

**ALLYSHIP:
CHALLENGING PRIVILEGE AND DOING SOLIDARITY
IN MOVEMENTS FOR COLLECTIVE LIBERATION
SPRING 2015
(CSRE 157P / FEMGEN 157P / AMST 157P)**

#BlackLivesMatter doesn't mean your life isn't important – it means that Black lives, which are seen as without value within White supremacy, are important to your liberation.

-Alicia Garza, creator of #BlackLivesMatter

Solidarity is not an act of charity. It is an act of unity between allies fighting on different terrains toward the same objective.

-Samora Machel, revolutionary socialist and former President of Mozambique

2-4 Units
Fridays 1:15-4:05
Building 160, Room 123

Instructor: Daniel Murray
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Many activists in the racial justice, immigrant, indigenous, feminist, and LGBTQ movements, are committed to principles of leadership by frontline communities - their goal is to build power in communities that are disempowered by dominant institutions and practices. This makes for complicated relationships with those that are not part of those frontline communities but recognize both that their own silence makes them complicit in systems of oppression and that their liberation is tied up in the liberation of those communities. In this course, we will examine how power and privilege can undermine attempts to collaborate in social justice work, and then explore principles and practices of allyship, solidarity and collective liberation that attempt to overcome these challenges. *We will discuss texts on white privilege and anti-racism as our primary point of reference*, but will develop an intersectional analysis that connects to other kinds of solidarity work and movements for collective liberation. As a community-engaged learning course, students will work with community partners (4-5 hrs/wk) to establish long-term relationships based in solidarity. Students are encouraged to work with movements, organizations, and student groups with whom they already have relationships. Throughout the quarter, we will have guest lectures and workshops with community partners and movement strategy organizations.

In this course, we will not only be learning about allyship and solidarity, we will be practicing it. This means developing a *reciprocal* relationship with your community partner. This takes two forms. On one hand, part of being an ally means doing some of the unglamorous or mundane work that is essential for the organization to function, freeing organizers and members of frontline communities to focus on movement-building, strategic planning and leadership development. What that will look like will depend on your community partner. Some have needs for translating, data entry and analysis, research, event preparation and staffing, transcription, or fundraising. Your willingness to do this work is critical to promoting the self-empowerment of others, undoing systems of privilege and oppression, and building movements for collective liberation. On the other hand, solidarity means making the struggle your own and bringing it into your own community to transform it. Balancing these can be challenging, but we will be working to do both in this class.

BIG IDEAS

This course will be based around three “big ideas” or themes.

Big Idea 1: White Privilege and White Supremacy

Big Idea 2: Frontline Leadership

Big Idea 3: Allyship/Solidarity/Collective Liberation

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students should be able to do the following:

- Assess examples of oppression, privilege and white supremacy in society and in their own lives.
- Discuss specific institutions, policies and practices in the history of white supremacy in the US.
- Differentiate and describe the intersections between white supremacy and other forms of oppression.
- Identify frontline communities and describe the ways that oppression of frontline communities is connected to their own liberation.
- Critique practices of allyship or other modes of participation in movements that undermine frontline leadership and solidarity.
- Evaluate frameworks for organizing in terms of whether and how they empower frontline communities and promote collective liberation.
- Identify community organizations, movement strategy organizations, student groups and campus resources working for social justice.
- Demonstrate principles of allyship and solidarity in working with community partners.
- Understand how community organizations, movement groups, and non-profits function.
- Develop a proposal for and execute an action that challenges white supremacy or oppression and aligns with their community partner’s mission.
- Maintain their commitment to working for social justice.
- Facilitate discussion on complex political topics and participate effectively and equitably in collective decision-making.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As a Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) course, you will spend time each week working with a community partner. You will work 4-5 hours/week beginning in week 2. Some of this work will be on-site at events, in the community or at the offices of the organization. Some will be remote work that you can complete anywhere. Students may work with one of the partner organizations provided. If you are interested in working with a community organization with which they already have a relationship or a student group, please consult with me. We have cultivated partnerships with the following organizations:

- **Anakbayan Silicon Valley** – a youth organization that struggles for the rights of Filipinos in America and national democracy in the Philippines by educating, organizing, and mobilizing the youth in Silicon Valley (San Jose)
- **The Anti Police-Terror Project** – a multi-racial and multi-generational grassroots group working to end police brutality (Oakland)

