

Colonnade Program Course Proposal: Connections Category
Department of Diversity & Community Studies

1. What course does the department plan to offer in *Connections*?

ICSR 300: Public Problem Solving

a. **Which subcategory are you proposing for this course?** Social and Cultural

2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory? Please address all of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.

1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.

Public Problem Solving is an “investigation of historical perspectives and theoretical dimensions of public problem solving with attention to the development of collective power, capacities, and responsibilities.” The methods employed for achieving this emerge out of the social sciences, in particular community-based research (CBR), which involves qualitative strategies and comparative interpretation. The course adopts the notion that CBR increases the knowledge and understanding of public problems and integrates the information gained with empowerment, social capital, and policy change to improve the wellbeing and quality of life for members of communities. The collaborative approach of CBR enhances students’ understanding of themselves and their role as partners, co-researchers, and problem-solvers.

“Public problems” refers to any of a range of multifaceted problems with shifting conditions and complex interdependencies. For example, *how do we achieve and then move beyond sustainability? What factors create resilience among individuals grounded in their communities? What is the relationship between individual and collective change? What are effective strategies for developing collective power in order to enact social change?* These questions guide the course goals.

2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.

DCS 300 engages students in a range of theories and practices as they relate to specific community contexts (primarily U.S.) and provides strategies to do multidisciplinary research effectively and with a degree of confidence. Students explore important contemporary issues that are strongly impacted by uneven uses of power, ambiguous expressions of fairness, and strategic silencing and disempowerment. In doing so, they learn to evaluate and critically respond to different value systems within a range of communities. DCS 300 helps students become engaged members of society through ecological perspectives, risk and resilience, and individual and collective action. The public “action” portion of the course provides a powerful counter-balance to the theoretical material by encouraging solutions that are equitable, engaged, grassroots, and empowering.

The course’s primary format will reflect CBR’s philosophical commitment to open discussion and learning as opposed to more didactic pedagogical approaches—critical

individual reflection and group discussion will be emphasized. Students will examine problem-solving as a means to confront complex situations with sensitivity and insight. By using concepts of community based research, they will develop understandings of theoretical foundations of public problem solving, critiquing research materials, and interacting in communities (ethnography, interview, etc.). The primary goal of DCS 300 is to explore the advantages of collaboration with communities in solving problems.

3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.

Drawing on socio-cultural, economic, and ecological analysis, DCS 300 considers some of the major issues around public problem-solving and social change, including the institutionalization of inequity, the intersections of place with relations of power, such as: race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, gender identity, nationality, religion, geography, ability, and age. Research, course materials, and community projects investigate class material through multi-dimensional analyses that examine interconnectivity and intersectionality. The course addresses ways in which social constructs and intersections shape people's lives. Course outcomes lead to the recognition of the social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of public action as they relate to community change and resilience.

3. In addition to meeting the posted learning outcomes, how does this course contribute uniquely to the *Connections* category (i.e., why should this course be in Colonnade)? Discuss in detail.

Public-Problem Solving offers a unique approach to researching social and cultural systems. Students will investigate ways in which CBR can be used to empower individuals and communities without compromising the norms, values, and beliefs of the collective. The course will also address the ethical issues, historic and contemporary, of research involving vulnerable and marginalized populations. In terms of contributions to the Connections category of the Colonnade, DCS 300 offers students the opportunity to evaluate real-world problems, become civically engaged, and work in the local community. In addition, students will participate in a wide range of meaningful reflective practices and strategies that will allow them to analyze their personal experience in relation to others' in the community.

4. Please identify any prerequisites for this course. NOTE: Any prerequisites MUST be *Colonnade Foundations* or *Explorations* courses.

No pre-requisites.

5. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for the course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section's syllabus.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Effectively communicate the basic concepts and key theoretical perspectives of CBR design.
- Examine the challenges of and approaches to problem solving in community contexts.

- Critically examine ethical dimensions of CBR.
- Develop a community-based project that addresses a public concern.

