

**Urban Education with Civic Engagement**  
**50:163:382:40**  
**Fall 2019 Tuesday/Thursday 11:10-12:30**  
**BSB 117**

Instructor:

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday (2-3) or by appointment.

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday (10-11)

**Course Description**

This course applies an ecological approach to studying urban schools. We explore how policies, cities, neighborhoods, families, school buildings, and classrooms together shape the social and political landscapes of urban schooling. This course integrates engaged civic learning: students learn firsthand about urban schooling and the perspectives of youth through participating in the Rutgers Ignite afterschool program. We examine the relationship between schools and the urban environments in which they are situated, looking at how schools perpetuate or contest inequalities along race, class, ethnic, and gender lines. The course explores key topics and debates on equity and access in urban schools. Specifically, we seek to understand youth's multiple and varied perspectives on schooling. We will examine contemporary reform movements looking critically at how these impact diverse communities. In addition to class discussions, analyses of readings & films, and reflections from civic engagement, we will hear from several guest speakers who attend, work, and conduct research in Camden's schools.

This course meets the following **Engaged Civic Learning (ECL) goals** for **General Education**:

1. *Incorporate a substantial experiential or community-focused component in which all students are required to participate; students should receive appropriate preparation for this component:* All students will design and implement "storytelling clubs" with children in an afterschool program coordinated by Rutgers' Ignite Program. In small groups, students will spend one afternoon/week at a North Camden school from 3pm-6pm to co-facilitate their clubs and to participate in afterschool activities with the children. Students will design collaboratively their club with input from the children and will receive guidance (in class discussion and through written input) from the professor and TA throughout the semester.
2. *Provide opportunities for students to analyze, interpret, or reflect on their course experiences and relate it to the course content, with assessment of this work playing a significant role in overall course assessment:* Every written and presentation assignment for this class asks students to analyze, interpret, and reflect across course materials and learning from civic engagement in afterschool clubs including a personal reflection, three critical reflections, and the culminating portfolio (with presentation).

3. *Be situated in a partnership that brings benefits to both partners and involves appropriate communication (including sharing of results of student work when suitable) between partners:* With the children, the students facilitate each club meeting to building to a culminating storytelling project, which can include a dance performance, a film, a portfolio of art and poetry, or a short documentary. Students facilitate the children's stories and help put together the final project, which is shared among the afterschool group, with the wider class, and when feasible, at a parent community event hosted by Ignite.

In addition, students participate in all five **Engaged Civic Learning Activities:**

1. Reflect on how engaged civic learning experiences may or may not have altered their assumptions about the community and their relationship to it—we begin the class reflecting and defining our group's principles and practices of civic engagement with children in local Camden schools. We continue to explore our roles as insiders and outsiders, as well as how our understanding of children and urban schools shift throughout the semester
2. Analyze their own actions and those of others participating in the engaged civic learning project—we spend ample time in each class meeting discussing specific concerns or successes that arose during the clubs and we assist each other in processing the learning and decision-making around these scenarios
3. Articulate the challenges, needs, and aspirations of members of the local community—the afterschool setting and partnership enable to the students to consider different perceptions of needs, challenges, and aspirations from children, parents, teachers, Ignite Ambassadors and educators, as well as the role of different school cultures and bureaucracies. Because our clubs take place at different local schools including charter schools, traditional public schools, and a Catholic school, students are able to compare and contrast their experiences across their different club contexts.
4. Communicate effectively with community members—students learn how to communicate with different players in implementing their clubs including the children, the Ambassadors, school officials, and the Ignite administrators. They need to communicate their needs for particular equipment and supplies and manage challenges, as these come up. Students also are required to communicate with one another as they co-facilitate their storytelling clubs.
5. Work constructively with diverse others to address public challenges—the focus on storytelling supports the exploration of diverse perspectives, experiences, and cultural gifts across both students and children. Students creatively engage in constructing narrative with children that respects and honors their communities' perspectives. We think of these stories as counter-narratives as these projects contest problematic stereotypes and deficit constructions of Camden's youth instead showing the talented, creative, and fantastic contributions of children.

**Required Book:**

Watson, Renee. 2017. *Piecing Me Together*. New York: Bloomsbury.

