Social Studies 68ec: Education and Community in America
Universities and Community Engagement, c. 1890-2015

“Life and education must never be separated.
We must have more life in our universities, and more education in our life.” ¹

Catalogue Description

Explores efforts to realize the civic purpose of American universities, particularly in terms of attempts to engage local communities through educational outreach programs. Examines major periods of experimentation and innovation in the 20th and 21st centuries, from the settlement house movement of the early 1900s to recent efforts to revive the public mission of universities through service-learning and other forms of civic education. This course is an activity-based learning course, limited to students who are concurrently participating in one of PBHA’s education-related service programs. Class discussions and assignments will make active links with students’ service work. Enrollment capped at 12.

Course Overview

This course explores a variety of attempts of students and faculty to engage their communities in educational programs from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first centuries. Today, the widely accepted model for university outreach programs is based on the concept of reciprocity: the notion that members of the university and the neighboring community both benefit from their joint endeavors. But this has not always been the case. Together, we explore the origins and evolution of this concept. Our goal is to better understand the present moment – the values and assumptions that underlie contemporary models of engaged universities.

Course readings include both secondary works and primary materials. We examine national trends, and each week we relate these trends to events here at Harvard with a particular focus on the history of Phillips Brooks House. The course proceeds chronologically, beginning with the Progressive era and ending with contemporary trends. The majority of readings directly address the efforts of universities to engage their local communities through various types of outreach programs. Other readings focus more broadly on student activism, community education programs, and the public or civic purpose of universities in a democracy.

This class on higher education in a democratic society is based on active participation and collaborative learning among students, faculty, and community partners. We will explore the ways in which your readings in the social sciences and your service experiences inform each other. Our goal is to help you develop a fuller understanding of your role as a student, a volunteer, and a member of a larger community.

Each week, we will (generally) follow this schedule:

- Before Monday at 9:00 AM – Complete assigned readings for the week; post 1-3 questions or comments on Canvas regarding the readings that will guide our class discussion
- During class on Monday – Discuss readings, student presentations, joint determination of questions to be addressed in weekly journal
- During the week – Participate in service program(s)
- Before Friday at 5:00 – Submit journal entries, reflecting on readings and their relation to service
Grades

10% - Oral Presentation
20% - Weekly Journal Entries (due Fridays at 5:00 PM)
10% - Expansion of Journal Entry (due 10/12 or 11/23 at 11:59 PM)
10% - Project Proposal (due 10/18 at 11:59 PM)
40% - Final Project (due 12/11 at 11:59 PM)
10% - Participation

Late assignments will be subject to a 1/3 grade deduction per day. (An A becomes and A-, an A- becomes a B+, etc.) Grades follow the system set out in the Student Handbook. Please see: http://static.fas.harvard.edu/registrar/ugrad_handbook/current/chapter2/grading_system.html

Assignments

**Oral Presentation** (8-10 minutes) – Over the course of the semester, each student will give a presentation that addresses the following questions: What is your service program? What motivates you to participate? What questions do you hope that this class will answer for you regarding your service experience? Have the course readings helped you to view your service in a new light? Do your experiences challenge some of the claims made in the course readings?

**Weekly Journal Entries** (2 pages) – At the end of each class, we will brainstorm a list of questions that relate the week’s readings to your service experience. I will email them to you and ask you a.) to respond personally to the questions and/or b.) to use them to frame a conversation with a community partner. You will write a total of ten informal entries over the course of the semester (you may skip one week).

**Expansion of Journal Entry** (5-7 pages) – You will revise and expand one of your weekly journal entries, relating your thoughts to course readings more fully. This more formal piece of writing should have a thesis and argument supported by evidence from the readings and your service experience. It should also include references and a bibliography (Chicago or MLA).

**Project Proposal** (2 pages) – In the middle of the semester, you will submit a proposal for your final project. It should specify 1.) which of the two options you are selecting (see below), 2.) which course readings will play a central role in your project, and 3.) what additional research you propose to incorporate. After you submit it, you will meet with me to discuss your proposal the week of 10/19-10/23.

