ACTIVISM BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Education 545-006 | Fall 2019 Thursdays 4:30PM-7 PM, Van Pelt 113

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Office Hours (GSE 423B): scheduled via Calendly

"People have to be made to understand that they cannot look for salvation anywhere but to themselves."
-Ella Baker

"Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of [people] upon their world in order to transform it."

-Paulo Freire

COURSE DESCRIPTION

ACTIVISM BEYOND THE CLASSROOM (ABC) invites you to engage in participatory inquiry and public scholarship related to grassroots activism around education and social justice, in collaboration with Philadelphia community activists and one another. Together, we will explore how to form the coalition(s), theory, and praxes necessary to transform social conditions. In the first part of the course, we critically examine theories of power, resistance, and liberatory transformation to share knowledges and a build a critical vocabulary with which we will investigate the contested rhetorical and political terrain of our present moment. The notion of praxis, a guiding principle of the course, signals the processes through which "theory" is both embodied and realized. As such, in the second part of the course, we will experiment with how theory can be brought to bear on contemporary struggles around education—and, conversely, how the practices of activism can inform our learning, scholarship, and pedagogies. ABC is an Academically Based Community Service course supported by the Netter Center for Community Partnerships.

Our work will crosscut three areas: (1) inquiry-based working groups, (2) community engagements, and (3) public forms of scholarship, including a class podcast, opinion essays, and a course website located at: www.activismbeyondtheclassroom.com.

WORKING GROUPS

ABC working groups function as micro learning communities formed in collaboration with community partners to: engage in collective inquiry and action, develop teaching and learning practices, and produce public scholarship in chosen areas of exploration. Each working group will develop a **working group syllabus** and a **podcast episode** which, in addition to content added to the course website, will introduce the topic to a wider audience.

For the Fall 2019 iteration of the course, established community partnerships invite collective inquiry in the areas of: teacher unionism and organizing; youth and student organizing; and, processes of gentrification and cultural erasure in Philadelphia communities. Previous inquiry areas

(archived on the course website) have included: mass incarceration, gender, educational disparities, schools as sites of empowerment; Penn-West Philadelphia community relations; queer theory and education; Black and Brown activism in higher education; and critical pedagogies.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

Apart from the ethic and praxis of community partnership (described below), students are asked to observe or (when possible) participate in a local community action around an issue of their choosing (e.g., related to working group inquiries or individual interests), and write a short reflection on the experience to be shared on the course website. Examples of past community engagements have included: neighborhood association meetings, community or student organization meetings, political demonstrations, teach-ins, etc. I strongly encourage you to venture beyond the campus. As a class, we will share information about community engagement opportunities.

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

In addition to intellectually engaging issues of public significance to the field of education, a major objective of the course is for class participants to explore approaches to public scholarship. With the availability of social media and online/open-access publishing, there are more opportunities than ever for researchers to help shape public as well as academic discourses. Yet, graduate training rarely provides avenues for students to cultivate a more "public" voice around their fields of expertise—or, to grapple with the risks public scholarship presents in today's political climate. To this end, in addition to the class podcast, students will also author an **op-ed article** related to their working group or individual interests. Examples from previous students are available on the course website.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

From its inception, the *ABC* course has attempted to introduce students to the Philadelphia organizing landscape and issues of local significance related to education and activism, while providing opportunities for direct engagement with community activists. While the two previous versions of the course invited students to connect with local advocates and engage in dialogue around community-based organizing work, the Fall 2019 iteration of the course purposefully shifts from a community engagement model to a partnership model. Engaging community members after students have already determined topics of inquiry, as was the case in previous iterations, does little to cultivate reciprocity or mutual benefit within university-community relations. In fact, this dynamic can reproduce a pattern of knowledge and resource extraction that undermines the possibility of meaningful collaborations with local communities.

For students, our approach will provide a more substantive form of engagement with community organizations and, for community partners, it is hoped that having an expanded role in shaping the course direction will produce public-facing scholarship that is more useful to their existing work.

While three areas of community partnership have been established to engage with the organizing efforts of teachers, students, and place-based communities, each working group will determine the nature of our shared inquiry as a class. At the culmination of the course, a **community showcase** will be held to celebrate the end of the semester and publicly share the work generated through the course.