*This book can be purchased from our local independent bookstore, La Unique African-American Bookstore and Cultural Center, 111 North 6<sup>th</sup> Street Camden 08102*

*All other articles and chapters listed on the syllabus can be found on our course sakai site under resources. You must have the reading completed, notes taken, and either a digital or hard copy available with you in class on the date assigned. Recommended readings are not required.*

**Sakai:** We will be using some of the features of the Sakai web class management site. To get started, go to sakai.rutgers.edu and log in with your Rutgers net ID and password. Please visit the site frequently. If you experience any trouble, please contact the Help Desk.

### **Course Assignments:**

1). Protect Minors Certification (online course, takes 45 minutes to complete.) You will complete this during class on **Tuesday, September 10**—we'll meet at the Paul Robeson Library computer lab

<http://protectminors.rutgers.edu/registration.html?schID=55008>

2). Education Narrative

This paper allows you to connect your experiences with schooling to the content of the course. We will use these papers to build a classroom community based on the knowledge and experience we each bring to the class. Choose a specific incident or experience during your K-12 schooling that illustrates how your home and community life connected with (or did not connect with) your schooling experiences. You should write about a specific incident that affected how you thought about yourself as a student, your family/community or the larger society. Include one or two paragraphs at the end of your narrative as a letter to your prior self. Do you have any advice or suggestions from your position now? (2-3 double-spaced pages, Times New Roman font.) Please bring four copies of your reflection to class with you.

**DUE: September 19**

3) Civic Engagement: Storytelling Clubs with Ignite

The framing questions for the course are: What are some ways to investigate, critique, and re-imagine urban schools? In particular, how can students' experiences and stories inform this inquiry?

**Beginning on Monday, September 16 and concluding Thursday, November 21**, you will contribute to the Ignite Afterschool Program at a local school. This is an afterschool partnership between Rutgers Camden and schools in Camden. The first two weeks will involve icebreakers and community building activities and the storytelling clubs will officially begin on Monday, September 30. You will participate one afternoon a week (Monday-Thursday), from 3-6 p.m. **Your weekly participation at your club is REQUIRED and there will be sign-in sheet at the school. If you are ill or unable to make the club, you must contact the professor and your group members in advance. You are allowed only one absence before your course grade is affected.**

Your involvement in the Ignite Program will likely include:

- tutoring and homework help
- co-facilitating a storytelling club
- clean up and planning for the following week.

On September 5, during class, you will sign up for your afterschool day. From these sign-ups, we will create teams so that you can begin to plan your afterschool clubs together.

Club purpose: Design activities to assist students in **EXPRESSING THEIR OWN STORIES**. Stories can be expressed through multiple forms including **writing, scrapbooking, comics, poetry, music, film, and dance**

Draw upon your own talents and interests:

For instance, if you are a poet or dancer, use your knowledge to inspire and guide the youth. You should co-develop the themes and ways of sharing stories in partnership with the children. In other words, the club design should include interaction between you and the children.

Club goals:

**HAVE FUN AND LET THE KIDS HAVE FUN!**

Assist youth to have fun while expressing stories about their lives or about topics of interest to them (and you should have fun too!) For instance, possible themes can include but are not limited to: safety/violence, teaching and learning, culture and family, arts and sports, college and/or educational goals for the future.

**FINAL PROJECT OR COLLECTION OF WORK**

If possible, you will work toward a final project with the kids that you will present during class at the end of the semester. For some clubs, the children may rotate frequently from week-to-week. If you cannot work toward a final project, you will share a collection of the stories and activities you completed with children, as well as your learning process.

Supplies:

Ignite will provide each club with general arts supplies (such as construction paper, writing utensils, coloring materials, glue, scissors, etc.). If you would like to request additional specific supplies, you should email the Ignite program coordinator a week in advance. (We will provide this contact info early in the class).

Be a responsible and caring mentor

Engaging with youth at the school is both a privilege and a responsibility, as you will be directly accountable for creating and implementing a meaningful program. This is a privilege because you will have the opportunity to learn from youth directly about their experiences and perceptions. You will also be interacting with teachers and Rutgers ambassadors and will see firsthand how an afterschool program operates. We expect you to be respectful contributors and to make a positive impact.

