

Spectrum Session 1

Course Title: Taking Action: Leadership and Service Honors

Course Description

Each year, more than three million Americans experience homelessness. More than 11 million go hungry. One out of every six children in America lives in poverty. Why? What can young people do about it? As a recent student remarked, “Everyone knows social issues exist and wants to help – this course teaches how to do so.” An offering of CTD’s Civic Education Project, this innovative curriculum integrates academic study with meaningful community service for an experience that participants routinely describe as “eye-opening” and “life-changing.” Students split their time between the classroom and supervised hands-on service projects with community organizations ranging from homeless shelters to Head Start programs to top political offices. Through academic research, small group work, and facilitated reflection, students investigate the root causes and proposed solutions of pressing social problems and gain a deeper understanding of complex social issues. This course enhances communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities and prepares students for a lifetime of leadership and civic engagement.

This innovative curriculum integrates academic study with community service to create a powerful, eye-opening experience for young student leaders. Students examine the structure of communities and the different social, political, and economic factors that affect them. Through academic research, collaborative group work, whole-group and small-group discussion, debate, hands-on service projects, and facilitated reflection, students gain a deeper understanding of complex social issues and learn how young people can make a difference in communities to impact societal and structural inequalities. Taking Action enhances critical thinking and problem-solving abilities while teaching students how to become more civically engaged through a life of service, advocacy, activism learning, and leadership.

Focus topics correspond to students’ service assignments and include issues of social inequalities such as urban poverty and educational access. Students will engage in six field experiences – one community assessment experience, four community service projects, and one social activism experience. Within each site, students interact with diverse demographic and social populations. By carrying academic rigor outside the classroom, this highly interactive course allows students not only to apply what they learn in the classroom, but also to learn from the people most directly confronted by a given issue: the social workers and clients, the media and local citizens.

Essential Questions

- How and why do we define, assess, and identify social and political injustice?
- In what ways can a collective group of thoughtful, young leaders take service action toward justice?
- How can we critically reflect on our collective actions to learn and improve?

Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Knowledgeably discuss the dynamic nature of community and how the different layers of communities contribute to or are affected by social injustice.
- Identify the multiple stakeholders that are influenced by or have influence over a social injustice.
- Assess the composition of a community, determine its assets and critical needs, and define possible structural problems that underlie those needs.
- Prepare an action plan to address a particular area of social injustice.

- Enact skills that lead to sustainable social change such as: critical and reflective thinking, interpersonal and intercultural communication, and problem solving.
- Communicate awareness of resources that can be utilized to take action including: local media and policy makers, NGOs and local nonprofit agencies, governmental and assistance programs.
- Speak knowledgeably about cultural/racial/socioeconomic relativism in “comfort-stretching” service opportunities.
- Speak knowledgeably about service and altruism and its possible limitations.
- Critically reflect and learn from service experiences by (1) connecting action to academic and socio-emotional learning, (2) inferring long-term implications, and (3) analyzing action to make future improvements.

Instructional Strategies

This class is unique in that direct instruction by the instructors will be kept to a minimum; dialogue and learning tasks will replace the more traditional lecture format. The class is taught with a *in a deliberately democratic* way. Student voice will be of utmost importance regarding curricular, pedagogical, and field experience decisions; and students will be empowered to make decisions and give critique to matters consequential to their education. In service-learning classes, instructors often refer to the community sites as “cases” to be studied. For this reason attendance and quality participation are paramount to the learning of all students. To ensure success, students must attend *all class meetings and field experiences* and engage in class discussions and tasks. Students should look at their participation as not only a means by which to share their own points of view and to clarify concepts and issues presented, but also as an additional fund of knowledge from which their peers may learn.

Both oral (class participation) and physical (engaging in all tasks and experiences) participation will be an expectation of the course. Since we have no concrete, objective way to assess daily participation, students will be kept accountable for their participation internally. No specific grade will be given for participation; rather structures will be put in place where students *must* participate in order to be successful.

