

AH2582/SS2582, SPRING 2013
SCHOOL BASED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Part of the Spectator to Citizen Course Sequence

CLASS: T 2:00 - 3:00 SERVICE COMPONENT: T & R 3:30-5:00 Sturm Hall room 124

Instructor: Cara DiEnno, PhD Associate Director, Center for Community Engagement & Office & Office Hours: 18 S. Driscoll walk-in or by appointment (I'm here 5 days/week) Phone: 303-871-2158 e-mail: cara.dienno@du.edu	Community Partner: Force Beacon Boys and Girls Club Contact: Annie Vassallo Site Director Web Address: http://www.bgcmd.org/clubs/beacon-neighborhood-centers & https://www.facebook.com/bgcmd.force Phone: O: 720-424-7412 C: 201-446-7435 e-mail: AnnieV@bgcmd.org
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Overview of the *Spectator to Citizen* Course Sequence:

This course is the final course of the three-course sequence of two-credit courses, "Spectator to Citizen," offered by the Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning (CCESL). This sequence is designed to provide opportunities for University of Denver students to develop a set of public skills and a civic knowledge base that will allow them to actively participate in the public life of their communities. These courses strongly encourage students of diverse backgrounds, politics and values to learn together, and from one another, in a safe and challenging learning environment.

Course Description, Goals & Objectives

This course provides opportunities for students to engage with an urban youth organization in a meaningful way that will challenge students to think about how our public schools are preparing students to be effective citizens. We also examine the role that universities and communities can and should play in the education process. Students are expected to take a critical look at their own education experience and compare this experience with the education experience of those with whom the student will be working with for the quarter. This course is arranged as a 10-week community learning project. Classes will include group discussions and activities based on the assigned class topic and readings along with your experience in the schools.

Topics covered will include:

- Civic engagement and the civic mission of schools
- What does it mean to be a citizen? What do we think of when we talk about citizenship, democracy, civic engagement, civic education, civic development and civic identity?
- The role of community organizing and education
- Youth and issues facing Denver public schools
- Inequities in the education system, the role of demographics and more
- School choice, vouchers and the corporatization of public schooling – perspectives on education reform
- The role of deliberation in democracy and schools
- Democratic education and civic engagement beyond the US

Goals

Through a mix of required readings, multimedia, deep discussion and the service learning component, you will develop an understanding of current issues facing public education in the US and beyond regarding civic engagement and democratic education. You will also develop a deeper understanding of your own perspective regarding citizenship, democracy and your role in these processes.

Objectives

Through engagement with the course readings, lectures, discussions, activities, assignments and most importantly, the group service learning project, by the end of the semester you are expected to be able to:

- Articulate your own critical perspective about the role of civic engagement in K12 education.
- Describe different conceptualizations of citizenship.
- Describe how community organizing can be applied to education reform.
- Explain why communities depend upon an active citizenry.
- Explain the role that communities, universities and organization can play in supporting civic engagement in K12 education.
- Compare and contrast your personal K12 experiences in light of the service learning experience
- Apply academic knowledge about civic engagement, citizenship, and democracy to real issues challenging the Denver community.
- Demonstrate an ability to learn alongside the community, valuing the knowledge that comes from experience in addition to academic wisdom.
- Demonstrate a strengthening of your own civic skills that will allow you to play a productive role in your community.

Required Course Material

You are expected to complete all readings - if you fail to stay up on your readings, you will fall behind in class.

Readings: All readings available through Blackboard. Additionally, for reference students should have a copy of Whitcher, Jenny et al. *CCESL Community Organizing Handbook*, 2nd Edition. 2010. (provided in class)

Other Materials: 3 x 5 notecards

Course Structure & Educational Philosophy

The value in your education lies in your ability to process new information and think critically about it, therefore the goal of this class will NOT be to assess your ability to regurgitate material from lectures or readings, but rather to assess your ability to adapt new information to your life experiences: past, present, and future. After all, your learning in and out of the classroom does not exist in a bubble outside of you, your career goals or aspirations – the worth in your college education lies in how you can apply this information. It is my goal to aid you in developing the skill set to do so. The assessment of your ability to apply said information will come in the form of reflections, discussions, the service learning component, and assignments. A variety of teaching methods will be used to measure your learning in a range of ways to accommodate different learning styles.