#### 4). Civic Engagement: Journal

You are required to write a **journal entry** after each club meeting. Each entry should be at least one page, double-spaced in length. All writing should be typed. You may want to include sketches, poems or songs to reflect upon your civic engagement. Please bring journals with you to class as we will sometimes ask you to reflect upon particular experiences either through discussion or through written activities. **Journals should be dated and will be collected at the same time you submit critical reflections. You should type these up as soon as possible after each club meeting.**

##### Describe:

Write about the most memorable moments and interactions at your club after **each visit to the school**. Describe any conversations or experiences that stood out to you. Describe interactions or observations that you found meaningful (i.e. interactions that caused you to feel happy, proud, frustrated, uncomfortable, etc.) Your journal should be descriptive and specific and you will draw upon this material to write your critical reflections and your final portfolio.

##### Reflect:

You can use one or more of the following questions for each journal:

- Is there anything you wish you had done differently?
- Do you have any specific questions about anything you observed or participated in?
- Do you have any broad questions or concerns about urban education after your experience?
- Did you catch yourself making any assumptions about the children, the school, teachers? Were any of your assumptions challenged? How can you learn more?

**DUE: October 15, November 5, November 23**

#### 4). Three Critical Reflections:

You will write three critical reflections (3-4 double-spaced pages, Times New Roman font). You will complete a structured worksheet to guide these reflections about your civic engagement, making connections to course readings as well as discussions, films, or guest speakers. The reflection gives you the opportunity to critically explore in depth particular examples from your journals. The aim of the exercise is to see how specific arguments in the course material can help you think critically about and in new and interesting ways about specific events from the Civic Engagement program. And vice versa, how can experiences in schools inform your understanding of academic texts and materials?

You will reflect upon the following from your journal:

- A specific interaction or scenario from the Ignite program
- A story shared by a student or teacher

Below is a list of course materials, which you can draw upon in your reflection:

- Quote from a reading, film, or guest speaker (no more than four sentences)
- A concept from a reading (no more than four sentences)

- An argument made by an author or guest speaker (no more than four sentences)

**DUE: October 15, November 5, November 23**

### 5). Portfolio

Your major assignment for this course is a portfolio that highlights and synthesizes other assignments completed throughout the semester. You will write a summary and analysis (12-16 double-spaced pages, Times New Roman font) on your experience participating in the Ignite afterschool program and completing a storytelling project. You should include all of your building reflections and lesson plans as appendixes to your portfolio.

#### **First half of your summary/analysis (6-8 pages)**

- What was the focus and storytelling form for your club? How did you come up with the focus and form? What did you bring personally to this storytelling club?
- How successful was your club? What worked and why? What didn't work and why? What did you learn and what would you do differently?
- Describe the range of stories and perspectives shared? How did these change over time? What did the children teach you through their stories? What do you think they learned?
- Describe your club's final project or the range of activities/stories over the semester. What influenced this project or range of activities? What challenged or supported the project or range of activities? How did you deal with the challenges?

**Second half of your summary/analysis (6-8 pages)** Draw from at least four course readings in this section.

- How did your perspectives and knowledge about urban education and urban youth change or expand? Point to specific experiences and course readings.
- How did youth stories and civic engagement challenge or support what you learned from other course materials? What are some ways you've learned to investigate, critique, and re-imagine urban schools? In particular, how can students' experiences and stories inform this inquiry?
- Reflect on how your project could inform urban schools. In what ways will you use what you have learned? And, why does this matter?

#### **Include the following appendixes:**

- Educational narrative
- Journal entries
- Critical reflections
- Lesson plans/ Activity descriptions

**DUE: December 13**

### 6). Team Presentation:

You will present with the other classmates who worked on your club. Each team will share your final project (e.g. a book of student stories and art, a film, a poetry collection, etc.) or the collection of activities. Depending on the number of groups, presentations will last approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Additional guidelines and a list of questions to focus your presentations will be provided in class.

7). Surprise Check-ins: Over the semester, we have **5 surprise check-ins**. For each assigned reading, article, or podcast, you should use a notecard to write down the argument of the piece. Put the argument in your own words and it should contain at least two key points. Include a heading with the author's name and date of publication. We will collect your notecards five times throughout the semester but you should bring one with you to each class. Surprise check-ins are meant to encourage you to keep up with the course readings and to help you understand the main concepts or arguments presented.

