SSIR LDST - 290
Living a Life of Consequence: Self-Discovery and Social Change
Fall 2012
Course Syllabus

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Office hours: by appointment
Class meeting time Thursdays 3:00-5:30pm. Location: Lakeview Classroom

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Description

This course will engage the ethical, creative, and reflective imaginations of students by examining various models of social engagement, and different pathways to self-discovery, in light of the significant social challenges of our time.

The course aims to integrate theory and practice by encouraging students to reflect on their own talents, passions, and aspirations towards a consequential life in the context of what they are learning through the readings, class lectures and discussions, fall break immersion experience, and their community-based learning.

The course is centered on two questions:
• What does it mean to live a life of consequence?
• How does self-discovery lead to social change?

Learning objectives:

1. To offer a variety of ways to think ethically and reflectively.
2. To integrate theory and practice of social engagement.
3. To expose students to three different models of engaging social challenge.
4. To develop skills in understanding and critiquing the assumptions of various ways of engaging social difference.
5. To enable students to reflect on their own life stories, passions, and aspirations within the models presented.

Format

There are five kinds of interaction:
1) Lectures and class discussions
2) Guest presentations
3) Meals and continued discussion at Boatwright House (Dr. Kocher’s home adjacent to campus)
4) Fall break experiential travel to the Downtown East Side of Vancouver in Canada
5) 15 hours of community-based learning with an organization in Richmond

Assessment

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Papers should be organized in the following way:

1. **Format.** Please type the paper double-spaced, in Times New Roman font size 12, on one side of the paper only, with one inch margins all the way around. Page numbers should be at the bottom center.
2. **Title.** Think carefully about how your title communicates the argument of the paper in an attractive way, and whether you want to use a subtitle. The title, name of course, and your name should be on a cover sheet.
3. **Introduction.** Write this after you have written your paper, so that it genuinely introduces:
   - the argument that follows
   - the specific ways in which you are narrowing your subject down to a manageable size
   - the specific terms you are using that need some definition
   - the introduction should not take up more than 5% of a paper of this kind. One or two paragraphs should do it. The introduction for the response papers and journal entries may be only a couple of sentences.
4. **Main body of the paper.** A sequence of subheadings that divide the paper into logical, roughly even-length sections reassures the professor that the argument has been planned and reasoned carefully before being written.
5. **Conclusion.** Should be very short and summarize main findings.

Grading Standards:

These standards have been articulated by Jepson faculty members and serve as a helpful guide for students preparing papers.

“**A**” work is well-written, well-argued, and thoroughly conversant with the source material, containing no major inaccuracies or contradictions, and illustrating subtlety and nuance of argument. “**A**” papers consist of interesting, substantial thoughts well-packaged in technically proficient writing.

“**B**” work attempts to forward an argument and shows good familiarity with and understanding of the source material, and is generally well-written. There are generally two genres of “**B**”
work: papers that have some of the qualities of an “A” paper, but also contain serious flaws; and
papers that contain no serious flaws, but also lack originality or depth of perceptiveness, or
simply fail to be persuasive.

“C” work makes an attempt to complete an assignment but contains substantial flaws, either of
writing quality, inadequate comprehension of the material, unsupported arguments, and/or
logically contradictory or implausible arguments.

“D” and “F” work refers to papers that are seriously inadequate and fail to meet the basic
requirements of the assignment.

Class Sessions and Assignments

August 30 – Introduction to the class, the syllabus, and review of the summer reading
assignments.

September 6 – Ethical theories and Community-Based-Learning orientation.

John Rawls, A Theory of Justice
Peter Vardy and Paul Grosch, The Puzzle of Ethics (Ch 4-6)
General Assembly of the United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

September 13 – Modes of ethical thinking and the challenge of poverty
   In class presentation: Richmond’s Poverty Story, Dr. John Moeser

Paul Collier, The Bottom Billion (Preface, Ch 8)
Defining Poverty, (Complied by World Bank and UN definitions)
Andrew Carnegie, The Gospel of Wealth

September 20 – Models of Social Change: Working For

Hugh Heclo, On Thinking Institutionally (1-10, 45-66)
Joel Fleishman, The Foundation (Ch 1-3, Epilogue)
William Easterly, The White Man’s Burden (Ch 1 and 11)

September 27 – Models of Social Change: Working With

Muhammed Unis, Poverty is a Threat to Peace
David Bornstein, The Price of a Dream
Charles Payne, I’ve Got the Light of Freedom (Ch 3)
October 4 – Models of Social Change: Being With

Jean Vanier and Stanley Hauerwas, Living Gently in a Violent World (21-51, 102-105)
Podcast of Speaking of Faith NPR interview
http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/wisdomoftenderness/
James C. Scott, Seeing Like a State (309-357)

October 11 – Preparing for Vancouver
Paper One due

October 18 – Processing Vancouver: Working For, Working With, Being With continued

Jim Collins, Good to Great (Ch 3)
“Dorothy Day” in Callings by William Placher
Mark Warren, Dry Bones Rattling (30-39, Ch 2)
George Orwell, Shooting an Elephant

October 25 – Exploring Community-Based Learning
Paper Two due

November 1 – The Self in Religious Traditions

Genesis 1-3 www.biblegateway.com
Reading from Muslim tradition TBA
Eboo Patel, Acts of Faith
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, The Dignity of Difference (Ch 5)

November 8 – Richmond’s Unhealed History

Ben Campbell, Richmond’s Unhealed History (Intro and Ch 1-5)
Community-Based-Learning Response paper due

November 15 – Richmond’s Unhealed History continued

Ben Campbell, Richmond’s Unhealed History (Ch 6-9 and epilogue)
In-class conversation with Ben Campbell

7:00pm – Students are required to attend the Weinstein-Rosenthal Forum on Faith, Ethics, and Global Society. Ukrop Auditorium in Queally Hall.
November 29 – Living a Life of Consequence

Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*
Weinstein-Rosenthal Response Paper due

December 6 – Course Conclusion
Final papers are due

Assignments

**Paper One: 20 points**

Address the question: Can poverty in Richmond be fixed? Your paper should engage several of the ethical theories we studied in class. It should draw on the readings and the class presentation by Dr. Moeser. Additionally, use one of the theories of social change – working for, working with, or being with – to address the question.