**Final Project** –

**Option A: Organizational History (10-12 pages) and Accompanying Synopsis (c. 1000 words):**
You will write an intellectual and/or institutional history of your partner organization. You should model this history on those you encounter in the assigned readings. It should relate your specific organization to the wider educational trends covered in course readings, but it will also involve additional research. Part of your research will take place in your community, whether interview based or archival. It should also include references and a bibliography (Chicago or MLA). You will also submit a synopsis and adaptation of your history in the form of either an op-ed or a brief history that would be appropriate for publication on your partner organization’s website.
Option B: Community Resource/Asset and Accompanying Essay (10-12 pages): You will identify an existing community need/problem and create a resource for your partner organization to help address that need/problem. You must obtain written documentation from someone at your partner organization that confirms a need for your proposed resource, to be submitted with your proposal. Possibilities include a web page, lesson plan, brief video, etc. With this final assignment, you will also write an accompanying paper, drawing on the assigned readings of the course to explain history of the problem/need, why you chose to intervene in this particular way, and why your intervention is appropriate. It should also include references and a bibliography (Chicago or MLA).

Participation – This component of your grade includes participation in class discussions and questions/comments posted to the discussion board.

The Honor Code

As you complete all of the assignments for this course, please remember your commitment to uphold the Harvard College Honor Code:

Harvard College is an academic and residential community devoted to learning and the creation of knowledge. We – the academic community of Harvard College, including the faculty and students – view integrity as the basis for intellectual discovery, artistic creation, independent scholarship, and meaningful collaboration. We thus hold honesty – in the representation of our work and in our interactions with teachers, advisers, peers, and students – as the foundation of our community.

The Harvard College Honor Code

Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one’s own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.

For more information, see: http://honor.fas.harvard.edu/honor-code.
Course Schedule

Week 1 (9/2) Introduction to the Course (Shopping Week)

In class for discussion: statements of purpose, Phillips Brooks House 1909, 1974, and 2015

9/7 – Labor Day (No Class)

Week 2 (9/14) Civic Education and the Mission of American Universities


At Harvard –


Week 3 (9/21) Progressive Education, Citizenship, and Universities


At Harvard –


Week 4 (9/28) Social Science and Social Reform: Settlement Houses and Universities


At Harvard –


*The Prospect Union 1891-99, with Illustrations* (Cambridge, MA: The Union, 1899), 15-25.

**Week 5 (10/5) The Professionalization and Secularization of Service**


*At Harvard –*


**10/12 – Columbus Day (No Class)**

*10/12 at 11:59 PM:*
Option to submit Expanded Journal Entry (If you decide not to submit at this time, you must submit on 11/23)

*10/18 at 11:59 PM:*
Submission of Project Proposal

**Week 6 (10/19) General Education and American Democracy at Mid Century**


**At Harvard**


*Brooks House News: selected articles, 1939-1953.*


**Week 7 (10/26) Highlander Folk School: Community Education and Civil Rights**


**At Harvard**

*Harvard Crimson:* articles on speakers from Highlander, 1934.


**Week 8 (11/2) Freedom Summer and the Miles College-PBHA Summer Program, 1964**

* Guest Speaker: Richard Parker ’68, Faculty Member at Harvard Kennedy School* (Harvard College Volunteer Experience: tutoring at Windsor State Prison; tutoring in Watts in summer 1965; teaching in the Talladega/Dartmouth program in summer 1966; teaching at Miles College in fall 1967)


**At Harvard**


“Miles College – Phillips Brooks House Association Volunteer Teaching Project”

“Some Thoughts After a Summer at Miles College, Birmingham, Alabama”


Week 9 (11/9) Challenges for Universities in the 1960s and 1970s


Excerpts from Clark Kerr, The Uses of the University, 1964.


At Harvard -

Harvard Crimson: articles on tutoring programs from the 1960s and 1970s.


Week 10 (11/16) The Emergence and Growth of Service Learning


At Harvard –


“Activity-Based Learning,” Bok Center.

**Week 11 (11/23) University Engagement and Community Schools**


*11/23 at 11:59 PM:*
Submission of Expanded Journal Entry for all those who did not submit on 10/12

**Thanksgiving 11/26**

**Week 12 (11/30) Appeals to the Past: Progressive Lessons for Today**


*12/11 at 11:59 PM:*
Submission of Final Project