EL 94a Syllabus  
Spring 2015  
(Two-credit Experiential Learning Practicum Course)

The Immigrant Experience in Waltham: A Service-based Practicum

Class meeting time:  Wednesdays from 1:00 – 1:50 p.m. starting Wed Jan 21, Schwartz 110
Instructor: Marci McPhee, International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life

mcphee@brandeis.edu  x67744  Office: ASAC 311 (Abraham Shapiro Academic Complex)
Office hours – 3:30 – 4:30 W & Th, or by appointment – contact Barbara: ethics@brandeis.edu
Visit Marci’s office hours google doc to sign up for a time (link in my email signature line)
Make sure I see you through my glass door when you arrive, so I’ll know you’re waiting.

Associated four-credit base class:
- AAAS 177a: The Other African Americans: Comparative Perspectives on Black Ethnic Diversity (Spring)
- AMST 55a: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration in American Culture (Fall 2014)
- ANTH 1a: Intro to the Comparative Study of Human Societies (fall 2014 or spring 2015)
- IGS 10a: Intro to International and Global Studies (fall 2014 or spring 2015)

**EL 94a Practicum course description:**
The EL 94a course “The Immigrant Experience in Waltham: A Service-based Practicum” (IP) is a 2-credit course that may be taken in conjunction with the base course. This supplemental course is designed to provide students with hands-on experience through community work with immigrants, applying some of the frameworks and analysis methods of the base course. The practicum is also intended to provide students with an opportunity to realize a social justice aim by collaborating with an organization that is addressing needs of immigrants, and other social justice/social policy issues of interest to the student.

The combination of the base course and the EL 94a should contain the following four elements:
1. Direct or hands-on experiences that engage students intellectually, creatively, emotionally, socially, and/or physically, to enable them to experience the theories they learn and discuss in class.
2. Unknown outcomes allowing students to learn from natural consequences, mistakes, and successes. (We are all co-learners: Instructor and EL94 students.)
3. Opportunities for students to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results.
4. Structured assignments and processes that enable students to reflect on their direct experiences critically and to connect theory and practice.

In order to develop their reflective skills and to enable faculty to assess their progress, students in EL 94a will present their EL experience in written and oral form. Students’ papers and presentations should focus on the learning process through their direct experience in the community organization, as it connects to their learning in the base course.

**BASE COURSES:**

- **AAAS 177a course description:** The Other African Americans: Comparative Perspectives on Black Ethnic Diversity. Explores the identities, immigration and integration of Black Africans and Afro-Caribbean in the United States and United Kingdom from interdisciplinary perspectives. It examines intra-racial and inter-ethnic similarities and differences, conflicts and collaborations that animate the lived experiences of native and new Blacks.

- **AMST 55a course description:** Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration in American Culture. Provides an introductory overview of the study of race, ethnicity, and culture in the United States. Focuses on the historical, sociological, and political movements that affected the arrival and settlement of African, Asian, European, American Indian, and Latino populations in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
Utilizing theoretical and discursive perspectives, compares and explores the experiences of these groups in the United States in relation to issues of immigration, population relocations, government and civil legislation, ethnic identity, gender and family relations, class, and community.

**ANTH 1a course description:** Examines the ways human beings construct their lives in a variety of societies. Includes the study of the concept of culture, kinship, and social organization, political economy, gender and sexuality, religion and ritual, symbols and language, social inequalities and social change, and globalization. Consideration of anthropological research methods and approaches to cross-cultural analysis.

**IGS 10a course description:** “Globalization” touches us more every day. Introduces the challenges of globalization to national and international governance, economic success, individual and group identities, cultural diversity, the environment, and inequalities within and between nations, regions of the globe, gender, and race.

**Potential Partners for your community work:**

1. **Charles River Public Internet Center**
   154 Moody St. [crpic.org](http://crpic.org) 781-891-9559
   Contact Judith Webster [jmwebster@crpic.org](mailto:jmwebster@crpic.org)
   Brandeis IP students will be tutors in a workshop series taught by Charles River Public Internet Center staff, to be offered on weekday evenings (probably Monday and Wednesday). The workshop will cover very basic computer literacy such as accessing the internet and Microsoft Word, for non-native English speakers. All of the community participants are enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at other times.

