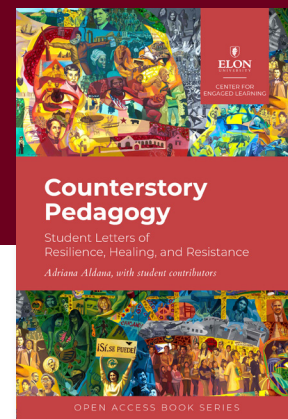


YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

This 10-week course syllabus template focuses on the course's core components while offering flexibility regarding specific course expectations and policies.



[Syllabus Template]

Instructor:

Class Day/Time:

Class Location:

Contact Info:

Course Description

This course explores the role of youth in community development and social change, emphasizing empowerment strategies and participatory methods. Students will engage with theories of empowerment and social justice, analyze community-based initiatives, and develop skills for fostering youth-led change.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand key theories of empowerment and social justice.
2. Apply participatory action research methods to youth-centered community change.
3. Critically evaluate youth-led initiatives and their impact on social change.
4. Develop strategies for engaging youth in community development.
5. Identify and address systemic inequalities in youth empowerment processes.

Course Format

This course is designed to be experiential and participatory, emphasizing collaborative learning and shared exploration of youth empowerment. Students will actively engage in discussions and activities that examine the challenges and benefits of incorporating young people's voices and perspectives into community change efforts. The course values diverse sources of knowledge, including insights from students, the instructor, and the community, fostering an environment of mutual learning and local knowledge creation.



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In contrast to traditional educational models where students passively receive knowledge, this course encourages active co-construction of understanding and critical reflection. Additionally, counterstory pedagogy and dialogic methods will be central to our approach, enabling students to critically examine dominant narratives and engage in meaningful dialogue that supports transformative learning.

Course Assignments and Grading

Youth Empowerment Workshop Proposal (30%)

Popular education and co-facilitation of many meetings and events are key practice skills in community organizing with youth. Workshops are one way of applying popular education principles. They are also a mezzo-level practice approach towards macro-level or systemic change. Workshops requiring collaborative approaches across differences and sources of power are essential principles for youth empowerment.

Students will work in small groups of 2-3 to design, propose, and plan a youth empowerment workshop (60 min). Each group will choose a topic related to a social justice issue, racial justice issue, or other community priority affecting youth. For example, the group might lead skill-building training or facilitate an informational session that raises awareness about a particular topic. The workshop must be evidence-based (integrate required readings), experiential, and developmentally appropriate for the target age group. The proposal includes preparing a facilitator's agenda and other relevant resource materials as part of your planning process.

Workshop Facilitation (25%)

Once the group proposals have been approved, students will be expected to facilitate their popular education-based workshop in class. The workshop does not need to present on the weekly readings/materials assigned for that specific date. However, the weekly reading(s) should inform the workshop design and facilitation. The workshop should be relevant to current events or issues related to the topic and/or the identified community priority. The group will facilitate a "practice run" of their workshop for 60 minutes.

Reflection Letter (25%)

At the end of the semester, each student will reflect on reoccurring course themes that enhanced their personal and/or professional learning. The student will write a short, 2-page (max) paper as a letter addressed to youth. The letter should reflect concepts or ideas learned from the course (i.e., readings and class discussions). This paper should be in 12-inch font, with 1-inch margins, and double-spaced. Students will have an opportunity to share the reflection letter with the class during the final class session. This presentation will draw connections between course concepts and personal/professional experiences. The presentation should include a general introduction, a brief discussion of the positionality/standpoint used to write the reflection, and the letter's reading. In discussing positionality/standpoint, the student will demonstrate how various aspects of your identity affect how you perceive, move, act, or speak. The "presentation" should be 5 minutes long (max), including reading your letter. Students who supplement the letter reading with creative expressions (photo gallery, music, video, poetry, exhibits, etc.) will get an extra point.



Class Participation (20%)

The literature on adult learning supports an educational philosophy that promotes active learning strategies. Active learning in the classroom requires that Instructors and students accept some degree of shared responsibility for learning. Students are expected to participate actively in the classroom, arrive at class having read the required material, be prepared to seek answers to questions generated by that course material, and engage in activities designed to apply new knowledge. Class participation is based on (1) attendance and (2) active participation in class activities or discussions.

Course Materials and Topics

Required Textbook

Delgado, M. (2015). *Community practice and urban youth: Social justice service-learning and civic engagement*. Routledge.

Course Topics and Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to Youth Empowerment and Community Change

Week 2: Youth as Agents of Change and the Role of Adult Allies

Week 3: Theories of Empowerment and Social Justice

Week 4: Building Partnerships with Youth and Community Organizations

Week 5: Youth Empowerment Program Design and Planning

Week 6: Participatory Action Research (PAR) Methods

Week 7: Case Studies of Youth-Led Change Initiatives Part I (Environmental Justice)

Week 8: Case Studies of Youth-Led Change Initiatives Part II (Food Justice)

Week 9: Case Studies of Youth-Led Change Initiatives Part III (Racial Justice)

Week 10: Presentations of Reflection Letters

Additional References and Resources

Aldana, A. & Richards-Schuster, K. 2021. "Youth-Led antiracism research: Making a case for Participatory Methods and Creative Strategies in Developmental Science." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 36 (6): 654-685.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/07435584211043289>.

Aldana, A., Richards-Schuster, K., & Checkoway, B. 2016. "Dialogic pedagogy for youth participatory action research: Facilitation of an intergroup empowerment program." *Social Work with Groups* 39(4): 339-358.



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Additional References and Resources Cont.

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- Convention on the rights of the child: The child-friendly version. 1991. *United Nations*. <https://www.unicef.org/media/56661/file>.
- Fletcher, A. 2015. "New roles for young people throughout society." *The Freechild Project*. <http://treasure.over-blog.com/2015/12/new-roles-for-young-people-throughout-society.html>.
- Garcia, C. 2017. "Queridisima Palomita: A letter to my great-great-great-great-great granddaughter." In C. De Robertis (ed.), *Radical Hope: Letters of Love and Dissent in Dangerous Times*: 102-110. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Ginwright, S., & James, T. 2002. "From assets to agents of change: Social justice, organizing, and youth development." *New Directions for Student Leadership* 2002 (96): 27-46.
- Jennings, L. B., D. M. Parra-Medina, D. K. Hilfinger-Messias, and K. McLoughlin. 2006. "Toward a critical social theory of youth empowerment." *Journal of Community Practice* 14 (1-2): 31-55.
- Norman, J. (n.d.) "Building effective youth-adult partnerships." *Advocates for Youth*. <https://www.advocatesforyouth.org/resources/fact-sheets/building-effective-youth-adult-partnerships/>.
- Prendiville, P. 2008. "Developing Facilitation Skills: A Handbook for Group Facilitators." Combat Poverty Agency.
- Zaveri, M. 2020. "‘I Need People to Hear My Voice’: Teens Protest Racism." *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/23/us/teens-protest-black-lives-matter.html>.