Resources and Materials

- **Books**
 - a. *A Place at the Table: Struggles for Equality in America* edited by Maria Fleming
 - b. *Nickel and Dime: On (Not) Getting By in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich
- **Web sites**
 - a. <http://www.teenink.com> – An online and print magazine that publishes articles, stories, essays, and poetry by teenagers from across the country. Students will be expected to submit articles for publication.
 - b. <http://www.21classes.com> – An online blogging community will be used to communicate information with parents, to provide access to classroom resources, and to post pictures, movies, and student work that relates to the class.
 - c. <http://www.whatkidscando.org> – “Voices and work from the next generation.”
 - d. <http://mobilize.org> – “Dedicated to educating, empowering, and energizing young people to participate to increase our civic engagement and political participation.”
 - e. <http://www.idealists.org> – “Organizations around the world that were started by and run by young people.”
- **Articles**
 - a. Excerpts from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire
 - b. Excerpts from *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools* by Jonathan Kozol
 - c. Excerpts from *There are no Children Here* – Alex Kotlowitz
 - d. Narratives and analytical essays about social, political, and civic issues by teenagers from the magazine, *Teen Ink*.
 - e. “Letters from Birmingham Jail” by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Privilege, Power, and Difference” by Allan Johnson, and “The Call of Service” by Robert Coles.
- **Materials**
 - a. 1 pocket folder or binder
 - b. 1 seventy-page college-bound notebook or composition book
 - c. Blue/black ink pens and pencils
 - d. 2 blue or black permanent markers

- e. 1 reusable water bottle
- f. 1 flash drive for downloading web materials or saving files or documents (optional)

Student Assessment

• Pre-Assessment

Students will take an online assessment that shows their present level of knowledge regarding the outcomes of the class by identifying and defining their level of confidence about key concepts and writing four analytical essays regarding community needs, civic action, social issues, and critical reflection.

• CTD Grading Scale

A+	100-97%	A	96-93%	A-	92-90%
B+	89-87%	B	86-83%	B-	82-80%
C+	79-77%	C	76-73%	C-	72-70%
D+	69-67%	D	66-63%	D-	62-60%
F	below 60%				

• Breakdown of Final Grade

- 30% — Field Experience Responses (4)
- 30% — Performance Assessment Tasks (2)
- 30% — Teach-in Final Project (1)
- 10% — Story of Social Injustice (1)

• Post-Assessment

The post-test will be the same as the pre-test.

Schedule

Date	Essential Questions:	In-Class Tasks:	Assessments	Out of Class Tasks
Week 1: How and why do we define, assess, and identify social injustice?				
Mon 6/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are we? Why are we here? • What is expected of me? What do I expect? • What personal stories of social injustice do we have to tell? • What is the meaning of social justice? How does a justice mentality play a role in actions you take? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walk, meet, and greet and name/action icebreaker 2. Stepping over the Line diversity and personal story-telling exercise & critical reflection (organic discussion) 3. Class discussion norms, class expectations, essential questions, and network groups. 4. Introduce 21classes weblog @ library labs & give pre-test/ asset map exploration 5. Field Experience Preflection & Uptown Exploration 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Class pre-test 2. Pluses and Deltas 3. Walk, meet, and greet post-it notes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) R & A¹: “Building Communities from the Inside Out” pp. 1-11 2) R & A: Community Mapping – Youth-Led Researching and Organizing 3) Based on your readings and research, develop a survey or interview tool to bring into the field
Tues 6/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and why do we gather data to identify community needs? • How and why do we gather data to identify community capacities and assets? • Who are the stakeholders of the community? What are their roles in community issues? 	<p>Field Experience #1: Community Snapshot in Uptown Neighborhood, Chicago: (walk2 protocol)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lunch network protocol – Mid-experience reflection protocol 2. Pluses and deltas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pluses and Deltas 2. Field Experience Responses 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Field Experience Response #1 2) R & A: “Letter from Birmingham Jail” reading 3) R & A: “Building Communities from the Inside Out” pp. 12-25

