

UC 313: COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

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This course is an experiment in community-based teaching and learning. On the one hand, it is a **practicum** for collaborative public projects in the arts and humanities. On the other, it is a **seminar** that explores the role of culture and higher education in civic and community life. As members of the course, you are both students of, and participants in, public culture-making.

The Projects Practicum: UC 313 will sponsor five community projects, all organized by the UM Arts of Citizenship Program. Each of you will work on a single project of your choosing for the whole term; project teams will typically have three-six students. Although the projects vary in their partners, themes, and products, all of them involve the collaborative creation of cultural resources. Your project work will entail using academic skills—research, teaching, writing, interviewing, design—to create public goods valuable to the larger community. Some of the projects require travel to off-campus sites, but you do not need to have a car or van-training to take the course. The projects are described in the last part of this syllabus.

The Weekly Seminar: The course meets twice a week, on Monday and Wednesday afternoons, for ninety minutes. After the first few weeks of class, Wednesdays are usually reserved for orientation discussions, team meetings, and feedback sessions focused on the community projects. Some project teams may have to schedule regular meetings at other times; please be as flexible as you can. On Mondays, the class will generally meet in seminar format to discuss readings and the course's themes of public culture, democratic participation, and community-based education. These seminar meetings are essential to the educational goals of UC 313, and your attendance and participation are required.

Work Responsibilities and Credit-Hours: You may take UC 313 for three or four credits; you are expected to commit three hours per week of work time (team meetings, community work, seminar, and readings) for each credit-hour. With one-and-a-half hours a week in seminar, and two-three hours of class reading and writing, you will probably work on your project an average of 5-9 hours a week, depending on your credit-hours. **More important than the hours you put in is your commitment to be a responsible, accountable member of the project team.** Your peers, community partners, and I depend on you; in a real sense, you'll be representing the University in the larger community. It is **essential** that you attend project meetings, be on time, and follow through on commitments. Your capacity and consistency in doing so will be an important component of your grade.

Readings: The seminar readings are meant to serve as concise but significant explorations of the themes of the course. Please come to class having read and thought about them and prepared to talk about them. The readings include four books available at Shaman Drum bookstore:

Jane Addams, **Twenty Years At Hull-House**
Harry Boyte, **Everyday Politics: Reconnecting Citizens and Public Life**
Dudley Cocke, **Journeys Home: Revealing a Zuni-Appalachian Collaboration**
W.E.B. DuBois, **Souls of Black Folks**
Diana Eck, **Encountering God: A Journey From Bozeman To Banares**
Kristin Hass, **Carried To The Wall**

Other assignments include online readings, photocopied course materials, and background readings specific to each project team. We will handle the distribution of hardcopy materials in class as needed.

Writing, Presentations, and Community Events: UC 313 asks you to do two types of writing. Each project culminates in written work useful to the public or our partner. This term, our “products” will include a historical website featuring an abolitionist newspaper published in Ann Arbor in the 1840s; educational materials for a play about the history of Motown Record Company; and an exhibit on interfaith dialogue. At the same time, you will write three personal response papers—more formal than a journal but less academic than a conventional paper—in which you reflect on the course themes, your project’s accomplishments and challenges, and the role of community work in your education. The first two personal response papers are 3 pages long; the final, more summative paper is 6-8 pages long. All will be graded.

In the second half of the term, your team will make a formal presentation about your project’s goals, themes, progress, and problems. Because public speaking—the capacity to convey your work in clear, vivid terms before both university and community audiences—is an important skill of collaboration in the “real world,” this will be graded. I hope that we will be able to bring together representatives from all our community partners to hear the presentations and give you feedback. Finally you are required to attend three community events: an interfaith exhibit linked with MLK Day, a campus-wide project fair on community-based learning, and a performance of “Children of Abraham,” connected with one of our projects.

Grading: Your project work will count for 30% of your grade; my assessment will include the effectiveness of your work with your team, the quality of your relationship with your community partners and/or audience, and the quality and timeliness of the product your team creates. Classroom participation, including engagement with readings and leadership of discussion, will contribute 20% to the grade. The two short response papers and team presentation will each represent 10% of the grade, and the final, summative paper 20%.

Response papers are due **electronically** on Friday morning of their assigned week. Because it is so important to bring projects to closure in a timely way, I will not ordinarily give extensions for assigned work, except for emergencies. Late work will be graded down one notch for each day they are late.

A Final Thought: I love doing community-based teaching and learning; I hope that you will too. My goals for you this term are:

- to develop your writing, research, and analytical skills;
- to activate those skills in making valuable contributions to community culture;
- to learn to collaborate with student peers and community “others” in doing public work; and
- to take joy and pride in doing so.

WEEKLY SYLLABUS

Readings marked (SD) are books available for purchase at Shaman Drum.

Readings marked (X) will be distributed as photocopies or textfiles.

Readings marked (W) are on the World Wide Web.