6. Give a brief description of how the department will assess the course beyond student grades for these learning objectives.

The Department of Diversity & Community Studies program has an assessment committee that will assess the effectiveness of DCS 300 by incorporating the Colonnade Plan Learning Outcomes into our existing assessment structure. DCS 300 will be assessed yearly using students' course portfolios.

1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.

Consistent with the notion of community-based research, students will write reflective papers as part of their course portfolios. These critical reflections will track their own development in relation to the community ~~they are engaging with~~. The assessment team will evaluate using a holistic rubric that specifies key components of development of self, such as areas of discomfort, problems, communication, and change.

2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.

As part of the portfolio, students will write several critical synthesis papers that address the diverse values of members of society in relation to the principles of community-based research. Like the reflective essays, at least one of these essays will be assessed using a holistic rubric.

3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.

Students will engage in a community-based research project that allows them to practice the principles of partnership contributions and collaboration with communities. The project will allow students to bridge theory into practice with the goal of creating solutions for social problems. Assessment will respond to a selection of projects as presented in multimedia outlets such as Powerpoint, YouTube, VoiceThread, or other accessible methods.

A holistic rubric will be developed using a 4-point scale:

- 4 = outstanding (far exceeds expectations)
- 3 = good (exceeds expectations)
- 2 = average (meets basic expectations)
- 1 = poor (does not meet basic expectations)

The committee's targets are:

- 70% of the work will score 2 or higher.
- 30% of the work will score 3 or higher.

4. Please discuss how this course will provide a summative learning experience for students in the development of skills in argumentation and use of evidence.

CBR, while a participatory paradigm, rests on a set of assumptions about what constitutes evidence and effective practice. DCS 300, therefore, offers a collaborative, participatory,

systematic, and transformative learning experience. Through course materials (readings, lectures, film, etc.), students will gather evidence that supports the need for comprehensive social change that includes the collective voices of communities. This process, called “diagnosing,” is the root of CBR. In the “prescribing” and “implementing” stages of CBR, students will analyze and synthesize the evidence collected to create a research plan. In the final phase of CBR, “evaluation” of the data collected, students will learn to support their choices in evaluation and articulate the integrated process of input (evidence- gathering), process (sense-making), and outcome (evaluation).

5. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?

Initially the Department of Diversity and Community Studies plans to offer one section of this course every fall semester.

6. Please attach sample syllabus for the course. PLEASE BE SURE THE PROPOSAL FORM AND THE SYLLABUS ARE IN THE SAME DOCUMENT.

DCS 300: Public Problem Solving

Instructor: Dr. Molly Kerby

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Office Hours: MW 1:30-4:00p and Friday by appt.

Office: Women's Studies Center (State St. next to International Center)

Office Phone: (270) 745-6952

Women's Studies Center: (270) 745-6477

Required Texts:

- Diane Russell, *GroundWork for Community-Based Conservation: Strategies for Social Research*, AltaMira Press (May 7, 2003), ISBN-13: 978-0742504387.
- Randy Stoecker, *Research Methods for Community Change: A Project-Based Approach*, SAGE Publications, Inc; Second Edition edition (February 9, 2012), ISBN-13: 978-1412994057.

Course Overview: Public Problem Solving is an “investigation of historical perspectives and theoretical dimensions of public problem solving with attention to the development of collective power, capacities, and responsibilities.” The methods employed for achieving this emerge out of the social sciences, in particular community-based research (CBR), which involves qualitative strategies and comparative interpretation. The course adopts the notion that CBR increases the knowledge and understanding of public problems and integrates the information gained with empowerment, social capital, and policy change to improve the health and quality of communities. The collaborative approach of CBR equitably involves all partners in the research process, recognizes the unique strengths that each brings, and integrates theory with practice.

“Public problems” refers to any of a range of multifaceted problems with shifting conditions and complex interdependencies. For example, how do we move beyond sustainability? What factors create resilience among communities? How do we build protective factors in communities to mediate risk and resilience? What are effective strategies for developing collective power in order to enact social change? These questions guide the course goals.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Effectively communicate the basic concepts and key theoretical perspectives of CBR design.
- Examine the challenges of and approaches to problem solving in community contexts.
- Critically examine ethical dimensions of CBR.
- Develop a community-based project that addresses a public concern.

