

Critical Approaches to Service-Learning
An Alternative Spring Break Course
Health Behavior & Health Education 610
Mondays 2 to 2:50pm, Hillel Classroom
Syllabus Spring 2012

There are these two young fish swimming along, and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, "Morning, boys, how's the water?" And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes, "What the hell is water?"

If at this moment, you're worried that I plan to present myself here as the wise old fish explaining what water is to you younger fish, please don't be. I am not the wise old fish. The immediate point of the fish story is that the most obvious, ubiquitous, important realities are often the ones that are the hardest to see and talk about. Stated as an English sentence, of course, this is just a banal platitude -- but the fact is that, in the day-to-day trenches of adult existence, banal platitudes can have life-or-death importance.

~David Foster Wallace, *This is Water*

Instructors

Graduate Instructor: Dane Emmerling, daemmer@unc.edu

Supervising Faculty: Dr. Lynn Blanchard, blanchard@unc.edu

Office Hours: Sunday 4 to 8 p.m., 3514 Student Union

Staff

Carolyn Byrne: Student Service Specialist, cbyrne@email.unc.edu

Brittany Corn: AmeriCorps Vista, bgcorn@email.unc.edu

Recitation and Service Leaders

Civil Rights: Georgia Cavanaugh & Emma Harver

Relief & Rebuilding: Simone Duval & Mam Harr Gaye

Latino Issues: Ben Rosado & Wendy Song

Native Communities: Sara Nicholson & Jackclyn Ngo

Urban Poverty: Christie Lainez & Olivia Hart

COURSE OVERVIEW

Students in this course will encounter issues, theories and experiences relevant to social action, coalition building and social change. The content of this course will be examined through confronting the possibilities and limitations of service and service-learning. The content and approaches of this course represents a wide variety of disciplines, with an emphasis on drawing from the field of public health. This course will connect theory to practice and thought to action.

HBHE 699 is a two-hour pass/fail course. Students in this course meet weekly for a one-hour lecture and for a one-hour recitation. Students are organized into five recitation sessions, each with a unique focus: 1) civil rights, 2) relief and rebuilding, 3) Latino issues, 4) Native communities and 5) urban poverty. Forty hours of service will be completed by each recitation group during spring break by volunteering with selected

organizations. This course fulfills the Experiential Education requirement. This course cannot be repeated.

This is a course associated with the APPLES Service-Learning Program's Alternative Break Program. APPLES is a student-led, staff-supported program that builds sustainable, service-learning partnerships among students, faculty and communities in North Carolina and beyond. By engaging all partners in an enriched, community-based curriculum, APPLES experiential programs foster socially aware and civically involved students. All students will participate in the APPLES Alternative Break and will volunteer 40 hours of service according to their assigned recitation topic.

Learning Goals: Through this course students will:

1. Examine social, economic, and political factors shaping communities
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of service and service-learning
3. Apply perspectives of service-learning and critical analysis to a social change project

EXPECTATIONS

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to attend and participate in all lecture and recitation sessions. More than one unexcused absence from either lecture or recitation session will result in failing the class. Attendance will be taken by recitation leaders at every lecture and recitation period. Completion and passing all reading, writing and service-learning assignments is required to successfully pass this course.

Reading Assignments

All readings will be posted to the course site on sakai. Students are expected to come to both the lecture and recitation sessions having read all required assignments and prepared to discuss those readings.

Writing Assignments

This course requires around 25 pages of writing from students, ranging from reading responses to reflections on service-learning. All writing assignments will be evaluated and feedback given according to the writing rubric. Writing assignments will be given either an exceptional, commendable or unacceptable evaluation according to the rubric. Work that is deemed unacceptable will be required to be redone. If at the end of the term students have any outstanding work that is unacceptable they will not pass the class.