8). On-time class attendance and class participation are imperative:

A successful class depends on every member of the group actively engaging as both learners and teachers. It is our assumption that each of us has valuable perspectives and experiences that will inform our collective, developing knowledge about issues related to urban education. Attendance is mandatory. You are required to notify us about any absences. Any absence after three, whether excused, unexcused or some combination, will count against your grade. This is a discussion-based course and our success as a class is fully dependent upon your attendance and informed participation. All required readings are to be completed by the beginning of the class for which they are assigned. You are expected to come to class with notes from the readings, reflections from your civic engagement, as well as with questions and comments to discuss with your classmates.

**Grading:**

Education Narrative	5%
Crit. Reflections	30% (10% for each reflection)
Journals	10%
Project Presentation	10%
Portfolio	30%
Surprise Check-ins	10%
Class Participation	5%

**Due Dates and Late Policy**

Assignments must be submitted by the due date/time. Items submitted later will be considered late. Deadlines are for your and my benefit. If you have extenuating circumstances, please contact me beforehand. Extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis.

**Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism—passing off another's ideas or words as one's own—is a serious act of academic dishonesty and represents a serious violation of the academic integrity policy of Rutgers University. Careless or inadequate citing of ideas or words borrowed from another also constitutes an act of academic dishonesty. It is each student's responsibility to acquaint him/herself with Rutgers University's rules on academic integrity:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/> If, after reviewing these rules, you are unsure about which actions constitute violations of the academic integrity policy, please contact me.

**ADA Statement:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among

other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form at <https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration>. <https://success.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services>

### **Food and Housing Insecurity**

When students face challenges securing food and/or housing, it can be difficult to learn. If you are in this situation, please contact the Dean of Students. If you feel comfortable, please also let me know, and I will do what I can to connect you with appropriate resources. Our campus offers various services and supports for students; know that you are not alone in dealing with these issues.

Dean of Students: <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/>

RU-Camden Food Pantry: <https://wellnesscenter.camden.rutgers.edu/node/318>

### **Childcare**

Many students have care responsibilities for a child in their life, whether as a parent, an older sibling, cousin, etc. If your childcare needs ever come into conflict with the course schedule, please don't feel as though you need to miss class. I understand that sometimes plans fall through. If this happens, you are welcome to bring a child to class with you. I simply ask that you bring materials to keep them busy, and remain mindful of your classmates. If you have any questions about this, feel free to contact me.

**Media:** In order to familiarize yourself with the on-going and current issues in urban education, look at the following websites regularly throughout the semester: Education Week online ([www.edweek.com](http://www.edweek.com)), the Philadelphia School Notebook ([www.thenotebook.org](http://www.thenotebook.org)) and Rethinking Schools ([www.rethinkingschools.org](http://www.rethinkingschools.org)). You might also look at the coverage of urban education in the popular press. For instance, you could read the Philadelphia Inquirer ([www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/](http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/)) or you could read the Courier Post ([www.courierpostonline.com](http://www.courierpostonline.com)). Alternatively, you might choose a more national newspaper such as the New York Times ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)).

## **Course Topics and Readings**

### **September 3**

Introduction / Course Overview

### **Hope and the Value of Education**

#### **September 5**

hooks, bell. 2003. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York: Routledge (preface

and Keepers of Hope).  
DUE: Select afterschool day.

### **Civic Engagement in Urban Schools**

#### **September 10**

“To Hell with Good Intentions”: An address by Ivan Illich to the Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects (CIASP) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, April 20, 1968.

*Visit from Ignite/Orientation/Complete Protection of Minors—Meet at the Paul Robeson Library Computer Lab*

#### **September 12**

Dahan, T., Cruz, K., Perry, A., Danley, S. and Hammell, B. “‘I live both lives’: Exploring Double Consciousness in Resident-Students at an Engaged Institution”. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*

### **Educational Inequality and the Politics of Belonging: School Choice, Gentrification & School Reform, Busing, Closing Schools**

#### **September 17**

Watson, Renee. 2017. *Piecing Me Together*. New York: Bloomsbury.

