

# Academic Communities of Practice

## **ACP 250: GROUNDS FOR CHANGE FALL 2012 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

*(Please check Coursefinder for cross-listings, pre-requisites and information about courses incorporating Transformational Service Learning [TL])*

### **Chicago**

#### **“Our Toxic World”**

Prof. W. Aaron Shoults-Wilson

MW 8:00-9:15

Society has always had an uneasy relationship with poisons. For example, the element arsenic was known as "inheritance powder" during the middle ages, was used in everything from pesticides to wallpapers during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is currently causing the world's largest mass-poisoning in Bangladesh. Toxins are found in our air, our water, and our food but are often defended as necessary for modern life. How do we decide what is too toxic and what is acceptable for mass consumption? How do we determine limits on pollution? How do we choose which chemicals to ban and which to leave unrestricted? This class will investigate the toxins that are encountered every day in our world, focusing on the scientific literature. Students will learn about historic and cutting edge research as they explore our toxic world and ultimately decide what they want to do about it.

#### **“Youth Violence: Intervention and Theory” (TL)**

Prof. Melissa Sisco

W 2:00-5:30

This course provides an intensive focus on addressing the causes, obstacles to overcoming, and therapeutic interventions with violent youth in the arena of self/mental illness/substances/anger, peers/gangs, family violence, and societal/media induced expectations. Students who participate in this class will experience a real world exploration of this problem through an interactive class style that focuses on the Chicago community, community involvement that plays on the strength and availability of each student, and cutting edge readings, videos, and music that tie in the theoretical underpinnings and modern media examples of obstacles and solutions. This course is highly individualized per student interests and is designed to help students launch into a social justice ideology while building an active resume that will aid in future job and academic advancement. With the instructor's guidance, students choose 50% of the evaluative experience to meet their interests and long term goals.

#### **“Creating Inclusive Capitalism in Chicago” [TL]**

Prof. Raed Elaydi

TTh 11:00-12:15

As many social entrepreneurs and nonprofit leaders have adopted and adapted strategies from the world of business, the lines that have traditionally divided the business and nonprofit sectors have blurred, creating opportunities for people with business skills to help shape the “new” social sector. Just as entrepreneurship is rooted in a sense of opportunity, so too social entrepreneurship is rooted in a sense that the limits of capitalism, combined with the limits of government, is creating both a new set of needs as well as new, innovative opportunities for meeting those needs.

Through academic research and Transformational Service Learning activities, students will explore the areas in which social enterprises are most prevalent – health, education, finance, trade/agriculture, poverty alleviation and inner-city regeneration – and the extent to which these sectors are characterized by ‘market failures’ reflecting the limits of both capitalism and government.

### **“Making Schools Meet Kids’ Needs” [TL]**

Prof. Gregory Hauser

MW 11:00-12:15

How best can metropolitan public schools meet the developmental needs of children from traditionally marginalized social groups? The course examines the relationship of socio-economic status, ethnicity and first language as factors in student academic performance, examining how these factors can both limit and provide unique educational opportunities. The focus is not exclusively on how to improve student test scores (although this is a dimension that will be examined) but rather on how schools can best serve students and families in fostering intellectual, moral, and emotional growth. The course is separated into classroom study of national and state-level policies and programs that address these social factors and the lived experience of direct collaboration with schools in the Chicago area that are addressing these factors (the school populations are free and reduced lunch at or above 50%; majority non-white/Anglo; and 20% or more EEL). The schools will be from two different districts and students will be assigned to assist teachers and tutor students in one of the two schools. The expectation is that students contribute a minimum of 15 hours in direct classroom service at the school.

### **“Immigration: Transforming the National Conversation” (Honors)**

Prof. Priscilla Archibald

MW 2:00-3:15

This course will explore the issue of immigration from a variety of perspectives, encouraging an appreciation for its complexity. In addition to reading fiction and cultural theory, students will become familiar with immigrant communities of Chicago (past and present). As they investigate the differences between cultural, civic and economic aspects of the issue, students will articulate clear approaches to the problems and opportunities created by immigration. Instead of the defensive posture evident in most contemporary political discourse (“how high should the wall be?”), students will find the facts that allow them to reframe the issue in productive ways, asking, for example: what types of civic institutions could most effectively address immigration issues – local institutions? Transnational/transregional institutions? Or how might educational institutions adjust to realities of immigration like bilingualism?

## **Schaumburg**

### **“Making Schools Meet Kids’ Needs” [TL]**

Prof. Thomas Thomas

TTh 9:30-10:45

How best can metropolitan public schools meet the developmental needs of children from traditionally marginalized social groups? The course examines the relationship of socio-economic status, ethnicity and first language as factors in student academic performance, examining how these factors can both limit and provide unique educational opportunities. The focus is not exclusively on how to improve student test scores (although this is a dimension that will be examined) but rather on how schools can best serve students and families in fostering intellectual, moral, and emotional growth. The course is separated into classroom study of national and state-level policies and programs that address these social factors and the lived experience of direct collaboration with schools in the northwest suburban region that are addressing these factors (the school populations are free and reduced lunch at or above 50%; majority non-white/Anglo; and 20% or more EEL). The schools will be from two different districts and students will be assigned to assist teachers and tutor students in one of the two schools. The expectation is that students contribute a minimum of 15 hours in direct classroom service at the school.