The writing assignments are:

1. Political Biography
2. Reading Responses
3. Statement of Belief
4. Alternative Break Critical Response Paper
5. Social Change Project Reflections
6. Action Plan

Social Change Project:

The culminating product for this course is the social change project. Each recitation class will apply social change practices by addressing a specific need identified by a community partner. These project proposals will be presented on Pitch Day early on in the semester and the final product will be presented on Presentation Day. Student will receive feedback from the instructor, peers, community partners, faculty and staff.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

We are going to be talking about many different challenging ideas and questions in which there are few right answers and many different interpretations. You are encouraged to challenge ideas while respecting other people. Laptops are not permitted in class except under exceptional circumstances which must be approved in advance.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

The class will be structured with these guiding questions.

1. Who am I?
2. Who am I trying to serve? How can I learn about their perspective?
3. What am I here to do? (Why?)
4. What needs to be done? How do I determine needs?
5. How can I do what needs to be done?
6. How will I know I reached my goals?

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 9th: Stories of Service

(Who are we? What are we here to do?)

Lecture Objectives: Clarify the approach and philosophy of the course. Explain the requirements and logistics of the course. Introduce concept of social change. Introduce two stories of service and examine implications of these stories.

Recitation Objectives: Introduce specific experience history, begin introduction of community partners and goals for coming weeks

Readings due this week / Assignments: None

Week 2: January 23th: Politics, Privilege, and Identity

(Who are we?)

Lecture Objectives: Introduce theories of privilege and difference. Discuss implications of privilege and power for community. Introduce political biography assignment.

Recitation Objectives: Leaders share their political biographies

Readings due this week / Assignments:

1. **Due: Reading Response 1 (Friday 20th @ 5)**
2. Privilege, Oppression, and Difference: Allan Johnson (Chapter 2 of Privilege Power and Difference)
3. Zizek: First as Tragedy then as Farce

**Week 3: January 30th: Critical Perspectives on Service & Service-Learning
(What are we here to do?)**

Lecture Objectives: Discuss the implications of doing service as being an inherently political act. Define and discuss charity versus justice service. Discuss “Why service-learning is bad”

Recitation Objectives: Participants present their individual political narratives and together construct a group narrative based on shared values.

Readings due this week / Assignments

1. **Due: Reading Response 2 (Friday 27th @ 5)**
2. **Due: Political Biographies (Monday 30th @ 11:55pm)**
3. Starfish Hurling and Community Service: Keith Morton
4. Campus and Community at Providence College: Keith Morton
5. Why Service Learning is Bad: Jown Ewby

**Week 4: February 6th: Community Asset Mapping
(Who are they? What needs to be done?)**

Lecture Objectives: Begin introduction to philosophy and approach of community asset mapping.

Recitation Objectives: Begin community asset mapping exercise for host community. Have students interview community partners. Finish group narratives

Readings due this week / Assignments

1. Recitation Assignment: Outside research on aspect of host community
2. **Experience Specific Readings Assigned**

**Week 5: February 13th: Community Asset Mapping Part 2
(Who are they? What needs to be done?)**

Lecture Objectives: Continue learning about the community asset mapping approach to social change. Social Change project introduced and assigned. Group narratives presented.

Recitation Objectives: Finish community asset mapping exercise for host community

1. Recitation assignment: Outside research on aspect of host community
2. **Experience Specific Readings Assigned**

**Week 6: February 20th: Social Change (Service, Advocacy, Activism)
(How can we do what needs to be done?)**

Lecture Objectives: Define and discuss theories and approaches of social change. Discuss the differences between service with and without a social change approach.

Recitation Objectives: Begin working on Social Change Project talking about brainstorming allies, obstacles and approaches for Social Change Project

Readings due this week / Assignments

1. **Due: Reading Response 3 (Feb 17th @ 5pm)**
2. **Mid-Semester Check in and Evaluation**
3. Chapter 13: Improving Health Through Community Organization and Community Building. Health Behavior and Health Education: Theory, Research, and Practice

Week 7 February 27th: Perspective, Postmodernism, Default Settings and Social Change

(Who are we? What are we here to do?)