Please ask questions, participate, get excited, and be creative. A good class will look more like a small community. With that said, please recognize that diversity in this classroom is supported and encouraged. Respect for your instructor, fellow classmates, community partners, and other guests is mandatory. The course is designed to support your learning, understanding and engagement with others while you develop your own perspective on civic engagement, democratic values, and their role in education in our rapidly changing and diverse world. Class time will be spent in discussion, though some time will also be used for lecture, multi-media presentations, small group activities, and work on the service learning project.

You are expected to complete readings for the day in which they are assigned and be prepared to participate in class discussions. The course schedule is tentative and it is your responsibility to keep track of changes announced in class or on Blackboard.

Finally, please let me know how I can help you learn and ensure your success. The bottom line: communicate with me if you have any questions, concerns, difficulties, or problems. Reasonable suggestions and constructive criticism are always welcome.

Expectations for Classroom Dynamics

I expect that all of us engage in a positive and ongoing dialogue conducive to intellectual discovery in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Throughout this course, we will engage in critical analysis of issues related to education, civic development, inequality, and the like. In so doing, we will discuss topics that are intellectually and emotionally challenging. All participants in this class will be expected to respect each other's opinions as well as those of community partners, guests and others who engage with our course. You are also expected to be professional in all communications. We will focus on critical thinking and making the space within the classroom to express thoughts and beliefs in a supportive atmosphere – I, however, need each student in this course to commit to creating a safe space for this sort of reflection and discussion.

What you may expect of me:

- ◆ A sincere effort to help you learn
- ◆ Accessibility – I will be available outside the classroom
- ◆ Respect and courtesy
- ◆ Fairness
- ◆ Timeliness
- ◆ Prompt and constructive feedback on assignments
- ◆ A recognition that I do not know everything, but will get those questions I cannot answer immediately researched and answered for you

What I expect of you:

- ◆ A sincere effort to learn the course material and engage in class discussion/activities
 - ◆ Careful and complete reading of assigned materials
 - ◆ Timeliness in attendance and turning in assignments
 - ◆ Regular attendance
 - ◆ Prior notice: if events in your life emerge that you believe will make it impossible for you to be on time or perform in class as expected . . . be proactive, notify me in advance
 - ◆ Disconnection of your cell phone during class INCLUDING text messaging
 - ◆ Academic Honesty
 - ◆ And most of all respect for your peers, me, our agency partners and their constituents
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Service Learning

This course will incorporate service learning as an integral component. Service learning is an educational practice that combines formal coursework with community service in a way that both promotes specific academic learning objectives and responds to community-identified needs. Service learning functions on the idea that “students are unlikely to be effective citizens and leaders without the ability to understand complex social problems, apply what they learn, and have the critical thinking ability to make adequate judgments about the information they receive” (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

For the service learning portion of this course you will participate in the after-school science program of our community partner, Force Beacons Neighborhood Center of the Boys and Girls Club. You will be expected to do at least 3 hours of work with this campaign per week (3:30-5:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays – more details are included in the handout detailing the service learning requirement). The work you do in this course will only be strengthened by the work that you do outside of the classroom. Through your involvement with our partner, you will gain an understanding of community issues, community assets, and community processes for making change happen. You will have the opportunity to engage in real-world issues and social problems, working with our community partner to become part of the solution. Service learning is intended to help you learn, understand and engage with others. The time that you spend at our partner site is essential to meeting the objectives of this course and to the development of your own perspective on school based civic engagement. The goals of this partnership are two-fold, first to deepen your understanding of civic engagement through the context of a specific K12 issue and to help you develop a set of public skills that will allow you to participate in the public life of your community. True learning comes not from the quantity of hours that you “rack up” in the community, but from the quality of the community-engaged learning experience. The second goal of this partnership is to support the work of a local, community-based organization that engages in K12 civic issues. As a group and in consultation with Force Beacons, our class will organize a Science Fair at the end of the quarter for the program as our final project. We will set aside class time to discuss and work on this project.

The service-learning you will participate in during this course is intended to benefit your learning and reflection as well as the partner agency you will be working with. Be aware however, that ***the credit you earn does not come from the service you perform, but rather from the learning that comes out of the experience***. This experience is fully integrated into the other course components and your progress in the service learning component will be measured by your participation in discussion and reflections, in addition to the final project.

What this course is and is not

This class is intended to encourage you to think hard about the things that challenge education from being successful – an enterprise that is clearly essential for the health and welfare of our schools and our democracy. It is not meant to find “a fix” to the complex and often dysfunctional institutions we see in K-12. Its aim is not to provide you with a how-to manual that will enable you to be a successful teacher or school reformer. It could be argued that such a manual does not exist, for working with schools requires more than a one size fits all approach. Instead, think of this class as an exercise in realism, providing you with a set of stories that I hope will help you locate your own efforts to engage in your community & schools within a useful framework.

