

William Paterson University
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Women's and Gender Studies

Course Outline

1. TITLE OF COURSE AND COURSE NUMBER:

Activism and Social Change. WGS 3330. 3 credits

2. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course critically examines the notion and practices of “activism” that are framed around contemporary issues that call for “social change” such as inequality, violence, loss of livelihoods, educational access, forced migration, lack of health and healthcare, environmental justice, discrimination and law, and globalization. Using a social justice framework to explore dynamics of race, gender and class, the course will examine case studies of community activism and advocacy to understand the interconnected systems of inequality and ways to challenge them. Key questions that inform this course are: What are the social, political, economic, ecological and cultural conditions that give rise to social activism and movements? How have marginalized groups historically organized for political and social justice? How do these movements affect political processes and institutions? The course will explore possibilities to engage with local community-based work and advocacy.

3. COURSE PREREQUISITES: UCC areas 1, 2, 3 and Area 4

4. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

To deepen an understanding of civic engagement and effective citizenship

To identify, examine, and analyze social conditions and community problems as arising from systems of inequality and discrimination

To critically appreciate the need for activism and social justice

To evaluate the notion of activism and activist practices and strategies

To explore possibilities to engage with community-based work and advocacy

To examine connections and distinctions between community service and social activism

To enhance critical thinking and communication

5. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- a. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills to engage in community problem solving

As part of WGS 3330, students, working with the instructor, select a project they will work on for the course – either an analysis of community-based case studies and/or a service-learning component that creates opportunities for students to engage with local communities. Students will be required to: write and present their analysis of the problems / key issues facing the community; recognize the meanings and importance of activism for social change

- b. Identify key arenas (local, national and/or global) of engagement and decision-making

Throughout the semester, students will have written assignments and readings that will identify particular communities and issues or problems to investigate. The writing assignments and project reports will focus on particular kinds of community-based work and advocacy in order to: demonstrate the interconnectedness of social problems (local, national, regional, global), their contexts, and possibilities for change; identify and analyze the conditions under which different forms of activism emerge and their strengths and limits.

- c. Identify the relationship between the course discipline and civic engagement

The discipline of WGS is inherently defined through an integration of intellectual (theoretical) and civic engagement (activist) work (such as interventions in public discourses, practices and policies). This course will enable students – through written assignments, research and presentations – to effectively use social justice frameworks and intersectional approaches to civic engagement (around issues such as gender, race, class, sexuality, environment, identities, immigration, health).

- d. Demonstrate the skills to effectively participate in community and civic life

As part of this course, students will work on a class project of their choice which will include collaborations with civil society organizations (communities and advocacy organizations such as those working on rights, domestic violence, homelessness, immigration, poverty, healthcare, etc.) and demonstrate that they can successfully apply their skills and knowledge of civic engagement within this context.

6. TOPICAL OUTLINE FOR COURSE CONTENT:

What is activism? Its forms, historical emergence, relation between forms and contexts, strategies and ideologies; activist imaginations; examples include historical cases such as civil rights movement, anti-war movements, and local cases of issue-based community actions

What is community? Kinds of community, problems and challenges, membership and leadership, engagement with larger society and state, solidarity and community activism; examples include communities based on commonality of experience of oppression (ethnic, race, gender, sexuality, class), local communities (residential), communities of interests (elderly)

Community-based organizations - NGOs, INGOs, non-profit organizations, campus services, issue-based activisms, outreach

What are social movements? How do social movements link to community activism? Advocacy? definitions, functions, models, communication, agendas; examples could include women's movement, civil rights and anti-discrimination, labor and class, LGBTQI rights, "occupy" movements, issue-based such as welfare, environmental, cultural rights, displacement

Methods of inquiry into community engagement - identification and construction of problem, collection of data within the community, analytical tools for problem-solving, communication methods.

Human rights as a transnational framework: history, policies, institutional changes, debates, case studies

Activism and the State - engaging the state versus community-based solutions, law and communities, government and representation of community interests, public policy, institutions of state - justice system, military, welfare, housing, healthcare

Activism and globalization – forms of solidarity, global activisms, global justice movements, transnational institutions for activism and advocacy, online communities and activism, anti-globalization struggles and forums

Activism and change: promise of feminist education, movements for social change, modes of engagement and resistance

7. Writing Intensive: No

8. Technology Intensive: No

9. SUGGESTED TEACHING METHODS AND STUDENT LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Writing portfolios, structured reflections, group discussions, individual and course service learning projects, films, guest speakers, site visits, and, etc.

