Seminar Description

This seminar examines strategies for involving young people in organizations and communities. It considers the changing sociopolitical context of youth participation, models and methods of age-appropriate and culturally-competent practice, roles of youth and adults as citizens and collaborators, and perspectives on the future of youth and community in a diverse democratic society. It examines youth-led, adult-led, and intergenerational initiatives, including youth civic engagement in policy formation and community-based evaluation research. Special emphasis will be placed on youth participation in socially disadvantaged and economically disinvested areas, and on work in psychology, sociology, anthropology, social work, public health, education, and related disciplines and fields.

Seminar Objectives

1. Understand the changing sociopolitical context of youth participation in a diverse democratic society;

2. Analyze major models and methods of age-appropriate and culturally-competent practice;

3. Develop knowledge from empirically-based efforts by young people to create community change;

4. Assess alternative forms of research as a form of social intervention; and

5. Identify problems and issues of youth participation in socially disadvantaged and economically disinvested areas.

Seminar Design

Responsibilities will include readings, participation in discussions, written assignments, and other learning activities related to course objectives. Resource persons will be invited to address special topics.
Reading List

Participation Perspectives I


Participation Perspectives II

www.unicef.org/voy/meeting/rig/convsum.html


**Youth Participation in Community Agencies**


**Youth on Boards**


Youth on Board and National Center for Nonprofit Boards.(2000). *Youth on Board.* Washington: Authors.

**Adults as Allies**


**Youth Organizing for Civil Rights in Mississippi**


**Youth Organizing for School Reform in California**


**Young People as Change Agents and Community Builders**


**Young Voter Participation**


**Strengthening Civic Engagement in Diverse Democracy**


**Youth Participatory Evaluation Research for Diverse Democracy**


**Education for Diverse Democracy**


# Weekly Calendar

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Assignments

What is Youth Participation?

Write an initial paper on the following: What is your definition of youth participation for community change? What criteria would you use to assess it, and why? This paper should be 3-4 double-spaced typewritten pages, refer to the readings, and is due September 24 (10 percent).

Short Papers

Write three short papers in which you critically discuss a theme from the three major topics of the seminar.

The assignment is to synthesize and refer to specific readings, organize your thoughts, and make a specific point. The guiding questions might or might not help in the formulation of your thoughts.

The papers should be 5-7 double-spaced typewritten pages each and are due at the final sessions scheduled for that topic: October 15, November 5, and December 3 (25 percent each).

Term Paper Option

Instead of the three short papers, you may choose to prepare a term paper on a topic related to the seminar. 15-18 double-spaced typewritten pages, due December 3.

If you choose this option, prepare a 1-2 page proposal, including your purpose, methodology, significance, and relevance to the seminar, due October 1.
**Student-Led Discussions**

Student-led discussions are scheduled for the concluding session for each of the three major topics: October 15, November 5, and December 3.

Working in small groups, you will facilitate a discussion that addresses each topic, raises additional questions, and strengthens our mutual learning.

**Participation Strategies**

Working in small groups, you will formulate and propose a specific strategy for youth participation for community change in the final session on December 10.

On November 5 we will generate a list of potential strategies, set priorities, and form groups around selected ones.

**Paper Revision Policy**

You may revise and resubmit any paper for reevaluation until the last session. Papers are due on assigned dates unless prearranged with the instructor. Late papers will be penalized.

**Class Participation**

Class participation contributes to individual and group learning. It might include involvement in discussions, volunteering, cocurricular activities, or other initiatives (15 percent).
Partial List of Guiding Questions

Opening and Orientation

• Why is it that in some of the world’s most disinvested areas, there are young people creating community change?
• What are some specific strategies for involving young people in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives?
• What would happen if society viewed young people as positive resources or competent citizens rather than as social problems or service recipients?
• How can we strengthen research and teaching that simultaneously develops knowledge, engaged young people, and creates community change?