Assignments & Projects

Critical Reflection Activities - 150 points

The reflections take the place of exams or quizzes, and are your opportunity to show that you grasp the course material and the practical implications of class content, particularly in light of your service learning experience. These assignments are meant to aid your reflection on the nature of your experience and the learning you are deriving from it as well as the readings and help you deepen your understanding and personal philosophy about school based civic engagement.

You will have two audio (or video) reflection assignments each worth 25 points.

You will have one end-of-quarter written reflection. You will turn in a draft of this final reflection during Week 10 for feedback (the draft is worth 25 points). You will then turn in the final written reflection by our exam time listed on the class schedule (worth 75 points).

Please review the Critical Reflection Guidelines for more detailed information.

Assigned Reading Notecard Questions - 70 points

Every class day (except for weeks 1, 6 & 10) you are required to bring to class a 3 x 5 note card with at least two discussion questions. A discussion question is a question that occurs to you during the readings. The questions should focus on something that you do not understand or are curious about, or a question reflecting upon something you disagree with. These are due at the start of class (no exceptions). We will use these to guide our discussion during course sessions. As a heading on each card, please write your name and the date.

These questions will be evaluated according to two criteria (10 points total): 1) whether you hand them in (2 point); and 2) the insight or amount of thought reflected in the questions (4 points/question). Your questions should be "think" questions rather than just scribbling down a general content question such as: what is civic engagement? or, what is cohesion? Though you may ask for clarification or more specificity about a particular topic during class discussion. There will be 7 of these throughout the semester, each worth 10 points.

In-Class Participation Points - 30 points

The lifeblood of this course is discussion and participation, therefore your attendance at each class period coupled with your preparedness (i.e. having completed the readings) and readiness to engage in thoughtful discussion are crucial –your participation in class will be gauged and points distributed accordingly. I will keep attendance to assist me in your participation calculation.

Service Learning Participation & Final Project – 150 points

The final project for this course will be to organize a Science Fair for Force Beacons. The grading rubric for this assignment will be determining as the project unfolds. We will decide together, democratically as a class, how to

determine final grades. However, at least a third of the points will be allocated based on the effort you take in understanding Force Beacons and their after school program and your performance with our partner throughout the quarter. More details will be provided in class.

Grading

Grades will be determined as follows:

Reflections	150 pts.
Notecards	70 pts.
Class Participation	30 pts.
Service Learning Project	150 pts.
Total Points	400 pts

Final Grade = % of total points (400)		
Percentage	Points	Grade
94-100%	376-400	A
90-93.9%	360-375	A-
87-89.9%	348-374	B+
84-86.9	336-347	B
80-83.9%	320-335	B-
77-79.9%	308-319	C+
74-76.9%	296-307	C
70-73.9%	280-295	C-
67-69.9%	268-279	D+
64-66.9%	256-267	D
60-63.9%	240-266	D-
Below 60%	Below 240	F

Course Policies:

Attendance

You are expected to attend and participate in class. I am always more flexible if you are proactive – contact me before things arise rather than weeks after. I will record attendance to assist me in calculating your final participation grade. If you have an excused absence, such as those for University functions or for medical reasons, please see me.

It is your responsibility to initiate communication with a fellow classmate or myself about course content or announcements that were presented during a missed class.

Conduct and Responsibilities

By registering for this course, you entered into a contractual agreement as a learner. As a full partner in the learning process, you assume primary responsibility for your education choices, actions and decisions. The schedule clearly states the dates and times this class meets. Please be on time for each class. If you're not here, you can't participate in our collaborative learning process, and your absence affects everyone in the course. You are also expected to be courteous to your peers, classroom guests, as well as myself.

Here's an incomplete list of *unacceptable behavior*.

- Disrespectful and/or hateful language
- Violent and/or threatening conduct
- Cell phone use including text messaging, surfing the internet, etc.
- Activities not related to the course (for example: working on a crossword puzzle, reading the Clarion or surfing the net)

Student Athletes / Special Needs / Etc.

If you have a university-approved circumstance that requires flexibility in due dates, testing environments, etc., please let me know toward the beginning of the semester. Also please request that the Disability Services Program send a letter verifying your disability [contact the Disability Services Program (DSP) at 303-871-2372 or via <http://www.du.edu/car/uap/>].

