



COURSE: Community Engagement for Social Change - Lauren Catteneo

Course Description

This class explores influences on social problems and approaches to addressing them by drawing from the perspectives of multiple disciplines. By definition, a social problem is a problem that affects many people, but such issues are often viewed primarily as individual-level problems that require individual-level solutions. In this class, students will learn to understand social problems and approaches to addressing them at both the individual level (typically the focus of fields such as Clinical Psychology) and the social level (typically the focus of fields such as Community Psychology, Sociology, and Public Affairs). The class will achieve its goals through a semester-long case example of the social problem of poverty. We will explore this social problem through students' service to community organizations, readings, class exercises and both written and oral projects.

GOALS

In this course, students will:

- Identify and understand the individual, interpersonal and social context levels of a social problem, drawing from the perspectives of multiple disciplines.
- Identify and understand approaches toward targeting different aspects of a social problem.
- Apply the above skills in oral and written products.
- Complete a minimum of 20 hours of service to a community organization coordinated by the instructor and in the context of this service:
 - Deepen understanding of a social problem through contact with both people it affects and people trying to do something about it;
 - Provide concrete value to the community organization;
 - Connect course concepts to concrete experiences.

Requirements:

Participation and Preparation (35%) Students are required to attend class **(10%)**, and to complete exercises throughout the semester **(10%)**. Instructions for exercises will be given in class and/or through Blackboard. Students are also required to read/listen to assigned material before class. Preparation will be evaluated by either a quiz or an entry in a critical reading journal each class **(15%)**. Details will be provided over Blackboard, and **both quizzes and critical journal entries must be submitted through Blackboard before the start of class** in order for students to receive credit. Students may miss a total of 2 quizzes/critical reading journal entries without penalty.

Connection Papers (20%). Students will write two three-page double-spaced papers in response to prompts from the instructor. Details will be posted on Blackboard. Note that these are due on SUNDAYS rather than at class time: **3/4 and 4/22**.

Final project (30%): The final project consists of a paper and an in-class poster presentation. Students will work in groups during the semester to analyze a social issue of interest to them, other than poverty. *Each student* will identify a program or organization that targets that problem, and will write a 4-6 page paper using scholarly sources to conduct a multilevel analysis of the social problem and an analysis of their organization's approach to addressing it. Students will submit their individual paper via Blackboard on **Sunday May 6**. As a group, students will construct a poster that provides an overview of the social

problem and an organization that works to address it. During final exam time, there will be a poster session in which all students share their work.

Policy for late assignments: With the exception of journal entries and quizzes which may NOT be handed in late, assignments handed in up to 24 hours past the deadline will be downgraded by 15%; up to 48 hours they will be downgraded by 50%; after 48 hours they will not be accepted.

Service (15%): A fundamental goal and requirement of this class is to provide concrete value to our partner organizations in exchange for the experience we are gaining. These partnerships have been developed by the instructor, and students will choose from available placements at the outset of the course. **Students who do not complete the requirements they agree to when they choose a placement will receive a failing grade for the course.** The minimum number of hours you will total over the course of the semester is 20, plus approximately two hours of orientation. (Placements involving special services such as tutoring may require more training.) The academic (readings, exams) workload in this class is relatively light, because the service is meant to be the core of the substance of the course. Your reliable engagement in your service placement is essential. Your grade for this requirement will be assessed at 2 points and then averaged:

1. At mid-term check-in (**March 8**) at which time you must have:
 - a. Chosen a placement and documented your understanding of the requirements on the class Google spreadsheet.
 - b. Completed orientation and/or training at your placement and documented this on the Google spreadsheet.
 - c. Met expectations according to supervisor report.
 - d. Completed at least 5 hours of service, as documented on the spreadsheet (if you do not document it, it did not happen).
2. At final exam time (**May 10**) at which time you must have:
 - a. Completed the minimum of 20 hours and documented this on the Google spreadsheet.
 - b. Met expectations according to supervisor report.

TENTATIVE COURSE PLAN AND READING LIST

Date	Content & Assignment Due Dates	Course Readings <i>Readings available on Blackboard (See full citations below)</i>
Jan. 23	Course Introduction	
Jan. 25	What is Service Learning? Launching placements and connections to course content Exercise due: Cress 2.4	* Cress, Collier, Reitenauer, & Associates, 2005. <u>Ch 1 and 2.</u>
Jan. 30	Understanding social issues through multi-level analysis Critical reading journal due	* Ryan, 1971. <u>Intro & Ch 1.</u>
Feb 1	Understanding social issues through multi-level analysis	* Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2007
Feb 6	Setting the stage for our case study: wealth and power in the US	* Complete the pages on this interactive website: http://inequality.is/

