Most Americans welcome the voice that lifts them out of themselves. They want to be better people. They want to help make this a better country...What you can do is to awaken them to the possibilities within themselves. So those who have not succumbed to the contemporary disaffection and alienation must speak the world of life to their fellow Americans. It is not a liberal or conservative issue. It is not Democrat versus Republican. It is a question of whether we are going to settle into a permanent state of self-absorption or show the vigor and purpose that becomes us. We don’t want it said that after a couple of great centuries we let the American Experiment disintegrate.

John Gardner, as quoted in Civil Society: The Underpinnings of American Democracy, by Brian O’Connell.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines civic engagement in public and private organizations and analyzes techniques for developing the capacity for people to direct the decisions that affect their lives.

EXPANDED DESCRIPTION:

What is the “vigor and purpose that becomes us?” What does it mean to “speak the world of life” to others and ourselves? Over the course of the semester, we will ask collectively, what is our role as citizen? How do we engage in community development, grassroots organizing, and advocacy to create a more just and democratic society? Do we all have the same opportunity to engage in political and social decision-making structures? How does the type of social change that minimizes the burden of poverty, discrimination, and injustice occur? How do we as individuals contribute to this change?

Course readings and discussion will focus on current methods for involving citizens in public and voluntary organizations. You will be introduced to the Social Work Code of Ethics, and discuss the philosophy and values that underlie volunteerism, public participation, and social change strategies. The course examines volunteer involvement in public and private organizations, primarily through analysis of your experiences in service learning. You will also analyze techniques for developing the capacity for people to become involved in the decisions that affect their lives, particularly for those people who are most often excluded from such decisions. A three to five hour a week volunteer
placement, coordinated in conjunction with the UNC APPLES program, is required for the class (Total of 40-50 hours over the course of the semester).

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
The goal of this course is to build on your existing knowledge and experience in combination with a participatory classroom environment and the experiential learning of a community placement. At the end of the course, you should be able to:

1) Communicate a personal philosophy regarding the value and effectiveness of citizen involvement in community development, advocacy and public decision-making.

2) Describe philosophical and ethical perspectives and theories regarding citizen involvement in public and voluntary community development activities.

3) Identify and analyze the degree to which local public and voluntary programs currently involve community members, particularly women, people of color, low-income citizens, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender individuals, and other traditionally marginalized groups in their planning and decision-making.

4) Identify and evaluate methods and techniques for involving citizens in community and organizational planning and social change.

5) Describe the role of volunteerism in citizen participation and discuss the complexities between a volunteer and service-based strategy and a social change or systemic-based strategy.

6) Refine personal skills as a facilitator of citizen participation and volunteer involvement with a focus on supporting diversity and enabling members from all parts of the community to participate in its positive development.

REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS:

The majority of the readings are available through the library e-reserve system (http://eres.lib.unc.edu/courseindex.asp) and through Blackboard.

OFFICE HOURS:
I will be holding regular office hours on Thursday from 1-2 p.m. before class. I am also available to meet with you by appointment. There does not have to be a “problem” for you to schedule time to meet. If you want to improve your writing, brainstorm your final community project, or talk about the field of Social Work, I am available.
STUDENT RIGHTS:

As a student, you have the right to criticize and question what you are hearing and reading, without fear of ridicule or threat of retribution. You also have the right to support and affirm what is being discussed and shared, as well. You have the right to be treated equally and with respect. You have the right to be fully informed of course requirements and grading procedures. You have the right to receive prompt and comprehensible feedback on your assignments.

TEACHING METHODS AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING:

Because learning and teaching are interdependent processes, I would encourage each of us to view ourselves as having important ideas to teach and important ideas to learn. With this in mind, there will be minimal lecture in this class. This class is an upper level seminar so I expect a high level of critical engagement both inside and outside of the classroom. Primarily we will engage in small group or large group discussions and a workshop-style format. These discussions will require you to come prepared having not only read the readings assigned for the week but prepared to engage them within the class community. **If you do not do the required readings each week, it will affect your grade.**

The development of a supportive learning environment, reflecting the values of the social work profession, is essential for the success of this class. A supportive learning environment is fostered by listening to the ideas and view of others, being able to understand appreciate a point of view which is different from your own, articulating clearly your point of view, and linking experience to readings and assignments. It also includes creating space for those less comfortable to be able to discuss their opinions. I will appreciate your contributions to making this a safe and respectful class for learning and growth.

