SC311.01: Diversity, Community and Service
Fall 2010, Carney 205
Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00-4:15 p.m.

Prof. Deborah Piatelli
McGuinn 425
millerdp@bc.edu

Course Description
Poverty, racism, homelessness, inadequate education, lack of quality and affordable healthcare, unemployment, violence, and environmental pollutions, etc. have become daily realities for many people living in a stratified society. What are the roles and responsibilities of individual citizens in addressing the pervasiveness of injustice and inequality in our society? How do our personal experiences influence the way in which we understand inequality and how does this understanding shape our motivations and forms of civic engagement? What forms of civic engagement can lead to social change? How can privilege distort our views and impact our actions? This course will engage with several bodies of literature: social movement, community organizing, service learning, feminist and critical race studies in understanding the dilemmas facing those working for social change in the global world. Students will explore contemporary forms of volunteerism, service, community-organizing, and ‘activism’ and evaluate how each addresses social change. Drawing on case studies, personal accounts, and sociological research, students will have the opportunity to reflect upon their own personal motivations and/or experiences with these social change forms as well as gain a deeper understanding of how various forms of privilege can influence social change efforts.

Course Objectives:
* Gain a deeper understanding of your own moral responsibility as a member of society.
* Identify and articulate how your personal experiences have been shaped by larger societal patterns and in turn have shaped your understanding of inequality and what it takes to make social change.
* Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various social change models and be able to apply these models to a particular social issue.
* Develop an understanding of how privilege can impact our actions toward social change and explore ways in which we can effectively work across differences.
Required Texts (available in bookstore and on reserve)

Course Requirements

Class participation (25% of your grade)
Class participation is required as much of the learning will take place in the classroom through participation in class discussions. It is expected that when you are in class you will participate. Students are expected to come to each class session having completed the assigned readings and prepared to discuss the material. I will take note of the frequency of your participation as well as excessive absences and lateness as this has an effect on group discussion.

Assignments and due dates (75% of your grade)
You will be asked to complete three assignments and a short presentation over the course of the semester. A detailed description for each assignment can be found on Blackboard.

Personal Reflection Paper (10%)  Due date: Thurs., Sept. 23
Inequality Analysis (25%)  Due date: Thurs., Oct. 21
Field Experience Report (25%)  Due date: Tues., Nov. 16
Final Presentation (15%)  Due date: TBD, end of semester

Late work. If you have extenuating circumstances, you must come see me BEFORE the due date to discuss a possible extension; otherwise you will lose 5 points each day the assignment is late.

A note on academic integrity
Sharing of information and ideas are encouraged as you will be working with your classmates on your assignments. In cases where you are required to use published work, you must cite the work. If you plagiarize or cheat in some other form, you will fail the assignment; repeated episodes will result in failure of the course. If there are any questions on proper method of citing, please see me. For more information on Boston College’s academic integrity policy, please visit: www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy/#integrity.
Course Schedule

Tuesday, September 7
Introduction to the course

I. SELF AND SOCIETY

Thursday, September 9
Moral responsibility

Readings:

Tuesday, September 14
Lived experiences and worldviews

Readings:

Thursday, September 16
Guest speaker: Burt Howell, Associate Director for The Center for Student Formation at Boston College

Tuesday, September 21
Service learning and public sociology

Readings:

Thursday, September 23
Paper discussion

1st PAPER DUE
II. CRITICALLY EXPLORING INEQUALITY

Thursday, September 30
Stereotypes, Power and Privilege

*Film clips in class:* Dangerous Minds (1995)

*Readings:*

Tuesday, October 5
(cont.)

*Readings:*

Thursday, October 7
(cont.)

*Readings:*

III. EVALUATING MODELS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Tuesday, October 12
The politics of difference  
Distributive, ideological and feminist models of change

*Readings:*

Thursday, October 14
(cont.)

Tuesday, October 19
Possible poverty speaker

Thursday, October 21
Paper discussion and field placements

Tuesday, October 26
(cont.)

Thursday, October 28
The ‘service’ model

Readings:

Tuesday, November 2
(cont.)

Thursday, November 4
The ‘community-organizing’ model
Film in class: Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street

Readings:
*Stall, Susan and Randy Stoecker. (1998). “Community Organizing or Organizing Community? Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment.” Gender and Society, 12, 6, 729-756. LIBRARY RESERVE

Tuesday, November 9
(cont.)

Readings:

Thursday, November 11
(cont.)
Tuesday, November 16
Discuss field experience

Thursday, November 18
(cont.)

Tuesday, November 23
Presentation Review

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Tuesday, November 30
Presentations

Thursday, December 2
Presentations

Tuesday, December 7
Presentations

Thursday, December 9
Presentations

3rd PAPER DUE