UNST 421: Enhancing Youth Literacy

Partnerships with

- Portland Youth Builders
- James John SUN Program
- Parkrose High School SUN Program
- NW Housing Alternatives
- Beach School

Hybrid Course: Once a Week Face-to-Face & Some Online Interaction

NOTE: This is a hybrid class. You will be expected to fully participate in all face-to-face and online portions of the class. This is a 6-credit course, and the workload will be non-traditional in its format (presentations, group projects, volunteering in the community, etc.).

Instructor & Email: Zapoura Newton-Calvert (zapoura@pdx.edu)
Office Hours: After class or by appointment

INFORMATION ON PARTNER PROGRAMS

Capstone Partnership with Portland Youth Builders

The Enhancing Youth Literacy Capstone has been working with various education programs and schools over the past five years. This is our first year partnered with the Portland Youth Builders program, which helps young high school aged people make long term positive change. Students attend PYB every weekday, alternating between academic studies and vocational training in either our green construction or computer technology program. All students receive career development skills, leadership development opportunities, and long term support.

- PYB is a diploma-granting alternative high school.
- PYB is a vocational training program.
- PYB prepares young people for successful careers.
- PYB is about making positive change.
- PYB is for life.

Capstone Partnership with the James John School S.U.N. Program

This is our third term in partnership with the James John School, which is located in the St. Johns Neighborhood. This school is a feeder school for Roosevelt High School, a school with one of the highest dropout rates in the state. James John is currently developing a host of support programs for kids and families, and the S.U.N. Program has a big role in this kind of support. After school program time, as we will discuss in class, can be credited with helping to close the achievement gap, keeping kids safe and connected to the community, giving children access to adult mentors, supplementing school time with other kinds of learning (art, science, etc.).

Capstone Partnership with Parkrose High School S.U.N. Program
This is our third term in partnership with the Parkrose High School S.U.N. Program in the capacity of tutors. Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (S.U.N. is a county-wide program) is a program designed to integrate a wide array of services for students and families and to link schools to the community. We will be working within a selection of Parkrose High School classrooms and in the afterschool program to provide tutoring to students in math and writing. With disturbingly high dropout rates in high schools across Oregon (44%), supporting high school students and providing them with mentors and tutors is incredibly important. Recent state test scores showed 10th grade students at Parkrose scoring in the 70th percentile in reading, the 60th percentile in math, and the 50th percentile in writing.

Capstone Partnership with NW Housing Alternatives

NW Housing Alternatives supports low-income families and "creates opportunities through housing." We will be working in their residence services program to support kids and families in the following ways: working directly in afterschool programs for kids, assisting in the teaching of parenting workshops, and fundraising.

Capstone Partnership with Beach School

Beach school is a Portland Public School (K-8) with a dual-immersion program (English & Spanish) and a community schools program. We will be working in a 2nd grade classroom working to support students in reading and comprehension.

Instructor's Facilitation Role:

My job, as your Capstone instructor, is to serve as a facilitator and advisor for your experience. Our work in the classroom should build a context for thinking more deeply as you provide service to the community. This is a community-based class not only in your service work but also in the classroom. The classroom community is built by all of us in an open, honest, and critical space.

PSU Volunteer Roles:

PSU students will spend 30 hours of service related in ONE of the placement sites, including tutoring, mentoring, classroom assistance and group project work.

- ◎ **Hands-on Service** (at least 2 hours a week at your placement site)
- ◎ **Group Work & Photo Diary Documentation** (4-5 hours possible; hours will vary based on project goals)
- ◎ **PIC** (you can count up to 2 hours toward your total number of service hours)
- ◎ **Additional Service Hours** (handsonportland.org) (if you need additional hours, you can explore other volunteer placements engaging youth) (instructor approval needed)

Your weekly hands-on and group work participation will be documented in your weekly journal.

Texts/Supplies:

- *City Kids, City Schools*, edited by William Ayers
- *Changing the Odds for Children at Risk*, by Susan Neuman
- Our Desire to Learn site will contain links to additional course readings.

Course Requirements/Evaluation:

Your evaluation is based on all of the criteria for course requirements and policies. However, as indicated in the Student Capstone Guide, you are not evaluated only on the service aspects of the course in themselves, but on the learning demonstrated by your contributions to group work and the quality of group and individual written production and/or oral presentations.