General Education/Colonnade: This course fulfills the Social and Cultural sub-requirement under the Connections category in Colonnade.

Diversity & Community Studies Major: DCS 300 is a core course for the undergraduate major in Diversity & Community Studies. For more information on the major, visit

<http://www.wku.edu/dcs/>.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services, Downing University Center A200, (270) 745-5121 V/TDD. Please do not request accommodations directly from the instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Academic Integrity: It is understood that students will present their own work for all assignments. Student work will be checked using plagiarism detection software. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in either failure of the assignment or failure of the course and will be reported to the WKU Office of Judicial Affairs. Please refer to the *WKU Student Handbook* for more information.

Course Requirements:

Evaluation: Students must satisfactorily complete the following requirements in order to pass this course.

<p><u>Grade distribution</u></p> <p>Class Participation Discussion Questions Critical Reflections CBR Project Group Presentations Group Paper</p>	<p><u>Grade Scale:</u></p> <p>895-1000 A 795-894 B 695-794 C 595-694 D < 595 F</p>
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Class Participation:

This class functions as a forum in which participants can engage the texts and exchange ideas, interpretations, and insights with each other. The success of this format depends on everyone's preparation and participation. Therefore, I expect you to participate in class activities and discussion. Successful participation requires that you prepare for class by completing the reading, doing your homework, and actively engaging the course material. I expect you to attend class, to be an active participant in class discussion, and fully participate in class projects. You are also expected to be respectful to your classmates and the professor. Failure to do so will result in points deducted from your participation grade. Please remember that we all have a right to interpret materials as we wish as long as critical thought is involved.

Discussion Questions:

This assignment requires you to submit two discussion questions based on the assigned readings for the week at the beginning of class each Tuesday. These questions will be used to direct class discussion. Questions can address content, method, specific points, or relationships between ideas, issues, and/or other readings. Your questions should reflect careful consideration of the readings and a thoughtful analysis of the issues addressed. Discussion questions will be used to take attendance. This is NOT something you can "make up" if you are not in class because it will be tied to attendance.

Portfolios: The following components will constitute the course portfolio. Instructions will be provided in class.

1. Reflection:

A major part of CBR is continuous reflection. Consistent with the notion of community-based research, students will write reflective papers as part of their course portfolios that track their own development in relation to the community they are engaging with. Students will be expected to write weekly reflections of materials, theoretic principles, and/or experiences in the community. These reflection should be at least three pages and no longer than 5 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font.

2. Critical Synthesis: Students will write a critical synthesis response for each section of the course. These papers should be 5-7 pages in length and should consist of a response to the readings. Each paper **MUST** respond to the key ideas presented and evaluate the concepts in terms of strengths, weaknesses, and value for community empowerment, as well as the development of insights, questions, speculation about the implications of the author's theoretical points. These papers should be serious theoretical papers that demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the concepts and theories presented in the reading.

3. Community-based Research Project:

Students will conduct, in a small group, a community-based research project using community-based participatory research. Students are expected to engage in a systematic inquiry, making use of whatever methodological approaches seem appropriate to the research and that they have the knowledge to apply. Although it's desirable to develop and complete a research project, given the constraints of the semester, it's understood that with some fieldwork projects the process is the product. Therefore, keeping detailed notes of the process as it unfolds is recommended.

The final fieldwork paper should be prepared in a way so that it is of optimal value to the collaborating community organization, even if this means departing from academic conventions. It is strongly encouraged that reports to community organizations begin with an Executive Summary unless such a summary is inappropriate to the findings or audience.

In the paper submitted to the instructor, please also include a "reflection" that is not intended for the community organization that details your challenges, encounters with power differentials, cultural differences, and otherwise illustrates your hands-on engagement with the central questions of the course. Please consider what would do differently if you were embarking on a new community-based research project.

