

# Training for Transformation (GWS 295)

Spring 2013, Tuesdays 10:25-11:40am  
740 Williams St. Seminar Room

**Professor:** Ariella Rotramel, PhD

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**Office Location:** Second floor, Department of Gender and Women's Studies, 740 Williams Street.

**Office Hours:** Tues 9:00-10:00am in GWS office, Wed 1:30-2:30pm in LGBTQ Center, and by appt.

## **Course Overview**

The common thread of our course is supporting positive change in public education and contesting the "school to prison" pipeline. Together we will discuss key social justice issues that relate to your placements as well as develop best practice for participating in community-based service learning. Under the guidance of community activists and Professor Rotramel, you will strengthen your understanding of the class theme for Spring 2013: the "school-to-prison" pipeline. A core value of this course is respect as we engage each other in the classroom, our community partners and the broader Connecticut College and New London communities. We will strive to develop best practices for community engagement and learning throughout the semester. Through a combination of critical thinking and action, we will develop a grounded understanding of how transformation is being pursued at the community level today and the possible avenues for students such as yourselves to become active participants in social justice movements.

## **Course Readings**

All readings will be made available via our Moodle site, in-class handouts, and/or as weblinks in our course schedule. Additional resources related to our course topic will also be available via Moodle.

## **Learning Goals**

This course fulfills components of the Gender and Women's Studies departmental learning goals. Students in this course will learn to:

- Know how other forces of identity and power such as race, sexuality, class, religion and nationality intersect and interact with gender;
- Understand the concept of "social location," including ones own;
- Appreciate the power of individual and collective agency;
- Utilize feminist methodologies and approaches in order to frame original research and organizing;
- Work on writing skills that bring clarity of expression and coherence of argument;
- Refine skills of information literacy and research, both library and web-based, and how to use digital technologies;
- Achieve oral proficiency to speak confidently, intelligently, clearly and constructively;

## **Disabilities**

It is the policy of Connecticut College to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified individuals with disabilities. If you need an accommodation for your classes, please visit the Office of Student Disability Services in Crozier-Williams, Second Floor, Room 221 (open 8:30am-5:00pm Monday-Friday). Once your memo is obtained, please meet with me to discuss accommodations.

## **Office Hours**

I hold office hours in order to provide you with an opportunity to discuss course-specific issues that we have not been able to address in class. Please do not hesitate to come to me if you are having difficulties with the course, because if such a problem is not addressed as early as possible, there will be little we can do at the end of the semester.

## Academic Integrity

It is crucial that you conduct yourself in a manner that is in line with our college's Honor Code. Former Connecticut College professor, Ariana Hamidi, offers an excellent summation of the work we do here and the practices that will help you ensure that your actions reflect academic values.

*At the college we are continually engaged with other people's ideas: we read them in books, hear them in lecture, discuss them with our friends, engage with them on a personal level, and incorporate them into our own writing. As a result, it is very easy to blur the lines between our own intellectual work and the work of others. But, it is important that we give credit where it is due. Plagiarism is using others' ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information. To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use: another person's idea, opinion, or theory; any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings—any pieces of information—that are not common knowledge; quotations of another person's actual written words and/or spoken words; or paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words.*

It is my expectation that at any time during the semester you are concerned about your work and how best to present others' thoughts that you will seek out assistance. In order to assist you, our college offers resources such as the Writing Center to our friendly, knowledgeable librarians and myself.

## Grading

You will receive your final grade based on your performance in class, at your placements and related tasks, and on class assignments. The grading scale for this course is: A = 100-93; A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D = 69-60; F= 59 and below.

	Participation & Attendance	Community Placement	Reflection Paper 1	Reflection Paper 2	Reflection Paper 3	Roundtable
Due	n/a	Feb. 11 - May 1	Feb. 12	Mar. 5	Apr. 30	May 7
Grade %	20	40	10	10	10	10

## Course Assignments

### Participation and Attendance (20%)

You are required to come to class on time. Lateness and unexcused absences will count negatively towards your grade. As this class does not meet weekly for the entire semester, *2 unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your grade by one full letter. 3 or more unexcused absences will result in a failing course grade.* Sustained, astute, and critically engaged class participation is crucial for a successful and productive classroom atmosphere. Class discussion will stay closely aligned with the course readings and your community placement experiences, thus you must come to class having done all assigned reading and be actively engaged in your placements to be able to effectively participate. You are required to respectfully engage all members of the classroom and talk only in your turn. Interruptions and hostile remarks will not be tolerated. All cell phones or similar electronic devices must be turned off and put away in class.

Working in groups of two to three, you will identify three sources to share with our class that engage a topic related to your community placement work. One source will be advocacy-focused, one source will be research-based, and a final source will be either a media or popular source. By March 26<sup>th</sup> at 12pm, your group will e-mail me PDFs or links to the three sources and a two page write up that explains the relevance of each reading to our course – your group is expected to write this summary together either by collaborating in person or via a site than enables collaboration such as Google Drive (accessible via your CC e-mail account). I will provide feedback on the write up as needed. On the day that our class reads your group's chosen sources, your group will lead a discussion for the first thirty minutes of class. Each group member should participate in the facilitation and you will be expected to come prepared with framing ideas and questions.