Late Work / Make-Up Work

I do not accept late work except under extreme circumstances. Should events in your life arise that make it difficult for you to complete your work in a timely matter, please come talk to me. Late assignments will only be accepted with my approval and appropriate points will be deducted.

Blackboard

This class will have a Blackboard site. Please orient yourself with the blackboard system. The site will contain important links to class material (syllabus, assignments), links to readings (pdf files, web sites) and other information. I will also use Blackboard to post any announcements or updates.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a score of zero on the assignment and/or failing grade in the course. Use your own words and ideas for each assignment and cite additional sources through in-text citations and proper referencing (see writing and grammar section below). For the consequences of academic dishonesty, refer to the University of Denver website on Academic Integrity (<http://www.du.edu/honorcode/studentprocedure.htm>). See also <http://www.du.edu/ccs/> for general information about citizenship standards from the Office of Citizenship and Community Standards.

Violations of the honor code and academic misconduct will be taken seriously and are grounds for automatic failure of the course. When I have concerns about potential academic misconduct, a memo detailing the instance(s) of potential misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Citizenship and Community Standards for their review and records.

If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of these issues as they pertain to this course, it is your responsibility to consult with me before you complete any relevant requirements of the course.

Questions/Concerns/Suggestions

I will always find time to assist you outside of class regarding assignments, course material, advising, grades, or any other reason related to class. Please come talk to me during the semester if you're stuck on an assignment, unclear about a topic, concerned about your grade, etc. Don't wait until the end of the semester to see me if you're having difficulties early on.

Writing and Grammar

Good writing skills are imperative. Consequently, written work is expected to be concise, organized and with minimal errors. Grammar will be a regular criterion for grading on all assignments! Appropriate writing style is expected. Slang, clichés, jargon, or offensive language and/or quotes will not be accepted. All writing assignments must adhere to the following criteria.

1. If typed, font should be Times New Roman, 12 point, and double-spaced. Standard margins should be used.
2. Place your name, the class, and the name of the assignment as a header. Use page numbers in the footer.
3. To conserve our precious natural resources, please print/write all materials double-sided.
4. DO NOT bind, place in a folder, or fasten your assignments by any method other than stapling. DO NOT create a cover page, this simply wastes valuable natural resources.
5. Except in instances of creative or alternative writing, all assignments should be in the following format:
 - a. Introduction
 - i. Introduce the topic you will be writing about and outline your essay.
 - b. Body of essay
 - i. Facts, statements, history that supports the above introduction
 - ii. This is the "meat" of your essay, be sure to back up all of your statements
 - b. Conclusion
 - i. Re-state your main points
 - ii. Concluding remarks that summarize or characterize your essay
6. Support all statements with readings or in class discussion/lectures. References and in-text citations are required –APA (6th edition) is the recommended style. If you would like some resources about APA, just let me know.

7. If you are having trouble with your writing, please see me or the campus writing center located at Penrose. To Schedule an Appointment:
 - a. Go to <http://myweb.du.edu> and login
 - i. Select the "Student & Financial Aid" tab
 - ii. Click on the "Writing Center" menu
 - b. Or ... Call 303.871.7456

Spring 2012 Schedule

WEEK ONE (March 26th)

Civic Engagement and the Civic Mission of Schools

- READING DUE:
 - Preface: Keeping the Republic (p. xvii-xx) in *Teaching America: The Case for Civic Education*
 - Start with the Facts: Strengthening Denver Public Schools' Education Pipeline
- FOLLOW UP (OPTIONAL) READINGS:
 - *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*, 1983, can be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/>
 - *A Nation at Risk: 25 Years Later* – Special coverage from Education Week on the progress made since *A Nation at Risk* was released, found at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/collections/nation-at-risk-25-years/>
 - *The Civic Mission of Schools, 2003*, can be found at: http://civicmissionofschools.org/site/campaign/cms_report.html

WEEK TWO (April 2nd)

What do we mean by civic engagement, civic education, civic development, civic identity?