TEACHER ORGANIZING

<u>Ismael Jimenez</u>

Co-Chair, Caucus of Working Educators: www.workingeducators.org
Founding Member, Melanated Educators Collective: www.melanatededucatorscollective.com

The Caucus of Working Educators (WE) is a "social justice union" of teachers, counselors, nurses, librarians, and other school support staff that functions as a radical caucus within the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. WE is responsible for the founding of Black Lives Matter at School Week, which is now a national movement, and sponsors campaigns and coalitions related to racial justice, teacher unionism, teacher inquiry, and safe public schools.

The Melanated Educators Collective formed out of The Caucus of Working Educators Racial Justice Committee with the purpose of unifying and empowering educators of color in the Philadelphia and Greater Philadelphia communities.

STUDENT AND YOUTH ORGANIZING

Masterman High School 1967 Student Walkout Historical Marker Committee

"We are (five) juniors from J.R. Masterman High School in Philadelphia. We are working as a team this fall to submit an application for a Pennsylvania historical landmark commemorating the 1967 Black Student Walkout. This past school year we each competed individually in the National History Day Competition, winning in regionals, states, and for some even nationals. This push for the plaque stems from a learned appreciation for local history and our hope that the state will recognize the role of young people during this time. We feel that those who risked their lives and partook in the walkout deserve recognition for their contribution to the nation's history." Student-designed website: www.walkoutsforblackhistory.weebly.com

Philadelphia Student Union

According to the PSU website, "The Philadelphia Student Union exists to build the power of young people to demand a high quality education in the Philadelphia public school system. We are a youth led organization and we make positive changes in the short term by learning how to organize to build power." Currently, the organization is leading a campaign to remove police from Philadelphia schools, and is part of coalitions to secure more equitable funding for Philadelphia schools and ensure that there is a moratorium on further school closures: www.phillystudentunion.org.

PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITIES

Re/Member Black Philadelphia: A Digital Storytelling and Community Archiving Project

Re/Member Black Philadelphia is a multimodal digital scholarship and community archiving collaboration between the GSE, Penn Libraries, the School District of Philadelphia, and multiple community partner organizations led by Dr. Strong. The project seeks to: (1) document processes of community change and displacement through multimodal storytelling, (2) support community institutions and members in digitally preserving significant historical materials, and (3) engage youth and other community members in place-based, collaborative inquiry. Unlike the other partnerships, this project would offer interested student participants an opportunity to contribute to an existing

university-community research collaboration, which utilizes interdisciplinary methods such ethnographic and oral history techniques, geospatial mapping, filmmaking, and archiving.

Project collaborator, **Dr. Jenn Garcon**, Penn Postdoctoral Fellow in Public and Community Data Curation, will support student collaboration with the project. See coverage of our work, "Mapping Disparity in Philadelphia."

COURSE PEDAGOGY

This course is guided by the principles of decolonial, participatory, and critical pedagogies. While activist praxes clearly inform the course subject matter, they also shape how we will learn and collaborate with one another. Each session will be guided by and model different deliberative practices and discussion modes, which are aimed at fostering space for honest communication, collective learning, and the undoing of social hierarchies and un/conscious biases that manifest in the classroom.

Our course materials embrace diverse knowledges, which may take the form of written academic texts, films, podcasts, news articles, think pieces, social media posts, and other popular cultural texts and multimodal ephemera. All materials will be available electronically and it is expected that students will assume an active role in contributing additional resources that are not adequately represented in the syllabus. In the spirit of sharing and building public forms of knowledge, we will make use of the course website, mixtape, podcast, **social media**, and a **public notebook**.

COURSE REQUIEMENTS

1. Class Participation and Attendance	20%
2. Working Group Participation	40%
3. Individual Community Engagement	15%
4. Op-Ed Article	25%

1. Class Participation and Attendance

All participants are expected to contribute to our learning community by adequately preparing to engage with course materials and other participants, thoughtfully and with care. If you need to be absent, no need to discuss. However, be aware that after one unexcused absence, your participation grade will be affected without prior discussion.

Prior to class, students are asked to contribute to our:

- social media (@actbeyondtheclass on Twitter and Instagram) with at least one post related to Three "Qs" (one question, one quandary, and one quote). Be creative and consider this as an exercise in effectively communicating y/our intellectual work to a broader audience that may be unfamiliar with the material. I encourage you to utilize images (including those you capture), video, text, audio, or other modalities. Include your initials or another way of identifying your posts.
- **class mixtape** with a song or soundscape that relates to your engagement with the weekly readings. Add links to the song(s) from YouTube and Spotify to our Canvas site4.

During class, we will take turns contributing to our:

- **public notebook**: rather than, or in addition to, taking individual notes, we will experiment with a collective public record of how we are making sense of our class discussions.
- social media, as another public-facing archive of the experience of our class sessions. This could include recorded video (when we have consensus to do so), images, quoted dialogue, brief discussion summaries, etc.

