EL 94a Syllabus  Fall 2014  (Two-credit Experiential Learning Practicum Course)

The Immigrant Experience in Waltham: A Service-based Practicum

Class meeting time: Wednesdays from 12:00 – 12:50 p.m. starting Wed Sept 10, location TBA

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:
AMST 55a: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration in American Culture (fall 2014)
ANTH 1a: Intro to the Comparative Study of Human Societies (spring or fall 2014)
IGS 10a: Intro to International and Global Studies (spring or fall 2014)

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:

**AMST 55a course description:** 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. **Waltham Family School**
   510 Moody St.  [781-314-5696](tel:781-314-5696)
   [walthampublicschools.org/fam.cfm](http://walthampublicschools.org/fam.cfm)
   Contact Britta McNemar,  [BrittaMcNemar@k12.waltham.ma.us](mailto:BrittaMcNemar@k12.waltham.ma.us)
   and Bryna Leeder,  [brynaesl@msn.com](mailto: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).

3. **Community Day Center**
   16 Felton Street, near BranVan stop at Moody and Enterprise Rental Car
   [communitydaycenter.org](http://communitydaycenter.org)  781-392-6311
   Contact: Marilyn Lee-Tom  [director@communitydaycenter.org](mailto:director@communitydaycenter.org)
   The Community Day Center supports homeless individuals and those in need to shape and meet their life goals. About 30% of the guests are immigrants. Students must be available for at least 3 hours a week during the hours the Center is open: M-F from 1:30 – 4:30 pm. Students will spend time with the guests doing art work, sharing computer expertise, drafting letters and resumes, filling in forms and applications, and assisting with activities. Spanish speakers are especially needed.

**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: The four assignments are due via email to Marci [mcphee@brandeis.edu](mailto: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](http://brandeis.edu/writingprogram/writingcenter) for hours and details.

- Assignment 1: Practicum Learning Goals and Workplan
  Due: Fri Sept 26 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 Oct 10 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 Nov 14 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 Dec 5 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 Dec 3 from 12-12:50 in (location TBA) (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. 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](http://www.mass.gov/ori)
  2. Read Introduction, *Desert Roots: Journey of an American Dream*, by Brandeis professor Mitra Shavarini, (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](http://brandeis.edu/ethics/news/2012/2012.September.7) (about 45 min total - Prof. Shavarini, 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W Sept 10</td>
<td>Class. Structure &amp; expectations, connecting with community organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Sept 17</td>
<td>Class. Working in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Intensive – to get up to speed on the skills needed for this kind of work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Sept 24</td>
<td>Class. Before this class you should have read Selections from “Massachusetts New Americans Agenda,” 8 pages, available on Google docs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Sept 26</td>
<td>Assignment #1 due by 12 noon – Practicum Workplan</td>
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<td>W Oct 1</td>
<td>Guest speaker – Prof. Doug Smith (LGLS) about Immigration and Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Oct 8</td>
<td>Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Oct 10</td>
<td>Assignment #2 due by 12 noon – <em>Desert Roots</em> reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Oct 15</td>
<td>Class discussion of immigrant issues raised by <em>Desert Roots</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Oct 22</td>
<td>Guest speakers – Prof. Freeze (IGS 10a), Lamb (ANTH 1a), and Powers (AMST 55a)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Oct 29</td>
<td>Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Nov 5</td>
<td>Class. 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Nov 12</td>
<td>Class (last class in our regular classroom!) Before this class you should have read “Theory for Practice: A Framework for Thinking about Experiential Education,” available on Google docs</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Nov 14</td>
<td>Assignment #3 due by 12 noon – Informal immigrant interview</td>
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<td>W Nov 19</td>
<td>Presentation preparation – (location TBA)</td>
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<td>W Nov 26</td>
<td>NO CLASS – Thanksgiving</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Dec 3</td>
<td>Presentation (location TBA) – open to the public, advertised as an Ethics Center event.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri Dec 5</td>
<td>Assignment #4 due by 12 noon – Final reflection and handoff letter</td>
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(THESE ARE OUR FINAL PRESENTATION. WE CAN SHAPE THE FOLLOWING PLACEHOLDER TITLE & DESCRIPTION TOGETHER.)

The Immigrant Experience in Waltham: A Service-based Practicum
Learnings from a Semester in the Community

Wednesday, December 3, 2014

Time: 12:00 – 12:50 pm
Location: TBA

A city where over a dozen languages are spoken at home, Waltham presents an array of opportunities and challenges for a substantial community of immigrants. Join the students in the practicum “The Immigrant Experience in Waltham”, taught by Marci McPhee, as the students share learnings from a semester of working with organizations in Waltham supporting immigrants. 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 November 14 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.
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](http://www.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/forfaculty/teaching-toolkit](http://www.brandeis.edu/experientiallearning/forfaculty/teaching-toolkit) 7/17/14

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