Expansed Experiential Learning Course List Supplement 2014-15

In this supplementary document you can read descriptions from faculty of Experiential Learning (EL) Courses of how they teach the content of their EL Courses using experiential learning pedagogy both IN and OUT of the classroom. If you are looking for the full course list, please see the other document called Experiential Learning Course List.

"Experiential Learning is a philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities."

(Association of Experiential Education)

If you have any questions please contact OR
If you are an instructor and would like to add a description to this list:
Daniel Langenthal, Director of Experiential Learning and Teaching
dlangent@brandeis.edu  x62697
Mandel Center for the Humanities 1st Floor, Suite 129 (across from 110)

Descriptions of Experiential Learning

This list is organized alphabetically by the last name of the faculty member

Cameron Anderson:

The Art of Visual Narrative (THA 40A1)
Set Design 1 - From Idea to Image (THA 125B1)
In my courses, students will explore the process of creating visual narrative - how do we travel from idea to image to visual storytelling? We will learn to create evocative environments and visual metaphor that transport the viewer, transcend reality, and make stories.

We will construct and deconstruct the idea of performance space both theatrical and site-specific. How do we create the psychological landscape of a story? What can an architectural detail tell us about character? What can we learn from objects?

Design will be approached from an interdisciplinary and experiential perspective that will challenge students to combine visual art, new media, performance, and space, in surprising and meaningful ways.
We will study space and create responses in two and three dimensions. We will draw, collage, build, create installations, and deconstruct. We will create a series of projects that will build upon each other and culminate in a final project that will bring together what we have learned throughout the semester.

My classes will provide students with the opportunity to learn how to story-tell through space. Using the building blocks of color, composition, line, texture, and shape, students will learn to create work that effectively conveys themes, ideas, politics, and meaning.

Students will learn to identify why something is moving visually, how that emotion was created, and then to elicit emotion and meaning from their own work. Students will learn how to create meaning through visual metaphor - so that their work is expressive rather than descriptive. Students will be asked to both work alone and collaborate with their peers. Students will be encouraged to speak about their own work with clarity and passion - and to provide respectful constructive comments on their peers' work.

An example of a series of projects from 40a: At the beginning of the semester students will choose an historical event that is closely tied to a specific place in Massachusetts. The story of this event will be researched and become each student's "play/subject." This event will be explored creatively/abstractly in various media throughout the semester- culminating in a large-scale visual project of the student's choosing. Students may choose to create a site-specific theatrical installation, a film, a sculpture, etc.

Leading up to this final project, students will be asked to create work in two and three dimensions. We will learn to do visual research that supports our ideas and to create the visual psychological landscape for whatever story we are telling.

Elizabeth Bradfield

Directed Writing: Poetry (ENG 119B1):
In this poetry workshop we will develop the tools—sound, imagery, rhythm, use of the line and stanza—that help poems become vivid in the mind’s eye of the reader.

To do this, we will read widely and experiment with many different styles. Our goal is to write and read and, through that, discover what fires us as writers. We will study both poems and the wise thoughts of poets on how poems are made.

We will play, revise, work, read, and listen -- both to established writers and to each other. Commenting on classmates' poems is as valuable a teaching tool as attending to the comments your own poems are given.

Students, in addition, will research and share with their classmates information from the world of poetry -- journals, presses, and other resources that will be of value to them in their writerly lives.
The goal of this course is to build a foundation that will help students channel their inspiration as well as evaluate and edit their own work, to help students see their own poems as a voice in the ongoing conversation of American poetry.

Jennifer Cleary

The Real American Idols: Education through Creativity and Theatrical Pedagogy (THA 138B1)

My courses are considered experiential in nature because students will engage with material in an active manner and reflect on these experiences, within class projects, discussions, and in writing assignments. Active learning and reflection are core tenets of my teaching philosophy; experiential methodology will be utilized in every session of every class, requiring participation of every student beyond listening and discussion. Methods include (but are not limited to) working in-class on group projects to apply course concepts, participating in course discussions where we apply material together through dialogue/story, partnering with classmates on honing and applying skills learned, and interacting with the material outside of class in a lab format. We will DO in order to learn, putting the material to use and then evaluating what it means to engage with the content in this manner.

Do not be surprised if I ask you to engage in a project or activity before you feel you have "learned" enough about the subject via passive lecture - getting up and actively doing, and then having a concrete discussion and reflection experience about doing it before you feel "ready," will be exactly how you engage with, and learn, the material. It is more than "learning by doing" but rather "learning by doing, thinking, reflecting, and doing again!"

Experiential learning in this nature requires our course environment to be a community; it is important that students know their classmates and acknowledge that they are part of a common learning experience together. This community-based structure makes the experiential nature of the course that much richer.