As we move through the semester if some things don’t work or make sense, say so. You are responsible for your learning. I am responsible for creating a safe, accessible, and resource rich context for your learning.

SERVICE LEARNING AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:

Much of your learning will happen outside of the classroom. During the first two class meetings, you will have the opportunity to hear about the various community groups that will be in partnership with our class. You will spend 3-5 hours in a service learning partnership with 2-4 of your classmates. **Your grade for participation will be based not only on your attendance and participation in class, but also your participation in your partnership.**

Your volunteer time is a vital component of your course experience. You will be working 3-5 hours per week with a local non-profit or community change effort. **(40-50 hours for semester)** The following guidelines may help you in your community placement:

1. This is a commitment to your community partner and, most importantly to the people it serves and supports. It is critical that your community partner know your daily time commitment and that you follow through consistently with this plan. If you are experiencing any difficulties or changes in your schedule, you most talk to me EARLY in the semester. I will be communicating with each of your community partners throughout the course to make sure both your needs and that of the agency are being met.
2. Follow the policies, procedures, and related expectations as defined by your community partner. If you are confused, if tasks are unclear, ask your supervisor or another experienced volunteer. Don’t be afraid to ask questions.

3. Trust yourself. If something doesn't feel right, ask for assistance, clarification. Remember-- this is your learning experience. Feel free to use our class time to process any issues that may come up. Everyone will experience concerns, insecurities, difficulties, and frustrations. Openness to explore and process those experiences is valued. Everyone in class will benefit from sharing both the positive as well as challenging moments.

Class Assignments:

Weekly Action/Reaction Discussion Post—12 posts: 6 postings/6 responses

These posts should demonstrate engagement with the readings, your community experience, and our class discussion. ORIGINAL POSTS should be posted by **5 p.m. on each WEDNESDAY before class.** RESPONSE POSTS should be online by midnight on WEDNESDAY. Each post should be the equivalent of approximately one double-spaced typewritten page and should connect your readings/thoughts to your organizing experience and your team projects. Posts that are too short, do not exhibit good writing, do not carefully discuss the readings will receive reduced or no credit. You will be expected to post for ten weeks. Six should be initial postings of your own original thoughts and the other six should respond to points/issues raised by your classmates. See Blackboard “Course Documents” and “Grading” for specific evaluation criteria for online postings.

Discussion Facilitation

In order to increase facilitation and leadership skills, **two** students will be selected **each week** to open the class with announcements, current events relevant to our weekly discussion, highlights from our online posts for the week, and introduce the week’s topic. If appropriate, student facilitators will take notes and write a one-page synopsis to be distributed the following week to classmates. Co-facilitators will also close the class with a relevant thought or quote to synthesize the content of the week.

Philosophy of Service (**Due: Sept. 4th**) 

The purpose of this creative project is for you to reflect on and further develop your own philosophy of service by examining the individuals, groups, social movements, learning experiences, etc. that have had a significant influence on your values, work, personal insights, and ways of knowing. How has (or does) your service experience or social vision inform your learning and life experiences? This project should be imaginative, introspective, and thoughtful. Examples include: an essay (4-6 pages), film, poetry, performance piece, or other creative medium that communicates your philosophy of service and social change work.

Power and Privilege Paper (**Due: Sept. 25th**)
Thinking about your service learning placement (or another group/agency with which you are familiar), discuss the following (4-6 pages):

- Describe your agency, whom it works with/serves, and the services it provides. (5 pts)
- Broadly define how you see power and privilege operating within the social constructs of race, ethnicity, class, (dis)ability, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation? Use the readings to support your point of view. You may choose to just focus on one aspect of privilege if you wish.
- How do these constructs impact the work of your agency/project?
- Does viewing inequality through a privilege lens equip us to better understand social inequality? In other words, does understanding privilege matter to the work of social change? If no, why? If yes, what do we do about it?
- Organization and Style: (5 pts)

Community Writing Assignment (Due: October 30th)

Writing is a powerful change tool. As such, this writing assignment focuses on using your voice to communicate in a very public way an issue with conviction and clarity. You may choose to write an op-ed piece for a local paper, a letter to your congressional representatives, a column for a local magazine, a training manual, a performance piece, or other creative writing piece relevant to a social change issue that has meaning to you. This should be submitted for publication or public view. Your writing idea should be approved by me beforehand. Your proposal should turn in via email by October 30th describing the topic you intend to address. If there are problems with your proposal, I will arrange a meeting to discuss alternatives.