¹ R&A = Read and Annotate

Wed 6/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What makes an effective community assessment tool, why? What types of information must we consider? What is the difference between asset and deficiency-based community development? Is one better than the other? Why? How do I develop an accurate community asset and deficiency map? What is it used for? How do I convince audience to take action with data on my map? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partner Trust walk, debrief, and sharing of responses. Whole group seminar reflection and discussion – sharing responses, examining actions taken during the field visit Engage in “Save the last word” protocol with “Letters from Birmingham” Network Performance task #1 – Creating a community assessment map and tool; carousel; process debrief (computer lab) Community map development and role-play exercise (audience critical feedback) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pluses and Deltas Field Responses In-class performance task 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> R & A: <i>Savage Inequalities</i> chapter 2- “Other People’s Children” R & A: “What Kind of Citizen?” reading Begin community assessment performance task (Due Monday, 7/26) Finish Assignment #1- Social Justice Personal Story (Due Friday, 7/22)
Thurs 6/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I bring a justice-oriented mindset into a community service experience, particularly one that deals with education of children? What is the value of community service work like done at the Foster Reading Center? What are the limitations? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field experience pre-reflection and framing (reciprocity, empathy, justice mindset) <p>Field Experience #2: Foster Reading Center 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field Experience Response <p>Study Session: Meeting with Alderman Shiller from Uptown. Q & A: Investigating underlying assets and deficiencies of Uptown</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field Experience Response #2 R & A: “Barn Raising: Collaborative Group Process in Seminars” by McCormick & Kahn R & A: “Types of Service” by Robert Cole Post 1 artifact on blog
Fri 7/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways does story-telling during service experiences impact a “reciprocal”, “empathetic” and “justice-oriented” experience? How do we begin addressing social or political problems that exist through service? How do we begin developing a theory of change to address the problem? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partner Trust walk, debrief, and sharing of responses Whole-Group Seminar – Critical Reflection of Field Experience # 2 Story-telling protocol w/ tales of social injustice. Four Frames: Political, Educational, Economic, Social X/Y spectrum “Take a stand” exercise (from the four frames) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Exit slips / Pluses and Deltas Turning Point “norms” and discussion effectiveness self-assessment In-class performance task #3 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> R & A-- <i>Nickel and Dimed</i>, pp 1 – 25 Finish Community Assessment Performance Task (CAPT) due Monday

Week 2: July 5 – July 9: How can we collectively take action toward social justice?				
Mon 7/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is A Just Harvest’s theory of change? What evidence makes you infer it? What actions and activities do you see that reflect the theory of change? Do you perceive this theory to be effective? Why? Why not? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-reflection of a Just Harvest Field visit – H & H task <p>Field Experience #3: A Just Harvest 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field Experience Response Pluses and Deltas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> R & A – “Q & A: The Causes of Hunger in America” R & A “Homeless Children and Youth” article Field Experience Response #3
Tues 7/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the underlying causes of hunger and homelessness? What evidence did we see in our field experiences that connected to our readings? Once we establish underlying causes, how do we create a theory of change and action plan? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partner Trust walk, debrief, and sharing of field responses Whole-group critical reflection of Field Experience #3 Open-Class Forum: Developing our collective plan for social justice in Uptown/Evanston—organizing mobilization (1/2 Day Organization and Project Selection) Action Plan Theory of Action Task Re-Forum & Collective Action Plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection Group Performance Task Pluses and Deltas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> R & A: YMCA Theory of Change Post artifact #2 on the blog <p>Study Session: Open Forum Organization</p>
Wed 7/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the YMCA’s theory of change? What actions, activities, or structures do they have in place 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field Experience pre-reflection <p>Field Experience #4:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field Experience Response Pluses and Deltas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field Experience Response #4

