagueness to either-or readings and including ‘scope’ ambiguity. Our discussion considers whether ambiguity is necessarily ‘constructive’ to all parties at all times. The session concludes with a discussion of ‘hard persuasion’ or ‘logos’, and how defining the terms of an argument helps one to dominate the discourse, with a focus on how much freedom we have in defining and redefining words.

*The exercises will help us to both recognize and deploy various types of ambiguity, while always ensuring our best interest.*

**14.15-15.00 - Session 4: Grace - How to disagree without being disagreeable**

Since in-your-face remarks tend to cause offence, politeness involves the use of indirect language. We survey the various ways in which indirectness is expressed linguistically and then focus on ‘Indirect Speech Acts’: the way in which we encode actions and intentions. For example, since disagreement, refusal and rejection are potentially face-threatening, speakers world-wide have devised various forms of expression which enable them to disagree without being disagreeable. However, since these expressions tend to be culture-specific, a failure to recognize their coded meaning is a prime reason for cross-cultural misunderstanding.

*The exercises for this session provide practice in both expressing and deflecting divisiveness. They also show our inherent tendency to use coded language, and offer suggestions on how to use humour as a means to defuse hostility.*

**15.00-15.30 - Coffee break**

**15.30-16.15 - Session 5: Fallacies and loaded questions**

This final topic on the unsaid look at the implicit frames contained in logical fallacies and focuses on loaded questions in particular. We introduce a strategy for responding to loaded questions and review some methods for reframing a discussion. We conclude with advice on how best to combine force and grace.

*These exercises help us first to detect implicit framing devices, then to deploy them ourselves, and finally to find ways of responding to them by reframing the issue with both force and grace.*

**Day 2 – Thursday, 30 March**

**9.30 – 11.30 - Session 5: HARDTALK simulation**

We conclude the workshop with a HARDTALK exercise. In groups of 2 or 3, participants are asked to select a controversial topic (immigration, corruption, trafficking, alcohol tax, etc...). They should first work together in identifying the key arguments FOR and AGAINST the issue, testing out the various devices introduced the previous day (vocabulary, connotations, metaphors, appeals to emotion, loaded questions, and other logical fallacies). They will then be invited to simulate an interview. Feedback will be provided both by participants and by the course leaders, but with a focus on the manner rather than the content of each speaker's performance.

*This final exercise will allow you to put all points discussed hitherto into practice by asking you to frame a particular issue, and to defend your ground during a simulated interview using 'an iron fist in a glove of velvet.'*

**11.30 - 12.00 - Evaluation, final remarks, handing out the certificates**