SC311: Diversity, Community and Service
Spring 2012
Carney 305
Wednesdays, 12:30-2:50 p.m.

Prof. Dave Harker
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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:30-6:00pm or by appointment

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. Students will explore contemporary forms of civic engagement, 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 responsibilities 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. **If I sense that students are not doing the assigned readings, I will assign additional quizzes and/or short writing assignments to ensure the readings are completed.

Every student will also be required to sign up, as part of a group, to lead discussion for one class during the semester. This will be considered as part of your class participation grade.

*A note on personal electronics and class participation:* * Since this is a heavily participation and discussion-based class, I request that students refrain from using laptops and other personal electronic devices (computer, iPad, iPhone, etc.) during the class period. I find that such devices tend to be more of a distraction than a learning aid. Powerpoints of lecture slides will be posted on Blackboard after the class for your convenience. If you have any questions or concerns about this request, please let me know.

**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:** Wed., Feb. 15
- **Inequality Analysis (25%)**
  - **Due date:** Wed., Mar. 29
- **Field Experience Report (25%)**
  - **Due date:** Wed., Apr. 26
- **Final Presentation (15%)**
  - **Due date:** TBD, end of semester
Late work: If you have extenuating circumstances, you must see me BEFORE the due date to discuss a possible extension; otherwise you will lose 5 percentage 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:

Wednesday, January 18th:
Introduction to the course

I. SELF AND SOCIETY

Wednesday, January 25th:
Moral and Social Responsibilities
Sign up for discussion-leader groups

Readings:

Wednesday, February 1st:
Service Learning and Public Sociology

Readings:

Wednesday, February 8th:
Guest Speaker: Burt Howell, Director of Intersections at Boston College

Readings:
- Illich, Ivan. (1968). “To Hell With Good Intentions” Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects, Cuernavaca, Mexico. BLACKBOARD
Wednesday, February 15th:
Lived Experiences and Worldviews
Paper Discussion

Readings:

II. CRITICALLY EXPLORING INEQUALITY

Wednesday, February 22nd:
Stereotypes, Power and Privilege

Readings:

Wednesday, February 29th:
Stereotypes, Power and Privilege (Continued)

Readings:

Wednesday, March 7th:
Spring Vacation - No Class
Wednesday, March 14th:
Stereotypes, Power and Privilege (Continued)

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

**Readings:**

III. EVALUATING MODELS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Wednesday, March 21st:
The Politics of Difference
Distributive, Ideological and Feminist Models of Change

**Readings:**

Wednesday, March 28th: 2nd PAPER DUE
The “Service” Model
*Paper Discussion and Possible Field Experience Placements*

**Readings:**

**Wednesday, April 4th:**
The “Service” Model (continued)

**Readings:**

**Wednesday, April 11th:**
The “Community-Organizing” Model

**Film in class:** 9500 Liberty (2010)

**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

**Wednesday, April 18th:**
The “Organizing Community” Model,

*Discuss Field Experience, and Presentation Review

**Readings:**

**Wednesday, April 25th:**
3rd PAPER DUE

Presentations

**Wednesday, May 2nd:**

Presentations