**SYLLABUS**

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| **LAS/SOC 3710**  **Learning About Your Community Through Research** | |
| Term: | Winter 2015 |
| Meeting Time: | * Site: Determine weekly schedule with your site supervisor * Classroom: **Wednesdays, 11:45 am - 3:25 pm** |
| Location: | 37 State Hall |
| Instructor: | Nicole Trujillo-Pagán, Ph.D. |
| Email: | [Bb3729@wayne.edu](mailto:Bb3729@wayne.edu) |
| Office Hours: | Mondays, 1-4 pm or by appointment |
| Office Location: | 3315 FAB |

**Purpose:**

This course represents the capstone course for the CBS Scholars Program. It enhances students’ knowledge, facilitates their application of theory to practice, and promotes their active participation in creating new knowledge through community-based research.

**Description:**

In this course, students make a major and regular commitment in their schedule to a field placement where they will provide community service and undertake a research project using participatory research methods. For the purposes of this course, “participatory research” implies the student invites site participation in their project and actively reflects on *how* her/his actions within the site can produce productive outcomes that support the site’s work and/or mission. Students will communicate with site supervisors at each stage of the project, including problem definition/issue selection, research design, conducting research, interpreting results, and determining how the results should be used for action.

**Objectives:**

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

* Apply academic knowledge and use research skills developed through experiential learning, and
* Use their experiences to contribute to policy, social, and/or programmatic change.

**Course Policies**

*Site Placement Partnerships:*

Students must strive to nurture Wayne State University’s relationship to its surrounding communities for both their own benefit and that of students who will follow. Remember you are a representative of the university and endeavor to maintain an appropriate and professional demeanor and preserve relationships to site organizations at all times.

*The Syllabus and Course Outline:*

The syllabus will guide the course.

The nature of field placements and research requires flexibility in the course outline.

THE SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Students are advised to rely on the updated blackboard version of the syllabus rather than the initial paper version they received on the first day of class.

Students are expected to be familiar with blackboard and review any posted revisions to the syllabus, course outline and/or journal exercises.

*Communication and Blackboard*:

All course information will be posted on Blackboard.

Students are advised to check blackboard weekly for announcements and/or updates to the syllabus or journal exercises. Students should also check blackboard before class for any last-minute announcements.

Please direct any questions about blackboard, access, and/or connectivity to Computing and Information Technology (C&IT) at (313) 577-4778 or by email to [helpdesk@wayne.edu](mailto:helpdesk@wayne.edu).

Electronic communication with students is coordinated through blackboard. If you use a non-WSU email account, be sure you figure out how to forward any email to that account.

*Differently-Abled Students*

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TTY: telecommunication device for the deaf; phone for hearing impaired students only). Once you have your accommodations in place, you or SDS should contact me via email to discuss your needs. Student Disability Services' mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University.

*Assignments*

*Written Assignments*

**No assignments will be accepted by email or in person.** Students must submit written assignments on blackboard using the dropbox feature. *DO NOT send an email to the instructor duplicating a blackboard submission.*

If there is a problem with your file submission, the instructor will post a note in blackboard. **You are responsible for checking your grades and resubmitting a compatible file within one week of your original submission.** If necessary, you should work with C&IT to prevent a recurrence of corrupt or incompatible submissions.

You will *not* have the opportunity to resubmit a written assignment for a revised grade.

*Due Dates/Times*

Late assignments will be penalized by three (3) points for every week they are late. This policy applies irrespective of whether a written assignment is submitted 15 minutes or 6.5 days after it is due.

You may avoid late penalties with a signed and dated doctor’s note indicating your lack of availability to submit the assignment on its due date.In otherwords, if you were sick on the week an assignment is due, your doctor’s note must cover (indicate you were not able to attend class on) the due date of the assignment. Where you have a week to complete an assignment, the doctor’s note must cover the entire week. You have one week from the due date of the assignment to contact and provide documentation to the instructor.

*Academic Protocol:*

Wayne State University **severely penalizes plagiarism, cheating, making up false information for papers, and copying from other students.** If you are caught doing any of these, you may fail the specific assignment, fail the class, referred to the University administration for further academic discipline including, but not limited to, losing your eligibility for scholarships, being dropped from special programs at the University, and/or being expelled from the University.

You should assume the instructor acts as a form of “safeassign” without using the software. Avoid plagiarism [misrepresenting the words, ideas or work of others as your own], cheating [copying from another student's term papers and exams, **knowingly sharing information or answers of exams and papers to be turned in for evaluation and grading,** taking an exam for another student, using unauthorized notes during exams, etc.], and fabrication [making up false information for papers, citing work you never actually read, etc.]. Cutting and pasting a sentence and/or paraphrasing the content from books, journals and/or the internet without appropriate in-text citation and bibliography represent forms of plagiarism.

Paraphrasing and/or cutting and pasting more than 15% of a paper’s content, even with appropriate citation, is not acceptable in this course.

**Course Overview:**

*On site*

Students are expected to be actively involved with their site for at least six (6) hours per week.