In-class Film: *Beyond Brown*

DUE: Educational Narrative

#### **September 19**

Watson, Renee. 2017. *Piecing Me Together*. New York: Bloomsbury.

#### **September 24**

This American Life Podcast: The Problem We All Live With (Prologue, Part 1 and Part 2)

<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with-part-one>

Recommended:

Why Poor Schools Can’t Win at Standardized Testing:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/07/why-poor-schools-cant-win-at-standardized-testing/374287/>

#### **September 26**

Selection from Keith Benson’s 2016 Dissertation, *Better for Whom?* (Pps. 20-64)

#### **October 1**

Eve Ewing. 2018. *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago’s South Side*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 3)

A new school for Camden as the community mourns the old one:

<https://whyy.org/articles/a-new-school-for-camden-as-a-community-mourns-the-old-one/>

#### **October 3**

Rashmi’s Class:

Global perspectives on urban education (Readings TBD)

**October 8**

Brown, Amy. 2015. *A Good Investment? Philanthropy and the Marketing of Race in an Urban Public School*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.  
(Chapter 3)

**October 10**

Rubin, B.C., Hayes, B., and Benson, K. 2009. "It's the Worst Place to Live": Urban Youth and the Challenge of School-Based Civic Learning. *Theory Into Practice*, 48:213-221.

**Within Schools: Surveillance or Culturally Sustaining Communities?****October 15**

Ferguson, Ann Arnett. 2001. *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. (Chapter 3)

DUE: Critical Reflection 1 and Journal

**October 17**

Rashmi's Class:

Global perspectives on urban education (Readings TBD).

**October 22**

Ferguson, Ann Arnett. 2001. *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. (Chapter 4)

**Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy****October 24**

Alim, H. Samy and Paris, Django. 2017. "What is Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Why Does it Matter? In *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies*, eds. Django Paris and H. Samy Alim. New York: Teachers College Press.

**October 29**

Watson, Nyeema. 2015. *Dissertation: Reading Camden: Examining The Lives of Children in Camden through African-American Children's Literature*. (Chapter 3: Accepting, Resisting, and the Space Between: How Youth Make Meaning of Violence in Camden.)

**October 31**

San Pedro, Timothy J. 2017. "'This Stuff Interests Me': Re-Centering Indigenous Paradigms in Colonizing Schooling Spaces. In *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies*, eds. Django Paris and H. Samy Alim. New York: Teachers College Press.

**November 5**

Lee, Stacey J. and Walsh, Daniel. 2017. "Socially Just, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy for Diverse Immigrant Youth: Possibilities, Challenges, and Directions. In *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies*, eds. Django Paris and H. Samy Alim. New York: Teachers College Press.

In-class film: Precious Knowledge

DUE: Critical Reflection 2 and Journal

## **Ethnographic Insights on After-School and Youth Workers**

### **November 7**

Baldrige, Bianca J. 2019. *Reclaiming Community: Race and the Uncertain Future of Youth Work*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. (Chapter 1)

### **November 12**

Baldrige, Bianca J. 2019. *Reclaiming Community: Race and the Uncertain Future of Youth Work*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. (Chapter 2)

## **Pushout or Dropout?**

### **November 14**

Gonzales, Roberto. 2016. *Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America*. Oakland: University of California Press. (Chapter 2)

### **November 19**

Listen to WHYY Podcast “Schooled” (Three Parts):

<https://whyy.org/programs/schooled/>

In-class Film: *Heart of Stone*

### **November 21**

Morris, Monique 2016. *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School*. New York: The New Press. (Chapter 2)

### **November 26**

February, 2001. Pushed Out: Youth Voices on the Dropout Crisis in Philadelphia. Youth United For Change:

<http://ourcity-ourschools.org/sites/default/files/Pushed-Out%20--%20Youth%20Voices%20on%20the%20Dropout%20Crisis%20in%20Philadelphia%20--%20YUC%20report.pdf>

DUE: Critical Reflection 3 and Journal

### **December 3**

Reading: TBD

### **December 5**

Presentations

### **December 10**

Presentations

**Final Portfolios: DUE Friday, December 13 by 4 pm**