2. **Prospect Hill Community Center**
   Address: 44 Hansen Rd [prospecthillcc.org](http://prospecthillcc.org)
   Contact: [wgprospecthillkidsclub@gmail.com](mailto:wgprospecthillkidsclub@gmail.com)
   Brandeis IP students work in collaboration with volunteers from the Waltham Group’s Prospect Hill Kids Club and Bentley University volunteers to provide afternoon enrichment to children who live in the Prospect Hill Terrace low-income housing neighborhood. The Center is open on weekdays from 3:00-5:30 pm. IP students sign up to be at the Center on the same day each week. The afternoons include homework help, tutoring, and fun indoor and outdoor activities. Children who attend the Center come primarily from single-parent households and are in elementary and middle school. Many parents in Prospect Hill are immigrants who are non-native English speakers, with the most commonly spoken languages being Spanish and Haitian Creole. After early February, transportation will be provided by Waltham Group, leaving campus around 2:30 pm. Before then, transport is on your own.

3. **Waltham Family School**
   510 Moody St. 781-314-5696 walthampublicschools.org/fam.cfm
   Contact Britta McNemar, BrittaMcNemar@k12.waltham.ma.us and Bryna Leeder, brynaesl@msn.com
   IP students working with Waltham Family School, a family literacy program, will serve as tutors/teaching assistants in classes with adults taking English as a Second Language classes. Students must be available for at least 3 hours a week during the following time blocks: Tues (9-10:30; 10:30-12), Wed (9-10:30; 10:30-12), or Thurs (9-10:30; 10:30-12).
**EL 94a Time Commitment:**

a. 1-hour weekly class meeting with the Instructor and other 94a participants to workshop, reflect, troubleshoot, etc.

b. At least 3 additional hours per week of individual or group work on project/practicum. Activities will include work on the practicum activities listed above, such as identifying an organization with which to work, collaborating with the organization’s staff to develop a plan for an activity or product, and implementing the activity or product. The 3-hour per week time commitment also includes the final presentation.

**Transportation:** Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from the community partner site. **BE SURE YOU HAVE A BACKUP MODE OF TRANSPORTATION.** If you need help with transportation, consider [brandeis.edu/campussustainability/transportation](http://brandeis.edu/campussustainability/transportation)

**Community Work Hours:** Log your community service hours WEEKLY in two ways:

1) Log hours and description of the time spent on the google doc (see me for link) and
2) Log your hours again on SAGE. See details at [brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/communityservice/awardandtrackinghours/trackinghours](http://brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/communityservice/awardandtrackinghours/trackinghours)

Do not include time spent doing the homework for the base course or the practicum (readings or writing assignments). However, time spent preparing for the final presentation should be included.

**Grading:** (See page 8 for grading rubrics)

1) Work with the community organization: 50%
2) Attendance/participation practicum class: 20%
3) Written assignments: 20% (5% per reflection for 4 assignments).
4) Final presentation: 10%

**Extra credit option:** Attend one or more events related to the themes of the practicum and write a 2-3 page reflection connecting the event to the base course AND your community experience. Well-written reflections may bring up your grade. One or two extra credit papers will be accepted.

**Class Attendance and Punctuality:** Regular attendance is crucial to the successful attainment of the course objectives in this small discussion-based seminar. Particularly because the class meets only once a week and class time is so short, **punctuality is essential.** Missing any part of class will be considered a full absence.

One absence will be considered a warning. Two or more absences will affect your attendance/participation grade by one letter grade for each subsequent absence. In cases of an accident, illness, etc. you must notify the instructor as soon as possible. Excessive absences will have a negative impact on your class participation grade and will seriously affect your ability to achieve the practicum learning objectives.

**A Word about Language:** An *immigrant* is defined as someone who leaves his country of origin intending to settle in another country. Visiting students or temporary workers who relocate for the purposes of education, tourism, or temporary work are not considered immigrants. Some consider the phrase *Illegal immigrant* offensive; the preferred terminology is *undocumented immigrant*. In this class, we may also discuss children of immigrants, whether those children themselves are immigrants.

**Assignments:**

EL94a Syllabus – “The Immigrant Experience in Waltham: A Service-based Practicum” (IP)
The four assignments are due via email to Marci mcphee@brandeis.edu no later than 12 noon on Fridays (dates below). Please plan ahead for weekend travel, personal circumstances, etc. In fairness to all students, late assignments will receive a lower grade.

