

Contemporary Issues Institute 2015: Cultivating a Civil Society in an Era of Incivility

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The MSU Center for Community and Economic Development's Contemporary Issues Institute identifies critical emerging issues in community and economic development. The institute, with the support of a broad-based advisory committee, seeks to learn more about an emerging issue in community and economic development and facilitate networking with key stakeholders that may lead to future research and outreach collaboration in the emerging topical area.

Our 2015 topic is on "Cultivating a Civil Society in an Era of Incivility ." We have all seen it before in our political systems, on the Internet and television, and in several other settings. Whether in a town hall meeting where the question and answer portion has turned into something uncontrollably chaotic, or in a customer service line at a department store where a customer is making a scene, incivility seems to be on the rise. This year's Contemporary Issues Institute seeks to help understand the nature and scope of incivility in our daily lives.

Some forms of incivility seem necessary. Take for example the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Acts of peaceful disobedience were critical to bringing attention to the more violent acts of racial prejudice. However, in everyday practice, incivility may be detrimental to the discourse that is important to a democratic process.

This year's institute, while still in the planning stages, examines the causes and possible solutions of incivility. With theatrical performances to show real life examples of incivility, breakout sessions that will discuss the *Theories of Incivility*, *Our Individual Civil Character*, and much more, we plan for our audience to have a better understanding of the topic and to better incorporate civil practices in their everyday demeanor.

This year's Institute will be held on Friday, March 6, 2015, at the Michigan Capitol Building from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

For more up-to-date information on this topic, visit <http://ced.msu.edu/>.