PSCI/HSOC 335

HEALTHY SCHOOLS:

Community based participatory research, planning and action

A Fox Leadership, ABCS Seminar

Tuesdays, 3:30-6:30pm
Leadership Hall Seminar Room
3814 Walnut St. (entrance on left side of building)

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office hrs, W 1:30-2:30 and by apptmt

This Fox Leadership and academically based community service seminar will use course readings, the PBS series “Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick,” and students’ own observations and interviews in their service learning projects in two West Philadelphia elementary/middle schools to analyze the causes and impact of health and educational inequalities in urban schools in the United States and efforts to address them. Course speakers will help us examine the history, theories, politics and leadership behind some different strategies for addressing these inequalities and their outcomes.

Course service projects at Lea and Wilson, two West Philadelphia schools are based on work with the Center for Disease Control and Health Promotion (CDC)’s School Health Index (SHI), a blueprint for the formation of School Health Councils (SHCs) and their evaluation and planning process, which seeks to adopt one or two realistic school health improvement plans each year. The CDC’s goal is for individual schools to use this process to promote “health behaviors (that) can play a critical role in preventing the leading causes of death, disability, hospitalization, illness, and school absences.” This course represents in part an ongoing effort to determine whether universities and their students can be helpful in facilitating the SHI process and whether this process can in turn be useful in promoting cooperative university/school partnerships that establish effective,
well-supervised, educational service-learning, volunteer, and research experiences that promote a healthier school environment.

Course goals will, therefore, include:

1. Establishing a collaborative relationship with school staff and students in developing and assessing school health improvement projects
2. Developing resources and researching best practices and methods of evaluation that may prove useful to these efforts
3. Evaluating the theory and politics that have shaped the CDC’s strategies for addressing the behavioral and some environmental causes of disease and ill health, and the strengths and limitations of these strategies at both the local and national level.
4. Analyzing the historical, political, social, racial, economic, and institutional contexts that shape this effort to build university/school partnerships; the strengths and limitations of these strategies; and what role leadership can play in improving them.
5. Analyzing the Obama administration’s K-12 Educational Reform Agenda and strategies for achieving it in the context of previous reform efforts.
6. Helping students determine what role they as citizens want to play in addressing educational and health inequalities; what arguments they want to make about the causes of and strategies for addressing these inequalities; and how to do so effectively.

Field Placements

NB: Although public transportation is available, both Wilson and Lea schools are within a short walking distance from Penn's campus. Van service will be arranged for students participating in recess/lunch initiative; tokens are available for students who wish to take public transportation. In order to get to Lea, board the 42 bus going westbound from 40th and Spruce. Get off of the bus at 47th and Spruce. Turn right and the Lea School will be directly to your left. In order to get to Wilson, at either 36th, 37th, or 40th street stations board the number 11 or number 36 trolley going westbound. Get off the trolley at 46th street and Wilson will be directly across the street on the southeastern corner of 46th and Woodland

Last year’s Healthy Schools course was conducted in tandem with the formation of a School Health Council which engaged in an assessment and planning process at Henry C. Lea, a K-8 school at 47th & Locust. Their work initiated action and research projects that will form the basis for ongoing student teams’ work at Lea this semester. In addition, a new relationship and
projects will be established with the Alexander Wilson School at 46th and Woodland. These teams will work on the following projects under the supervision of graduate students in GSE with teaching experience:

**HENRY C. LEA SCHOOL (47TH and Locust)**

1. The ongoing implementation of a lunch and recess initiative to encourage more student responsibility, healthier eating habits and a pleasanter atmosphere at lunch and playground monitoring and socialized play, to encourage more organized games, exercise and activities (and discourage violence and bullying) at recess with supervision from Chris Dean, (cpu@dolphin.upenn.edu). (11:00-12:55pm, days flexible depending on Penn student schedules)

2. The continued development and implementation of a series of anti-bullying lesson plans, most probably in younger grades, with supervision from Chris Dean ((cpu@dolphin.upenn.edu)--Days/hours flexible depending on Penn student schedules.

3. **Lea:** Expansion of after-school fruit stand: UNI (Urban Nutrition Initiative) currently supports a successful student-run fruit stand after school on Mondays. The possibility of expanding this program to a second day would include: sourcing, procuring, and preparing fruit, and aiding students in the actual operation of the fruit stand. Project hours: either Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday from 2:45-3:45. Supervision from Chris Dean, (cpu@dolphin.upenn.edu). (There is also the possibility of a similar project offering fruit for sale before school. Project hours: 7:45-8:30 AM)

4. **After school health club and healthy foods stand:** The Lea Community School after school program is developing a health club in conjunction with the UNI educator for Lea. This project would consist of aiding the UNI educator to teach a group of students nutrition and cooking lessons and to prepare for the operation of a once-a-month healthy foods stand to be run at the monthly Lea School Marketplace where students from the after school program can spend the “Lea Dollars” they have earned. Supervision from Kate Christman (kchris@sas.upenn.edu). Project hours: Monday 3:30-4:30.