- **Causa Justa :: Just Cause** – a housing and racial justice organization. Bilingual Spanish-English preferred (Oakland/San Francisco)
- **Planting Justice** – A grassroots food justice organization, working to democratize access to affordable, nutritious food by empowering urban residents and addressing the structural inequalities of race, class, privilege and oppression in the food system (Oakland)
- **Sacred Community Land Trust** – A food justice organization working counter the imperialism faced by indigenous peoples by securing land for community use (Oakland)
- **Youth United for Community Action (YUCA)** – a youth-led community development organization focusing on education, housing displacement, and climate justice (East Palo Alto)

Transportation: We can support your transportation to work with these organizations through travel reimbursements or Zipcar rentals.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION – 15%

Discussion will be central to our class. We will have a range of activities to encourage sharing of our thoughts, feelings and experiences. We will be addressing some challenging topics throughout the class (that is the point!), so it will be important to create a safe space. We will develop commitments together to ensure that this happens, but a safe space requires that we actively work to create it together. We won't be perfect in our terminology and discussion, but we will learn together how we can best communicate in ways that will both challenge us and create the trust for us to challenge each other to go further.

Twenty-five percent of your grade is based on your attendance and participation in the classroom. Participating in our classroom discussions is an important way for us to bring together the scholarly readings and our experiences working with community groups. Further, unlike most other courses, we will be inviting community members to join in our class discussions, as such it will be a rare and valuable opportunity to learn collaboratively with individuals deeply involved in the movements for collective liberation.

Our in-class discussion is also a way for us to realize some of the principles of equality that we will be examining throughout the course. As such, being a good participant does not mean talking a lot or show others how much you know. There will be many ways to participate in this class, and many ways to support a participatory learning environment for the class. Participation includes speaking as well as creating space for others and listening to their perspectives actively. Here are some concrete ways to participate actively.

- Ask a question or make a comment that shows you are interested in what another person says or encourages another person to elaborate on something they have said.
- Make a comment that draws a link between a classmate's comment and a text, or between two classmates' contributions.
- Contribute something that builds on what someone else has said, being explicit about the connection.
- Make a comment that draws out a recurring theme in the discussion
- Bring in a resource (e.g., reading, website, video) that is not covered in the syllabus but adds new information or a new perspective to our learning.

- Create space for someone who has not yet spoken to contribute to the conversation.
- Use body language (in only a slightly exaggerated way!) to show interest in what different speakers are saying.

FACILITATION – 10%

In a group of 2-3 students, you will help to plan and execute part of the session for one week. This is to both give you experience in facilitation and workshop planning, but more importantly, to give you power over the content of the class and the way it is run. This is an opportunity to ensure that the course is relevant to your needs and embodies some of the principles of democracy and empowerment that are at its core.

Your group will design an in-class activity, execute it, and facilitate discussion of the topic and texts. Your group will meet with me early in the week to brainstorm and develop ideas for activities and discussion. Be sure to read the readings before the planning meeting. Feel free to bring in outside materials like videos, images, or music that can be shared in class.

WRITTEN REFLECTIONS AND RESPONSES – 35%

In this course we will have two types of written reflections, which will alternate each week. Your writing can be relatively informal. Think of them more as journal entries. Each reflection should be **about 500 words**. They should be submitted on Canvas by Tuesday at 7:00am.

Critical Reflections

In the first type of reflection, you will respond to a series of *academic questions* that will prompt you to think critically about the readings, our in-class discussion, and the community work in which you are engaged. Some of the questions are listed below in the class schedule. Others will be added as the syllabus develops.

Personal Reflections

The second type of reflection will be a *personal reflection* on your community experiences and your past experiences with privilege, race and community work. Like the critical reflections, you will respond to a series of questions to guide your reflection.

Reflection Responses

Each week, you will also comment on at least one other student's reflection in Canvas. These comments are meant to encourage dialogue and discussion. You can pose questions, agree or disagree, relate their post to another experience or article, or make links between posts. These are due by 7:00am Friday morning. I encourage you to read all students' reflections.

GROUP PRESENTATION – 10%

With your group, you will select one of the topics below (or another that you propose) and prepare a 10-minute presentation for the class on the issue and how it intersects with issues of race. The goal is for each group to develop specialized knowledge and share that knowledge with the rest of the class. You will present in Week ??.

Topics: Imperialism/Colonialism, indigenous rights, LGBTQ liberation, gender, class (See Week 9 for a list of readings)

FINAL ACTION – 30%

Your final project will actualize the iterative process of action-thought-action that we have employed throughout the course. You will collaborate with the other students working with your community partner (and perhaps others). It will consist of three parts.

