Empowering Community Through Creative Expression
RC HUMS 334 SEC 001 / SSW 513 SEC 001
Syllabus for Fall 2011
Wednesdays 4-6pm 28 Tyler, basement of Residential College

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

How can the arts affect change in communities? This course challenges the understanding of what it means to be empowered and how to be an agent of empowerment. Learn how to apply the arts as a tool for change in issues of social justice. This class is taught by a team of teachers that practice engaged-learning as an instructional tool. Students will develop the capacity to formulate creative arts interventions through exposure to engaged-learning practices in the classroom and through hands-on work with one of five exemplary community-based projects in Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor and Detroit. This course meets with SW799.006 and offers undergraduate and graduate students a collaborative learning experience with Residential College and School of Social Work faculty, community artists and community members from local agencies serving families and youth. Students will meet once a week to explore how this genre affects personal, community, and societal transformation through self-reflection, creative response, and the examination of innovators such as Augusto Boal, Hector Aristizabel, Anna Deveare Smith and Lisa Delpit.
LEARNING GOALS:

1. Apply and articulate values, ethical standards and principles unique to arts-based interventions involving diverse populations and settings.
2. Identify ways to match arts-based interventions methods effectively and ethically with community members, across diverse populations and cultural backgrounds.
3. Demonstrate ability to form alliances and collaborations and communicate empathically.
4. Identify a range of arts-based intervention methods that can be applied to individual and community change efforts.
5. Apply in some depth at least one method of arts-based intervention in an applied community setting.
6. Apply strategic planning design and analysis of systems (e.g. logic models) to arts-based intervention at the community level.
7. Describe ways that arts-based interventions can contribute to social change and social justice at the individual, organizational and community level.
8. Conduct grant writing and proposal writing to support arts-based interventions.
9. Understand the role of volunteers in carrying out the work and fulfilling the missions of arts-based interventions and how they relate to staff, artists and community members involved in the intervention.
10. Develop understanding of group skills needed for community collaboration and intercultural interaction.
11. Understand the role of the arts in the process of community, social and individual change and acquire skills in using the arts effectively for these purposes.
12. Utilize a wide perspective of arts-based approaches that engage, strengthen and build well-being at the individual, organizational and community level.

THEMES AND TEXTS THAT SUPPORT LEARNING GOALS

Week 1 and 2
Themes: Class orientation and internship selection

Week 3 (including the class retreat)
Themes: Social Identity, Defining Social Justice, Entering and Exiting Community

1. Identify own social and cultural identities and group memberships and understand how these relate to arts-based work with community members, collaborators and others.
2. Envision what social justice could look like in specific contexts,
3. Develop understanding of group skills needed for increasing intercultural interaction and cross-cultural collaboration at the community level.
4. Demonstrate intersectional humility in communication and interactions with others,
5. Incorporate insights from those with insider and outsider statuses into social justice planning and actions.

**Required reading**


**Class Retreat**
The retreat will be held on Saturday, September 24th 10:30-3pm at the Residential College in room 126 Tyler. It’s on the ground floor next to the glass double doors on E. University.

This is an opportunity for students and teachers to engage in prolonged and intensive team-building activities in order to encourage the community of the class. Individual perspectives will be explored on social identity as an introduction to entering community and the notion of “unpacking” and “stowing baggage.” Responses to the question “What is the Purpose of Art?” will be shared. *(Snacks are provided but bring water and wear clothes for movement – we get playful!)*

**Required reading**

**Week 4**
**Theme: The Power of Arts for Change; the arts as a tool for individual, community and organizational empowerment.**
Students are introduced to the work of community activists and artists Augusto Boal and Hector Aristizabel. (In weeks 8 and 9, classes will focus specifically on Boal.)
Students will:

1. Learn about pedagogies that promote the healing of individuals and communities through arts interventions, specifically Aristizabel’s Blessing Next to the Wound.
2. Local artists, slam poets and musicians working in social justice will visit the classroom to share their perspectives and showcase their work including interactive activities.

**Required reading**

Weeks 5 and 6
Theme: Education, an Issue of Social Justice

Students participate in drama in education specialist Dorothy Heathcote’s Mantle of the Expert pedagogy and practice engaged-learning methodologies in order to add new skills to their arts intervention toolbox.