10. GUIDELINES/SUGGESTIONS FOR METHODS OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT:

Journals, informal and formal writing assignments to analyze the historical and contemporary contexts of people and the world that students encounter during experiential learning within communities

Group projects (paper and presentations) where students present their analysis of the work of organizations and develop social policy initiatives for the organizations

11. Suggested readings, suggested or required texts, objects of study

Suggested Required Texts:

Baumgardner, Jennifer and Amy Richards.2005. *Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.

Hawkesworth, M. E. 2006. *Globalization and Feminist Activism*. NY: Rowman and Littlefield.

Kristof, Nicholas and Sheryl Wudunn.2009. *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Naples, Nancy A. 1998. *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class, and Gender*. New York: Routledge.

Naples, Nancy A. and Karen Bojar. 2002. *Teaching Feminist Activism: Strategies from the Field*. New York: Routledge.

Oyler, Cella. 2011. *Actions Speak Louder than Words. Community Activism as Curriculum*. NY: Routledge

Shragge, Eric. 2003. *Activism and Social Change* NY: Broadview Press

Stewart, Charles J., Craig Allen Smith, and Robert E. Denton, Jr. 2001. *Persuasion and Social Movements*. 4th ed. IL: Waveland.

12. Bibliography of supportive texts and other materials:

Alexander, Michelle. 2010. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. NY: New Press

Astin, A. W., & Sax, L. J. 1998. How undergraduates are affected by service participation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 39, 251-263.

Astin, A. W., Sax, L. J., & Avalos, J. 1999. Long-term effects of volunteerism during the undergraduate years. *The Review of Higher Education*, 22, 187-202.

Bell, lee Anna. 2010. *Storytelling for Social Justice Connecting Narrative and the Arts in Antiracist Teaching*. NY: Routledge

- Blackmon, Doug. 2009. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. MA: Anchor
- Boulding, Elise. 2000. *Selections from Cultures of Peace*. Syracuse: Syracuse University
- Canaday, Margot. 2011. *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America (Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America)*. NJ: Princeton University Press
- Chen, Ching-In., Jai Dulani, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha. Eds. 2011. *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities* NY: South End Press
- Chomsky, Noam and Robert W. McChesney. 2011. *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism & Global Order*. NY: Seven Stories Press
- Clapham, Andrew. 2007. *Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cockburn, Cynthia. 2007. *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism, and Feminist Analysis*. New York: Zed Books.
- Dartnell, Michael Y. 2006. *Insurgency Online: Web Activism and Global Conflict (Digital Futures)*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press
- Dworkin, Ronald. 2000. "Justice and the High Cost of Health." In *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality*. MA: Harvard University Press.
- Enke, Anne. 2007. *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space, and Feminism Activism*. Duke University Press.
- Enloe, Cynthia. 2007. *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link*. NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
- Erikson, Robert. 2001. "Descriptions of Inequality: The Swedish Approach to Welfare Research." In *The Quality of Life* edited by Nussbaum and Sen. London: Oxford University Press
- Flexner, Eleanor. 1996. *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* MA: Harvard Univ. Press
- Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (M. Bergman Ramos, Trans). New York: Continuum International Publishing Group. (Original work published in 1970).
- Gandhi, Mohandas K. 2001. *Non-Violent Resistance (Satyagraha)* NY: Dover publications
- George, Susan. 2004. *Another World Is Possible* London: Verso

- George, Susan. 2010. *Whose Crisis, Whose Future*. NY: Polity
- Gitlin, Andrew. Ed. 2004. *Power and Method: Political Activism and Educational Research (Critical Social Thought)* NY: Routledge
- Gullett, Charly 2010. *Raising Hell With Alinsky: Conservative Activism and Civil Disobedience* Arizona: Warfield Press
- Guy-Sheftall, B. 2008. Women's studies: a view from the margins. In *The evolution of American Women's Studies: Reflections on triumphs, controversies, and change*. Ed. by A. Ginsberg. 103-116. NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hawkesworth, M. 2010. From Constitutive Outside to the Politics of Extinction: Critical Race Theory, Feminist Theory, and Political Theory. *Political Research Quarterly* September vol. 63 no. 3 686-696.
- Hephaestus Books. 2011. *Activism By Method, including: Civil Disobedience, Direct Action, Human Shield, Culture Jamming, Hacktivism, Satyagraha, Advocacy, Open Campaign, ... Pamphleteer, Judicial Activism, Soapbox*
- hooks, b. 2003. *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. Routledge: New York.
- INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. 2006. *The Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology* NY: South End Press
- INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. Eds. 2009. *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. NY: South End Press
- Jordan, Tim. 2002. *Activism!: Direct Action, Hacktivism and the Future of Society* London: Reaktion Books
- Kahn, Seth and JongHwa Lee. 2010. *Activism and Rhetoric: Theories and Contexts for Political Engagement* NY: Routledge
- Kaufman, Joyce P. and Kristen P. Williams. 2010. *Women and War: Gender Identity and Activism in Times of Conflict*. NY: Kumarian Press
- Kedrowski, Karen and Marilyn Sarow. 2010. *Cancer Activism: Gender, Media, and Public Policy* IL: University of Illinois Press
- Margaret DiCanio. 2005. *Encyclopedia of American Activism: 1960 to the Present*. NE: iUniverse Inc
- Margo V. Perkins. 2000. *Autobiography as Activism: Three Black Women of the Sixties*. MS: University Press of Mississippi