1) In the first part, you will critically analyze the work you have done with your community partner and the class readings/discussions. You should reflect on challenges you witnessed, community needs you have discussed with your community partner, and a mode of action based in principles of solidarity. Based on this analysis and collaboration with your community partner, you will develop a proposal for a concrete action that you will take to challenge white supremacy or oppression *in your own community*. The action proposal should be grounded in your reflections on the readings and community work. What is it about particular readings and community experiences that lead you to believe that your action will be a meaningful intervention? Some possibilities for action include, organizing an event, a reading group, or consciousness-raising circle; writing and Op-ed; designing a campaign or a mentorship program; organizing an action; etc. You may work in groups for this project, but *you should each submit your own analysis and proposal. (1500 words, due 5/15)*

2) In the second part, you will execute the action, making sure to document it (photos, video, audio recording, securing a copy of the document if it is written, etc.). This should happen **between week 7 and finals week.**

3) In the third part, you will briefly (5-10 minutes) present and reflect on your action with the class *and community partners* at a final event **during finals week**. You will describe the action and address: How were you trying to take the work of your community partner you're your own community? What challenges did you face in organizing and executing it? Was the action successful? How did the action relate to our reflections on allyship and solidarity throughout the course? What did you learn from organizing and executing it? What other actions could you take in the future? How would you do them differently? *Your community partner will then comment on your action* and then your classmates.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

An important part of this course is learning about and practicing accountability and trust. You will be working on this with your community partners, and we will also practice it in the classroom. One way that we will do this is working together to assess and evaluate our own work in the class and the work of our classmates. We will establish expectations for participation, reflection, and group work, and we will evaluate these as we go along. We will do this regularly throughout the course. You will also establish expectations with your community partners, and must remain accountable to your commitment to them. Your community partner will submit an assessment of your collaboration with them at the end of the quarter. Your final grade will be determined by this collective self-assessment and community partner assessment.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 (4/3): Introduction

In-class Activity:

- Introducing Race and Intersectionality
- Preparing for Community Engagement:
 - Principles of Ethical and Effective Service; Reflection; Working with Movements
- Models of Action:

- Community organizing, movement-building, direct action, grassroots fundraising, popular education

Reflection Questions (in-class):

- What do allyship, solidarity and oppression mean to you?
- What are your motivations for taking this class? What do you hope to do with what you learn and experience through this course? What are you unsure or anxious about?

Other:

- Syllabus review – Read, discuss, propose changes, try for consensus

Week 2 (4/10): Oppression, White Supremacy and White Privilege in the US

Required Reading:

- [Iris Marion Young, “The Five Faces of Oppression” (12 pp., 1990)]
- Bill Quigley, [“Fourteen Cases of Racism in the US Criminal Justice System”](#)
- [Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations” (2014)]
- Elizabeth ‘Betita’ Martinez, “What Is White Supremacy?” (6 pp.)
- Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
- Malkia A. Cyril, Turn Up: 21st-Century Black Millennials Are Bringing Direct Action Back” (3 pp., 2014)
- [Ferguson Action Demands](#)
- Each student will also read an article, do online research, or do other work suggested by community partners to prepare for their specific community work.
 - YUCA: [“East of Palo Alto’s Eden: Race and the Formation of Silicon Valley”](#)
 - Planting Justice:
 - The Anti Police-Terror Project
 - Causa Justa :: Just Cause
 - Sacred Community Land Trust

Recommended Reading:

- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* (Selections)
- Beverly Tatum, “Breaking the Silence”
- Joel Olsen, “The Problem of the White Citizen”

Reflection Questions:

- Connect the institutional and the interpersonal. [Have you ever heard a racist comment and remained silent? Do you actively and regularly work to confront racism in society? Could you do more? What are some of the obstacles for you to take action on racism?] Have a conversation with someone about structural racism??

Week 3 (4/17): Anti-Racism and Frameworks for Anti-Racist Organizing – Guest Lecture: Ingrid Chapman (The Catalyst Project and

Required Reading:

- Joe Fagin and Hernan Revera, “Confronting One’s Own Racism”
- Paul Kivel, “The Costs of Racism to White People”
- Andrea Smith, “The Problem with Privilege” (2013)
- Catalyst Project, “Tools for White Anti-Racist Organizing”
- Catalyst Project “Culture Shifts”

- Bay Area Solidarity Action Team, “Protocol and Principles for White People Working to Support the Black Liberation Movement”
- Ingrid Chapman, “Hearts on Fire: The Struggle for Justice in New Orleans”

Recommended Reading:

- Tim Wise, “Membership Has Its Privileges: Thoughts on Acknowledging and Challenging Whiteness”
- Stephanie M. Wildman with Adrienne D. Davis, “Making Systems of Privilege Visible”
- Allan G. Johnson, “Privilege as Paradox”
- Robert Jensen, “White Privilege/White Supremacy”

Reflection Questions:

- Describe three forms of privilege that you have and from which you *most* benefit. Paul Kivel and other authors argue that we should understand our liberation as tied up with those that are oppressed; that we need to find our self-interest in the struggle for equality. What do they mean by this? Think about your self-interest. Reflect on three ways that *your life* would *most* improve if white supremacy or other forms of privilege are eradicated?