2. Working Groups

We will form three working groups that will be responsible for leading two-week units related to the teacher organizing; youth and student organizing; and, processes of change in Philadelphia communities. Each working group will have a space on Canvas and the course website to organize the collaborative inquiry process, and is expected to produce the following over the course of the semester:

- a **syllabus** of texts and resources that are useful for understanding the subject matter and will guide class discussion over two weeks.
- a podcast episode
- web content for the working group pages on the course website, which should include the syllabus, podcast episode, and any other materials that represent the collective vision and effort of the group (e.g., discussion questions, images of class sessions, class slides, etc.).
- self and peer feedback, which will form the working group participation grade.

3. Individual Community Engagement

All students must attend an event that is community-based and broadly related to the themes of the course. In the past, students attended community town halls, service events, organization meetings, and protests, though other kinds of off-campus engagement related to issues of educational or social justice are welcomed. After the experience, you must write a sort reflection describing the experience and how it relates to the course, which can be shared on the class website. 500 words (max) is appropriate and these reflections can be submitted at any time.

4. Op-Ed Article

Each participant is asked to craft one opinion article of 750-1250 words related to a topic of their choosing and which is broadly related to the themes of the course. These will be peer-reviewed and workshopped. Extra credit will be given if the opinion piece is published.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Sept 19	Working groups submit first draft of syllabus
Oct 3	Working groups submit final draft of syllabus and pitch podcast episode
Oct 17	Submit individual proposal for Op-Ed
Nov 14	Submit first draft of Op-Ed
Nov 21	Listening session for first cut of podcast episode
Dec 5	Submit finalized working group content for website
Dec 12	Community showcase and self/peer feedback due
Dec 18:	Submit community engagement and finalized op-ed essays
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OVERVIEW OF COURSE

PART I: Theories

Week 1: AUG 29 Introduction to Activism Beyond the Classroom

Week 2: SEPT 5 Theorizing the "Present"

