

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT URBAN SEMESTER FIELD WORK SEMINAR
INTERDEPARTMENTAL 212&212W REGINA DYTON, MSW

Educational Objectives

These seminars will provide a survey of theories and concepts to help you gain insight into what it means to function as a staff member of an organization engaged in human services, state and local government advocacy, etc. There are three basic objectives:

- 1) To acquaint you with different theoretical approaches to urban issues and problems, and provide you with an introduction to theories of social policy and bureaucracy in order to help orient you to the social, political and economic environment in which you, your organization and your constituents are functioning.
- 2) To explore various issues that impede the process of meeting human needs, issues of race, class, gender and other “isms” that are confronted in human services.
- 3) To sample various approaches, strategies and tactics used by organizations and individuals in the attempt to meet human needs and empower community residents.

Class Format

We will meet once a week for 1-1/2 hours. We will use a combination of lectures, discussions, media presentations and guest speakers on topics in the attached outline. We will also try to incorporate your experiences in your placements into the discussion.

Please turn cell phones off or to inaudible during class: phones may not be answered until after class unless it is a bona-fide emergency. Failure to observe these courtesies may result in a reduced grade.

Grades

Grades will be determined on the basis of:

- 1) **Written papers** pertaining to your experiences this semester, per attached outline-**1/2 of your grade;**
- 2) **Constructive class participation and oral presentations-1/4 of your grade** (see following statement on attendance);
- 3) A written **take home final examination –1/4 of your grade**

Attendance

Since the entire Urban Semester experience is based on your experience in living and sharing with each other, class attendance is important and influences your ability to participate in class and hence, your grade. Also, absences are felt in such a small group. **After two absences, your final grade will be reduced by half a grade (A to A- or A-to B+, etc) unless there are bona fide reasons why you needed to miss class.** If it is necessary to miss a class, please notify me beforehand. Excessive tardiness (more than 15 minutes late on a repeated basis) is disruptive to the class and may also result in a reduced grade.

Papers and Assignment

These assignments are intended to develop your sense of your agency's mission, your own role and how these fit into larger issues in meeting human needs. Strive for clear, concise work. Typed work is preferred. **Papers more than one week late will be reduced ½ grade.** (A to A- or A-to B+ etc) 5 pages maximum, unless you are taking the course for W credit (see below). ***Plagiarism of any sort will result in automatic irrevocable failure on the assignment.***

#1-Due Second Class Session

Summarize your initial impression of Hartford as a community or your new impressions of Hartford if you already live here. Address at least two of the following 5 areas in your impressions and discussion;

- 1) Who are the people of Hartford? What do the demographics look like from your casual observation?
- 2) Education/Schools
- 3) Housing
- 4) Agencies and Organizations
- 5) Economic status of the City

What are your individual goals for the semester? What factors went into your choice of a placement and how do you hope your internship will meet your goals? Choose another student in the group who you did not know previously, who is not among your roommates and is not working in the same setting with you. Compare your impressions, the areas you chose to observe and write about and your goals. Write about one page on this comparison.

#2 Due the Fifth Class Session

Research a little about the organization in which you are interning. If the organization has a mission statement, obtain a copy of it and bring it to class. Also create an organizational chart of the organization in which you are doing your internship (try to the best of your ability). Ask your supervisor for help if you need it. This can be on a single sheet of paper; bring this to class. On another sheet of paper, list as many different organizations as you can that your agency/organization interacts with and specify the relationships. This can be in a simple list format. **For students taking the course for W credit write a sentence or two about each organization to equal up to three written pages. Bring TWO copies of this assignment to class.** Turn in one and keep one for use in a later class. When I hand back your graded paper, please give me your extra copy. **KEEP** your graded paper and bring it to each class as we will refer to and add to it from time to time.

#3 Due for the 6th Class Session

Everyone should read two chapters from Howard Zinn's Peop:e's History of the United States and two chapters of Reading for Diversity and Social Justice, by Adams, Blumenfeld, Castamede, Hackman, Peters and Zuniga(editors). The books are available at the UConn coop at the undergraduate building. In a brief paper, **5-6 pages for those not taking this as a "W" course,8 pages for "W" credit** summarize the most important issues from these readings for you as an intern and then discuss the relevancy of these ideas for your work in your placement. Summarize your thoughts in a class presentation of 8-10 minutes. Make sure to reference both books in your paper and talk. Consider this assignment the equivalent of a mid-term exam.

Additional Reading

On the **take-home exam** there will be one question that will ask you to write about two books you have read during this semester and how they relate to your placement and your overall experience in Hartford. Therefore, during the semester **select two books**. They can be relevant to your placement or to other aspects of the program or urban issues in a broad sense. Most students select books that tie into their work ,but you should feel free to read books in other areas if you wish. Please feel free to talk with me about suggestions. In many instances, novels, biographies or literature are acceptable.

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For those of you enrolled in the course for W Credit, please complete the same written Assignments with the following additional requirements:

- 1) The total number of written pages you must hand in must equal **15 pages** (excluding the final exam). A rough guide would be that the first paper should be approximately 5 pages, the second paper (the agency list) 2 pages and the last paper 8 pages.
- 2) Partial or complete re-writing may be required. Editing suggestions on your paper must be incorporated into the rewriting.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

Week One: Agency Field Visits-Out and About in the Community

Session I Urban Observations and Introductions to Agency Life

Session II Conceptual Frameworks and Socialization of Perspectives
Impressions of Hartford Due

Session III Different Perspectives on Urban Problems, Political and Social
Work Approaches

Session IV Forces at Work Within the Community: Relations of Power

Session V Social Institutions and Bureaucracies-Structure and Process
Organizational Charts Due

Session VI Mid Term Presentations
Second Paper Due

The order of the following classes may vary depending upon availability of guest speakers who may be involved in class sessions.

Session VII Racism: Issues From the African American Perspective

Session VIII Racism, Issues From the Puerto Rican Perspective

Session IX- Racism, Issues From the Native American Perspective

Session X- Racism-Issues from the Asian American Perspective

Session XI Homophobia and Intersections of Oppression

Session XII Social Change and Community Organizing

Session XIII Student Presentations and Wrap-Up
Each student will give a 5-7 minute oral presentation on books you
have read during the semester and **Turn in Written Final Exams**