Free writing coaching is available at the Writing Center in the Goldfarb Library: visit brandeis.edu/writingprogram/writingcenter for hours and details.

- **Assignment 1: Practicum Learning Goals and Workplan**
  
  **Due:** Fri Feb 6 by 12 noon via email.
  
  **Description:** Within 2 weeks of beginning your practicum, you must submit a 2-3 page reflection (double-spaced) in which you describe the work you have done so far on your practicum, goals you have set with your organizational partners, your personal learning goals, challenges you have encountered so far, and ways you foresee overcoming them. In short, what would you need to accomplish by the end of the semester to feel that you’ve done what you wanted to do, and learned what you wanted to learn? Your paper also should connect 1-2 experiences in your community work to 1-2 specific concepts from the base course class learnings. Include a specific quote or an author you’ve discussed in the base course.

- **Assignment 2: Desert Roots Reflection**
  
  **Due:** Fri Feb 27 by 12 noon via email.
  
  **Description:** Either read the introduction to Prof. Mitra Shavarini’s book Desert Roots: Journey of an American Dream (11 pages, on Google docs) or watch the first three videos from the book launch event at brandeis.edu/ethics/news/2012/2012.September.7 (about 45 minutes total - Prof. Shavarini; Leila Pascual ’14, student respondent; Prof. Kristen Lucken, faculty respondent). Write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) response paper connecting Mitra’s story to
  1. a specific concept or theory in the base course (list a quote or an author), AND
  2. an experience from your community work.

- **Assignment 3: Informal Immigrant Interview**
  
  **Due:** Fri Mar 27 by 12 noon via email.
  
  **Description:** Interview an immigrant. Ideally this will be an immigrant you have met in the course of your community work. Write his/her story in 2-3 pages (double-spaced), or submit original artwork, a short video, photo essay with captions, or other product. If you choose something other than a paper, please submit a short narrative of explanation and commentary. Your interview product may be considered for inclusion in the Waltham Public Library archive collecting immigrant stories as part of the history of Waltham. See page 7 for more information about this assignment.

- **Assignment 4: Final Reflection and Handoff Letter (two separate documents)**
  
  **Due:** no later than Fri Apr 24 by 12 noon via email.
  
  **Description:** Write a 2-4 page (double-spaced) reflection, which summarizes your community work and practicum class experience by addressing the following questions:
  - What did you learn about yourself through this experience?
  - What were your greatest challenges?
  - How did this experience affect the way you experience the base course?
- How do you feel that your work with the practicum supports or challenges the information you have learned in the base course?
- What conclusions can you draw about the intersection of the base course learnings and the immigrant experience in Waltham?
- Did your work actually meet the needs of immigrants in Waltham? How do you know?

Then, in a separate 1-2 page paper (double-spaced), write your handoff letter to next semester’s IP students. What suggestions do you have for future students working with your community partner? Including your name on this page is optional.

• Final Presentation:
Wed Apr 24 from 1-1:50 in Geller, Hassenfeld (upper Sherman) (open to the public)
Description: Present your project or summary of your work and experience throughout the semester. Feel free to be creative! Some ideas for final presentations might be: a video or slide show, a poster, a booklet, a scripted skit, the possibilities are endless! However, all presentations should include specific quotes or observations from both the base course AND your community work. Students who worked together on their practicum may work together on final projects. Note: Your presentation grade includes your teamwork in preparing for and publicizing this presentation.

Readings:
• Required texts:
  1. Selections from “Massachusetts New Americans Agenda,” (8 pages) available on Google docs. The entire report is downloadable at www.mass.gov/ori
  2. Read Introduction, Desert Roots: Journey of an American Dream, by Brandeis professor Mitra Shavari, (11 pages) available on Google docs, OR watch the first three videos from the book launch event at brandeis.edu/ethics/news/2012/2012.September.7 (about 45 min total - Prof. Shavari, the author; Leila Pascual ‘14, student respondent; Prof. Kristen Lucken, faculty respondent).

