



IS418: Community Engagement

Day/Time: Wednesdays, 9-11:50AM
182 Armory

Instructor: Martin Wolske

Description: Community engagement refers to the multiple ways that information professionals in libraries and other settings learn about, collaborate with, and provide service and outreach to community members. The course provides an introduction to, and overview of, community engagement theory and practice.

Grounded in the progressive education model of John Dewey and the popular education model of Paulo Freire, among others, this course seeks to reframe the role of course actors so as to create a community of inquiry. While I cannot fully forgo my responsibilities arising from, or the power relationship embedded within, my role as instructor within this class, I also acknowledge that often times I will be as much or more the learner benefiting from the knowledge brought to the class by those enrolled in the class for credit. Likewise, those with whom we engage in community, far from being solely a recipient of our services, also bring a wealth of knowledge to bear in our learning. As we work together in class and in the field in common cause for learning and positive social change, we grow into a community of inquiry.

Building from this, as we gather together as co-explorers this coming semester – instructor-student and student-instructors – we'll spend time exploring the word and the world of three major authors, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Paulo Freire, and Nicole Cooke, regarding knowledges, critical literacies and consciousness, transformation, and culturally competent library professionalism.

We'll do active praxis, bringing together action and reflection into dialogue with others in the class, and within our daily lives.

We'll bring our rich lived experiences to date into conversation with our current ongoing experiences serving as service-learning volunteers within an instructor-approved professional or community organization advancing its own community engagement works.

And we'll increasingly spend time during the latter part of the semester working on design challenges applying our growing understanding of progressive community action and advocacy. The end deliverables will include:

- An individual or small group colloquium presentation;
- A written or video proposal for a program, committee activity, or other professional work that will or could be applied in the field as part of your professional practice moving forward; and
- A detailed description of the design process used to develop the proposal.