Examples of appropriate topics for research that could be conducted within the semester:

- A small population study, e.g., a study of the demographic and spatial characteristics (e.g., physical ecology of roads, parks, schools, etc. of a specific geo-ethnic community.
- A demographic or historical analysis of a specific community.
- A community needs/resource assessment or asset mapping
- An evaluation of a community program run by a community group

Each class will begin with a check-in to discuss that week's progress, questions about research design, collaboration and trust-building, and data-collection and analysis.

Group Presentation:

Presentations should be no more than 30 minutes long including time for questions and use some form of multimedia. The end product will be included in the portfolio. In addition to the presentation, each member of your group will submit a written report that discusses your methodology, data collection, and results.

Format for Written Assignments:

All written assignments must be typed (in a standard 12-point font size) and double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides. Each written assignment should have a title. Your name, the course name and section, the due date, and my name should appear in the upper left-hand corner. Assignments should be stapled and pages should be numbered. You should use either MLA or APA format for incorporating and citing outside sources. All assignments should be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on the due date.

Policies:

Attendance: Because this course is discussion oriented, attendance is mandatory. You are allowed three absences (excused or unexcused). If you miss more than three days without speaking with me, your final grade will be dropped one letter. If you miss five classes, your grade will be dropped two letters. If you miss 6 or more, you will receive a failing grade. If you're having difficulties, speaking with me is the best way to resolve them. Excused absences (prolonged illness, family death, etc.) will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to find out the assignments you missed and be prepared for the next class; please do not email me and ask. Excessive tardiness will also affect your grade.

Late Assignments: Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized one letter grade for each day it is late. Assignments late more than five days will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity:

It is understood that students will present their own work for all assignments. Student work will be checked using plagiarism detection software. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in either failure of the assignment or failure of the course. I also reserve the right to use the university plagiarism/cheating policy (below).

University plagiarism/cheating policy:

There is no tolerance for plagiarism or cheating at the university. The university requires faculty to report any dishonest work, and the student could both fail the course and possibly be expelled from the university. This policy will be practiced in this course. If you are not familiar with the university plagiarism policy you may access it at:

<http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Support/StuAffairs/StuLife/handbook/P1Policy/14AcademicOffenses.htm>

In addition, I define cheating and plagiarism very strictly. For example, I consider it plagiarism if you did not write any one section of your work (whether you "borrowed" it from a source or had someone else write it for you for example). I also consider it cheating when a student "recycles"

papers that she or he wrote for another professor and/or another class. Everything you write for this class should be an original piece of work specifically written by you (the student) for this course. If any materials are not properly cited “in-text” or a reference page included, I will consider that omission as an attempt to plagiarize. If you are not sure how to do these things, see me and I will help.

Writing Center Assistance:

The Writing Center is your friend!! The Writing Center is located in Cherry Hall 123 on the Bowling Green campus and also offers online consultations for students who live at a distance or who cannot visit during our operating hours. Our writing tutors have been trained to provide helpful feedback to students at all phases of a writing project: they can help you brainstorm ideas, structure your essay, clarify your purpose, strengthen your support, and edit for clarity and correctness. But they will not revise or edit the paper for you. See instructions of the website www.wku.edu/writingcenter for making online or face-to-face appointments. Or call (270) 745-5719 during our operating hours (also listed on our website) for help scheduling an appointment.

Student Assistance/Tutoring:

Should you require academic assistance with this course, or any other General Education Course, there are several places that can provide help. The Learning Center, located in the Academic Advising and Retention Center, DUC A-330, has tutors in most major undergraduate subjects and course levels throughout the week—they can also direct you to one of many tutoring and assistance Centers across campus. To make an appointment, or request a tutor for a specific class, call (270)745-6254 or stop by DUC A-330. Log on to TLC’s web site at <http://www.wku.edu/tlc> for tutoring for students at a distance. TLC hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:00am-9:00pm, Friday 8:00am-4:00pm, and Sunday 4:00pm-9:00pm.

