

Sociology 495 Community Activism Spring 1996

Radford University

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Office Hours: TTH 1:30-3:00
W 3:00-4:00

This class is designed to explore our leadership styles and skills, to acquire additional leadership skills, and to generate new ways of working in groups. In this sense this is an advanced class. In other words, it is not so much that the concepts we will be dealing with require so much prior knowledge, but rather it is advanced in that it will require a level of commitment from you that other classes may not have required. **THIS CLASS IS ABOUT YOU AND WHO YOU ARE OR WOULD BE AS A LEADER.** It is also about social justice and ways of working with communities that assumes subject-subject rather than subject-object relations.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

Diagnostics

Learning who we are and what we want. We will use a variety of tools to look at ourselves, analyze our styles and determine what role we would like to play in a group or social justice organization/project. Part of this diagnostic will be jointly exploring concepts and clarifying our position on various issues.

New Skills

We will be working to acquire new leadership skills. Some of this will be done by leading discussion and scribing for the class (see requirements below) and some will focus on our ability to listen to and hear others; our ability to respond empathically and compassionately to others. Some of our skills will be acquired through our discovery of ourselves in our readings.

New Group Techniques

As we will learn community development is often seen as educating community members so they can be more effective in the community. After working with various communities I and others have seen that community development and self transformation must go hand in hand. Those of you who have been on alternative breaks know that the breaks are transforming. Something happens that is beyond any individual learning experience. This transformation is not something that can be taught. It happens. A question we need to explore is how we can make it happen for everyone in the group so that we are all "making the path as we walk it." Currently, the educating done in community development assumes that transformation is a byproduct of learning. This is not necessarily so. We want to make transformation the product of learning and want to work on how to "make" transformation highly likely.

THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS IS TO HELP EACH OF US TO BE "READY FROM WITHIN" FOR THE "LONG HAUL" SO THAT WE "REFUSE TO STAND SILENTLY BY"

THROUGH "PLANTING THE SEEDS OF FIRE" AND "MAKING THE ROAD BY WALKING"

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO BE DOING:

We will all take turns leading the class and scribing.

We will all be involved in diagnostic exercises and learning exercises.

We will be co-leading presenting material from the readings.

We will all journal electronically with Dr. P at least once a week with regard to the class discussion, reading, diagnostics, learning exercises, and co-leading the class.

We will have regular group reflection sessions on how well the process of learning is doing in the class.

We will go on alternative break in Ivanhoe, VA.

We will be working with RUCC on the Curriculum Based Alternative Break Project.

Each of you will have a final reflection paper on the class.

Grading for the class:

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Leading class | 100 points |
| Scribing for class | 100 points |
| Electronic journaling | 100 points |
| Class Presentation of Your Book | 100 points |
| Alternative Break | 200 points |
| Class project | 150 points |
| Reflective paper | 150 points |
| Total points | 900 points |

READINGS:

Three chapters from Covey Seven Habits of Truly Effective People One chapter from Greenleaf Servant Leadership Both on Reserve

Myles Horton The Long Haul
Septims Clark Ready from Within

One additional book of your choice. Some suggestions are:

Horton and Freire We Make the Road by Walking
Adams Planting the seeds of Fire
Wigginton Refuse to Stand Silently By

Hinsdale, Lewis & Waller It Comes from the People
Parker The Active Life

or any book which we have mutually decided upon.