Lecture Objectives: Discuss popular cultures impact on social change and political attitude. Discuss self/other heuristics and implications for social change and being in community with trip participants and host community.

Recitation Objective: Final preparations and logistics for trip. Continue work on social change project

Readings due this week / Assignments

1. **Due: Reading Response 4 (Feb 24th @ 5pm)**
2. **Due: Strategy Chart and Timeline (Group Project)**
3. David Foster Wallace: This is water
4. Critical Response Essays Assigned and Discussed
5. Statement of Beliefs Essay Assigned and Discussed

SPRING BREAK March 2nd to March 13th

Recitation Objectives: Have daily reflection session where group processes experiences, works on critical reflection ideas, works on statement of belief ideas, discusses feedback they received when proposing social change project to constituents of community.

Assignments

1. Critical Incident Journal (Due to team leaders)

Week 8: March 12th: Pitch Day

Lecture Objectives: Students present ideas for social change project to team of evaluators. Students present on ideas for coalitions, obstacles, and steps that can be undertaken as well as possible future directions. Feedback is given by other students and team of evaluators.

Recitation Objectives: Work on action plan for implementation of social change project.

Readings due this week / Assignments

1. Readings: None
2. Assignments: Pitch Day Proposal

Week 9: March 19th:

Farmworker Advocacy in NC: A History (Ryan Nilsen Guest Lecture)

(What needs to be done? How can I do what needs to be done?)

Lecture Objectives: Feelings of helpless and apathy can be overcome through studying previous social change movements that succeeded.

Recitation Objectives: Start implementation of social change project.

Readings due this week / Assignments:

1. **Due: Reading Response 5 (March 16th @ 5pm)**
2. **Due: Updated Strategy Chart and Timeline (Group Project)**
3. **Due: Critical Reflection Paper (March 19th @11:55pm)**
4. Readings: TBD

**Week 10: March 26th: Farmworker Advocacy in NC: A Current Perspective
(What needs to be done? How can I do what needs to be done?)**

Lecture Objectives: Continued discussion of a case study in social change and the lessons that can be learned from this historical example as it applies to the students own projects.

Recitation Objectives: Continue implementation of social change project

Readings due this week / Assignments:

1. Readings TBD
2. **Due: Reading Response 6 (March 23rd @ 5pm)**

Week 11: April 2nd: The Ecological Revolution

(How will I know I reached my goals? What needs to happen next?)

Lecture Objectives: A discussion of the progress of society in moving toward a new relation to the world. Discussion of the scientific episteme versus relational episteme.

Recitation Objectives: Continue implementation of social change project

Readings due this week / Assignments

1. **Due: Reading Response 7 (March 30th @ 5pm)**
2. **Due: Statement of Belief Papers (April 2nd @ 11:55pm)**
3. Reading from A Social Change Model of Leadership Development – The UCLA Guidebook

Week 12: April 9th: Default settings and ways forward

Lecture Objectives: A discussion of what we have learned in the class and how it has informed the student's view of social change and social progress. General discussion and brain-storming session about how the social justice approach can be incorporated into other aspects of participant lives.

Readings: None

Recitation Objectives: Continue working on social change project. Start preparing final presentation.

Readings due this week/ Assignments

Week 13: April 16th: Panel Day

Lecture Objectives: Bring in the team who evaluated the pitches and will evaluate the presentations and have them be a panel on social change and working with different issues.

Recitation Objectives: Continue working on social change project.

1. **Due: Personal Action Plans (April 16th @ 11:55 pm)**

Week 14: April 23th: Social Change Action Plan Celebration

5 to 7 pm Memorial Hall (How will I know I reached my goals?)

Lecture Objectives: Students teams will make 10 minute final presentations to the community about their social change projects. A reception will follow with dinner and refreshments.

No Recitation This Week

Readings due this week / Assignments:

1. **Due: Social Change Project Reflections (April 23rd 11:55pm)**