Visiting education specialist Dr. Simona Goldin provides a backdrop to the current inequalities in education policy and teaching practices in American schools. She poses the questions, ‘why is education the social justice issue of our time?’ and ‘why is it that so many children have permission to fail?’ Race and class disparities in K-12 classrooms are examined and linked to the work at the community sites.

Required reading


Listen online: www.thislife.org/ click on ‘On The Radio’ then select 8/14/09 Going Big: Harlem Renaissance (Geoffrey Canada’s Harlem Children’s Zone).

150 Different Ways of Knowing: Representations of Knowledge in Teaching
S Wilson, L. Schulman and A. Reichert

Dear Zora: A Letter to Zora Neale Hurston 50 Years After Brown
The Graduate Center, CUNY

Week 7
Theme: Language and Power, the Power of Language
Referring to Lisa Delpit’s book, The Skin That We Speak, students will:

1. Identify the ways in which individuals experience language as a personal reflection of gender, race, class and/or sub-culture through the sharing of personal experiences.
2. Deepen their understanding of how language and communication (code-switching) impact community practice work and arts intervention methodologies.
3. Identify how the power of language/language of power is significant to the goals of personal and community empowerment.

Required reading
“The Skin That We Speak: Thoughts on Language and Culture in the Classroom.” by Lisa Delpit and Joanne Kilgour Dowdy
Week 8 and 9

Themes: Oral History to Performance and Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed.

These arts interventions serve to:

1. Challenge the students to identify and make a connection with a person or persons at their site,
2. Organize an interview with them that reflects their opinion of the strengths and needs of the organization or activity,
3. Learn about several models of oral history performance, including the work of Anna Deveare Smith and others,
4. Explore how this oral history could be presented in a theatrical manner,
5. Edit and present the interview material in oral and/or written form.
6. Students will workshop Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed and learn a few of the methodologies that could be used at some of the sites.

Required reading

http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/1999/12/a_brief_introdu.php


http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2002/09/we_all_are_thea.php


Boal, Augusto. “Games For Actors and Non-Actors.” Chapters One and Two 
Routledge 1992

http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2001/09/taking_action_1_4.php

Valdez, Luis. Notes on Chicano Theater. (Google Luis Valdez, click on Notes on Chicano Theater and read pages 6-10)

Peter Schumann. Puppets on the Streets

Can The Muppets Make Friends In Ramallah? NYTimes

Westlake, E.J. “The Children of Tomorrow: Seattle Public Theater’s Work with Homeless Youth.”

Haedicke, Susan C. “Theater for the next Generation: The Living Stage Theater Company’s Program for Teen Mothers.”
Week 10
Theme: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Arts Methodologies in Empowering the Individual, an Organization and a Community

Students will:

1. Apply strategic planning design and analysis of systems (e.g. logic models) to arts-based intervention at the community level.
2. Learn of some important and controversial case studies on how arts intervention programs affected and altered a community’s culture.
3. Determine appropriate and ethical data collection and analytic methods for evaluation.

Required reading


ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly Reflections: Each week students will submit a weekly 1-2 page paper connecting their experience on site with the themes, readings or discussions in class. Students are required to submit their reflections over the course of the semester starting the week of the retreat with an additional final self-evaluative reflection due on 12/14. The reflections should be posted in the Assignments section of C Tools. The deadline for submission is 4pm of each Wednesday class, giving students one week to write each reflection. The reflections provide an opportunity to:

1. Process the experience as it happens.
2. Communicate directly with the supervising teacher.
3. Have a private forum to air personal triggers caused by the work.
4. Integrate the readings and the course work with the internships.
5. Compile a record of the semester to refer back to for the final reflective essay.

**Self-Evaluation Essay due Friday, 12/16**: this 3-5 page essay provides an opportunity to evaluate experiences in this course focusing on individual contributions and insights. Questions to consider are:
1) How responsible was I as a classroom citizen and as a contributor at my site?
2) What have I learned about myself, surprises and validations, and what were my take-away moments?
3) What have I learned about the subject and the practice of the arts as an empowering tool?
4) What have I learned about the community with which I was engaged?
5) Do I have any continuing plans that may include social justice and/or the arts?