### **Community Placement Work (40%)**

During the semester, you will take part in activities through a community placement related to our course theme: the school to prison pipeline. Your time commitment will depend on the specific needs of your community placement, however all students are expected to make a minimum commitment of thirty hours (three hours per week) to conduct work at their placement site and/or a site project as well as minimum of five hours participating in further activities that develop out of this course during the semester. Each placement site offers a unique opportunity for you to engage in firsthand community work and learn about a topic that relates to the pipeline. Professor Rotramel will be available throughout the semester to advise students on work related to their placements as well as to participate in community-based activities.

During the first two weeks of class, students will work with Professor Rotramel to determine and secure their community placement. Two key placements for this semester involve working with youth or parents advocating for positive change in New London's education system.

You will track your community placement hours via a timesheet on Google Drive that will be shared with Professor Rotramel. A model of this timesheet is available on Moodle for you to use. Your timesheet will be updated regularly throughout the semester and must provide an honest accounting of your activities. Please be mindful that your failure to provide accurate information is a violation of Connecticut College's honor code and will be reported. If you are having any difficulties maintaining your hours, you should speak with both Professor Rotramel and a representative of your community placement site.

### **Reflection Papers (10% each)**

During the semester, you will write three reflections papers – they are due on February 12<sup>th</sup>, March 5<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>. For each paper, you will be provided guidelines in class the week before the paper is due. Your papers do not require outside research and will be focused on helping you assess and guide your experience in this class. On the day each paper is due, you will bring two copies to class (one for yourself and one to turn into Professor Rotramel). You should be prepared to share some insights you have gained in the process of writing your paper with our class as well as to productively respond to the concerns raised by your peers.

### **Training for Transformation Roundtable (10%)**

During the week of May 7<sup>th</sup>, we will hold a roundtable discussion of your work during the semester. We will seek to find a time that will enable us to invite our community partners to participate in the discussion and celebrate the conclusion of our class. For the roundtable, each student will prepare five minutes worth of remarks that highlight the key experiences they had during the semester and the lessons they have learned. After each student speaks, there will be an opportunity for members of our gathering to respond or ask follow-up questions. The aim of the roundtable is to synthesize your work and lessons to be learned for the future.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Tuesday, January 22 Introductions**

- ☐ Chen, "Classroom as Hostile Territory: Stopping School 'Push Out,'" *Colorlines* via [http://colorlines.com/archives/2009/12/when\\_the\\_classroom\\_becomes\\_hostile\\_territory\\_stopping\\_school\\_push\\_out.html](http://colorlines.com/archives/2009/12/when_the_classroom_becomes_hostile_territory_stopping_school_push_out.html)
- ☐ \*Lorde, "Transformation of Silence into Language and Action."

**Wednesday, January 23 NL Parent Advocates Meeting, 7pm-8:30pm** at NL Senior Center "Education Reform: What does it mean for New London Public Schools," Prof. Sandy Grande Visit OVCS to sign up for a ride, at 6:40pm OVCS's Patrick Lynch will drive a van from OVCS

**Tuesday, January 29 Service-Learning and Hearing Youth Voices**

- Southerners on New Ground, “Being an Ally/Building Solidarity,” via <http://southernersonnewground.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/SONG-Being-An-Ally-Building-Solidarity.pdf>
- \*Oberhauser, “Examining Gender and Community Through Critical Pedagogy.”
- Langeveld, “‘Hearing Youth Voices’ Outlines Student Concerns With New London Public Schools” New London Patch via <http://newlondon.patch.com/articles/hearing-youth-voices-outlines-student-concerns-with-new-london-public-schools#photo-11011935>
- Troubadour, Special Edition: Hearing Youth Voices (Handout)

**Tuesday, February 5 Participatory Action Research**

- Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, “Participatory Action Research,” via [http://www.incite-national.org/media/docs/5614\\_toolkitrev-par.pdf](http://www.incite-national.org/media/docs/5614_toolkitrev-par.pdf)
- CNR – UC Berkeley, “Definitions, Goals and Principles of Participatory Action Research,” via [http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/community\\_forestry/Fellowships/parinfo/PAR%20Definitions.pdf](http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/community_forestry/Fellowships/parinfo/PAR%20Definitions.pdf)

**Tuesday, February 12 Reflection Paper 1 Due**

**Tuesday, February 19 Intersectional Social Justice Work and the School-to-Prison Pipeline**

- ACLU, “Locating the School-to-Prison Pipeline” via [https://www.aclu.org/images/asset\\_upload\\_file966\\_35553.pdf](https://www.aclu.org/images/asset_upload_file966_35553.pdf)
- Rinku Sen Interview with B. Jesse Clarke, via <http://urbanhabitat.org/20years/sen>
- In-class screening of *Breaking the Pipeline* 2010 Global Action Project via <http://vimeo.com/11171893>

**Tuesday, February 26 Higher Education Struggles and Strategic Analysis**

- DeParle, “For Poor, Leap to College Often Ends in a Hard Fall,” *New York Times*, via <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/23/education/poor-students-struggle-as-class-plays-a-greater-role-in-success.html>
- \*Excerpts from *Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy*

**Tuesday, March 5 Reflection Paper 2 Due**

**Tuesday, March 12 & 19 Spring Break – No Class**

**Tuesday, March 26 No Class Meeting – Schedule Check In as Needed**

**Tuesday, April 2 Group 1 Reading Discussion**

- Group 1 Readings

**Tuesday, April 9 Group 2 Reading Discussion**

- Group 2 Readings

**Tuesday, April 16 Group 3 Reading Discussion**

- Group 3 Readings

**Tuesday, April 23 No Class Meeting – Schedule Check In as Needed**

**Tuesday, April 30 Reflection Paper 3 Due**

**Week of May 7 Training for Transformation Roundtable**