David Cunningham

This course provides hands-on training in social science research methodology. It assumes no prior knowledge of the research process, and covers issues related to research design, data collection, and causal analysis within the context of a large-scale collaborative research project. Each of you will operate as a member of a "research team," with responsibility over a component of the broader project. This endeavor will require you to coordinate your efforts with other members of the class to identify research questions, define the data necessary to answer those questions, gather and code that data, and begin the process of analysis. While the substantive focus of this research work will vary from semester to semester, projects are intended to support real-world social justice-related endeavors, and as such this course will count toward
the “research internship” requirement in the Social Justice and Social Policy (SJSP) program. The class also fulfills Brandeis’ Writing Intensive (WI) requirement, which means that we will spend a significant amount of time focusing on how to effectively communicate ideas related to our research topic, the data we compile, and the significance of our findings. We will also spend some time in the computer lab, working with the statistical software package SPSS. As an "applied" course, we will divide our time roughly equally among three tasks: 1) gaining substantive background on the particular topic that defines the semester’s research project; 2) discussing key general issues in research design and data analysis; 3) applying those issues to our particular research topic to produce findings of use to real-world social justice initiatives.

This semester’s research project: We will engage in work supporting the Mississippi Truth Project, a grassroots effort to form a statewide truth and reconciliation commission focused on racial violence in Mississippi between 1945 and 1975. Our goal is to provide research support for the commission, by building a database and conducting analyses that allow its members to better understand and convey the institutional bases of support for the violence that emerged throughout this period. Throughout the semester, we will be partnering with the University of Mississippi’s William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, and we hope to have Winter Institute Director Susan Glisson visit us at some point. Our efforts will be collaborative, evolving according to the research questions that the commission deems relevant to its work, as well as to the data available to us.

Irina Dubinina

Individual Lives, Common Story (EL 94A)
Concurrent enrollment in RUS 150b is required for this section of EL 94a. It is a supplemental experiential practicum course designed to provide students with hands-on experience conducting oral histories fieldwork at the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center and being engaged in a much needed community service benefiting Russian-speaking elders. The practicum is based on the principles of experiential learning (EL), which emphasizes connecting the knowledge received in the classroom to real-life issues that exist in our society, deriving knowledge from unstructured life situations, and allowing students to reflect on the knowledge gained from real-life experiences.

The project has a community service focus. It aims to bridge the intergenerational gap between Russian-speaking seniors and youth in order to generate the exchange of valuable wisdom and strengthen the Russian-speaking community.

Laura Goldin

AMST191B: Greening the Ivory Tower: Improving Environmental Sustainability of Brandeis & Community
Learning methods and community engagement: The learning in this class will take place in the context of weekly field trips, hands-on work, visits with experts, student project development and community engagement, along with an intimately related backdrop of
engaging books and other texts. Our studies will extend to environmental sustainability challenges faced by individuals, neighborhoods and institutions in surrounding Waltham as well, as we work with local schools, organizations serving the low-income population, farms and others to help “green” both our campus and the community.

Deirdre Hunter

When Violence Hits Home (WGS 89A1):
Students participate in seminar classes, which support an independent 104 hour semester length internship at a community setting. Seminar meetings, readings, presentations by people working in the field and student projects explore cultural, public health and interpersonal facets of violence from a feminist perspective. Topics include theories, causes and prevention of rape, battering, child abuse and animal abuse. Class discussions and brief essays integrate practical internship experiences in local organizations with course readings and seminar presentations.

Internship are secured individually by the students and placement is the first assignment of the course. Internships entail practical experience providing advocacy, direct support, educational counseling, public health, policy analysis or community education at local private or public organizations. Students complete a Learning Contract with their internship supervisor and course instructor which outlines the learning objectives and responsibilities of the internship and documents approval of the internship.

Learning Outcomes

- The ability to describe the social determinants, and the developmental and life course impacts of interpersonal violence, child abuse, rape and animal abuse.
- The ability to describe trauma theory and its contribution to clinical and public health approaches.
- The ability to describe prevention and response systems that integrate public health and clinical approaches.
- The ability to evaluate the intersectionality of the causes, course and responses to violence
- The successful performance of practical experience in a professional setting.
- Contributions to the mission and activities of an organization in a related field.
- The ability to reflect on and communicate about the interplay of fieldwork and academic work.

Activities that Support Learning Outcomes:

- Engaging in the process of securing and performing at the fieldwork placement
- Participation in seminar discussion and debate of historical understandings and current analyses of the issues.
- Readings averaging about 200 pages per week covering considerable territory including, literature from the public health, social science and historical fields as well as survivor and perpetrator memoirs.
• Production of a weekly essay integrating internship experiences with readings and which examine the tensions and interplay between academic theories and the policies and practices in place at internship sites.
• Presentation of a ten page end of term paper representing material not covered in class materials.
• Interaction with guest speakers from local public and private agencies.