• Suggested reading (optional):

Notice to students with disabilities:
If you are a student who needs academic accommodations because of a documented disability, please contact me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as possible. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations, you should contact Beth Rodgers-Kay in Academic Services (x6-3470 or brodgers@brandeis.edu.) Letters of accommodation should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.
CLASS SCHEDULE:

| W Jan 28 | 2. Class. Working in the community. |
| W Feb 4  | 3. NO CLASS – see you at ‘DEIS Impact! Attend any ‘DEIS Impact event (ideally related), and write a short reflection. Submit to Marci via email within 48 hours of the event; your reflection may be posted on the ‘DEIS Impact blog at blogs.brandeis.edu/deisimpact. (See the blog for examples.) This reflection takes the place of your class attendance this week. |
| F Feb 6  | Assignment #1 due by 12 noon – Practicum Workplan |
| W Feb 11 | 4. Guest speaker Marci Borenstein, director of the Office of High School Programs, whose research focused on diverse immigrant families, urban schools and parent involvement. |
| W Feb 18 | NO CLASS – Midterm break |
| W Feb 25 | 5. Class |
| F Feb 27 | Assignment #2 due by 12 noon – Desert Roots reflection |
| W Mar 4  | 6. Class discussion of immigrant issues raised by Desert Roots. Midpoint check of hours logged on Google doc and SAGE. Optional midterm checkin during office hours or by appointment if you have questions about your grade. |
| W Mar 11 | 7. Guest speakers – Prof. Wallace (AAAS 177a), Prof. Anjaria (ANTH 1a), and Prof. Rosenberger (IGS 10a) |
| W Mar 18 | 8. Class |
| W Mar 25 | 9. Class. Guest speaker Marina Offner, Admissions. Before this class you should have read the Ethical Inquiry, “Should Undocumented Students be Eligible for In-State Tuition Rates?” at brandeis.edu/ethics/ethicalinquiry/2010/april researched and prepared by Vanessa Kerr ’11 and Morgan Manley ’11. Come prepared with three questions. |
| F Mar 27 | Assignment #3 due by 12 noon – Informal immigrant interview |
| W Apr 1  | 10. Class (last class In our regular classroom!). Guest speaker Daniel Langenthal and/or Alyssa Canelli, Experiential Learning & Teaching. Before this class you should have read “Theory for Practice: A Framework for Thinking about Experiential Education,” available on Google docs |
| W Apr 8  | NO CLASS – Spring break |
| W Apr 22 | 12. Presentation in Geller, Hassenfeld (upper Sherman) – open to the public, advertised as an Ethics Center event. |
| Fri Apr 24 | Assignment #4 due by 12 noon – Final reflection and handoff letter. All community hours must be logged on the google doc and on SAGE by this time as well. |

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**THEME & TITLE:** The Immigrant Experience

**The Immigrant Experience.**

**Our Experience.**

Wednesday, April 22, 2015

Time: 1:00 – 1:50 pm

Location: Geller, Hassenfeld (upper Sherman)

What’s it like for immigrants who live in Waltham? What’s it like for Brandeis students who work with them? Join the students in the practicum “The Immigrant Experience in Waltham”, taught by Marci McPhee, as the students share what they learned from a semester working with Charles River Public Internet Center, Prospect Hill Community Center, or Waltham Family School. Refreshments served. Cosponsored by the Office of Experiential Learning and Teaching. For more information, please contact ethics@brandeis.edu.
Assignment #3: Informal Immigrant Interview  

Due Friday March 27 by 12 noon

In your work with your community organization, you are likely to meet and build relationships with several people who have migrated to this country. When you feel that sufficient trust is established, approach someone and ask if they would be willing to share their story with you.

Ideally the immigrant will be someone in your community organization. If necessary, you can interview someone on campus (student, faculty, or staff). S/he must be an immigrant: someone who leaves his country of origin intending to settle in another country. Visiting students or temporary workers who relocate for the purposes of education, tourism, or temporary work are not considered immigrants. If you’re unable to locate an appropriate person to interview, you may interview a professional who works with immigrants. In this case you will gather stories of immigrants with whom s/he works. Then you’ll complete the assignment as if you had interviewed the immigrants yourself. This may result in a composite product, i.e. combining stories of various immigrants into a single story.

Write his/her story in 1st person or 3rd person, as a narrative, poem, short performance, essay, etc. If written, your paper should be 2-3 pages (double-spaced). Non-written products might be original artwork, a short video, photo essay with captions, etc. Two students CAN interview the same person if they produce different products. The writing or art must be done by you as the student interviewer, not by the immigrant. Depending upon the work, the final product may be part of the archive being created at the Waltham Public Library to preserve Waltham history and community knowledge.