Participation Perspectives

• How would you assess the case study as example of youth participation for community change? What were the youth trying to accomplish, and how well did they do? How would you assess this as an example of research?
• Who are young people today, and what difference does it make how we think of their role in society?
• What picture does Keeter or Kozol paint of young people?
• According to Finn, what is their portrayal in mass media, social science, or professional practice? What explains this portrayal?
• What is youth participation? Is it presence or power? Is it youth-led, adult-led, or intergenerational?
• What difference does it make if we think of participation as a right?
• What are the primary purposes of youth participation, its major models and methods, causes and consequences, facilitating and limiting factors? What are the obstacles, and how can they be overcome?
• What criteria should be used for assessing youth participation, and why?
• What is community change? What are its core concepts, its strategies and steps in the process? Which forms have the most potential for empowering young people?

**Youth Participation in Community Agencies**

• How would you assess community agencies as an example of youth participation?
• What are some ways of involving young people in community agencies? What can adults do to increase their participation, and what can youth themselves do?
• How would you assess Mullahey or Driskell as examples of youth participation, or of research?
• What are some steps in the process of youth participation for community change? Which steps are most common, and which ones are cutting edge?
• Are there participation methods that are age appropriate and, if so, what are they? Is there adolescent thinking? Are there adolescent methods?

**Youth on Boards**

• What are some ways of assuring that young people are at the table? What can adults do to strengthen their representation? What can youth themselves do?
• What are the obstacles to representation, and some ways of overcoming them?
• How would assess the readings as examples of youth participation, and of research? What are the lessons learned from research?

**Adults as Allies**

• What are the roles and responsibilities of adults as allies in increasing youth participation? How can adults mentor young leaders?
• Who are the adults that work well with young people? What are their characteristics, and what do they do?
• What are the characteristics of the adult allies described in the readings? What are their similarities and differences?
• If you were asked to train a group of adults for roles as allies, what would it be?

**Youth Organizing for Civil Rights in Mississippi**

• What can young people themselves do to organize for community change? What are the various forms of youth organizing, and which one(s) have the most potential for empowerment?
• How would you assess the Mississippi and Moses readings as examples of youth participation, and of research?
• Are there methods of youth organizing that are culturally-competent and, if so, what are they?
Youth Organizing for School Reform in California

- How would you assess the California readings as examples of youth participation, and of research?
- Are there methods of youth organizing that are multicultural and, if so, what are they? How would you assess the California readings in terms of this approach?
- What are some ways to promote youth organizing in a democratic society that values diversity as an asset?

Young People as Change Agents and Community Builders

- What are the roles and responsibilities of young people in increasing participation? How can youth work with adults in nonadultist ways?
- Who are the young people that step forward as change agents and community builders? What are their characteristics, and what do they do?
- What are the characteristics of the young people described in the readings? What are their similarities and differences?
- If you were asked to train a group of young people for these roles, what would it be?

Strengthening Civic Engagement in Diverse Democracy

- How would you assess the level and pattern of youth civic engagement in democracy? Is there a problem? If so, what explains it, and what is to be done?
- Do you agree with Putnam’s analysis of the problem and proposed solution?
- What strategies and structures will strengthen youth civic engagement for diverse democracy? What forces limit and facilitate such strategies, and what lessons can be learned from them?

- What are some ways to promote youth civic engagement in a democratic society that values diversity as an asset?
- Assuming that diversity will characterize society in the future, how will youth civic engagement look different from a more multicultural perspective?
- What are the elements of multicultural youth civic engagement? How does it differ from approaches that are monocultural or pluralist?

Youth Participatory Evaluation Research

- What are some ways for increasing youth participation in knowledge development?
- Is there a young people’s way of knowing or epistemology and, if so, what is it?

Education for Diverse Democracy

- What is education for diverse democracy? What competencies are needed, and why?
• What are some ways to prepare young people for participation in a democratic society that values diversity as an asset?
• Assuming that diversity will characterize society in the future, how will education for democracy look different from a more multicultural perspective?
• What are the elements of education for diverse democracy? What are the similarities and differences in the approaches taken by Gay and Parker?
• If you were asked to design a workshop for this purpose, what would it be?
• What can be done by schools, whether through curricular or cocurricular activities?
• What can be done by afterschool activities, whether through grassroots groups, social clubs, sports teams, community centers, or other activities?
Information Form

Name:
Address:
Telephone:
E-mail:
UM program:
Professional goals:

Community experiences:

Interests in the course topic:

Experience or skill which might be useful to the group: