

**SCHOLARSHIP AND PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE 8112
SYLLABUS / SPRING 2009
1383 SOCIAL SCIENCES, WED. 1-3 PM**

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Course Description

This seminar addresses the responsibility of public engagement in academic work. Students will explore the common pursuits, the asymmetries of location and capabilities, and the transformative potential of dialogue and collaborative work between the University and the various local, national and transnational communities that it is committed to serving. The seminar will examine these issues by engaging directly in a cooperative case study on the effects of globalization on the local labor market.

In this seminar students will examine a range of themes relevant to public engagement, such as diverse practices of reading, writing and pedagogy, the privileged locations of knowledge, languages, strategies and tactics of civil society organizing, and the politics of collaborative work, in order to understand how to traverse and potentially transform the distinctions frequently drawn between academic and non-academic knowledge. Students will have the opportunity to meet with individuals, organizations and groups who are already participating in various political activities, social movements, and civil society organizing. They will also develop a collective project to reflect their understanding of their public responsibility in academic learning and knowledge production.

The following are some of the issues regarding scholarship and public responsibility we hope to consider in this course:

What can we learn individually and collectively about a set of critical issues facing our community and the world? What are the theoretical and practical approaches to this set of issues? What methods can we use to gain knowledge? Are there practical or ethical issues to producing that knowledge? What are the sites of the knowledge and who are our sources? How does our choice of sites and sources affect our ultimate findings? What should we do with the knowledge we produce about this problem? Will the public benefit from this knowledge?

The Case: Immigrant Labor in the Meatpacking Industry

The case study we will engage in together will focus on various aspects of the exploitation of immigrant labor in the meatpacking industry in the Midwest region of the United States and in Minnesota in particular. The recruitment and employment of immigrant workers in Midwest meatpacking plants provides a complex set of interrelated issues that illustrate quite dramatically how the globalized labor market affects individuals, families, businesses and communities. We will learn individually and collectively about the economic, social and cultural aspects of this situation and in doing so we will consider the ethical and practical complexities of studying this situation and in applying what we learn to try to bring about positive social change.

One of the factors that contributes to the exploitation of immigrant workers in the meatpacking industry is the fear of detection by U.S. immigration officials. In the past three years, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has engaged in a series of raids targeting employees of meatpacking and poultry processing plants around the country. As a result of these raids, thousands of undocumented immigrant laborers in those plants have been rounded up and deported. In May 2008, for instance, 389 immigrant workers were detained at a kosher meatpacking plant in Postville, Iowa. Ironically, these raids have had the unintended consequence of revealing the abusive and dangerous conditions at these plants, including underage workers, unreported injuries, sexual harassment and overtime work without pay.

Meatpacking is one of the most hazardous industries in the US. Workers must deal with loud, noises, hot and cold temperatures, slippery floors and most of them are wielding sharp knives. All of these things are compounded by a slaughter line that is moving at a rapid rate. Common injuries include cuts, lacerations, and in some cases amputations or death. Communication is often a problem in meatpacking plants. Managers and supervisors often do not speak the language of their workers and therefore it is hard to communicate any problems that may exist. Workers fear the consequences of complaining about the conditions of the plants in which they work.

The State and Federal Governments have roles to play in enforcing occupational safety and health laws, as well as monitoring food quality in these plants. Non-governmental organizations, including faith-based groups have been working on various facets of the issues facing immigrant workers in the meatpacking industry. We will consider what we can contribute through our academic work with regard to the situation of immigrant workers and their families in Midwest communities.

Course requirements

Seminar Participation 25%

Due to the interactive and participatory nature of this course, attendance at each class session is required and participation in the collective activities will also be given important weight.

Background papers 25%

Students will be expected to write two short (two to three pages) papers related to the group project. The first paper, due on February 11, will frame the background topic you are reporting on for the class; the second paper, due on March 11, will propose a research project for the class.

Group project presentations 25%

As a class we will design and undertake collective academic work on issues related to our case study on immigrant labor in the meatpacking industry. We will use peer evaluations to help assess your participation in the group work

Final critical paper 25%

Students will draft a 10-15 page paper reflecting on a topic related to scholarship and public responsibility. First draft of this paper is due on April 1 and will be peer edited and returned the following week. Final drafts are due on May 6, our last class day.