Rachel Kramer Theodorou

Exploring Early Childhood & Elementary Teaching (ED 100A):
Students will study teaching, learning, and children through reflection, study of a focal student, observing teaching, and activities/lectures that take a critical look at the history of education and its future.
In the experiential portion of this course, teachers spend approximately 3 hours per week in an early childhood or elementary school observing teaching and studying closely the experience of learning for a focal student.

Study of English Language Learning PK-12 (ED 175A):
This is a pre-service teacher training course to prepare prospective teachers to teach English Language Learners. As approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education, ED 175 satisfies the requirements for pre-service teachers to complete the Sheltered English Immersion Teaching Endorsement. Students study language acquisition theories, pedagogy related to sheltering English, learn strategies to teach ELLs, and study the various components of culture that affect learning English. In the experiential portion of this course, teachers spend approximately 3 hours per week in a school observing ESL instruction, sheltered English instruction, and studying how language is acquired by closely following a focal student.

• Experiential Learning is the fuel for all discussions about each of my classes. It is in these contexts of real teaching and learning that the potential and limitations of all theory and pedagogy are realized.
• Students use prompts that come directly from the content of the course to guide their learning in the field.
• Students gather data from their observations, meet weekly with peers to discuss data, and in these groups reflect on course content as it relates to what they have observed.
• Students meet a cooperating teacher, a classroom full of kids, principal, and other teachers in the classroom during their weekly visits.
• With the routine and practice of visiting another adult's classroom, students learn how to appropriately observe/participate in a professional's work space and how to present themselves as adults in a work-type situation. Students learn how to appropriately utilize professionals' time and expertise to further their own learning by following a process and guided practice of asking the right questions at the right times.
• Students consistently participate in a variety of small and whole group discussions and activities in class.
• We look at contemporary problems/issues by way of 3 debates; some of these are framed with the ideals of American public education as asserted by John Dewey.
• This course starts with reflection on how one was educated and uses these experiences and internalized norms for schooling to begin comparing and contrasting to current pedagogy and over time, students integrate new ideas with what they consider to be their answer to the idea "what is teaching".

Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, Chair Classical Studies

The Art and Archaeology of Ancient Rome (CLAS 134B1)

Teaching Experientially in Classical Studies

Because the discipline of Classical Studies involves engagement with every possible aspect of two ancient cultures and their peoples, the Greeks and the Romans, it is very easy to approach the material experientially. Students must be willing to explore these cultures from the more abstract--their politics, social customs, urban institutions, religion, and economics--down to details of everyday life—personal hygiene, living conditions, civic institutions such as slavery, utensils for cooking and cleaning, types and manufacture of clothing, food, and furniture, luxury items such as jewelry, silver and gold vessels, and precious gems, games, and their graffiti. Almost everything about the ancient Greeks and Romans relates to our world: the way we think and do not think politically and/or philosophically, the way we organize our cities, the laws we follow and way we run our law courts, the way we build roads, infrastructure (water systems, sewers, fountains, bridges), and architecture.

I tell my students studying these things requires that they be present in class (not asleep or talking on Facebook) and that they be willing to time travel to someplace where things may seem the same as in our modern world, but where the differences are deep, and even shocking. If they can learn to manage in these “foreign” worlds of Greeks and Romans (and the other ancient peoples around them), objectively accept the rules of these worlds, analyze and study these worlds without prejudice or preconceptions, they will be deeply engaged with experiential learning.

Experiential learning is an aerobic exercise of the mind. Students have to be ready to face difficult challenges, and face them with fresh perspectives, passion, and honesty. Whether they are coming up against cultural differences they have a hard time fathoming (like wide-spread acceptance of slavery, oppression of women and children, homophobia, or cruelty to animals and humans on an unprecedented scale) or encountering ethics, humor, or literary brilliance that warms their hearts and “feels” modern in tone and execution, they must be willing to view these cultural artifacts very closely by applying critical thinking and intensive analysis with all the available evidence in order to understand these ancient civilizations as thoroughly as possible.

Experiential learning means facing ancient realities as they were, not as we imagine them to be. It means reading ancient texts (sometimes in their original languages, Greek and Latin, and sometimes in translation) and pitting the knowledge gained
directly from ancient writers up against excavated, archaeological objects, artifacts, and works of art. We take fieldtrips to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, to other local museums in the Boston area with Greek and Roman art, and we utilize Brandeis’ own collection of ancient objects (ca. 800 of them in the Classical Studies Artifact Research Collection, or CLARC) to supplement the experiential learning process.