Counseling and Testing Center:

We believe that the university experience should be challenging, not overwhelming, and universities have a duty to support students as they are being challenged. To this end, the WKU Counseling and Testing Center is committed to promoting the academic mission of the university by providing a variety of psychological services to students that will augment recruitment, retention, and graduation by strengthening students’ capacity to tolerate distress, form healthy relationships, and seek healthy expressions of their ideals and values. The Counseling and Testing Center also advances the university’s mission by providing educational programming, training, and consultation to the students, faculty, staff, and constituents of WKU.

The Counseling and Testing Center is open from Monday – Friday from 8:00am-4:30pm.

Emergency and after hours appointments may be made by calling 270-745-3159.

The Counseling and Testing Center is open throughout the calendar year and closed during holidays and other specified dates found in the [2013-2014 Academic Calendar](#).

Topics & Readings

Class 1 Course Overview

Class 2 Challenges in advocacy/academic Partnerships, Models for Overcoming Them, part 1

Gibson, R. B. (2006). Beyond the pillars: sustainability assessment as a framework for effective integration of social, economic and ecological considerations in significant decision-making. *Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management*, 8(03), 259-280.

Stoecker, Randy, "Creative Tensions in the New Community Based Research," Keynote addressed prepared for the Community-Based Research Network Symposium, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, May 13, 2004. <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/drafts/cbrtensions.htm>

Class 3 Jan 29 Challenges in advocacy/academic Partnerships, Models for Overcoming Them, part 2

Diane Russell, *GroundWork for Community-Based Conservation: Strategies for Social Research*, AltaMira Press (May 7, 2003), ISBN-13: 978-0742504387.

Stoecker, Randy. Are academics irrelevant? Roles for scholars in participatory research. *The American Behavioral Scientist*. Thousand Oaks: Feb. 1999. 42:5. (E-copy from instructors)

Class 4 Stakeholders and Community

Diane Russell, *GroundWork for Community-Based Conservation: Strategies for Social Research*, AltaMira Press (May 7, 2003), ISBN-13: 978-0742504387.

Class 5 The Role of Research

Diane Russell, *GroundWork for Community-Based Conservation: Strategies for Social Research*, AltaMira Press (May 7, 2003), ISBN-13: 978-0742504387.

Class 6 Feb 19 Public Problem Solving

Diane Russell, *GroundWork for Community-Based Conservation: Strategies for Social Research*, AltaMira Press (May 7, 2003), ISBN-13: 978-0742504387.

Class 7 Feb 26 Ecological Perspectives

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, 513-531.

Stoecker, Randy. *Research Methods for Community Change*. Chapter 1-3. Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, 2007.

Class 8 Theories of Risk & Resilience

Stoecker, Randy. *Research Methods for Community Change*. Chapter 4. Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, 2007.

Fraser, M.W., Richman, J.M. & Galinsky, M.J. (1999). Risk, protection, and resilience: Toward a conceptual framework for social work practice. *Social Work Research*, 23 (3), 131-143

Class 9 CBR Methodologies

Stoecker, Randy. *Research Methods for Community Change*. Chapter 6. Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, 2007.

Gittell, Marilyn. "Assessing Community Change: An Evaluation of the Ford Foundation's Community Organizing Initiative, 2000-2004, April 2006. Chapters 2, 5, 7, and 8.

Class 10 Communication Across Privilege: Environmental Justice. Evaluation

Stoecker, Randy. *Research Methods for Community Change*. Chapter 7. Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, 2007.

Class 13: Privilege, Environment, and Justice. Evaluation

"Building a Regional Voice for Environmental Justice," a report by the Building a Regional Voice for Environmental Justice Collaborative, September 2004.

<http://www.libertyhill.org/reports>

Stoecker, Randy. *Research Methods for Community Change*. Chapter 8. Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, 2007.

Class 11 Discussion & Evaluation of CBR Projects

Class 12 Discussion & Evaluation of CBR Projects

Class 14-15 Class Presentations