*Off site*

Coursework consists of required reading, attendance at classroom sessions, and completion of evaluated assignments. Through coursework, students will analyze onsite experiences, apply analytic methods to these experiences, and address questions related to their ongoing research projects.

**Grading Criteria:**

Grades for the course will be determined through attendance, activities that help students develop a research project, and an individual poster presentation of that project. These requirements are detailed in the course outline and their weight toward the final grade will be calculated as follows:

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| Week | Assignment | Weight |
| cumulative | attendance | 10% |
| 2 | Journal Submission (JS) 1 | 5% |
| 3 | Paper 1 | 15% |
| 4 | Take home quiz | 5% |
| 5 | JS2 | 5% |
| 6 | JS3 | 5% |
| 7 | none |  |
| 8 | JS4 | 10% |
| 9 | Individual meetings with Instructor |  |
| 10 | *Spring break* |  |
| 11 | Paper 2 | 15% |
| 12 | JS5 | 10% |
| 13 | none (work on **data analysis**) | |
| 14 | JS6 | 10% |
| 15 | none (work on **poster presentation**) | |
| 16 | Poster presentation | 10% |

*Attendance:*

Attendance is called at each session. If you arrive late and/or leave early, your attendance will not be counted for the corresponding part of the session. The attendance record will **not** be revised if you were not present for roll call.

An “excused” absence is validated only through a signed and dated doctor’s note.

Your attendance grade will be lowered by one letter grade for each unexcused absence at required sessions > 2, e.g. from A to B for 3 absences, C for 4 and F for > 4 absences.

*Journal Submissions*

*Grading Scale*

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| --- | --- |
| A | 100-93 |
| A- | 92.9-90 |
| B+ | 89.9-87 |
| B | 86.9-83 |
| B- | 82.9-80 |
| C+ | 79.9-77 |
| C | 76.9-73 |
| C- | 72.9-70 |

Students will record on-site experiences and reflections in their “field research journal” on a weekly basis. These recordings will be developed as fieldnotes and can be used as a rich source of research data.

In your journal entries, you should complete the exercises

To receive a good grade on journal submissions (JS), you *must*

1. Complete all exercises outlined in the course outline and as **they may be** updated during the semester (updates posted on revised syllabus, see blackboard).
2. Demonstrate “thick description” in your journal writings. Be sure to use descriptive terms in your notes, pay attention to detailing actors and the context and audience of events.
3. Demonstrate reflection on, and elaboration of, your notes. In elaborating on your notes, the basis of evaluation is your ability to **distinguish what actually happened onsite** and **your reaction to it**. Get into a habit of identifying **alternate interpretations of what happened** and recordingthem along with your initial interpretations.

In terms of length, journal entries < three (3) pages are generally considered to have inadequately met the guideline of reflection and elaboration.

*Papers (and some journal submissions)*

The required papers in this course are designed to support student’s progress toward completion of a research project. For instance, Paper 1 supports students in developing a potential originating question based on existing scholarship. Sometimes journal submissions accomplish a similar goal. For instance, JS4 supports students in developing a research question based on empirical data.

The second paper is of particular importance because it pushes students to define a concrete research question that can be explored in the time they have remaining onsite. The second paper includes a statement of research methodology where students can begin to consider the questions they might ask if they choose to conduct additional interviews and/or surveys. As a result, students are required to meet with the instructor during a scheduled time on March 9 or 10. This will enable students to spend spring break finalizing their data collection instruments during spring break.

Students will present their final research projects in the form of a poster during the *Academia del Pueblo* Conference. This poster should reflect systematic engagement of the relationship between an organization's mission and your own observations onsite. Your final poster will should identify:

1. your research question (both originating and specifying),
2. important elements to help an unfamiliar audience understand your the setting (e.g. mission statement, organizational chart, demographic profile, etc.),
3. methods you used,
4. significant findings (dominant codes in your fieldnotes, survey results, interview findings, etc.),
5. conclusions, and
6. suggestions for further research, policy change and/or programmatic change.

**Required Texts:**

* *Con Respeto: Bridging the Distances Between Culturally Diverse Families and Schools: An Ethnographic Portrait*, by Guadalupe Valdes.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