Regional Strategic Roundtable

Members of the class will have the opportunity to participate in a **Strategic Roundtable on Human Rights and the Meatpacking Industry** to support their work on the case study. The Roundtable will take place on Thursday, February 26, in Chicago and is sponsored by the Midwest Coalition for Human Rights, the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs and the University of Chicago Human Rights Program. The roundtable will convene representatives of labor, academia, grassroots, legal, immigrant rights and faith-based organizations from across the Midwest working to address the issues faced by immigrant workers in the meatpacking industry. We have funds to support at least four students to represent our class at the roundtable.

Materials Required

Many readings are available online, and URLs are provided. Unless otherwise noted, all other readings are available on the course E-Reserve. The course webpage and password will be circulated.

Please purchase the following two books which we will read in their entirety:

Ashwin Desai, *We Are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002).

Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1905).

Optional Event on Participatory Action Research

The Office for Public Engagement is offering workshops this semester designed to engage University faculty, community members, students, and staff in exploring the principles and practice of Participatory Action Research. The goal of Participatory Action Research is to allow university researchers and community stakeholders to work on collaborative investigations that rely on mutual expertise to derive solutions and actions steps that can effectively address real life, complex issues in the local community. Please consider attending one of these workshops, which are being offered.

The workshop will be offered three times during the spring semester at various locations:

Wednesday, January 21, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, 303 Coffman Memorial Union

Tuesday, March 24, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm, President's Room (3rd floor),
Coffman Union

Wednesday, April 22, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm, North Minneapolis, location TBD

There is no cost to attend this workshop; RSVP to Anna Bates at public@umn.edu at least seven days prior to the respective workshop session. Contact the Office for Public Engagement at 612-624-1562 if you have any questions or need further information.

Course Calendar

Week 1: January 21

BEGINNINGS

Organization of class. Explanation of problem and assessment of individual and collective scholarly assets.

Week 2: January 28

GLOBALIZATION AND THE FURTHER COMMODIFICATION OF LABOR

The quest for lower labor costs completely reshaped the geographic and demographic profiles of the meatpacking industry in the United States in the last 40 years. The industry is a microcosm of the effects of globalization on local labor markets.

Readings: William Robinson, "Globalization and the Struggle for Immigrant Rights in the United States" (March 10, 2007). Available at:
<http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/1864>

Laura Carlsen, "Migrants: Globalization's Junk Mail", *Foreign Policy in Focus* (March 1, 2007). Available at:

<http://www.fpif.org/fpif.txt/4022>

“Labor Practices in the Meat Packing and Poultry Processing Industry: An Overview.” From the Library of Congress Congressional Research Service. October 2006. 58 p. <http://www.newtactics.org/sites/newtactics.org/files/CRS%20Report%20Meat%20Packin g%20Industry%20Practices.pdf>

Week 3: February 4

THE PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL: STANDING OUTSIDE AND INSIDE SOCIETY

All of us live in a society and are members of a nationality with its own language, tradition, historical situation, and social dilemmas. To what extent are intellectuals servants of these actualities, to what extent adversaries? What is the intellectual’s relationship with institutions and worldly powers? Are they necessarily co-opted and, if not, how should they speak – as the cliché goes – “truth to power”?

Readings: Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), pp. 3-23, 85-102.

Frontline interview with Angela Davis, “The Two Nations of Black America” (Spring 1997). Available at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/interviews/davis2.html>

David Graeber, “The New Anarchists”, *New Left Review* (Jan/Feb 2002): 61-73.

Week 4: February 11

First short paper due

PARSING THE CASE

Students will select one of the three topics listed below and be prepared to brief each other on those topics so that we have an initial background on various aspects of the situation facing meatpackers workers in our region. Feel free to research beyond the assigned readings to try to gather as much information as possible for our discussion. Each student should prepare a two-page paper with your observations and questions about the topic you are researching, your role as a researcher and the challenges you expect us to encounter individually and collectively in investigating this case.

Labor Rights:

“Workers Rights as Human Rights.” James A. Gross, Ed. 256 p. http://books.google.com/books?id=IV0ri9xJofUC&dq=workers+rights+in+US&pg=PP1&ots=QM_VbQMIE-

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/usa0105>.
&source=in&sig=M1GZ_eLDHL9rjUuuyIEsnnQrwQs&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=12&ct=result#PPPI,M1.