Week 3: SEPT 12 Activism and Radical Traditions

Week 4: SEPT 19 Struggles to Transform the School

Week 5: SEPT 26 Power and Social Transformation

Week 6: OCT 3 Engaging Communities and Publics

PART II: Praxes

Week 7: OCT 10 Working Group 1

Week 8: OCT 17 Working Group 1

Week 9: OCT 24 Working Group 2

Week 10: OCT 31 Working Group 2

Week 11: NOV 7 Working Group 3

Week 12: NOV 14 Working Group 3

Week 13: NOV 21 Podcasting Listening Session

Week 14: NOV 28 NO CLASS

Week 15: DEC 5 Finalizing Working Group Content

Week 16: DEC 12 ABC Community Showcase

COURSE SCHEDULE*

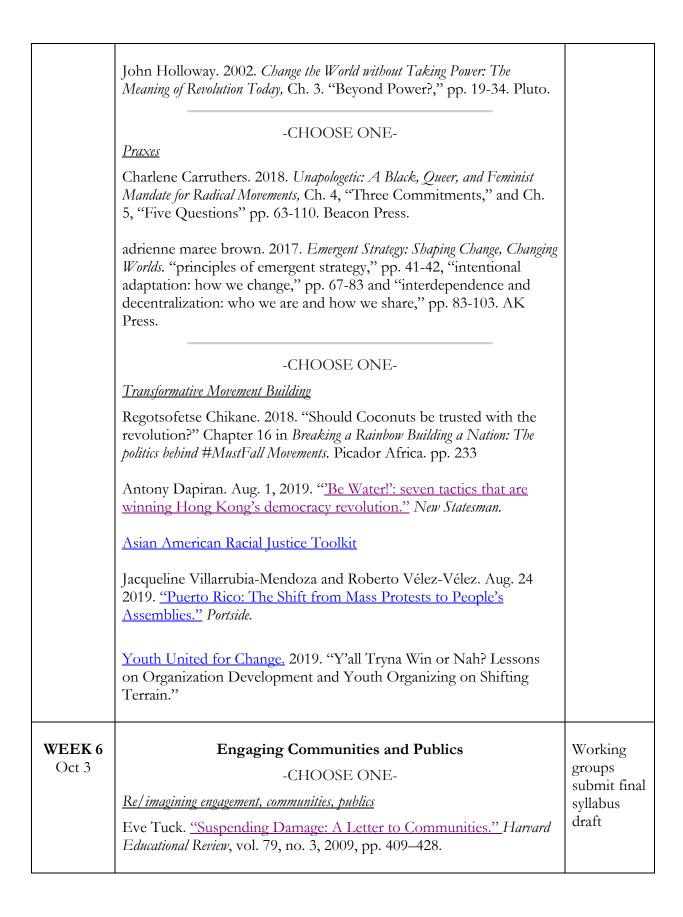
*Subject to change

PART I: THEORIES		
WEEK 1 Aug 29	Introduction to Activism Beyond the Classroom	
WEEK 2 Sept 5	Theorizing "The Present" -CHOOSE AT LEAST ONE- Re/thinking Temporality: J. Jack Halberstam. 2005. In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives. Ch. 1 "Queer Temporality and Postmodern Geographies," pp. 1-21. NYU Press. Rasheedah Phillips. 2016. "Future," pp. 167-174, in Kelly Fritsch et al. (cds). Keywords for Radicals: The Contested V ocabulary of Late-Capitalist Struggle. AK Press. For more of Phillips' digital scholarship/activism: Black Quantum Futurism and Community Futurism. Mark Rifkin. 2017. Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination. Ch. 1 "Indigenous Orientations," pp. 1-47. Duke U Press. -CHOOSE ONE- The "Crisis" (Again) John Clarke. 2010. "Of crises and conjunctures: The problem of the present." Journal of Communication Inquiry 34, no. 4: pp. 337-354. Doreen Massey and Michael Rustin. 2015. "Displacing Neoliberalism" (pp. 191-221) in Stuart Hall et al. (eds), After Neoliberalism: The Kilburn Manifesto. Soundings. -CHOOSE TWO- "The 1619 project." NY Times Magazine. Full PDF Robin D.G. Kelley. 2016. "Trump Says Go Back, We Say Fight Back" in Boston Review forum, "After Trump." View Kelley and responses.	Panel with community partners

	Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. 2016. From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation. Ch. 6, "Black Lives Matter: A Movement, Not a Moment," pp. 153-190. Haymarket Books.	
	"War, Peace and Global Justice" recorded panel with Johana Fernandez, Glen Ford, Vijay Prashad, and George Cicarello-Maher at Reclaiming Our Future: The Black Radical Tradition in Our Times conference at Temple University, January 7-10, 2016. [1hr35min]	
	Robin Truth Goodman. 2013. <i>Gender Work: Feminism After Neoliberalism</i> . Ch. 5 "Gender Work: Feminism After Neoliberalism," pp. 139-173. Palgrave McMillan.	
WEEK 3 Sept 12	Freedom Dreams: Activism and Radical Traditions	Finalize working
	-CHOOSE TWO -	groups
	Paradigms of Political Action	
	Audre Lorde. 1984. "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action." Sister Outsider. Ten Speed Press.	
	Carol Mueller. 2004. "Ella Baker and the Origins of Participatory Democracy" in Jacqueline Bobo et al. (eds), <i>The Black Studies Reader</i> , pp. 79-90.	
	Susan Stall and Randy Stoecker. 1998. "Community Organizing or Organizing Community? Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment." <i>Gender & Society</i> . 12(6): 729-756.	
	Astra Taylor. March 2016. "Against Activism" The Baffler. No. 30.	
	Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang. 2012. "Decolonization is not a metaphor." <i>Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 1</i> (1), pp. 1-40.	
	-CHOOSE TWO -	
	Manifestos of/for the Moment	
	"The Combahee River Collective Statement" and "Barbara Smith" in Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (ed.). 2017. How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective, pp. 15-28 and 29-71. Haymarket Books.	
	The Council of the Red Nation. 2015. "Native Liberation Struggles in North America: The Red Nation 10-point Program." See also: #StandingRockSyllabus. 2016.	
	Alyson Escalante. 2016. "Gender Nihilism: An Anti-Manifesto."	