**Final Project due Wednesday, 12/14**: The purpose of this assignment is for students to evaluate the strengths and needs of their site and to:

1. Assess and diagnose community needs and assets in ways which gather information, increase participation and strengthen social diversity,
2. Research and present to a small group from the class and a visiting specialist, a creative arts or fundraising idea that may be used next semester at their site.

What should this class do at your site next semester? We are constantly in search of new ideas to make this programming more effective—and we’re asking for your help.

Your assignment: create a proposal for a project that will involve RCHUMS 334/513 students and community members at your internship site. *This project should use the creative arts to build upon the strengths and address the needs of the community your site serves OR a business model to help fund and sustain the programming.* The point of this assignment is for you to suggest to us, based on your experiences, what project would be a good fit for both UM students and community participants to maximize the learning experience of each.

Let’s suppose that next semester, you have been appointed to be the leader at your site. Propose a project that will take place over an entire semester or a unit. Questions to address:

- What will the theme be?
- What materials will you use to address the theme at your site? Please provide samples.
- What will the product be?
- What steps will be taken to get to that product? Please provide a timeline.
- What will UM students do? What will they gain from this experience?
- What will the community members do? What will they gain from this experience?
• How much money will this project cost (excepting personnel and travel expenses)?
• How does this project build upon the strengths and address the needs of the community? Please back up these claims with evidence (either through research, or cite your interview).

On one of the Final Presentation dates you will give a 10 minute presentation to one of our community partners and a small group of your classmates. The feedback you receive for your presentation will inform your final draft. Teachers will meet with you individually to discuss your project.

SITE WORK

This is singularly the most important element of this course where students will:

1. Learn to identify a range of arts-based intervention methods that can be applied to individual and community change efforts.
2. Formulate plans and strategies that involve individuals and diverse groups in efforts to set goals, generate programs, make organizational decisions, respect differences in communication and conflict styles and that involve collective action in order to implement.
3. Apply at least one method of arts-based intervention in an applied community setting.
4. Understand the role of volunteers in carrying out the work and fulfilling the missions of arts-based interventions and how they relate to staff, artists and community members involved in the intervention.

Students must be dependable (being on time, being prepared, being as flexible as possible) as well as willing to fully engage and participate. This means students must make an effort to roll up their sleeves and get involved. Talk to people, be open to learning from the site leader and the community. The sites are very different and therefore the internship experience may vary greatly between sites. Not all of the internships will have hands-on opportunities. Be prepared to learn more than teach and to be ready to provide what the partnering agency needs even if that differs from expectations.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

MATRIX THEATRE is a community-based theatre based in SE Detroit that “uses the transformative power of theatre to change lives, build community and foster social justice.” Check out their website at www.matrixtheatre.org. Students who select this site need to be independent and motivated to support the theatre’s existing projects. Kate Mendeloff will be faculty supervisor. This is a great internship for someone who is good at being self-directed and with lots of initiative.
**END THE ‘R’ WORD CAMPAIGN.** Rich will work with a team of students to create arts-based advocacy events to promote inclusion and acceptance of people with intellectual disabilities and to end the derogatory and hurtful use of the term “retarded.” There is an international campaign coordinated by the Special Olympics and Best Buddies programs. We will collaborate with the UM student chapter of Best Buddies on planning campaign events. We will have the opportunity to plan arts-based events and projects that include college-age women and men who have intellectual disabilities as well as events targeted on the campus and local communities.

We will meet weekly on campus and also have some additional training opportunities for preparing ourselves to work as allies for people with intellectual disabilities. Students will attend some Best Buddy events on weekends to get familiar with the community and to prepare for joint events that we will plan for the campaign.

**TELLING IT** is a community-based program that boosts scholastic confidence through creative expression and provides a safe and constructive space for at-risk children and youth grades K-12 in Washtenaw County. Founded and directed by Deb Gordon-Gurfinkel, Telling It’s mission is to:

- establish a safe and creative environment for children and youth labeled “at-risk-to-fail”
- stimulate creative writing and literacy skills through the creative arts thereby increasing self-esteem and improving scholastic confidence
- when possible, identify and address the impediments to personal and academic success.