Organizational/Community Change Assessment Paper: (Due November 20th)

We will have spent the previous weeks in class discussing the strengths and limitations of citizen participation and methods to foster participation within both public/private agencies and community practice efforts. Prepare an 8-10 page assessment of citizen participation/empowerment and volunteer involvement in the agency where you are volunteering. In your paper I want you to: (1) assess the current level of citizen/client involvement as well as volunteer participation in the agency’s decision-making processes and management; (2) develop a recommendation to increase or enhance levels of participation for these groups; and (3) use your knowledge of organizational function and structure to describe the process that would need to happen in order for that change to effectively occur. If appropriate, you may wish to work with your placement organization to carry out this suggestion. During this process keep in mind you are a short-term visitor within an agency that may have a long history. Temper your suggestions and criticism with an awareness of your “position” as outsider.

Community Project (Final Project Option 2, Due November 20th)

As an alternative to the paper described above, the community project is designed to give more flexibility in reflecting on your agency, your service, and the issues you are exploring over the course of the semester. Possible project options include: A strengths/needs assessment on a particular issue the agency is addressing, grant development, community performance, film development, a photography exhibit based on an aspect of the agency. This project idea must be jointly conceptualized with your agency or community partner by November 6th. These projects should
not be attached to the work outlined in your agency work agreement and should be above and beyond the duties you are performing as part of your service commitment. Portfolios will require a minimum three page explanation of your project. This explanation should include elements of the organizational change assessment mentioned above. Portfolios will not be returned. Students should be sure to produce a substantial project worthy of a credit grade in a college level course. **Please discuss this option with me in advance if you are interested.**

**Student-Led Classes/Presentations (10%)**

To facilitate your teaching role, and to provide a forum for assimilating and discussing your service experiences, you will participate in a small group presentation at the end of the semester with your project team. Two class sessions have been set aside for you, as a class, to design in both content and structure. Working together, your challenge will be to make a clear connection between your respective service experiences and the social issues that have been studied in class and you have addressed with your agency or initiative.

As a group, you will design a **30 minute presentation** (20 minutes of material and at least 10 minutes of discussion) for the class that will:

1) Include explanations of your site and what you identify as the most important and/or compelling connection to the social issues such as diversity, education, empowerment, or other issue discussed in class

Handouts, article excerpts, a film clip, discussion questions, PowerPoint presentations, activities, or any combination of these will be important for the class presentation. Please let me know well in advance if you anticipate equipment needs, and I will do my best to accommodate you. You will need to arrange time outside of class to meet with your group, so it would be a good idea to exchange numbers and email addresses as soon as possible.

Your group’s class will be assessed on a number of criteria including effectiveness of presentation, clarity of presentation, comprehensiveness of material covered, and effectiveness of teaching methods employed (lecture, small groups, speaker, video, etc.). You will be also be graded by your cohort at the end of your presentation. I will take these grades and comments into consideration as I prepare the final grade for your presentation.

**GRADING SYSTEM:**

Grades for this course will be broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection papers</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Philosophy of Service Project (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Paper Two (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Community writing project (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Discussion Posts</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational assessment or Portfolio</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Self Evaluation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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_SOWO 490, Fall 2008_
**Community Agency** 10%
**Class** 10%
Class Co-facilitation 5%
Total 100%

**GRADE POINTS:**

Letter grades will be based on the following:
- A 100-93
- A- 92-90
- B+ 89-86
- B 85-83
- B- 82-80
- C+ 79-76
- C 75-73
- C- 72-70
- Etc.

**PARTICIPATION POLICY:**

Participation receives a heavy weight, as it includes several items, including:
- Participating in class discussions and activities (10 pts)
- Attendance for and commitment to volunteer placement (10 pts). I will ask for placement supervisors to provide feedback on your attendance and your performance, and I will incorporate that into your grade.
- Your own self evaluation of your learning and contributions over the course of the semester (5pts)

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY:**

I will be available both via email and in person to help clarify assignments prior to their due dates. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Assignments that are late will lose one letter grade for each day it is late, extensions will be granted prior to the due date by special consideration of the instructor – do not come to class and ask for an extension for something due that day.