	Johanna Hedva. 2014. "Sick woman theory." Mask Magazine.	
	"The Queer Nation Manifesto." 1990.	
	-CHOOSE ONE- Movement Cultures Alicia Garza. 2017. "Our cynicism will not build a movement. Collaboration will." Mic. David Graeber. 2009. Direct Action: An Ethnography. Ch. 5, "Direct Action, Anarchism, Direct Democracy" and Ch. 6, "Some Notes on 'Activist Culture'," (focus on 239-256 of Ch. 6). Loretta Ross. 2019. "T'm a Black Feminist. I Think Call-Out Culture is Toxic." NY Times. Aug. 17, 2019. "Transformative justice in an era of mass incarceration with Mariame Kaba and Victoria Law" episode of Center for Constitutional Rights The Activist Files podcast. March 14, 2019. [56 min] Episode website and link to episode on Apple podcasts.	
WEEK 4 Sept 19	Struggles to Transform the School -READ ALL- Theorizing Resistance and Education Henry Giroux. 2001. "Reproduction, Resistance & Accommodation in the Schooling Process" in Theory and Resistance in Education: Toward a Pedagogy for the Opposition. Bergin & Garvey Press. Philadelphia Context Matthew Countryman. 2005. Up South, Ch. 6 "Community Control of the Schools," pp. 223-257. Penn Press. Kristina Rizga. 2016. "Black Teachers Matter." Mother Jones. -CHOOSE ONE- Present Struggles Susan Booysen (ed). 2016. Fees must fall: student revolt, decolonisation and governance in South Africa. Ch. 2, "The roots of the revolution," pp. 54-73, Ch. 3, "The game's the same: 'Must Fall' moves to Euro-America," pp. 74-86 and Ch. 6, "Standing on the shoulders of giants?	Working groups submit first syllabus draft Podcasting technques workshop

Eve L. Ewing. 2018. Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side. Ch 3. "Dueling Realities" and Ch. 4 "Mourning," pp. 94-156. U Chicago Press. "The Problem We All Live With," a two-part series of This American Life podcast focusing on segregation in U.S. schools. Part One (7.31.2015) and Part Two (8.7.2015). [56 min] Movement For Black Lives. 2016. "A Vision For Black Lives." 2016. The Movement For Black Lives' policy platform related to education. [On Canvas: M4BL Education Plan] -CHOOSE ONE-Abolitionism Stefano Harney & Fred Moten. 2013. The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study, Ch. 2. "The University and the Undercommons," pp. 25-43. Minor Composition. Abigail Boggs et al. 2019. "Abolition University Studies: An Invitation" from Abolition University—studying within/ against/beyond the university. Bettina Love. 2019. We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom. Ch. 5, "Abolitionist Teaching, Freedom Dreaming, and Black Joy," pp. 88-123. Beacon. "Restorative Justice in School: An Overview," an episode of *The Cult* of Pedagogy podcast. Feb. 17, 2018. Episode website and link to Apple podcasts. WEEK 5 **Power and Social Transformation** Sept 26 -READ BOTH-**Primers** Martin Saar. 2014. "Power" in Encyclopedia of Political Theory, pp. 1098-1103. Blackwell. Christian Scholl. 2016. "Prefiguration" in Fritsch, Kelly, Clare O'Connor, and A. K. Thompson (eds). Keywords for Radicals: The Contested Vocabulary of Late-Capitalist Struggle, pp. 319-325. AK Press. -CHOOSE ONE-Re/imagining power Frances Fox Piven. 2008. "Can Power from Below Change the World?" American Sociological Review.



M.E. Torre et al. (2012). <u>Critical participatory action research as public science.</u> In Camic, P. & Cooper, H. (Eds.). The handbook of qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspectives in methodology and design, 2nd edition (pp. 171-184).

Michael Warner. (2002). "Publics and Counterpublics" *Public Culture*, Volume 14, Number 1, Winter 2002, pp. 49-90.

-CHOOSE ONE-

Digital Privacy and Academic Freedom

Steven Salaita. 2019. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. "My Life as a Cautionary Tale: Probing the Limits of academic freedom."

-CHOOSE TWO-

Penn and Philadelphia Communities

Penn Disorientation Guide

ABC Penn and Community Partnerships Working Group

Penn and Slavery:

Vanjessica Gladney. Feb. 28 2018. <u>"We Challenged Penn to Reexamine Its History of Slavery—And Our Project Isn't Over."</u> 34th Street.

Abul-Aliy Muhammad. July 21 2019. "As reparations debate continues, the University of Pennsylvania has a role to play." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

-CHOOSE TWO-

Modeling Community and Public Engagement

BxCRRB: Bronx Community Research Review Board

The Marian Cheek Jackson Center: Soundwalk of Northside Histories of Home: A Walk With Northside Neighbors:

Morris Justice Project (Bronx, New York)

Taja Lindley: The Bag Lady Manifesta. <u>"This Ain't a Eulogy: A Ritual for Re-Membering."</u> (Running time: 10 min)

	Rasheeda Phillips: Community Futures Lab (North Philadelphia) Torn Apart/Separados mapping project	
PART II: PRAXES		