- READING & NOTECARD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE:
 - Chapter 1: What is Civic Engagement? (p. 1-13) in *The Future of Democracy: Developing the next generation of American citizens*
 - Introduction (p. XXII-XXXI) of *American Institutions of Democracy: The Public Schools*
- FOLLOW UP (OPTIONAL) READINGS:
 - *What Kind of Citizen?* article, can be found at http://www.civicsurvey.org/what_kind_of_citizen.pdf
- SERVICE LEARNING COMPONENT BEGINS on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting this week
- **DUE: Audio Reflection #1**

WEEK THREE (April 9th)

Citizenship & Cultural Assimilation

- READING & NOTECARD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE:
 - *What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy* by Joel Westheimer & Joseph Kahne, 2004
 - Chapter 2: My Immigrant Tale: Assimilation and the Road to Success (p. 15-25) in *Teaching America: The Case for Civic Education*
- FOLLOW UP (OPTIONAL) READINGS:
 - *Youth-Led Community Organizing: Theory & Action* by Melvin Delgado and Lee Staples
 - *The 7 Components of Transformative Organizing Theory* by Eric Mann

WEEK FOUR (April 16th)

Cultural Assimilation, Part II: Inequities in the System – The Myth of Meritocracy

- READING & NOTECARD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE:
 - Chapter 2: The Complexity of Identity: Who am I? (p. 18-28) in *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*
 - Chapter 4: Identity Development in Adolescence (p. 52-74) in *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*
 - Demographic Change and Democratic Education (p. 302-322) in *Institutions of American Democracy: The Public Schools*
- FOLLOW UP (OPTIONAL) READINGS:
 - *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* (whole book) by Beverly Daniel Tatum
 - *Silenced Voices and Extraordinary Conversations . . . Reimagining Schools!* by Michelle Fine & Lois Weiss
 - *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* by Lisa Delpit

WEEK FIVE (April 23rd)

The Role of the Community in Education

- READING & NOTECARD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE:
 - Chapter 1: Introduction: The Ecology of Civic Learning (p. 1-21) in *Why Community Matters: Connecting Education with Civic Life*

- FOLLOW UP (OPTIONAL) READINGS:
 - Chapter 8: Civic Learning in Communities (p. 156-169) in *The Future of Democracy: Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens*
- **DUE: Audio Reflection #2**

WEEK SIX (April 30th) **CARA OUT OF TOWN***** Science Fair Prep**

No Class This Week – but you do have your service learning component!

- IN LIEU OF READINGS PLEASE DO THE FOLLOWING:
 - Meet as a class and continue preparing for the Science Fair
 - Watch “Waiting for Superman” in preparation for weeks 7 & 8 when we’ll watch the rebuttal movie

WEEK SEVEN (May 7th)

School Choice, Vouchers & the Corporatization of Public Schooling

- READING & NOTECARD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE:
 - Chapter 20: How School Choice Enhances Civic Health: Vouchers and Informed Politics (p. 193-202) in *Teaching America: The Case for Civic Education*
 - Introduction: The 500-Pound Gorilla (p. 1-11) in *Education, Inc. Turning Learning into a Business*
- FOLLOW UP (OPTIONAL) READINGS:
 - Part III: Privatization of Schools (p. 101-165) in *Education, Inc. Turning Learning into a Business*
 - Chapter 14: School Choice and the Democratic Ideal of Free Common Schools (p. 323-345) in *Institutions of American Democracy: The Public Schools*

WEEK EIGHT (May 14th)

Perspectives on Education Reform & Actions We Can Take

- READING & NOTECARD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE:
 - Chapter 12: How You Can Make A Difference (p. 215-228) in *Waiting for Superman: How We Can Save America’s Failing Public Schools*
 - Conclusion: Steps We Can Take (p. 167-171) in *Education, Inc. Turning Learning into a Business*
- FOLLOW UP (OPTIONAL) READINGS:
 - Chapter 10: Institutional Reforms (p. 183-213) in *The Future of Democracy: Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens* (relevant parts only pages 183-195)
- **LAST WEEK FOR SERVICE LEARNING COMPONENT - SCIENCE FAIR TODAY!!**

WEEK NINE (May 21st)

The Role of Deliberation in Democracy and Schools

- READING & NOTECARD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS DUE:
 - Afterword: Democratic Disagreement and Civic Education (p. 347-359) in *Institutions of American Democracy: The Public Schools*
- FOLLOW UP (OPTIONAL) READINGS:
 - *Democratic Education* by Amy Gutmann, Princeton University Press, 1999
 - *Resolved* movie
- **DUE: Draft End-of-Quarter Written Reflection**

WEEK TEN (May 28th)

Peer & Instructor Feedback on Critical Reflection

- **DUE: Simply come prepared to provide feedback to your peers and ready to embrace the feedback you receive**
 - I will bring 4 copies of your reflection to class with me for our peer review session

FINAL EXAM (June 4th)

Final Reflection & Celebration – Details TBA

- **DUE by 5pm: Your final reflection and service learning project grading materials (which will be determined by class on May 21st)**