In most cases you’ll want to change the name of your interviewee in your writing. If you’re including photos or video, you’ll probably want to take the pictures in such a way that the identity of the subject cannot be identified.

Of course, it is essential to build a level of trust with the person before you conduct the interview. Suggestions include reassuring them that their identity will be protected, and allowing them to comment on your product before you submit the assignment.

Possible interview questions might include questions such as these. These are ideas only; you should conduct the conversation in the way you feel is best, with respect for the person being interviewed as the top priority (NOT getting the story as the top priority).

- What was it like when you were growing up in [country]? Or what have people told you it was like in [country] where you were born?
- How did it happen that you, or your family, moved to the US? Why did you want or need to leave? Why did you want or need to come to this country in particular?
- What did you bring with you from your home country, and why? Is there a particular object relating to your story that you kept?
- What are your hopes for the future, for yourself and for your children?

In your opening paragraph, describe in 2-3 sentences how you know the person, your process in conducting the interview, and whether the paper is an individual story or composite story, fact or fiction (i.e. what an immigrant might have experienced, but not an actual interview). If you choose something other than a paper, please submit a short narrative of explanation and commentary.

Rather than a simple report (“he said, she did. . . “) your interview should have some value added: either a creative fashioning (see above), a reflection on what their story means to you, how it connects to your community work and/or insights from the base course, etc.

EL94a Syllabus – “The Immigrant Experience in Waltham: A Service-based Practicum” (IP)
ASSESSMENT RUBRIC for papers:
Evaluating papers considers the quality of thesis, evidence, analysis, structure, and style. Please read the assignment carefully; papers must address all parts of the assignment.

- An **A paper** makes an interesting, complex, and important argument and supports that argument with well-chosen evidence. The structure is logical and engaging; the writing is clear and concise, and all aspects of the assignment are thoroughly well executed.
- A **high B paper** either aims at making an engaging, complex argument but is hindered by problems of structure, analysis or style, or else it has a simpler argument that is thoroughly well executed.
- A **B paper** addresses the assignment and demonstrates efforts to produce a complex argument but is hindered by either a lack of complexity or importance in the thesis, or by structural, analytical, or stylistic problems in the execution of ideas.
- A **low B paper** demonstrates effort to address the assignment, but the argument is ultimately too obvious, undeveloped, or obscured by significant structural, analytical, or stylistic problems.
- A **C paper** has significant problems with argumentation and/or presentation.
- A **D paper** does not meet the minimum page requirement, does not address the assignment, plagiarizes, or does not meet standards for academic writing or argumentation.

Adapted from the Teaching Effectiveness Manual prepared by the Al-Quds/Brandeis Teaching Effectiveness Partnership Team, July 2011, page 6 at brandeis.edu/das/downloads/SomePrinciplesofEffectiveTeaching

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC for community work, class participation, student reflections:

**A = Reflective practitioner**, demonstrating clarity, relevance (meaningful to student and course learning goals), analysis (moving beyond simple description to analysis of how the experience contributes to student understanding), interconnections (demonstrating connections between the experience and base course, other learnings and experience and/or personal goals), and self-criticism (demonstrating ability to question their own biases, stereotypes, and preconceptions, in order to define new modes of thinking).

**B = Aware practitioner** demonstrates minor lapses in clarity; attempts to analyze the experience but lacks depth; demonstrates some ability to question personal biases, stereotypes and preconceptions.

**C = Reflection novice**, with frequent lapses in clarity, unclear relevance, little depth of analysis, no attempt to demonstrate connections to other learnings, and some attempt at self-criticism, but without awareness of personal biases, etc.

**D = Unacceptable**, with unclear and confusing language, inaccurate concepts, irrelevant observations, no attempt at analysis, connections, or self-criticism.

Adapted from material by Steven Jones, Coordinator of the Office of Service Learning, IUPUI, found in *Making the Connection: A Faculty Toolkit for Critical Thinking and Reflection Activities to Connect Theory and Practice in Experiential Learning*, from the Brandeis University Office of Experiential Learning, 2006.

brandeis.edu/experientiallearning/toolkit