STPEC 494A: Praxis

Class time/Location: Monday 11:15-1:45, Dickinson 209
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STPEC 494PI: Praxis/IE is a 3 credit course intended for students who wish to receive credit for the Integrative Experience gen ed requirement through an extended analysis of an internship experience. STPEC requires an internship for graduation and students will have completed or will be enrolled in their internship at the time they take this course.

The learning objectives of the Integrative Experience are to reflect on and to integrate student learning and experience from general education courses and core major courses, to provide opportunities for gen ed learning objectives such as oral communication, collaboration, critical thinking and interdisciplinary perspective-taking at a more advanced level, and to offer a shared learning experience for applying prior learning to new situations, challenging questions, and real-world problems.

With this in mind, the goals of this course are first to identify what is often considered unrelated knowledge from broader general education classes, draw it into present learning in the core courses of the major, and then to apply this knowledge toward a critical analysis of the institutions in which the students intern. This is a seminar providing structured, regular, collaborative feedback in small groups, opportunities for applied critical analysis and reflective practice, and includes student presentations at the end.

In this small seminar setting, dialogue and engaged pedagogy are the dominant strategies for learning. Skills presented and practiced toward a collaborative classroom are: active listening, effective communication for clarity, comprehension and engagement, self-reflection, critical thinking, and an interdisciplinary contextual analysis. Both in their written assignments and in small group dialogue, students will practice articulating multiple perspectives (their own social identity standpoints and those of others), and develop an agile understanding (in the real-world example of their internships) of the ways people make meaning of experiences, frame and justify positions and issues, formulate institutional goals and evaluate outcomes.

This class focuses on the relationship between theory and practice. It is an opportunity to evaluate organizational structures and outcomes and the beliefs that underlie them, in order to understand how power, organizational culture and policy are created, interrelated and maintained. It is an inquiry into the role of institutions in social change, and an analysis of theory and practice in those institutions. Students will be expected to rigorously analyze, both concretely and abstractly, the organizations in which they intern.

Each student must include a race, class and gender analysis in her work, both of herself and of the organization in which she worked. As such, this class is also an important opportunity for self-reflection. Using knowledge from the prior gen eds and core stpec courses, students will address the
political and social contexts in which they find and define themselves, and also observe their own major influences and learning. This reflection will take the form of both dedicated class discussion and a short personal essay.

The IE project is an overarching question or topic that the student pursues as a part of their work analyzing their internship. They should be prepared to set out goals for an inquiry that integrates content from previous gen ed and core STPEC classes into a critical analysis of their internship. Examples might be: 1) a contextual analysis of your organization within a social movement, 2) an analysis of the political limits of an organization engaging theories of wealth accumulation, private property and/or development theory, or 3) an extended analysis of intersectionality as a feminist theory and implications for understanding the political goals of your organization. Given the inherently interdisciplinary nature of the STPEC curriculum, the possibilities for IE projects are great.

**Grading:**
Students will complete 4 written sections drafts developing the core analysis of their project, and then combine and revise these sections into the final form of the project. They will complete a short written reflective essay, which may or may not be included in the final project itself. Because the course is based in dialogue, grades will also reflect participation and skill development.

4 written section drafts/final  55%
reflection                  15%
class participation         30%

Papers will be graded based on:
Completion of Assignment
Observational skills
Depth of Thought / Critical Thinking
Writing Quality – should be clear, concise, organized and **proofread**

It is unwise to come to class late or skip class because you have not finished your paper. The penalty for missing class is higher than the penalty for turning in a late paper. Class time is where most of the work for this course is carried out. Our discussion will suffer in your absence, your papers will suffer without input from the class …. and plus your comrades will miss you.

**Course Calendar:**

**Week 1: intro and social theory**  
Jan 20
Intro to syllabus
Introduction to students and organizations
Introduction to critical dialogue
Beginning social theory analysis

Week 2-3: social theory cont. Jan 27, Feb 3
Continued introductions
Theory and practice: Social theory and how we practice it
Mission and Vision

Reading:

Be prepared to present in some detail to the class:
1) **Social Theory:** Describe your organization. what does it do, why, what does it accomplish, why/how? What does it believe about the world and about the issue(s) it deals with, that it does what it does? Who are they (who run it) that they believe this?
2) **Core inquiry and analysis:** what are the main questions you want to ask about your org or the issues it deals with?

Include these:
- the “buffer zone”: use Kivel’s concept of the buffer zone as it applies to your org.
- **STPEC Core Material:** pull ideas and resources (theoretical tools) from the STPEC seminars that can contribute to content and analysis – that can help you name and describe something

Week 4: Organizational Structure and Funding Feb 10
Handout on organizational structure and decision-making

Readings:
Review section on funding and on Community leadership:

>>>>>> Organizational Summary and initial analysis due<<<<<<<<<
this is the development of your class presentation into a essay.

Week 5: review: social constructionism Feb 17
intersectionality and its limitations
situated knowledge and social vision
social constructionism and it's critics

Readings:

reference:
– Robin Diangelo, *Race and Class*

Week 6: Neoliberalism and individualism Feb 24
Week 7: Race and Whiteness
March 2
We will review colorblindness, micro-aggressions, institutional racism, bringing forward critiques of liberal individualism and neoliberalism

Readings:

Reference:

Especially for white students:

Week 8: Race and Whiteness: organizational analysis
Mar 9
Follow up and discussion: race analysis in orgs.

Readings:
– students must find readings that support a race analysis of the organization they interned in or of issues or populations their organization deals with.

********SPRING BREAK ********

Week 9: working group meetings
Mar 23

>>DUE: section draft: intersected race analysis, before 3 pm.

Week 10: Gender/Patriarchy/Queer Theory
Mar 30
Readings:

Reference:
-- Judith Butler *Gender Trouble* and women of color critiques of it
-- Andrea Smith *INCITE!

**Week 11: Organizational Gender Analysis**  
*April 6*

*Readings:*
– students must find readings that support a gender analysis of their org, or of issues or populations their org deals with.
– Gender Tool Kit
  
  **skim:**  

**Week 12: Capitalism and class**  
*April 13*

class as process: kinds of wealth
review of process of appropriation exploitation/necessary and surplus labor/social welfare
class as culture

*Readings:*

<<**DUE: section draft: intersected gender/race in your org. to your peer reader**

**Week 13: MONDAY SCHEDULE**  
*April 20*

>>**DUE: section draft: intersected gender/race in your org. by 3pm.**
Please attach the first draft with peer comments to the revised draft and turn both in together.

**Week 14: Self-reflection**  
*April 27*
self-reflective group dialogue: in class discussion of educational experience at the university, observations of learning and skill sets, in terms of how you want to be in the world as a global citizen.

>>**Due: section draft: capitalism/neoliberalism/liberalism as context** (or Race and gender in context
Final Paper due May 4 at 5pm.