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|  | **Week** | **Readings on blackboard are subject to change**  (complete *prior* to classroom session) | **Evaluation (due before session)**  *In addition to your journal entry for this week*, *write 2-3 pages addressing the following question*… | | **Objectives** |
| 1  (1/14) |  |  |  | At our first meeting, we will meet at Escuela Avancemos for an orientation. Our goal through January 22 is to maximize our time onsite. |
| EA break: 1/22 - 2/1 | 2  (1/21) | * *Con Respeto,* Ch. 1-5 (through pg. 115) | JS1 | * Describe the process of “getting in”, e.g. how you were introduced to the site, any barriers you may perceive in your involvement onsite, how you feel about those barriers, etc. * What basic social problem is Escuela Avancemos (EA) designed to address? How does EA intend to intervene in fixing or ameliorating the effects of this social problem? * What do you think your role on site will be? How do you feel about that role? | 1. To introduce the course structure and its objectives, 2. To locate the course within an specific institutional (academic and community) framework, 3. To collectively enrich the meaning of community engagement, responsibility and commitment in the course. |
| 3  (1/28) | * *Con Respeto,* Ch. 6-9 | PAPER | Answer the following questions based on your reading of the text, *Con Respeto,*   1. Identify the author’s major findings about how culture shapes how students experience their education. 2. How did the author’s findings and/or insights relate to your own educational experience? 3. How might the text inform your work and/or research onsite this semester? | 1. Revisit prior conversation about community engagement to develop a personal position and stake in your site placement. 2. Begin discussing basic ideas in social science, particularly in terms of the sociological imagination. |
| 4  (2/4) | |  |  | In-class quiz on social research | 1. Review our understanding of social research, including    1. the scientific method    2. inductive vs deductive logic    3. qualitative vs quantitative research    4. mixed-methods research    5. the importance of a research question and how to ask good ones,    6. the relative value of hypotheses in qualitative research,    7. literature reviews, and    8. the use of theory. 2. Answer the question “why research?”; politics and the distinction between value-free and value-engaged research |
| 5  (2/11) | | * field notes and coding\_Bernard | JS2 | * Analyze Organizational Chart * What are your site supervisor or other people onsite “teaching” you? In your description of this lesson, be sure to provide detail on a) any particular words or expressions that are frequently used and b) areas emphasized by the “teacher.” What is he/she focusing on? What might be some potential explanations for this emphasis? Are there alternate interpretations of what the “teacher” is emphasizing? What do the “teacher’s” interpretations suggest about other dynamics onsite? | Discussion   1. “getting in”: Building Rapport and Relationships 2. What are some common ethical problems encountered onsite? 3. Explore what research is and what it is not   **Methods Workshop 1**: Understanding the Basic Principles of Ethnography, including thick description. |

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| 6  (2/18) | * Langton on “critical incidents” in Ch. 4 (posted on bb) | JS3 | * Detail at least one “critical incident”. * At this early stage working in your site placement, what do you think is the relationship between the mission statement, what people (administration, teachers and students) say they do, and what they actually do onsite? What observations have you made onsite that help you develop this impression? | **Methods Workshop 3**: Interviews |
| 7  (2/25) |  |  |  | We will meet in the **library** for this session:   1. CITI workshop 2. Research **ethics**. |

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| 8  (3/4) |  | JS4 | * Review your notes on critical incidents. Identify at least two key concepts in these incidents. How could you study these concepts onsite? * Conduct up to 5 separate, individual, unstructured, informal, and CONFIDENTIAL interviews where you ask staff members about what they see as the most significant problem at EA. Any answer is acceptable, including those involving their specific work tasks, students, and/or the school. Be sure to ask about 1) what the staff member thinks is the cause of the problem, 2) what the staff member believes may be the consequence and/or implications of the problem. After collecting and recording your data, reflect on what relationships may exist between different respondents’ responses. * Share your preliminary ideas for research with your site supervisor. Record the feedback you receive from him/her. Based on this feedback, what potential research projects can you imagine can intervene productively on the collectively-defined problem? | **Guest Speaker** on Detroit Public Schools and the Latino/a community in Southwest Detroit |
| Developing the Research Question |
| 9 | (3/9 – 3/10) | Meet | One-on-one meetings with instructor about research question and method. | |
| (3/11) |  |  | We will meet at the Escuela for this session to review our preliminary findings and discuss ideas for research and other projects. |
| 10 | ***SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES*** | | | |
| 11  (3/25) |  | PAPER | Research Question and Methodology (including appendices for questionnaires and/or interview guides) | We will not meet in our classroom for this session. Instead, students should use this time to   1. Review materials posted online to guide you in developing your research question and methodology, 2. To review relevant literature in the library and develop a sense of the scholarship on your research question, 3. To work on data collection and analysis. |
| ***3/29*** | ***Last Day to Withdraw*** | | | |
| 12  (4/1) | Meet in 3339 FAB |  |  | Coding and Analyzing Your Notes |
| 13  (4/8) | Meet in 3339 FAB | JS 5 | * Attempt to develop at least one (2) additional analytic notes (see Bernard, posted online to bb). * Demonstrate an additional three (3) analytic memos based on recoding your notes from weeks 9-11. * Review the data you collected thus far. How does it help you answer your research question? Refine areas in which you need to collect data to complete your project. | Discussion: Data and Initial Findings |
| 14  (4/15) | Meet in Library | JS 6 | Develop at least 5 slides that address: 1) your research question, 2) your methods, 3) at least three (3) important (albeit preliminary) findings, 4) your conclusions, 5) contact information. Share them with your group in class. | Working session: posters  Students present final posters and comment on each other’s work. |
| 4/17 | *Last day to submit posters to printer vis a vis Tamara* | | | |
| 15  (4/25) | **Final Research Poster Presentations** at The 6th Annual La Academia del Pueblo | | | |