Follow the formatting for papers found in the syllabus. Your paper should have a clear thesis statement and argument. It should be approximately 5 pages in length.

*The paper is due in class on October 11.*

**Paper Two: 20 points**

Describe one experience of social engagement – either personal or institutional – you had or witnessed during the immersion experience in Vancouver. Analyze it using the categories of working for, working with, and being with. Draw conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of the engagement. The paper is designed to show the instructor your level of thoughtful wrestling with the three categories of social change that constitute a large part of this course. It should demonstrate your ability to make connections between your own experience and the three categories. Your writing should draw on course readings as appropriate.

Follow the formatting for papers found in the syllabus. Your paper should have a clear thesis statement and argument. It should be approximately 5 pages in length.

*The paper is due in class on October 25.*

**Final Paper: 40 points**

Develop a systematic analysis of the specific social problem your service work has been addressing. You should draw on your own experience, conversations with those you have been working alongside throughout the semester, the course readings, and at least four outside
reputable published sources to support your analysis. Address how all three models of social change: working for, working with, and being with could be employed to address the particular social challenge.

The paper should be 8-10 pages in length and follow the format outlined in the syllabus. The paper should have a clear thesis statement and a well-developed argument.

*The paper is due by 5pm on Friday, December, 7 to my office in the Wilton Center.*

**Community-Based-Learning Response Paper: 5 points**

Write a reflective paper that describes the agency in which you work through the eyes of one of those whom it serves. Write this entry in the first person. It may reflect the thoughts and feelings of someone you observe or someone you invent based on various persons you have met. Does this person consider himself or herself to be a full member of the community? Does this person believe he or she lives a life of consequence? The papers should be 2-3 pages in length.

*Due in class on November 8.*

**Weinstein-Rosenthal Response Paper: 5 points**

Write a response to the Weinstein-Rosenthal lecture answering the following question: Is there hope for healing in Richmond and why? It should address a specific place of challenge or unresolved pain in the Richmond region and should draw on the lecture, and Ben Campbell’s book, *Richmond’s Unhealed History.* The paper should be 2-3 pages in length.

*Due in class on November 29.*

**Class Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes having done the reading and ready to engage the material. Arriving late, under-prepared, or not at all will result in being marked down. The final grade will be dropped one-half letter grade for each absence unless there is a valid reason such as religious observance, family emergency, sickness, etc. Students who miss class for such reasons will be expected to write a 3 page paper showing comprehension of the assigned readings.

**The Honor System:** The Jepson School supports and adheres to the provisions of the Honor System as sanctioned by the School of Arts and Sciences. All work should be your own. A violation of the Honor System may result in a failing grade for the course.

**Religious Observance Policy:** Students needing to miss class because of religious observance should meet with me within the first two weeks of the semester to discuss the absence. The University’s full religious observance policy may be found here: [http://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/religiousobsrv.html](http://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/religiousobsrv.html)
Community-Based-Learning: Students are required to complete 15 hours of community-based-learning at one of the sites below. The following organizations have been selected based on the healthy relationship they enjoy with the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement. Failure to complete the 15 hours will result in a zero class participation grade.

“Working for”
- Youth Life Foundation of Richmond: Tutor/mentor an elementary-school child one afternoon a week. Attend a YLFR orientation 5:30-7:30 p.m., Sept. 13, Commons 348. [http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/ylfr.html](http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/ylfr.html)
- Higher Achievement at Henderson: Tutor/mentor one, two, or three students at Henderson Middle School in reading and math one evening (Mon., Tues., or Thurs.) a week. Attend two Higher Achievement trainings one evening a week during last two weeks of Sept. [http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/henderson.html](http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/henderson.html)

“Working with”
- AMP! Metro Richmond: Mentor a student at Henderson Middle School during his/her lunch hour from 12:00-1:00 p.m. on Fridays for the entire academic year. Attend one of AMP’s training sessions on Sept. 18, 19, or 28. [http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/henderson.html](http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/henderson.html)
- Middle School Renaissance programs at Henderson Middle School: Volunteer in one of several after-school programs led by UR students on Mondays and/or Wednesdays, including FAME, an all-male mentoring program, and Girl Talk, and all-female mentoring program, and others. [http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/henderson.html](http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/henderson.html)

“Being with”
- Rubicon: Interact with residents at Central Virginia’s oldest and largest drug-rehabilitation center (8:30-5:00, Mon.-Fri.). Rubicon will hold a mandatory orientation for all first-time volunteers. [http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/rubicon.html](http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/rubicon.html)
- Daily Planet Medical Respite: Interact with homeless individuals residing at DPMR while they recover from a chronic illness or a surgery (8:30-5:00, Mon.-Fri.). [http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/dpmedicalrespite.html](http://engage.richmond.edu/involved/buildit/partners/dpmedicalrespite.html)
- Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI): Interact with seeing-impaired residents as they learn skills to navigate in a seeing world. [http://www.vrcbvi.org/](http://www.vrcbvi.org/)

Questions about Henderson, Rubicon, or DPMR? Contact Cassie Price (cprice@richmond.edu). Questions about Youth Life, Boaz & Ruth, or VRCBVI? Contact Grace Leonard (grace.leonard@richmond.edu).