	Critical reading journal due	* Collins, 2016 pp. 9-33.
Feb 8	Setting the stage for our case study: wealth and power in the US Quiz due	* Watch this TED talk: http://www.ted.com/talks/richard_wilkinson.html
Feb 13	Setting the stage for our case study: wealth and power in the US Quiz due	* Irwin (2017) <u>To Understand Rising Inequality, Consider the Janitors at Two Companies, Then and Now.</u>
Feb 15	Poverty as a case study – what is it? Critical reading journal due	* Smith, 2010. Ch 4. Qualitative Expressions
Feb 20	Poverty as a case study – what is it? Quiz due	* Ehrenreich, 2008 Intro and Ch 1
Feb 22	Poverty as a case study – what is it? Critical reading journal due	* Smith, 2010. Ch 2. Classism
Feb 27	Poverty as a case study – how do we understand social context? Exercise due: evidence for and against raising minimum wage (3 pieces each)	* Listen to this discussion of the debate about raising the minimum wage: http://thedianerehmsnow.org/shows/2016-04-05/california-raises-its-minimum-wage-to-15-an-hour
Mar 1	Poverty as a case study – how do we understand social context? Critical reading journal due	* Collins (2016) Part 3: Understanding Disadvantage.
Connection Paper #1 due by SUNDAY Mar 4		
Mar 6	Poverty as a case study – how do we understand social context? Quiz due	* Listen to “House Rules,” episode 512 from the radio show <i>This American Life</i> : https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/512/house-rules
Mar 8	Poverty as a case study – how do we understand social context? Quiz due	Listen to “Is the American Dream Really Dead,” an episode of <i>Freakonomics</i> : http://freakonomics.com/podcast/american-dream-really-dead/
MIDTERM CHECK-IN is March 8 – make sure you have met all service requirements		
Mar 13/15	SPRING BREAK	OPTIONAL * Niki Okuk TED talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/niki_okuk_when_workers_own_companies_the_economy_is_more_resilient
Mar 20	Poverty as a case study – how do we understand social context? Critical reading journal due	* Gorski, 2008
Mar 22	Poverty as a case study- how do we understand the interpersonal aspects? Exercise due in class: social networks	No reading
Mar 27	Poverty as a case study- how do we understand the interpersonal aspects? Critical reading journal due	* Tough, 2011

Mar 29	Poverty as a case study- how do we understand the interpersonal aspects? Quiz due	* Belle & Doucet, 2003
Apr 3	Poverty as a case study- how do we understand the interpersonal aspects? Critical reading journal due	* Crosley-Corcoran, G., 2014 - Explaining White Privilege. Accessible at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gina-crosleycorcoran/explaining-white-privilege-to-a-broke-white-person_b_5269255.html
Apr 5	Poverty as a case study – how do we understand the individual-level aspects? Exercise due: Logistics reflection	* Goodman et al., 2009
MONDAY APRIL 9: Attend National Coalition for the Homeless Speakers Bureau from 7:30-8:45pm on-campus location TBD		
Apr 10	NO CLASS	
Apr 12	Poverty as a case study – how do we understand the individual-level aspects? Exercise due	* Listen to <i>Back to School</i> , an episode from the radio show <i>This American Life</i> . Accessible at: https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/474/back-to-school
Apr 17	Identifying and addressing multiple aspects of social problems Critical reading journal due	* Boo, 2001
Apr 19	Identifying and addressing multiple aspects of social problems	* TBD
Connection Paper #2 due by Sunday April 22		
Apr 24	Guest Speaker/Class Exercise	
Apr 26	Extending our analysis to other social problems: mass incarceration Quiz due	* Watch this TED talk, <i>The Future of Race in America</i> : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ6H-Mz6hgw
May 1	Extending our analysis to other social problems: mass incarceration Critical reading journal due	* Alexander (2010) Introduction.
May 3	Class wrap-up, Q/A on final projects	No reading
Final Paper due SUNDAY May 6		
May 10 - 8:00-10:00am: Poster Session		

Course Readings

All readings are posted on Blackboard; readings on websites are linked in the syllabus as well.

Alexander, M. (2012). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. The New Press. **Introduction.**

- Belle, D. & Doucet, J. (2003). Poverty, inequality, and discrimination as sources of depression among U.S. women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 27, **101-113**.
- Boo, K. (2001, April 9). Working two jobs, Elizabeth Jones does her best for her family. But is it enough? *The New Yorker*.
- Collins, C. (2016) Born on third base: A one percenter makes the case for tackling inequality, bringing wealth home, and committing to the common good. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.
- Cress, C., Collier, P.J., Reitenauer, V.L. and Associates (2005). *Learning through serving: A student guidebook for service-learning across the disciplines*. Sterling, VA: Stylus. **Ch 1 & 2**.
- Dalton, J.H., Elias, M.J. & Wandersman, A. (2007). Community psychology: Linking individuals and communities (2nd edition). Thompson Wadsworth: Belmont, CA (p.17-21).
- Ehrenreich, B. (2008). Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America. New York: Holt Paperbacks. Introduction and chapter 1.
- Goodman, L.A., Smyth, K.F., Borges, A.M. & Singer, R. (2009). When crises collide: How intimate partner violence and poverty intersect to shape women's mental health and coping. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 10, 306-328. **Excerpted in handout**.
- Gorski, P. (2009, April). The myth of the "culture of poverty." *Educational Leadership*, 32-36.
- Irwin, N. (2017, September 3). To Understand the Rising Inequality, Consider the Janitors at Two Top Companies, Then and Now. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/03/upshot/to-understand-rising-inequality-consider-the-janitors-at-two-top-companies-then-and-now.html?action=click&module=Featured&pgtype=Homepage>
- Pager, D. (2008). The dynamics of discrimination. In A. Chih Lin and D.R. Harris (Eds.) *The Colors of Poverty: Why Racial and Ethnic Disparities Persist*. New York: Russell Sage, **Ch 2**.
- Ryan, W. (1971). *Blaming the Victim*. New York: Vintage Books. Introduction & chapter 1.
- Smith, Laura (2010). *Psychology, Poverty and the End of Social Exclusion*. New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Tough, P. (2011, March 21). The poverty clinic: Can a stressful childhood make you a sick adult? *The New Yorker*.