	<p>to work toward it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are the collective efforts of <i>groups</i> used to take action? 	<p>McGaw YMCA Children's Center, Evanston</p> <p>http://www.mcgawymca.org</p> <p>9:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.</p> <p>3. 3-2-1-2 Network Protocol & Poetry Preview</p>		<p>2) R & A: <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> Preface</p> <p>3) Creating topics for spoken word poetry</p>
Thurs 7/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is oppression? How does it affect issues of justice? What does it mean to be critically conscious? How does that affect our service? In what ways can the performing arts be a tool or mechanism for awareness? What actions can be taken to promote this awareness? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partner Trust-Walk, debrief, and sharing of field responses <i>or</i> individual reflection exercise Guest Speaker: Elizabeth Clarke, President of Juvenile Justice Initiative (taking political and social action) Spoken Word and Poetry Slam Workshop -- Guest Speaker(s) – Andi Kauth and Billy Tuggle 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Online blog & class survey feedback Pluses and Deltas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> R & A: Resource Sheet: "Social Oppression, an Operational Definition" Read: "How do we Relate? The relationships Between Forms of Oppression" <p>Study Session: Open Forum</p>
Fri 7/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways is the Cornerstone Community outreach attempting to bring justice to the homelessness? Are they successful based on your experience? Why? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field Experience pre-flection on blogs & assessment <p>Field Experience #5: Cornerstone Community Outreach 10:00 – 1:30 p.m.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field Experience pre-flection on blogs & assessment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field Experience Response Action Plan Performance Task Exit Slip 	<p>Finish Theory of Change and Action Plan Performance Task (Due Monday, 7/12).</p> <p>Field Experience Response #5</p>

Week 3: How can we critically reflect on our collective actions?				
Mon 7/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What actions can we take that in our daily lives that impact social justice? How can we use the method of <i>theatre</i> to bring awareness to social injustice? How can we involve the people of the community in sharing the message of social change? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partner Walk Critical Reflection – Oppression and power implications in service, connection to justice mindset Theatre of the Oppressed Workshop and performance @ Norris Theatre of the oppressed in a public setting; guest speaker: Christian Totty & Jordan Clarke 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Group Performance Task Pluses and Deltas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> R & A – LIFT Website Reading Reading TBA Assign Teach-in
Tues 7/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does LIFT view urban poverty? What does affect their theory of change? How does LIFT balance all four SEEP frames in their theory of change? How does LIFT utilize or advocate for public policy to move toward social justice? 	<p>Field Experience #6: LIFT, Evanston http://www.liftcommunities.org/chicago</p> <p>10 a.m. – 2 p.m.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field Experience Response Pluses and Deltas Individual Written Reflection 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Field Response #6 R & A: Culture of Power Reading by Paul Kivel <p>Tuesday Study Session: Student Mobilization Forum</p>
Wed 7/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does race and racism play our service? Why are they important? What are (1) the culture of power; (2) the culture of poverty; and (3) social capital? How do these play a role in service and activism? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partner Walk Stepping over the line Organic Discussion re: Race and its role in urban poverty Take post-test and exit slip Open Forum – Class-Created Project and Experience 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Post artifact #3 on the blog Prepare for class-develop project
Thurs 7/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can a collective group of young leaders take action? What implications are there of student-led collective activism? 	<p>Field Experience #7: Class-Developed Service Project/Social Activism Experience</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Post-Class assessment Reflection Performance Task Pluses and Deltas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Final Project and Teach-in Preparation

Fri 7/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have we learned? What actions can we take to move toward social justice? • What questions do we still have? How can we continue to seek answers and ask more questions? • What are conclusions we can draw about our role as a young person in our society? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End-of-year surveys 2. Final project critical reflection 3. "Learning" Teach-in 4. Project celebration and final reflection 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final Project Presentations & Teach-in 2. Final Class Reflections 3. Final Pluses and Deltas 	Go be warriors for social justice!
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CTD Statement on Third-Party Web Sites

Instructors are required to thoroughly review any third-party web sites they intend to use in their courses for inappropriate content. However, because web content continuously changes, CTD disclaims any responsibility for any of the content contained on third-party web sites used in course materials. If you become aware of anything that may be inappropriate, please notify CTD staff immediately.

SAMPLE