5. **School breakfast at Lea:** The school district is making an effort to increase participation in school breakfast. Lea’s principal believes that efforts to increase participation need to be accompanied by an evaluation of what is offered for breakfast, what appeals to the children, and appropriate site-based changes in breakfast offerings. This project consists of studying school breakfast logistics, offerings
and student preferences. This project is more self-directed than other projects, requiring observation and analysis of breakfast at the school, research on “best practices” for promoting breakfast participation at other schools, and the development of student and staff surveys with the goal of developing a workable plan for increased breakfast participation at Lea. Supervision from Chris Dean, (cpu@dolphin.upenn.edu). Project hours: flexible, but availability during breakfast hours at least once a week is required (7:30-8:30 AM).

6. **Parent nutrition workshop:** In a partnership between UNI and the Lea Community School After School Program, a monthly nutrition workshop is offered for parents of Lea Community School students. This project would consist of aiding in the planning and implementation of this workshop, which includes nutrition, and cooking lessons. Supervision from Kate Christman (kchris@sas.upenn.edu). (Project hours: monthly availability on Tuesday evening for 2-3 hours and more flexible hours in planning, preparation and shopping time.)

**ALEXANDER WILSON SCHOOL (46TH and Woodland)**

1. **Initiate Recess/Lunch Initiative.** Requires flexibility, initiative, and preferably experience to initiate recess program (10:50-1 either Tuesday or Friday). Supervisor Eve Litt (Evlitt@dolphin.upenn.edu). This student group will also be encouraged to help develop proposals for additional “Healthy Schools” projects at Wilson next year in meetings with Wilson Health Council and appropriate staff.

**Requirements**

- Regular participation in class and class blackboard. (At least 2 blackboard reflections on readings required; also for any missed class or for one in which you do not participate; **5% of grade.** (EXTRA .5 CREDIT FOR ATTENDANCE AT AND REFLECTIONS ON CLASS RELATED EVENTS; .5 CREDIT FOR POSTING AND REFLECTIONS ON CLASS RELATED ARTICLES.)

- Consistent and responsible attendance, initiative, and reporting on school-based health project (usually at least 2 hours a week). As
much as possible, the planning meetings for this work will occur during class time, but attendance at some additional planning meetings may also be required. At least one brief reflection should be posted by a member of a team for every day of service experience. (5% of grade; determined in association with your team supervisor; EXTRA .5 CREDIT FOR EXTRA WORK RELATED TO SERVICE PROJECT, such as designing posters, getting supplies, meeting with school staff, painting playground AS APPROVED BY PROJECT SUPERVISOR).

• A 3-5 page analysis and reflection paper on the factors that have most shaped your family’s health and educational status over at least 2 generations. (5% of grade) (Should be based at least in part on at least one interview.) DUE FEB. 10

• A 3-5 page report on school-based interview and conversations (individual or small group report) on some aspect of Wilson/Lea school/neighborhood history and health environment based on at least one interview with member of school staff, volunteers, students regarding such topics as their experience of the school and neighborhood, what they have seen of its history, their view of health problems at school/in neighborhood, how they see their roles in the school, how they see impact of national and/or local educational trends and reform efforts. Use of relevant data also encouraged. (15% of grade) DUE APRIL 28

  Alternative: 3-5 page paper that uses at least one interview and relevant source materials to “make an argument” about what you see as key issue related to well-being of children in urban schools. You can choose to analyze what you see as causes of a key problem and/or strengths/weaknesses of a specific approach to improving well-being (health and/or education) of children in urban schools.

• A 3-5 page analysis of your Jonathan Kozol reading. (15% of grade) DUE MARCH 24.
• Group presentation/report on your service project: (25% of grade; roles of individual students in developing reports should be indicated in written report; students will grade their own performance and their group members in developing report) Due as per group choice on class calendar; written presentation, due within 7-10 days of presentation.
Presentation/Report should include:
1. Readings for class on issues related to your project.
2. Report from relevant scholarship; ideally interview w. expert
3. Report and analysis of outcomes, strengths and weaknesses, institutional constraints, recommendations for your project.
4. Some conclusions regarding implementation of university/school partnerships and their potential role in larger reform efforts.