“Blood, Sweat, and Fear: Workers’ Rights in U.S. Meat and Poultry Plants.” From Human Rights Watch. 2005. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/usa0105>.

“Dignity on the Line: An Evaluation of the Nebraska Meatpacking Workers Bill of Rights.” From Nebraska Appleseed. November 2006. 18 p.
http://www.midwesthumanrights.org/sites/midwesthumanrights.org/files/DignityOnTheLine-FullReport_0.pdf

Relevant Minnesota Statutes

- a. <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?id=179.86>
- b. <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?id=182.654&year=2008>
- c. <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?id=182.659&year=2008>

Immigrant Rights/Raids:

Congressional Testimony of Dr. Erik Camayd-Freixas. July 2008. 20 p.
<http://judiciary.house.gov/hearings/pdf/Camayd-Freixas080724.pdf>.

“Over-Raided, Under Siege: US Immigration Laws and Enforcement Destroy the Rights of Immigrants.” From the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. January 2008. http://www.nnirr.org/resources/docs/UnderSiege_web2.pdf.

National Immigrant Justice Center, “National Immigration Forum Backgrounder: Immigration Law Enforcement by State and Local Police,” September 2007, at <http://www.immigrationforum.org/documents/TheDebate/EnforcementLocalPolice/Backgrounder-StateLocalEnforcement.pdf>

The Urban Institute, Paying the Price: the Impact on Immigration Raids on America’s Children, 2007, at http://midwesthumanrights.org/sites/midwesthumanrights.org/files/children_immigration_raids_oct2007.pdf

Economic, Social and Cultural Impacts of Migrant Labor in Meatpacking

Kathy Fennelly, “Prejudice towards Immigrants in the Midwest,” Chapter 6, in Douglas Massey, Ed., *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration* Russell Sage: New York, 2008, at http://www.hhh.umn.edu/people/kfennelly/pdf/prejudice_immigrants_midwest.pdf

Kathy Fennelly and Helga Leitner, “How the Food Processing Industry is Diversifying in Minnesota,” Julian Samora Research Institute: 2002, at <http://www.jsri.msu.edu/RandS/research/wps/wp59.html>.

Office of the Legislative Auditor, *Economic Impact of Immigrants* (May 25, 2006), at <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/Ped/2006/immig.htm>.

Office of Strategic Planning and Results Management, *The Impact of Illegal Immigration in Minnesota*, St. Paul: 2005, at http://www.state.mn.us/mn/externalDocs/Administration/Report_The_Impact_of_Illegal_Immigration_on_Minnesota_120805035315_Illegal%20Immigration%20Brief%2026.pdf

Minnesota Immigrant Health Task Force, *Immigrant Health, A Call to Action: Recommendations from the Minnesota Immigrant Health Task Force*, Minneapolis: Minnesota Dept. of Health, 2005, at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/refugee/immigrant/immhealthrpt.pdf>

Ahlberg, Dennis A. "The New Minnesotans: How Are They Doing in Economic Terms?" *CURA Reporter*, Summer 2005, p. 3-9. <http://www.cura.umn.edu/reporter/05-Summ/Ahlburg-Song.pdf>

Week 5: Feb 18

ETHICS AND EPISTEMOLOGIES OF COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

What are the measures of legitimate or “trustworthy” research? How can academic researchers design and carry out their projects in a way that involves and respects community partners in “epistemologies of engagement?” What are the practical and ethical challenges of the IRB process?

Guest (1:00-2:15): Naomi Scheman, Department of Philosophy

Catherine Jordan, Susan Gust, and Naomi Scheman, “The Trustworthiness of Research: The Paradigm of Community-Based Research”, *Metropolitan Universities* 16(1) (April 2005): 39-57.

Naomi Scheman, “Epistemology Resuscitated: Objectivity as Trustworthiness,” in Nancy Tuana and Sandra Morgen, *Engendering Rationalities*, SUNY Press: New York, 2001, 23- 52.

Both articles available at:

<http://www.philosophy.umn.edu/TrustworthyExpertise/home.html>

Week 6: Feb 25

EXPERTS AS SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

We will invite individuals with expert and community-based knowledge to provide us with further background on the situation facing immigrant meatpacking workers in the

region. The students will have an opportunity to interview experts on background issues regarding immigration standards and practice, labor rights and working conditions, and cultural impacts of migration patterns created by the meatpacking labor market. Students will prepare thematic questions and carry out interviews with these experts to get necessary background information to direct next phase of our academic work.

