

DSSC 8112
Scholarship and Public Responsibility
Spring 2015
Friday 1:15-3:00pm
609 Social Sciences
Colloquium Convenor: Karen Brown
kbt@umn.edu

Course Overview

This seminar is designed as a colloquium that provides a space for exploration and dialogue on the relationship between scholarship and engagement beyond the university. The course in Spring 2015 will take the form of a colloquium with a series of faculty members and guest speakers offering their perspectives on this theme. Among the questions that the colloquium sessions will address:

- What does it mean to be an ‘engaged scholar’ or ‘public intellectual’? What is ‘public engagement’ in a global context?
- How is academic knowledge production connected to – or disconnected from – audiences outside the academy and to social change and policymaking in particular?
- How does the mission of higher education institutions and their contemporary structure and trends facilitate or complicate the work of politically engaged scholars?
- How do we understand the ‘public’ or ‘community’ with which our scholarship might engage?
- What are examples of ways to conduct engaged scholarship?
- What are the ethical commitments, responsibilities or accountabilities associated with scholar-activism?
- How do power relations operate in academic knowledge production, particularly in defining ‘expertise’ and ‘local knowledge’?

Course Requirements

This course is a colloquium series with a participatory graduate seminar format. Invited guest speakers will sometimes offer remarks as part of the class session, and the seminar sessions will generally be primarily based on discussion. Students are required to attend each session of the course and to engage actively in discussion. To facilitate this, students must complete assigned readings each week and prepare discussion questions each week focused on the assigned readings. Discussion questions should be posted to the course Moodle site by 5pm the day before (Thursday) each class session. In addition, visiting faculty might request additional written work or activities related to the class. These assignments are also required.

Students will also take responsibility for helping to lead discussion as requested by the facilitating faculty member.

Students are also required to develop either a policy brief or a community-based research proposal (due May 1), which they will present in class at the end of the semester. A more detailed assignment will be provided.

Grading

This is a two-credit course graded on an S/N basis. To receive a grade of S in the course, students must attend all class sessions (one unexcused absence is allowed); submit discussion questions for each week's session on the Moodle site; serve as discussion leader as requested; and prepare and present a policy brief or community research project proposal related to your research or teaching interests.

Policy briefs posted on the Scholars Strategy Network website offer good examples: (<http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/policy-briefs>)

Required Readings

Required readings for the course will be posted on the class Moodle site. If a guest speaker has a reading that cannot be posted on the Moodle site, print copies or information on how to access the reading in electronic form will be provided.

Schedule of Colloquium Sessions

David Pellow (Sociology)

January 30, February 6, February 13

Barbara Frey (Human Rights Program)

February 20, February 27, March 6

Frances Vavurs (Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development)

March 27 and April 3

Julie Grossman (Biological Principles of Sustainable & Organic Food Systems - Horticultural Science)

April 10

Heidi Barajas and UROC research team

April 17 and April 24

Karen Brown (ICGC)

May 1