• First Draft Op Ed (1-2 pages) and background paper (5 pages), using relevant class readings and your school experience to promote and/or critique school reform effort. (May be for Philadelphia, university/school partnership, state or nation). (5% of grade)

• Final Draft of OP Ed (1-2 pages) and background paper (5-10 pages) DUE 4/29. (25% of grade)

Readings

Required books:

Choose one of 4 books by Jonathan Kozol
Savage Inequalities: Children in America’s Schools (1991)
(If you do not understand how schools are financed and the basics of why poor urban and well-funded suburban schools look so different, this is the book to read.)

Account of impact of some of the nation’s highest rates of poverty, AIDS, asthma, rotten housing conditions, and violence on the lives of children in the South Bronx.

Account of all that can be gained and learned in individual relationships and listening to children in the South Bronx.

**The Shame of the Nation: the Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America (2005)**
(Kozol revisits America’s schools, looking at the impact of No Child Left Behind and increasing segregation.)

Available at House of Our Own Book Store, 3920 Spruce St, 215-222-1576

All other readings will be in a class bulk back or posted on class blackboard, depending on class preference.

**Resources (to be further developed by Service teams)**

Recess and Cooperative Play:

School Meals
- Ann Cooper & Lisa Holmes, *Lunch Lessons*, chapt 2, pp. 30-87

**COURSE CALENDAR**

**Week 1 (1/20): Introduction to Course**

“Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?” first segment

**Week 2 (1/27): Introduction to Schools, Team Projects; theories of inequalities, their impact and outcomes on education and health**


Web sites: School District: http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/ (especially, Lea and Wilson schools, demographics, PSSA’s)


http://www.barackobama.com/pdf/issues/PreK-12EducationFactSheet.pdf

http://www.barackobama.com/pdf/issues/education/Fact_Sheet_Education_Reform_Speech_FINAL.pdf

*Turn in top team preferences; Kozol preference.

SPEAKER: STERLING BALTIMORE

Week 3 (2/3): Schools and Inequality: theories, causes and outcomes; what we knew about interventions that work in 1988


FIRST HALF OF CLASS WILL TAKE PLACE AT LEA CAFETERIA, in-service training on cafeteria management
Week 4 (2/10): What Works and Why We Have Had So Little of It (1998)


Speaker: Joel Berg, Director, New York City Coalition Against Hunger (Joel Berg jberg@nyccah.org)

**Paper due on factors most influencing your/your family’s health and education**

Week 5 (2/17): School “climate” issues: priorities, strategies and positive behavior interventions

Speaker: Caroline L. Watts,
Graduate School of Education
wattsca@gse.upenn.edu

Readings: PCCY REPORT ON GOOD SCHOOL CLIMATE AND EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUPPORTS (sept, 2007)
Lisbeth Schorr, "The Lessons of Successful Programs," from WITHIN OUR REACH, 256-280

Week 6 (2/24): Educational inequalities: theories, causes and strategies; school financing

Speakers: Jonathan Cetel, Good Schools Pennsylvania
(Jonathan Cetel jonathan@goodschoolspa.org)
Josh Varon, Education Law Project
( "Varon, Josh" jvaron@elc-pa.org)

Readings: http://www.goodschoolspa.org/ (See especially “study and action guide” and reports under “Learn”)
http://www.elc-pa.org/ (especially publications and “program areas’)


Week 7 (3/3): Politics of conflicting priorities for School Meals: who is served what and how.

Speakers: Kathy Fisher, Public Citizens for Children and Youth
 (Kathy Fisher KathyFisher@pccy.org)
 Sandy Sherman, Food Trust
 (Sandy Sherman sbsherm@msn.com)

Readings: Introduction and epilogue, Susan Levine, School Lunch Politics: The Surprising History of America’s Favorite Welfare Program (2008), 1-9, 179-191


SPRING BREAK

Week 8 (3/17) Educational inequalities: theories, causes and strategies; No Child Left Behind

Readings: Sunderman, et al, NCLB Meets School Realities, ix-38
(Shame of the Nation group should be prepared to help lead discussion.)

**Week 9 (3/24): Promoting Health in Schools:**

Readings: School Health Index Middle School/High School training manual, introduction, instructions, a relevant module and resources.

(Amazing Grace group should be prepared to help lead discussion.)

**Kozol paper first draft due**

**Week 10 (3/31) Kozol roundup: Children and schools; politics, policy, citizenship, service and advocacy**

**Kozol paper final draft due**

**Week 11 (4/7) Taming Bureaucracies to Support What Works**


**Week 12 (4/14) Service Project Reports**

First draft of interview/reflection/analysis paper due

**Week 13 (4/21) Service Project Reports **LAST CLASS**

First draft of final op ed/supporting paper due

4/28 Final draft of interview paper due

5/5 Final draft of op ed due