This Capstone is evaluated using a number of American Academy of Colleges and Universities VALUE Rubrics (all are included in our D2L course shell). Within each 8-point rubric, there are the following three categories:

1. Emerging (3-4 range) (B-/B)
2. Proficient (5-6 range) (A-/A)
3. Exemplary (7-8 range) (A+)

In the first two weeks of the course, we will go through the evaluation rubrics and evaluation methods of the class thoroughly. You will take part in a variety of evaluation methods: self-evaluation, work sample submission, peer evaluation, evaluation from the community partner site, and instructor feedback.

If you fall below the "Emerging" range on any piece of coursework, we will discuss the work and talk about ways to get into the Emerging-Proficient range. All students are expected to fall in the Emerging-Proficient range in the majority of their course work across all categories of our Capstone learning.

IN CLASS/ONLINE LEARNING (Critical Reading, Thinking, and Sharing) (40% of final evaluation)

Your final evaluation is a reflection of your work as a critical thinker, learner, speaker, and writer on topics surrounding public school education.

Class Participation/Attendance: (15%)

- ◉ Participation: This is a hybrid course. You are required to participate both face-to-face in our class discussions AND online in our online discussion forums or on the PDX Education Action Network blog.
- ◉ Attendance: Attendance and class participation are expected and required. Notify in advance if you must miss a session or class period.
  - ○ See details on attendance policy at the end of the syllabus.
- ◉ Online Discussions: As part of our hybrid class, we will all participate in weekly discussion forums (first in D2L and later on the PDXEAN blog). Your leadership (each student will initiate some weekly conversations) and participation is part of your overall class participation evaluation. You will be given a "complete" or "incomplete" grade for each week's discussion work. Your final grade in "Online Discussion" will be based on your Work Sample submissions at mid-term and Week 9.

Short Conversation Starters & Leading Discussion (in class and online) (15%)

- ◉ Conversation Starters: You will be required to submit reading responses throughout the term and to bring a copy to class. Further instructions will be discussed in class. Discussion is a key component to our service learning this term. At mid-term and Week 9, you will submit a Work Sample of your best Reading Responses and a brief reflection for grading. Throughout the term, Conversation Starters will be graded as completed or incomplete (5 points or 0 points). Detailed instructions will be reviewed in class and available in the CONTENT section of our D2L course. Your final grade in Conversation Starters will be based on your Work Sample submissions.
- ◉ Leading Discussion: Discussion leading will be focused on linking course readings and topics to updated research and local experiences of students and educators in our community. Detailed instructions will be reviewed in class and available in the CONTENT section of our D2L course.

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE LEARNING (60% of final grade)

This portion of your grade will be evidenced in your interactions with one another and our community partner, your writing on your experience as a curriculum developer, teacher, and group project participant, your contributions to the group project, and the quality of the project itself.

Hands-on Work with the Community Partner & Group Project (35%)

- ◉ Hands-on Hours: Students must spend at least 30 volunteer, independent public act of engagement, and group work hours.
  - • During the first week of class, we will be solidifying a volunteer schedule for the term. You will be able to choose the day/days and time/times you will volunteer each week. These should be consistent from week to week, as the students will begin to know you and expect you to be there. If you are ill or are not able to attend your volunteer slot, please directly contact the community partner to let them know in advance.

- It is critical that you do not miss or be late to your sessions. The community partners and the students will be depending on you; also, you will be representing PSU in the community, so responsible behavior is obviously essential.
  - ⦿ **Weekly Reflective Journal & End-of-Term Shapshot** (the documentation of hands-on and group project work): Each week's journal entry submission should do the following:
    - Record the specifics of your volunteer time and keep a log of hours you work. You will be asked to track your **individual** and **group** work with youth throughout the term. This should be descriptive, detailed, and personal, as well as connected to ideas we're discussing in the course.
    - Make connections between what you see in the classroom and what you see in the course readings/discussions.
    - Be submitted by the Sunday following the volunteer week EACH WEEK. These will be checked each week.
    - o If you do not volunteer during a particular week, please note that in your entry. Do not merely skip a week of journal entries. If you are sick, note that in your entry.

