

PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS: COMM 3990 COMMUNITY RADIO IN VIEQUES, PR

WINTER SEMESTER: 2018-2019—Travel Dec 29, 2018-Jan 5, 2019

Dr. Lori Ramos, Professor ramosl@wpunj.edu

Assisting: Dr. Diana Peck peckd@wpunj.edu

Sebastian Escobar escobars@wpunj.edu

An offering within Selected Topics, this course is based on engagement with a community that was devastated by Hurricane Maria as it rebuilds itself. The focus is on providing expertise and handpower to continue the recovery of the community radio station, WVQR-90.1FM, over the course of a one-week service-learning experience in Vieques, Puerto Rico while providing an introduction to the history and culture of Vieques. COURSE PREREQUISITES: Permission of the Chairperson

Textbook (recommended): Rennie, E. (2006) *Community Media: A Global Introduction*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. and additional readings as provided by the instructors.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The course objectives are:

1. To demonstrate the role of community media in post-disaster relief and reconstruction problem solving
2. To assist with strengthening the community outreach of Radio Vieques
3. To develop programming that will be shared between Radio Vieques and WPSC-FM.
4. To develop group participation and leadership skills
5. To identify key ways in which community radio facilitates local leaders' and citizens' engagement and decision-making
6. To develop techniques of observing and listening to community concerns
7. To work with community members to develop programming and/or audio documentary ideas, both for WVQR and for college radio
8. To assist with the development of a network of the amateur (ham) radio users and the hardware/network to facilitate their emergency communication capability
9. To identify barriers (e.g., financial, political, cultural, technological) to the station being able to fulfill its role as a community resource and research ways to overcome those barriers.
10. To provide opportunities to interact with community members, including opportunities to volunteer in community service projects and to work with children through the Movimiento en Apoyo a Nuestros Tesoros Ambientales (Movement to Help Preserve Our Environmental Treasures), the Boys and Girls Club and the local schools.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify the role of a community radio station
2. Students will work with community members and leaders to determine what programming can best meet the public interest, convenience and necessity (as required by FCC licensing rules).
3. Through discussions and interviews with community members, students will examine the role of community media and amateur (ham) radio in facilitating emergency communications, government functions and citizen self-expression.

4. By working on service-learning projects, students will participate in a community's continuing efforts to recover from a major natural disaster.
5. Students will participate in creating journalistic stories and/or social media presence to share Vieques's story with diverse audiences
6. Students will conduct basic information gathering among community members by interview and/or questionnaire.
7. Students will reflect on their experience in a final paper, identifying the mission of community radio and the ways it contributes to problem solving in the community.
8. Students will examine the legal requirements of a non-commercial broadcast radio station, including what is necessary to retain FCC licensing.
9. Students will document their experiences and, if assigned, will develop documentation to share on social media or in other mediated forms.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

1. Students will live in arranged local housing in Vieques, Puerto Rico at the invitation of local citizens to work on community projects, particularly the non-commercial radio station, WVQR 90.1FM
2. Under the guidance of Dr. Lori Ramos students will study the history and culture of Puerto Rico and Vieques through lectures and discussions with local leaders and educators.
3. Under the guidance of Dr. Lori Ramos and Sebastian Escobar, the Station Manager of WPSC-FM, students will meet with local leaders and community members to determine programming needs.
4. Under the guidance of Sebastian Escobar, students will gather material for a subsequent audio documentary or radio program and, to the extent possible, prepare the audio documentary/program.
5. Under the guidance of Dr. Diana Peck, students will study the history and role of community and non-commercial media in the U.S.
6. Under the guidance of Sebastian Escobar, Dr. Ramos and Dr. Peck, students will assess the needs of WVQR going forward and suggest ways of meeting the needs.
7. Under the guidance of Dr. Ramos and Dr. Peck, students will participate in local community service projects, primarily through the auspices of MANTA (Movimiento Apoyo a Nuestros Tesoros Ambientales), the Boys and Girls Club, the local schools and the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust.
8. Under the guidance of Sebastian Escobar, Dr. Ramos and Dr. Peck, students will create documentation of their activities to share as appropriate on social media, in podcasts, or other mediated forms.

1. GUIDELINES/SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING METHODS AND STUDENTS LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Participation will be a central component for this course, including participation in:
 - a. Installing equipment in the radio station
 - b. Working with resident station personnel to determine programming needs
 - c. Working with community members to develop programming
 - d. Documenting activities, especially for a future podcast

- e. Attending all lectures/meetings with local experts and historians to learn about community media and the history of Vieques, including the recent demilitarization of the island; Dr. Ramos has connections with many local educators, artists, musicians, and community activists who could meet with our group for formal or informal talks.
 - f. Working with community members on service projects such as cleaning beaches, sharing information about conservation and preservation of the Island and surrounding waters
 - g. Exploring the local natural attractions such as the Bioluminescent Bay.
 - h. Taking a guided tour of the Playa Grande Sugar Mill ruins, which will introduce students to the economic and labor history of the island, including its connections to Europe from the 16th to 20th centuries
 - i. Taking a guided tour of Fort Conde de Mirasol, managed by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture which now often houses shows of the works of local artists
2. Faculty and local experts will prepare a series of talks on the topics of community media, non-commercial radio, Puerto Rico history (including its status within the United States), Vieques history (including its use as a military base), Vieques ecology and environment, and local culture. See “1e” above.
 3. Readings will be assigned before and during the trip to orient students to community media and to Puerto Rico and Vieques.
 4. Students will keep a journal/log of their activities and will write a paper pertinent to their experience.
 5. Students may be able to conduct research on community media needs.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Participate in all trip activities as designated by Dr. Ramos. These will include assisting the process of re-equipping the radio station as needed, attending talks and field trips, and engaging in discussions with local residents regarding community media. Adherence to the rules of the trip is expected as part of this grade. Failure to adhere to the rules may result in failing the course. (50%)
2. Keep a journal to record details of daily activities. (15%)
3. Write a summary paper that reflects on the experience and demonstrates an understanding of community media and the history and culture of Vieques. (20%)
4. Prepare a presentation and/or social media posts and/or a media document such as a podcast or video that summarizes relevant aspects of the time in Vieques. (15%)