Experiential learning means not taking anything for granted, not assuming any truth without scrutiny, and not allowing yourself to impose your own beliefs and prejudices on these ancient peoples without trying to see things from their perspective. My classes are interactive, talkative, and full of surprises. If done with vibrancy and energy, experiential learning will reveal the Greeks and Romans (or any subject under review) as not only relevant to the lives of students today, but crucial for understanding who we are and from where we come. I always give my classes a break about halfway through with snacks (usually cookies or fruit) and stretches, to change gears and allow people to come back to discussion with more excitement and energy.

Dan Perlman

**Fundamentals of Environmental Change (ENVS 2A1): Place in the Woods project:**
You will select a natural area and visit it over the first eight weeks of class (find a site and start visiting it right now!). You will observe the site carefully, and from your notes (plus any photographs or sketches that you make), create a project that demonstrates the changes that you observed there. You get to decide — **ahead of time** — what visual media you use to depict the changes (if you want to use any). If you do use visual media, and we recommend that you do, try to select a relatively small number of views that you can repeatedly view (and photograph or draw), to give the reader a sense of change. The more you can recreate the same view, the more effective the visual media will be. (Of course, if something new and interesting crops up, you should add it to your regular views.) Whether you use images or not, you should have about 5 pages of text. We will discuss these assignments in detail in class and will post detailed descriptions of these assignments on LATTE. Both of these assignments have first submissions (after which you will receive feedback) and final submissions.

David Rakowski

**Proseminar in Theory and Composition (MUS 172B1)**
**Instrumentation and Orchestration (MUS 175A1):**
"What's inside a well-oiled machine?" This is an example of a "cosmic question" I would ask to open a class on orchestration. In the class, music originally written for piano is recast to work for groups of instruments of 4 to 100 players. In order for the arrangements to work, the student must do some complicated problem-solving: reach back to instruction on part-writing from music theory classes, understand the music as a combination of musical lines, deconstruct the music into those lines, and put them back together given the assigned instrumental ensemble and the characteristics of the instruments being learned. The resulting arrangement works if it is like a well-oiled
machine. The cosmic question encourages the orchestration students to consider other things -- from poems to plays to their smartphones and their sneakers -- and consider how they too are well-oiled machines. I try to come up with appropriate cosmic questions like this one to frame the material being taught on any particular day.

Pito Salas

**IT Entrepreneurship (COSI 165A1):**
All the work is team based. The students are responsible for forming and delivering results with a team of 3 of 4 students. There are regular team checkins where student have to prepare and deliver a presentation and a demo of their work so far to the class and an invited outside expert. The students are encouraged throughout to think and articulate their approach, experience and reactions to entrepreneurial work. There are regular reflection blog posts that are seen by the class and used as a basis of discussion.

Christine Thomas

**Intermediate Experimental Laboratory (Chem 39B1, 39B2, 39B3):**
Rather than 11 independent laboratory experiments, in Chem 39b, students complete 3 multiple-week projects that actually simulate the experience that someone doing actual scientific research might have. For each of the 3 projects, which are largely synthetic in nature, each week's activities builds upon those of the week before. For example, the student might synthesize a ligand during the first week, use that ligand to make a metal complex the second week, and then in subsequent weeks study the physical properties of the metal complex or use it as a catalyst for an organometallic transformation. Each pair of students is assigned a slightly different derivative, with subtle variations in the ligand substituents. This means that no two outcomes will be the same, and at the end of each project the class as whole has a large body of data to compare. Students compile data from the whole class and use it to draw broad conclusions using key fundamental concepts they've learned in their lecture courses and read about in the primary literature. Each project culminates with a "lab report", but it's really more of a publication quality paper written in the style of a journal article, using literature references to back up their arguments along the way. This class is considered experiential because it really puts the students in the shoes of a scientific researcher, right down to using scientific search engines to find relevant precedents and preparing publication quality manuscripts.
Abnormal Psychology (PSYC 32a):
This course has a lower level of EL involved, but case studies are used throughout the course for real examples of the disorders the students study, and they are both instructed on how to 'do' diagnoses and tested on that knowledge at the end of the semester.

Seminar on Sex Differences (PSYC 160b):
This is an undergraduate and graduate-level research course that allows students to acquire more experience in two methodologies that are typically used by people graduating with psychology degrees - constructing, evaluating and using a survey (used in class with stereotypes, but useful if one goes on to have a job in marketing, advertising, politics, and other opinion related fields), and either an experiment or an archival study, either of which are used in research-related jobs. Experiential Learning occurs throughout, we spend time in class using surveys, developing the survey. I devote substantial parts of the seminar to teaching and reminding people how to do statistical analysis, and good chunks of 2 weeks at the beginning and once later in the semester to survey and research-design in general. In addition, students in the class read primary research throughout the course of the semester and blog on their reactions and questions with each other each week.