Group Work & Documentation (5%)

- ⦿ As part of our work this term, you will be grouped with peers in order to work on a final project (in lieu of a final exam), which will be presented to the class and our community partner at the end of the term.
- ⦿ Group projects vary wildly by partner site and need.
- ⦿ You will document your work with the community partner, the need at the community partner site, and the final product that is the result of your group project in your journal.

Participating in Community (P.I.C.): An Independent Act of Civic Engagement (10%)

You will be given a list of possible "civic acts of engagement" at the beginning of the term and will document this in your journal and/or in online discussion. These may include any of the following (and more):

- Posting comments on a series of education blogs written by educators, community members, of non-profit organizations.
- Attending a public meeting (McMenamin's Race Talks, Neighborhood Association Meeting, PTA meeting, etc.)
- Attending a political rally or event (there will be many opportunities this fall!)
- Volunteering through Hands-on Portland in an outside community placement
- Propose an additional "civic act of engagement" via email or meet with me outside of class.

Culminating Reflection & Snapshot (10%)

The culminating reflection for the course will give you three options for connecting the pieces of your learning and making plans for future thinking and/or action in your community. This will be submitted in lieu of a final journal entry and will be slightly more substantial in length and thinking. Specific instructions appear in the CONTENT of our D2L course. As part of this final reflection process, you will present some of your learning/reflections on our last day of class Week 10.

Policies:

Attendance:

Attendance and class participation are expected and required. It is critical that you do not miss or be late to your sessions. The community partners and the students will be depending on you; also, you will be representing PSU in the community, so responsible behavior is obviously essential. Notify in advance if you must miss a session or class period.

More than 1 PSU absences will lower your grade by one grade (i.e., B becomes B-). Two or more absences may result in failure or mandatory withdrawal. It is important to be to class on time as your being late will keep the group from functioning as a whole. Therefore, 2 late arrivals = 1 absence.

Late Work: Late work is not accepted unless previous arrangements have been made.

Paper Format: Typed, double-spaced, proofread, thoughtful

Course Goals

As members of the Enhancing Youth Literacy learning community, students will
- become familiar with key issues in local education, national education, and education policy.
- identify processes, core concepts, and modes of action and engagement relevant to the key issues in education discussed in class
- empower themselves and each other to apply knowledge in those key issues as informed action in the community
- apply these civic engagement skills within hands-on community partner placement experiences and beyond (either within education or other key social justice issues impacting our community)

Through the course goals and outcomes, students will engage deeply with learning in the four key university studies areas: inquiry and critical thinking, communication, diversity of human experience, and ethics and social responsibility.

Course Outcomes

- Evaluate, analyze, and compare primary and secondary sources detailing key issues of education and educational equity in order to challenge assumptions about schools and learning in the U.S. Pieces of the AACU Critical Thinking rubric will be used for evaluation. (UNST Inquiry and Critical Thinking Goal)
- Make connections between course materials and experience at the volunteer placement site and provide evidence through discussion and reflective writing of a willingness to challenge personal and systemic assumptions about our course's key education issues. (UNST Inquiry and Critical Thinking and Diversity of Human Experience Goals)
- Learn and use diverse forms of communication (blogging, email, oral presentations, and letter writing) to nurture relationships within small groups, with the community partner, and with the larger public. In-class workshops on these forms will be included. (UNST Communication Goal)
- Use multiple models/scales of intercultural sensitivity (including the Bennett scale) and understanding of the culture of power (from Lisa Delpit's "The Silenced Dialogue") to read, interpret, and discuss/write reflectively and to use these scales to analyze bias and privilege. (UNST Diversity of Human Experience and Ethics and Social Responsibility Goals)
- Analyze written and hands-on best practices in community volunteering, outreach, and school reform and to develop modes or plans for future civic engagement on a small or big picture level (voting, continued activism, parenting practices, support for extended family, etc.) (UNST Inquiry and Critical Thinking and Ethics and Social Responsibility Goals)
- To apply in-class and on-site learning to empower youth, the self, or others to initiate new content, create new partnership possibilities and/or take ownership of specific aspects of the of the small group work, role at the community partner site, and/or classroom discussion (online or face to face). Evidence of this work will take place in reflective journals and the culminating assignment. (UNST Communication and Ethics and Social Responsibility Goals)

The overarching course rubric appears here: http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/CivicEngagement.pdf.