W Jan 5: Introductions

M Jan 10: Themes: Meaning-Making and Citizenship

Kristin Hass, *Carried To the Wall* (SD)

W Jan 12: Projects: An Overview

Script, "Children of Abraham" (X)

Suzanne Smith, *Dancing In the Streets: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit*, 1-20 (X)

"Altar of Democracy" website, <http://www.saccadic.com/altar/index.html>

Students On Site website, Underground Railroad section, all links:

<http://www.artsofcitizenship.umich.edu/sos/topics/african/underground.html>

M Jan 17: Martin Luther King Day: no class

Event: "World Religions In Metropolitan Detroit" exhibit, Michigan League

W Jan 19: Themes: The Crisis of Civic Life

Harry Boyte, *Everyday Politics: Reconnecting Citizens and Public Life*, 1-112 (SD)

Matthew A. Crenson, and Benjamin Ginsberg, *Downsizing Democracy*, 1-19 (X)

M Jan 24: Themes: Crossing Boundaries

Jane Addams, *Twenty Years At Hull-House*, chapters 1-7, 11, 16 (SD)

W Jan 26: Project team meetings—by now you should be well into project reading packets

M Jan 31: Practices: Collaborative Projects

Dudley Cocke, *Journeys Home: Revealing a Zuni-Appalachian Collaboration* (SD)

W Feb 2: Project team meetings

FIRST RESPONSE PAPER DUE FRIDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 4

M Feb 7: Practices: Dialogue Across Boundaries

Diana Eck, *Encountering God*, 1-21, 45-80, 166-232 (SD)

W Feb 9: Project team meetings

M Feb 14: Practices: Storytelling and Historical Memory

W.E.B. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk* (SD)

W Feb 16: Project team meetings

M Feb 21: Practices: Research As Community Culture-Making

Wayne Booth et al., The Craft of Research (X)

Dolores Hayden, The Power of Place, 138-87 (X)

W Feb 23: Project team meetings

SECOND RESPONSE PAPER DUE, FRIDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 25

M Feb 28: Winter Term vacation: no class

W Mar 2: Winter Term vacation: no class

M Mar 7: Reflections: Dialogue As Artistic Practice

Animating Democracy: The Artistic Imagination As A Force For Civic Dialogue, 1-64 (W)

<http://www.americansforthearts.org/animatingdemocracy/full.pdf>

W Mar 9: Project team meetings as necessary

M Mar 14: Reflections: Higher Education and Engagement

“Wingspread Declaration On the Civic Responsibilities of Research Universities” (W)

http://www.compact.org/civic/Wingspread/Wingspread_Declaration.pdf

Harry Boyte, Everyday Politics, 134-59 (SD)

David Scobey, “Putting the Academy In Its Place” (X)

Event, Monday, March 14: performance, *Children of Abraham*, Washtenaw Community College

Event, Tuesday, March 15: UM Project Fair on Community-Based Learning, Michigan Union

W Mar 16: Project team meetings as necessary

M Mar 21: Preparation for team presentations

W Mar 23: TEAM PRESENTATIONS IN CLASS

M Mar 28: Feedback, problem-solving, and crisis management

W Mar 30: Project team meetings as necessary

M Apr 4: Project team meetings as necessary

W Apr 6: Project team meetings as necessary

M Apr 11: Project team meetings as necessary

W Apr 13: Project team meetings as necessary

M Apr 18: Culminations, celebrations, and evaluations

FINAL PAPERS AND TEAM PROJECTS DUE FRIDAY, APRIL 22

UC 313 PROJECTS: WINTER TERM, 2005

- 1) **The Motown Project: Arts of Citizenship** has been aiding Detroit's Mosaic Youth Theatre in its partnership with the Motown Historical Museum to create "Now That I Can Dance," a musical drama about the early history of Motown. The play is slated for production in May, 2005; during this final phase of the partnership, we will create educational, discussion, and exhibit materials that contextualize the history and issues in the play. Research, writing, working with Detroit-area teens and theater artists.
- 2) **Children of Abraham:** In a second collaboration with Mosaic Youth Theatre, Arts of Citizenship is preparing informational materials and a traveling exhibit to foster intergroup dialogue connected with a one-act play about Muslim, Jewish, and Christian teens. Research, writing, exhibit design, participant observation of play performances and dialogues, working with regional interfaith activists.
- 3) **Altar of Democracy:** This project builds on the work of a student team that created an interactive website on political dialogue in response to the Presidential election. During Winter Term, a new team will contribute writing, art, and cultural materials to the Altar, publicize the website, and do research on related initiatives for youth civic engagement, political participation, and cultural response. Political and cultural commentary, art- and culture-making, web design, web research, publicity, and electronic networking.
- 4) **Underground Railroad history website:** Part of an ongoing project to research and present the history of antislavery activism in Southeastern Michigan, this documentary project will design a historical website for digitizing the *Signal of Liberty*, an 1840s antislavery newspaper published in Ann Arbor and held in the Bentley Library. Historical research, public history writing, and web design.
- 5) **The America Project:** In Fall Term, 2005, Arts of Citizenship and other UM units will collaborate with the New York poet and musician Sekou Sundiata on "The America Project," a multimedia, community-based performance project that explores attitudes toward American identity. This term, a student team will plan the project, research the themes behind it, and build relationships with community participants in the project. Working with community groups interested in music and creative writing, research, and creative and expository writing.