**CLASS ABSENCE POLICY:**

Because our class relies heavily on our group process, you are expected to attend class and participate in class discussion. **Students who have more than two excused absences will lose 5 points from their participation grade; two or more unexcused absences will result in the forfeiture of all 40 points for class participation.** Students who are persistently late for class will also lose points from their participation grade. Excused absences include: family emergencies, illness (with doctor’s note), conference presentation, and graduate school appointments. **Let me know in advance if you have anticipated absences during the semester.**

**POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

Please refer to the APA Style Guide and the SSW Writing Guide for information on the attribution of quotes, plagiarism, and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. All written assignments should be signed with the UNC Honor Code.
In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

**POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS:**

If you have any unique learning needs and are a student with a disability that may affect your participation, please notify me at the beginning of the semester so we can make the necessary accommodations.

**NOTE-TAKING:**

Students will work in pairs to help guide the discussion and to capture important points/issues raised by taking “minutes” each week if necessary. If you want to take additional notes during class my preference is that these are written. **Open laptops are disturbing to the discussion process and to our facilitators.**

**READINGS AND COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week 1: Aug. 21, 2008**

**Topic:** *Introduction to the course; Review of syllabus; Introduction to Social Work Code of Ethics; Introductions of APPLES*

- What is public service? Social Change? How do these concepts fit together?
- What are the ethical guidelines for social workers? Why are they relevant to our work inside and outside of the classroom?

**Readings Due:**


**Week 2: August 28, 2008—Skill assessment posted to Blackboard before class**

**Topic:** *Kinds of service; Motivations for service*

- What are the different kinds of service that individuals may participate in? How are they the same? How are they different?
- In which type of service are you more inclined to participate?
- How are different types of service connected to different motivations?
- Why do individuals become involved in service within their communities? What are the benefits? The challenges?

**Readings due:**


Suggested Reading:

In class:

2:15-3:00 Presentation and discussion with community partners, review service learning assignments, choose volunteer APPLES placements by end of class

*Placements will be assigned by our next class on September 4th.

Week 3: September 4, 2008

Topic: Power and Empowerment

- How do we define power? What are different types of power that individuals/citizens/agencies may use?
- How do you, as a volunteer, help people access power within their own lives and their own communities?
- What is empowerment? What are the key components of empowerment practice? What are the goals?

Readings due:


Handouts:
Castello, P. Empowerment Definitions

Assignment due: Philosophy of Service Project (10%)

You should have contacted your community agency and have a plan for beginning the following week.

Week 4: September 11, 2008

Topic: Barriers to Empowerment and Participation: Understanding Inequity

SOWO 490, Fall 2008
Week 5: September 18, 2008

Topic: Barriers to Empowerment and Participation: Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Class, Sexual Orientation

- How do issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and other types of discrimination pose challenges to the empowerment process? How can they hinder citizen participation?
- What are strategies for overcoming these barriers?
- How do issues of race, class, etc. impact your work in your volunteer agency? How do they impact the work of your agency?

Readings due:


McIntosh, P. Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack, Action Packet.


Week 6: September 25, 2008

Topic: Citizen Participation and Democracy

- How do we define citizen participation? Are there different levels of participation? What are some examples?
- What are the benefits of participation for communities? For individuals? What are the challenges to fostering participation?
- How is volunteering and community service work linked to citizen participation?

Readings:


**Assignment due:** *Power and Privilege Paper (10%)*

**Week 7: October 2, 2008**

**Topic:** Popular Education and Social Change

- What is popular education and how is it different from other approaches?
- What is your responsibility for what happens in our society?

**Readings due:**


**Week 8: October 9, 2008**

**Topic:** Empowering Organizational Practice

- What do organizations (particularly non-profits) look like? What are the key structural elements of an organization? Who has power?
- What is empowering organizational practice?
- How does change happen in organizations?
- Can real social change happen through formal agency practice?

**Readings due:**


**Assignment due:**

- Bring Mission Statement from volunteer organization
• Community Writing Project Proposal Due

FALL BREAK OCTOBER 16th—No Class

Week 9: October 23, 2008

**Topic:** Working with communities

- How do we define “community?”
- What is the relationship between volunteer and community? Between agency and community?
- What are the key components of a community change process?