Telling It works in partnership with this class and with; SOS Community Services, an agency that provides shelter and support to homeless families, with C.O.P.E. School, an alternative middle and high school in Ypsilanti and with Avalon Housing, a Washtenaw County agency that provides low income housing and support services to single adults and families. Deb Gordon-Gurfinkel will supervise students who select any of the Telling It sites. Rich Tolman will also supervise graduate students. After two to three weeks, students will be expected to regularly facilitate workshops in their internship teams.

**INTERNSHIPS FOR FALL 2011**

The following are the internships options for site-work this semester. You can select as many as you feel you can commit to and carpooling is available for most of the sites:

**Matrix Theater of Detroit**  
Where: Matrix Theatre, 2720 Bagley, Detroit 48216  
When: Varies according to project- often late afternoons and weekends  
Transportation: Your own or carpool
What: Matrix works with youth and adults and does creative projects that promote advocacy and cultural education. Interns will choose to work on a particular project and will be supervised on site by Matrix staff. The faculty supervisor is Kate.

**End the ‘R’ Word Campaign**
Led by Rich. Details TBA

**Telling It Remix**
Where: Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron, Ypsilanti 48197
When: Mondays 3:30-6:15pm
What: A weekly workshop with 10-12 year old children receiving services from SOS Community Services. Jessica Jurek is team leader, Deb is the supervisor

Training: In order to work with the children, students have to take the SOS training on EITHER Tuesday, 1/25 3-5pm OR Thursday, 1/27 3-5pm. This is led by SOS social workers at 101 S. Huron St, Ypsilanti MI, 48197.

**Telling It Avalon**
Where: Carrot Way (?)
When: Mondays 3:30-6:15 starting October 10th
What: A pilot of an eight week program of weekly workshops with teenagers whose families live in one of Avalon Housing’s units that receive support services from Avalon Housing social services.
Training: Monday October 3rd at Carrot Way.

**Telling It Kids**
Where: Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron, Ypsilanti 48197
When: Tuesdays 3:30-6 PM
Transportation: Carpool
What: Weekly “playshops” with 6-8 year old children whose families are receiving services from SOS. Students will be working in collaboration with students from EMU and volunteers from the general population. Deb is the team leader.
Training: In order to work with the children, students have to take the SOS training which will be arranged with Deb. This is led by SOS social workers at 101 S. Huron St, Ypsilanti MI, 48197.

**Telling It COPE**
Where: COPE School, Chapelle School, 111, S Wallace Blvd, Ypsilanti 48197
When: Mondays, Tuesdays and/or Thursdays 11:00-1:00 PM (can select one day or more).
What: High school students meet in a daily class taught collaboratively by Deb with the school psychotherapist Kim Diebboll.
Training: The week of January 24th at COPE during your first site visit, 11:00-1:00pm.
Led by Deb and Kim.
**Independent Internships**
It is possible to set up an internship at a site that is not listed above. To do so, please talk to the instructors for approval and to ensure that it is an appropriate match for this course. The instructors will then decide who will be the supervising teacher.

**CLASS RUBRIC AND RESOURCES**

**What is Expected of the Student When Participating in This Class:**
This class is team-taught by three teachers with varying teaching styles. What they share is a commitment to engaged and interactive learning so students will be expected to participate in activities and exercises that may be quite physical, including role-play and games. Active participation in class is expected. Active participation can be demonstrated in several ways, some examples are: read the texts that have been assigned, participate in discussion, volunteer for in-class exercises, bring experiences or problems from real life groups to class discussion, thoughtfully process classroom experiences, take risks in sustaining dialogue on difficult issues that arise in class and in activities that may be out of the usual comfort zone.

**Assignments and Readings on C-Tools**
Please post weekly reflections and other assignments on time to your site supervisor in Assignments on C-Tools.

The C-Tools site is RC CTC. All those enrolled in the course will be added. This is the place where you will find your reading assignments as attachments under Resources \(\rightarrow\) RCHUMS 334 001 F11. Readings are added to the dates that they are due.

