**Political Science Directed Study**

**Course Meeting Details:**

This is a Directed Study course. The students will meet as a group on Mondays for an hour starting June 27th and ending the week of August 1st. Students will also be required to meet on Tues - Thurs from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Merrimack Valley YMCA in Lawrence, MA starting July 12th and ending July 28th. Additional meetings and/or meetings with other offices on campus will be scheduled as needed.

**Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to Youth Participatory Action Research. It is designed to be flexible and relevant to your own particular interests and path. We will cover basic aspects of the discipline of Political Science, youth activism, engaged research, and your own studies. The course is built around your involvement in conducting research and connecting that research to practice through a youth civic engagement summer program at the Merrimack Valley YMCA called Youth Voice. Finally, we will also engage in future academic career preparation at the collegiate level. Please note that this course has expectations of extensive independent work and will require you to be in Lawrence, MA at the YMCA from July 12th - July 28th (Tues -Thurs; 8:30 am to 12:30 pm). You will be responsible for maintaining an average of at least 12 - 16 hours of work per week.

**Course Goals:**

This course is designed to help you synthesize and integrate theories in applied social sciences and offer the opportunity for you to engage in the process of research and knowledge building. By the end of this course, a successful student will:

* Understand the role of studying Political Science in the broader world and how political science research can be utilized in practice
* Integrate youth participatory action research frameworks into the course content and recognize the connections between research and solving social and political problems.
* Thoughtfully and appropriately reflect on larger questions and debates in social and political life
* Conduct civically engaged research while working directly with community partners
* Carry out research that demonstrates theory building, qualitative methods, and connection to community
* Demonstrate strong written and oral communication skills in presenting the outcomes of your research

**Class Resources:**

Required texts include: Margolin, Jamie. (2020). *Youth to Power: Your Voice and How to Use It.* Hachette Book Group, Inc. ISBN: 978-0-738-24666-6.

All other materials and assignments will be shared between the student and instructor directly on Canvas.

**Grading:**

The course grade is based on:

* Completion of Research Tasks (60%)
  + Qualitative Interviews with Gen Z
  + Participation during Youth Voice
  + Youth Voice Survey and Focus Groups
* Completion of graded assignments (20%)
  + Homework 1
  + Homework 2
  + Homework 3
  + Homework 4
* Final Exam (20%)

**General Schedule and Plan (subject to change):**

| Dates | Overview of Content | Homework |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Week 1 (6/27-7/03) | Review of coursework and connections; starting ideas  Go over Canvas; introduction to qualitative research | * Read Margolin (xi - p. 43) * Complete CITI training * Find 1 youth written op-ed or letter to the editor |
| Week 2 (7/5-7/10) | Practice interview questions; discuss activism through writing, prep for the first week of Youth Voice | * **Homework 1** **due** * Read Margolin (p. 44 - 95) * **Conduct 2-3 interviews with youth** |
| Week 3 (7/11-7/17) | Discuss youth movements  **Youth Voice (Tues -Thurs)** | * **Homework 2 due** * Read Margolin (p. 96 - 150; 183 - 193) |
| Week 4 (7/18-7/24) | Activism with institutions and the media  **Youth Voice (Tues - Thurs)** | * **Homework 3 Due** * Read Margolin (p. 151 - 182; 194-203) |
| Week 5 (7/25-7/31) | Self-care and Activism  **Youth Voice (Tues - Thurs)** | * **Homework 4 Due** * Read Margolin (p. 204 - 224) |
| Week 6 (8/1-8/7) | Building Community  Youth Voice Debrief | * **Final Exam** |

**Course Policies and Additional Information:**

**Academic Integrity:**

* All work for this class must be your original work. Presenting material from other sources, either print or electronic, as one’s own work constitutes plagiarism. Please review [Merrimack College’s Academic Integrity Code](http://catalog.merrimack.edu/content.php?catoid=9&navoid=202#academic-integrity) and consult the [library’s web site](https://libguides.merrimack.edu/academic_integrity/AcademicIntegrity) for a discussion on academic integrity.

**Accommodations:**

* Merrimack College provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities through the Accessibility Services Office. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact the Accessibility Services Office via the online request form found on the Accessibility Services Office [website](http://www.merrimack.edu/aso), [email](mailto:accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu) or by visiting their office on the third floor of McQuade Library.
* Students are encouraged to contact the office as soon as possible to ensure adequate time to meet and create a plan. Students already registered with the Accessibility Services Office are encouraged each semester to request their letters to be emailed, and students are responsible to then email the letter to their instructors personally. While it is understood that some students will not use all accommodations in all courses, accommodations can not be made retroactively.

**Credit Hour Statement:**

In this course, students will be expected to do the following amount of work per week (on average):

WEEKS 1, 2, and 6

* Group meeting 1 hour
* Reading, research, homework: 10 hours (on average)
* Yout Voice Preparation: 1-hour

WEEKS 3, 4, and 5

* Group meeting 1 hour
* Youth Voice Participation 12 hours
* Reading, research, homework: 3 hours (on average)

Total time: 12-16 hours per week

**Departmental Writing Expectations and Reference:**

The Political Science and Public Policy Department has a Writing Expectations and Reference Guide that offers more information on writing expectations and criteria in our field and in our courses: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TfM-7SRyir5M05tD3YZPkeWoYZ6_D1UGiw34Bqhc81s/edit>

**Grading Scale:**

97 – 100 A 87 – 89 B+ 77 – 79 C+ 67 – 69 D+ 93 – 96 A 83 – 86 B 73 – 76 C 63 – 66 D

90 – 92 A- 80 – 82 B- 70 – 72 C- 60 – 62 D-

59 and below F