Guests: John Keller, Director, Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota, Vic Rosenthal, Director, Jewish Community Action, and Professor Kathy Fennelly, Humphrey Institute.

After class, several students will travel to Chicago to attend the following meeting:

Strategic Roundtable on Human Rights and the Meatpacking Industry

When: Thursday February 26th, 2008 | Breakfast 9am - 10am, Meeting 10am – 4pm

Where: Spertus Institute, 610 South Michigan Avenue, 3rd Floor, Chicago, IL

Week 7: March 4

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Is advocacy for social justice an appropriate academic objective? If so, how should it be undertaken?

Students will report back from Chicago strategy session, group discussions on refining of research objectives and methods in light of conference.

Students will map the problem based on the information they have learned and determine what information they still need to know to analyze the problem collectively. Class may make one map or several based on central relationship investigated.

After this exercise, students will begin to shape individual and/or collective projects related to the issues they have selected, and will discuss what methodologies they will use and what responsibilities they have as public scholars.

Readings: Nancy Pearson and Douglas Johnson, “Tactical Mapping: An Overview,” http://www.newtactics.org/sites/newtactics.org/files/Article_for_Turkey_2008.pdf

Week 8: March 11

PRIVILEGED LOCATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE: INTERVIEWS AND ANALYSIS IN COMMUNITIES AT RISK

Research interviews in vulnerable communities carry special responsibilities. What are the responsibilities of the researcher in these settings? How do the needs of the investigator match up with the needs of the investigated? What is the nature of consent in these arrangements? What should we do with the knowledge we gain?

Guests: Professor Joan Dejaeghere, Educational Policy and Administration, and Kate McCleary, U of M grad student, on research in immigrant communities in Austin, Minnesota regarding civic participation.

Readings: Jim Dawes, *That the World May Know: Bearing Witness to Atrocity*, Chapter 2 “Interrogation,” Harvard: Cambridge, 2007, pp. 76- 113.

Geraldine Pratt and Philippines-Canada Task Force on Human Rights, “International Accompaniment and Witnessing State Violence in the Philippines”, *Antipode* 40(5) (2008): 751-779.

Week 9: March 18 SPRING BREAK

Week 10: March 25

Second short paper due

DESIGNING THE PROJECT: STRATEGIES, METHODOLOGIES, OUTCOMES

Each student will prepare a two-page paper proposing an individual or group research project on our immigrant labor case study. Your proposed academic project should consider what are the assets and capacity of our collaborative effort.

Students will present initial ideas for individual and collective academic work on the issue, class discusses and select a focus(es) for the class’s remaining work on the issue. What will be the methods of our work? The sources of our knowledge? The product of our research? How will we use our work? Some ideas might be publication or information base for public use, testimony in appropriate policy fora, or providing materials to actors working to resolve the problem.

Readings: Ashwin Desai, *We Are the Poors: Community Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002).

Week 11: April 1 No formal class

*Term paper drafts due
Time reserved for group work.*

Reading: Kathryn Sikkink & Margaret E. Keck, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International Politics: Introduction”, in *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1998), pp. 1-38.

Week 12: April 8

STORYTELLING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: MOTIVATION AND VOICE IN REPRESENTING HUMAN SUFFERING

How do artists influence perceptions and politics of social justice issues? What are the motivations and methods of those who choose to tell the stories of “victims?” What are the public responsibilities associated with representation of human suffering?

Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 1905.

Jim Dawes, *That the World May Know: Bearing Witness to Atrocity*, Chapter 2 “Storytelling,” Harvard: Cambridge, 2007, pp. 164-229.

Time reserved for group work.
Peer reviewed papers returned.

Week 13: April 15

Presentations/evaluations

Week 14: April 22

NGOs, GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM AND THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Guest: Richa Nagar

Sangtin Writers and Richa Nagar, *Playing With Fire: Feminist Thought and Activism Through Seven Lives in India*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2007, ‘Introduction’ and ‘Postscript’.

Tariq Jazeel and Colin McFarlane, “Responsible Learning: Cultures of Knowledge Production and the North-South Divide”, *Antipode* (2007): 781-789.

Week 15: April 29

Presentations/evaluation

Week 16: May 6

ENDINGS

Discussion on real and potential outcomes of our group work.

Final papers due.