Marshall, Catherine and Amy Anderson. Edts. 2008. *Activist Educators Breaking Past Limits* NY: Routledge

McCaughey, Martha and Mike Ayers. Eds. *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice*. NY: Routledge

McGuire, Danielle L. 2010. *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance-- A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*. NY: Vintage

Mogu, Joey, Andrea Ritchie, Kay Whitlock. Eds. 2011. *Queer (In)Justice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States (Queer Action / Queer Ideas)*. NY: Beacon Press

Naples, N. 2008. Reflections on a feminist career. In *The Evolution of American Women's Studies: Reflections on Triumphs, Controversies, and Change*, ed. A. Ginsberg. 199-212. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nussbaum, Martha. 1999. "The Feminist Critique of Liberalism." In *Sex and Social Justice*. London: Oxford University Press.

Okin, Susan. 1999. "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?" In *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* edited by Joshua Cohen. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ransby, B. 2009. *Feminism and Social Change*. Chicago: University of Illinois

Riedner, Rachel and Kevin Mahoney. 2008. *Democracies to Come: Rhetorical Action, Neoliberalism, and Communities of Resistance (Cultural Studies/Pedagogy/Activism)* NY: Lexington Books

Rosen, Ruth. 2000. *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*. NY: Viking.

Rothenberg, P. 2008. Women studies—the early years: Sisterhood is powerful. In *The evolution of American women's studies: Reflections on triumphs, controversies, and change*, ed. A. Ginsberg. 67-86. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rudacille, Deborah. 2005. *The Riddle of Gender: Science, Activism, and Transgender Rights* NY: Pantheon Books

Shavelson, L. 2002. *Hooked: Five Addicts Challenge our Misguided Drug Rehab System*. NY: New Press.

Sides, Josh. 2011. *Erotic City: Sexual Revolutions and the Making of Modern San Francisco* NY: Oxford University Press

Silvers, Anita. 1995 "Reconciling Equality to Difference: Caring For People With Disabilities." *Hypatia*. 10:1

Smith, A. 2006. Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy: Women of color organizing. In *The color of violence: Incite! Anthology*. Cambridge: South End Press.

Smith, Andrea. 2005. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* NY: South End Press

Speck, B. W. 2001. Why service-learning? In *Developing and implementing service-learning programs: New directions for higher education*. Edited by M. Canada and B. W. Speck. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Springer, Kimberly Ed. *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: Contemporary African American Women's Activism* NC: Duke University Press.

Steger, Manfred and Nancy S. Lind. Eds. 1999. *Violence and Its Alternatives*, NY: St. Martin's Press

Stein, Rachel. 2004. *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and Activism* NJ: Rutgers University Press

Stewart, Charles J., Craig Allen Smith, and Robert E. Denton, Jr. 2001. *Persuasion and Social Movements*. 4th ed, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.

Tarrow, Sidney G. 2005. *The New Transnational Activism*. NY: Cambridge University Press

Vlahoulis, M. 2009. *Women and Social Change*. Tempe: Arizona State University.

Walker, T. 2000. A feminist challenge to community service: A call to politicize service learning. In *The practice of change: Concepts and models for service-learning in women's studies*, eds. B. J. Balliet and K. Heffernan. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education.

Washington, Harriet A. 2008. *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present*. MA: Anchor

Washington, James M. Ed. 1986. *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* NY: HarperCollins

West, Cornel. 2011. *Hope on a Tightrope* NY: Hay House

Young, Iris Marion. 2003. "Social Movements and the Politics of Difference." In *Race and Racism*, edited by Bernard Boxill. Oxford: Oxford University Press,

Zimmerman, B. 2002. The past in our present: Theorizing the activist project in women's studies. In *Women's studies on its own*, ed. R. Wiegman, 183-90. Durham: Duke University Press.

13. PREPARER'S NAME AND DATE: Vidya Kalaramadam. October 17th, 2012

14. ORIGINAL DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL DATE: August 26th, 2012