Week 4 (4/24): Frontline Leadership – Guest Lecture: Community Panel (Anakbayan Silicon Valley, the Anti Police-Terror Project, Causa Justa :: Just Cause, Planting Justice, Sacred Community Land Trust, Youth United for Community Action)

Required Reading:

- Malcolm X, “Message to the Grassroots” (1963)
- Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Ch. 1)
- “Jemez Principles of Organizing”
- Andrea Smith, “Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing”
- Alicia Garza, “A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement”

Reflection Questions:

- Interview a member from the community organization and reflect on their responses. The interview should have two parts: *First*, discuss the individual’s motivations for their involvement in the organization. Why did they start doing this work? What motivates them to keep going? What inspires them? What do they hope will be the outcome of their work? Do any of their responses surprise you? *Second*, what is their idea of leadership in their community? Is “frontline leadership” important to their work? Why? What does it look like?

Week 5 (5/1): Class Field Trip – May Day!!!

Required Reading:

- Betsy Leondar-Wright, “Working Definitions” (3 pp.)
- Paul Kivel, “Class Chart”, *You Call This Democracy?* (1 p.)
- Paul Kivel, “Where Are You in the Class System?” (1996) (4 pp.)
- Vicki Quatmann, “Organizing and Fundraising: Sisters in the Struggle”
- Kim Klein, “The Ten Most Important Things You Can Know about Fundraising”

Reflection:

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Other:

- We will decide, as a group what we will do to recognize May Day. What are your organizations doing? What are ways we can plug into or support their actions?

Week 6 (5/8): “Don’t Mourn, Organize!” – Guest Lecture: Steve Williams (LeftRoots)

Required Reading:

- Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, “In the Beginning” (pp. 98-125)
- Steve Williams, “Demand Everything: Lessons of the Transformative Organizing Model”
- Rinku Sen, “Community Organizing - Yesterday and Today”
- Ruckus Society Action Framework

Recommended Reading:

- Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, “Education of an Organizer” (pp. 63-80)
- George Lakey, “Strategies for a Living Revolution”
- Carol Mueller, “Ella Baker and the Origins of ‘Participatory Democracy’”
- Midwest Academy, *Organize!*

Personal Reflection Questions:

Week 7 (5/15): From Allyship to Collective Liberation

Required Reading:

- “A Critique of Ally Politics” in *Revolutionary Solidarity* (2014)
- Harsha Walia, “On Anti-Oppression, Decolonization, and Responsible Allyship.” presentation at 2012 PowerShift. (11 min. video Interview recorded at PowerShift Canada 2012, Oct 28 in Ottawa on unceded Algonquin territory). On [Youtube](#)
- Chris Crass, “From a Place of Love: Catalyst Project and the Strategy of Collective Liberation Leadership in White Communities”

Recommended Reading:

- “Accomplices Not Allies” in *Revolutionary Solidarity* (2014)

Critical/Personal Reflection Questions:

- What are some of the barriers to your participating more fully in movements for collective liberation? What would be the consequences if you did? Do you agree with some of the critiques we read this week that if you are not a full “accomplice”, then you are a detriment to movements for liberation?

Other:

- **Your Action Proposal.** Be prepared to workshop it.

Week 8 (5/22): Education, Student Organizing and Activism

Reading Due:

- Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Selections)
- “Port Huron Statement” (Selections)
- “Stanford Dis-Orientation Guide”
- Something about SNCC or Freedom Summer?

Recommended Reading:

- Myles Horton, *The Long Haul* (Ch. 9, 11-13, 15)

Critical Reflection Questions:

Week 9 (5/29): Intersectionality

Required Reading:

- “The Combahee River Collective Statement” (1974)
- Adolph Reed, Jr. “The limits of anti-racism”
- A reading on the intersections between race and one of the following topics:
 - Imperialism/Colonialism
 - Homophobia
 - Transphobia
 - Patriarchy
 - Class

Critical Reflection:

- 5-7 minute group presentation on the intersections between your topic (imperialism, indigenous rights, LGBTQ, gender, class) and race/white supremacy.

Week 10 (6/5): Open Session

As a class we will decide what this final day will look like. We can return to earlier topics, focus on a new topic that was not addressed, or shape the class to address new concerns that have arisen.

Finals Week (TBD): Final Presentations and Movement Convergence

OTHER RESOURCES

www.coloursofresistance.org