**Readings due:**


McKnight, J., & Kretzman, J.P. (1993). Building communities from the inside out: A path toward funding and mobilizing a community’s assets. Chicago: ACTA Publications. Rutgers University Press. (pp. 157-172).


**In Class:** Film--*Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street*

Week 10: October 30, 2008

**Topic:** Critiques of Volunteerism and Volunteer Organizations

- What are the roles of volunteers and volunteer organizations in American society?
- What are the benefits of volunteerism to the community? Are there drawbacks?
- Can volunteerism (service) have a negative impact on the community?

**Readings due:**


**Assignment due:** Community Writing Project (final copy with proof of submission)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 11: November 6, 2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Activism over the Long Haul</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Readings due:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>In Class:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3:30 Panel of community activists/leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>One group presentation—35 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 12: November 13, 2008</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Student Led Class –Group Presentations (35 minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 13: November 20, 2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Student led class –Group Presentations</td>
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</table>

**In Class:**

- Conclusion; Evaluations

**Assignment Due:**

*Organizational Assessment Paper or Community Portfolio Project* (see syllabus for specific grading details)
### 2008 Course Summary

*Syllabus may be modified as needed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings due</th>
<th>Assignment due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Aug. 21</td>
<td><strong>Introductions, Code of Ethics, Class Structure</strong></td>
<td>SW Code of Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Aug. 28</td>
<td><strong>Kinds of service</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Social Change and Action</strong>&lt;br&gt;A.P.P.L.E.S. Presentation, Placements</td>
<td>Wiesel, E.&lt;br&gt;Loeb, P&lt;br&gt;Stillman, S.&lt;br&gt;MacKenzie (Optional)</td>
<td>*First Online Post&lt;br&gt;*Skills Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Sept. 4</td>
<td><strong>Power and Empowerment</strong></td>
<td>VeneKlasen and Miller&lt;br&gt;Homan, M&lt;br&gt;Staples, L.</td>
<td>Personal Philosophy Paper/Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sept. 11</td>
<td><strong>Barriers to Empowerment and Participation:</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Understanding Inequity</strong></td>
<td>Leondar-Wright&lt;br&gt;Gates&lt;br&gt;Johnson, A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Sept. 18</td>
<td><strong>Barriers to Empowerment and Participation:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Race, Gender, and Class, Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Lorde, A.&lt;br&gt;McIntosh&lt;br&gt;Rustin&lt;br&gt;Wildman and Davis&lt;br&gt;Putnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Sept. 25</td>
<td><strong>Citizen Participation and Democracy</strong></td>
<td>Arnstein&lt;br&gt;Putnam&lt;br&gt;VeneKlasen and Miller—Ch. 2&lt;br&gt;Loeb, Ch. 8</td>
<td>Power and Privilege Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Oct. 2</td>
<td><strong>Popular Education and Social Change</strong></td>
<td>Nadeau, D.&lt;br&gt;Horton and Freire&lt;br&gt;TBA</td>
<td>Mid-semester Eval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Oct. 9</td>
<td><strong>Empowering Organizational Practice</strong></td>
<td>Homan, M.&lt;br&gt;Stout, L.&lt;br&gt;Kivel, P.</td>
<td>Writing Project Proposal/ Mission Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 16</td>
<td><strong>FALL BREAK</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Oct. 23</td>
<td><strong>Working with Communities</strong></td>
<td>Homan, M.&lt;br&gt;Medoff &amp; Sklar&lt;br&gt;Checkoway, B.&lt;br&gt;Kretzman and McKnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Oct. 30</td>
<td><strong>Critiques of Volunteerism and Volunteer Orgs.</strong></td>
<td>Serio, J&lt;br&gt;McKnight, J (link)&lt;br&gt;Vrtunski &amp; White&lt;br&gt;Mosle (link)</td>
<td>Completed Community Writing Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Nov. 6</td>
<td><strong>Activism Over the Long Haul (PANEL)</strong></td>
<td>Loeb, Ch. 10 and 12</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Nov. 13</td>
<td><strong>Student Presentations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Nov. 20</td>
<td><strong>Wrap Up/Evaluations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Assessment Paper or Project</td>
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