**Course Materials**
*The Skin That We Speak*, Edited by Lisa Delpit and Joanne Kilgour Dowdy, The New Press 2002. (Amazon has them used.) All other readings and other media will be found on C-Tools or disseminated to students.

Students are expected to check their email by 5:00 PM the day before an internship or class meeting.

**Attendance Policy**
We have a great responsibility to our community partners and our class only meets once per week therefore an unexcused absence from class or internships will result in a student’s final grade dropping by half a mark. More than three absences could affect your ability to complete the course successfully. Frequent tardiness to class and internships will also affect a student’s participation or site-work grade and evaluation.

**Grading System**
Rich, Kate or Deb is ultimately responsible for determining the grades of the students they supervise at each site.

**Undergraduates going to Telling It Kids, Remix, Avalon or COPE** will work with Deb on all matters related to class and site work.
Undergraduates going to Matrix will work with Kate on all matters related to class and site work.

End the ‘R’ Word Campaign will work with Rich on all matters related to class and site work.

MSW and other Graduate students will work with Rich on all class-related matters and work with site supervisors on issues related to your site-work.

Grade Breakdown:
Site-Work: 30%
Weekly Reflection Assignments: 20%
Participation in Class & Self-Evaluation Essay: 20%
Oral History to Performance: 10%
Final Project: 20%

Footnote: our experience has been that a syllabus is a constantly evolving entity so there may be changes during the semester but trust that the teachers will provide plenty of notice and explanation if this happens.

USEFUL TEXTS & MOVIES recommended by teachers and students so feel free to let us know of any you would like to add.

Books
I Am A Pencil, a teacher, his kids and their world of stories by Sam Swope Henry Holt and Co. 2005
The Freedom Writers Diary with Erin Gruwell (also a movie) Broadway Books 1999
Teaching Hope: Stories from The Freedom Writers Teachers and Erin Gruwell Broadway Books 2009
Ordinary Resurrections children in the years of hope by Jonathan Kozol Perennial 2000
Savage Inequalities children in America’s schools by Jonathan Kozol Perennial 1991
The Shame of the Nation by Jonothan Kozol Three Rivers Press 2005
Lost at School by Ross Greene Simon and Schuster 2008
Dreamkeepers by Gloria Ladson-Billings Jossey-Bass 2009
The Trouble with Black Boys Pedro Noguera Jossey-Bass 2008
36 Children by Herbert Kohl Plume 1967
Other People’s Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom by Lisa Delpit The New Press 1995 & 2006
The Skin That We Speak edited by Lisa Delpit and Joanne Kilgour Dowdy The New Press 2002
Other People’s Children Culture, Literacy and Learning: Taking Bloom In The Midst of the Whirlwind by Carol D. Lee Teachers College Press, Columbia University 2007
Holler If You Hear Me the education of a teacher and his students by Gregory Michie Teachers College Press 1999
City Kids, City Teachers reports from the front row edited by William Ayers and Patricia Ford The New Press 1996 & 2008
Criminal of Poverty growing up homeless in America by Tiny aka Lisa Gray-Garcia *City Lights Foundation 2006*

Runaways in their own words: kids talking about living on the streets by Jeffrey Artenstein *RGA Publishing Group 1990*

PUSH by Sapphire (also a movie) *Vintage Random House 1996*

Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Friere

Games for Actors and Non-Actors by Augusto Boal published by *Routledge 1992*

Theatre of the Oppressed, originally published in 1974, copyright by Augusto Boal and in English by *Urizen books, 1979*. Published by Theatre Communications Group.

Theater for Community, Conflict & Dialogue by Michael Rohd *Heineman 1998*

Drama for Learning Dorothy Heathcote’s mantle of the expert approach to education by D. Heathcote and Gavin Bolton Heinemann 1995

Theater Games for the Classroom a teacher’s handbook by Viola Spolin *Northwestern University Press 1986*

White Teacher by Vivian Gussin Paley

**Movies/Documentaries**

Precious

OT: Our Town

Born Into Brothels

Stomp the Yard

The Class

Freedom Writers Diary

Homeless: Motel Kids of Orange County HBO 7/22/10