

**WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM  
SOCIAL ACTIVISM AND THE 1<sup>ST</sup> AMENDMENT  
UH 400  
Winter 2007  
Monday & Wednesday 215-355pm  
238 Millett Hall**

---

**Instructor:** Sarah Twill, PhD, MSW  
**Telephone:** 775-2751 (social work office)  
**Email:** sarah.twill@wright.edu  
**Office Hours:** M 4-5pm; T & Th 2:15 – 5pm; Also by appointment

**Course Credits: 4 Quarter Hours**

---

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The service learning course is a 400- level University Honors seminar titled *Social Activism and the First Amendment*. The course will focus on inequality in public education and will require students to examine the guarantees of the First Amendment (i.e, freedom of speech, freedom of press, peaceful assembly, and the right to petition the government for redress of a grievance) through a partnership with the Dayton Public School System and projects focusing on activism. Throughout the class, students will demonstrate public advocacy skills need to be members of an educated citizenry. Students will reflect on their learning though weekly journals, assignments, and the completion of the capstone project.

Funding for the Service Learning Project (SLP) were provided by a *Great Cities, Great Service* grant.

**Course Goals**

Students successfully completing this course should be able, at a beginning level, to:

- a. Understand historical and current issues related to the First Amendment and challenges to its implementation
- b. Appreciate inequality in public education as it pertains to oppressed groups (gender, ability-disability, socio-economic status, race, etc.)
- c. Articulate the pros and cons of using social activism techniques to promote social justice
- d. Incorporate ideas of social activism into personal-professional self to prepare for responsibilities of citizenship
- e. Demonstrate critical thinking, speaking, and writing skills

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

*A Biography of the First Amendment* by Anthony Lewis (2007). List price: \$25.00  
(ISBN 978-0-465-013917-3)

*Going Public: An Organizer's Guide to Citizen Action* by Michael Green. List price: \$12.00

(ISBN 1-4000-76-7649-8)

*The Shame of the Nation: Restoring Apartheid Schooling in America* by Jonathan Kozel (2005). You will be loaned a copy by the Office of Service Learning.

## **CLASS POLICIES:**

### **Participation**

Students are expected to attend and participate in class. Preparation is a prerequisite for class participation. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Participation means sharing your thoughts, questions, and experiences in class discussions. It means participating in group activities, showing professional and courteous behavior in class (and in school), and showing respect for your fellow students, instructor, and guests by being open and attentive to their ideas and opinions. This includes, but is not limited to, the following inappropriate behaviors: talking while others are talking, refusing to participate in class activities, surfing the web, or holding side conversations during lecture. If you are absent, you are responsible for all materials covered and announcements made during your absence. Please ask a classmate to collect the materials and notes you will miss because of an absence.

**Students must work with our community partner school, Westwood K-8, each week and as assigned. To do so, students must have a background check.**

### **Learning Environment**

Differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected. Everyone in the class (including instructor and each student) is to be treated with dignity and respect. We can disagree with ideas without being disagreeable.

### **ADA Statement**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), Wright State University and the Department of Social Work seeks to provide equal access to individuals with disabilities. Students who have a disability and need specific accommodations and support to facilitate full inclusion of all aspects of the course should make an appointment with the instructor during the first week of the term. To register for services, contact the Office of Disability Services at 775-6580 or 775-5844(TTY).

### **Wright State University Code of Conduct**

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their academic careers. The WSU policy on academic honesty can be reviewed online at <http://www.wright.edu/students/judicial/>. If you have additional questions about the Code of Conduct, please contact the Office of Judicial Services (775-4240). Any violations of academic integrity (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, “faking” a poverty portfolio assignment, turning in the same or similar work as a peer) will be reported to the Office of Judicial Services. Accordingly, dependant of the violation, a

student found to have violated academic integrity will receive a zero on an assignment or an F in the class.

Plagiarism is “using another person’s words or ideas without giving credit to the other person. When you use someone else’s words, you must put quotation marks around them and give the writer or speaker credit by revealing the source in a citation. Even if you revise or paraphrase the words of someone else or just use their idea, you still must give the author credit in a note. Not giving due credit to the creator of an idea or writing is very much like lying.” (Harris, n.d)

If in doubt about any academic honesty issues, please discuss the concerns with the instructor.

### **METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:**

The course will incorporate a number of learning methodologies including lectures, discussions, small group class activities, guest speakers, supplemental readings, video and web resources, and experiential activities.

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

Students will have the opportunity to engage in the democratic process and use their powers of free speech to negotiate the assignments. The class will figure out the assignments during the first week of class.

*Things to consider when negotiating assignments:*

Must participate in service learning project (SLP)

Need to reflect on integration of learning from classroom experiences, readings, and SLP

WI class

### **The Importance of Writing**

This is a writing intensive course. Written assignments, including the weekly reflections and the preparation activities, will be graded based on the following criteria:

- *Content – shows depth of coverage, thoroughness of development, quality of understanding the concepts*
- *Organization and Coherence – clear transitions (including headings), precise and pertinent information, link concepts and ideas together, page numbers, stapled*
- *Readability – does the paper make sense, do I have to read a sentence 2 or more times to understand what is being said, adhere to and fulfills the requirements of the assignment*
- *Mechanical and grammatical correctness- spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization.....*

Students can receive writing assistance by visiting office hours prior to the assignment due date, calling the University’s Writer’s Hotline (775-2158) to ask questions, or visiting the following websites: <http://www.cola.wright.edu/Dept/ENG/wsuwweb/>> or <http://www.apastyle.org.elecref.html>>

**EVALATION AND GRADING:**

To be added as an attachment after class discussion in week 1.

**Grading Scale:**

A = 90% or greater    B= 80% or greater    C= 70% of greater    D= 60% or greater    F= below 59%

**Tentative Outline of the Quarter**

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Things to Remember</i>
1	M 1/5	Syllabus Reading –Kozel book due by 1/13	
	W 1/7	Schools in Crisis video What it means to be an ally	
2	M 1/12	Book Discussion	
	W 1/14	Brainstorming – 4 Ideas Reading – Lewis (AoFA) p. 1-39 Gecan (Public) preface – p. 32	
3	M 1/19	Martin Luther King Day Reading - Gecan p. 33- 74	
	W 1/21	Field -Meet the partners	
4	M 1/26	Free speech Reading – Lewis p. 39-101 Gecan p. 75-99	
	W 1/28	Field – 4 Ideas	
5	M 2/2	Media – Guest Speaker? Reading – Lewis p. 101-130 Gecan p. 100-126	
	W 2/4	Field – research and draft op-ed letter	
6	M 2/9	Media Reading – Lewis p. 130-141 Gecan p. 129-147	

	W 2/11	Field – edit and send op-ed	
7	M 2/16	Petition Government Lobbying techniques Reading- Class Handout Gecan p. 151-178	
	W 2/18	Field – write 1-2 minutes speech to tell legislators about their school/the issues	
8	M 2/23	Petitioning Government Reading – Lewis p. 143-169	
	W 2/25	Field – practice speech	
9	M 3/2	Assembly Reading – Lewis p. 169-190	
	W 3/4	Field – Children’s march video Posters	
10	M 3/9		<b>Field Trip to the State Capital – Date to be set</b>
	W 3/11		
	M 3/16	Class reflection	
Finals Week		Honors Reception and Presentations	