Scholarship and Public Responsibility
DSSC 8112; 2 credits, Spring 2013
Wednesday, 2:30-4:20; 609 Social Sciences

Subject Matter
The following questions will inform our discussion of scholarship and public responsibility:
For whom, and for what purpose, are we producing and disseminating knowledge? What is the public mission of the University? What are the different publics to whom our scholarly activities should be addressed and how can we go about meeting our responsibilities to these publics? What is the proper role of the public intellectual and what opportunities and constraints does the contemporary institutional setting of higher education offer for politically engaged scholar-activists concerned with social change? What are the promises and pitfalls of engaged scholarship? What assumptions underpin the questions we ask and how can we incorporate local indigenous knowledge and community service learning into the process of knowledge production and dissemination? How do asymmetries of power and privilege shape this process? How can we translate our knowledge into a language that speaks to those beyond the academy, influences non-academic audiences, and shapes public policies that address pressing social issues? How have scholars from different disciplines within the academy addressed these issues?

Course Requirements
In addition to responsibility for the required readings, students will assume a major responsibility for seminar discussions. Since the class is focused on discussion, attendance at all sessions is mandatory. Each student is required to formulate one question for discussion each week based on the required readings. The question should try to make connections, between the different readings and to your own research and interests. Twice during the semester, each student will prepare a short 2-3 page reaction paper that speaks to the central arguments and evidence in the readings and identifies issues to start the discussion. The paper should be a mini-essay which helps you (and us) to organize our thoughts and reflections on the key issues. It may take the form of an analysis of what is at stake in the debates or it may entail comments/critiques of specific arguments in the required readings. The student writing the reaction paper will also serve as the discussion leader for that week. You should e-mail your question and the reaction paper to the instructor and all class participants by noon on the Tuesday prior to our class on Wednesday. Students are also required to develop either a policy brief (due April 24th), or a community-based project, or community-based research proposal (due May 1st), which they will present in class at the end of the semester.

Grading:
The grading for this two credit course is S/N (satisfactory/non-satisfactory). In order to pass this course, you need to: a) contribute to the general discussion; b) write one discussion question each
week; c) write two 2-3 page reaction papers; d) interview a scholar/activist at the University or in the community and present your findings in class on Feb. 20th; and e) complete either a community-based project, or a community-based research proposal, or a policy brief that speaks to an issue of public concern that is connected to your research and/or teaching. The project can involve further study of a theme of the course; it can be a multi-media presentation, a piece of creative art (music, dance, poetry, film), or a summary of a community based project that integrates scholarship and public responsibility. The policy brief should explain relevant technical details in simple terms and be accessible to a general audience. It should address the sources of a contemporary social issue/problem and assess public policies designed to address it. For good examples, see the numerous policy briefs posted on the Scholars Strategy Network website (http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/policybriefs), including those listed under “America and the World”.

**Required Readings:**
All of the twenty-six (26) required readings for the course are posted on the class moodle website. Please download and print all of the readings at the start of the semester. Be sure to bring the readings to class since you will need them for our discussions.

**Disabilities:** It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Individuals should contact the course instructor to discuss any individual needs for accommodations. Any student needing to arrange accommodations for a documented disability should also contact the U. of M. Disability Services at 612-626-1333.

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READING**

*Week 1 (January 23)*  **Introductions and Discussion of Course Goals and Content**

No required readings this week.

*Week 2 (January 30)*  **Intellectuals and Engaged Scholarship**

Required Readings:

Aminzade  
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Week 3 (February 6)  **Intellectuals and Social Movements**

Required Readings:  


Guest Speaker: Sam Grant, Movement for Deep Democracy (Founder); Community Faculty, Metro State University

Week 4 (February 13)  **The Voices of Public Scholars**

Required Readings:  


Week 5 (February 20)  
**Interviews with Scholar-Activists**

No Required Readings; interview a scholar-activist in your department, or in another department, or at a community organization and come prepared to present what you found.

Guest Speaker: Dr. George Katsiaficas, Wentworth Institute of Technology

Week 6 (February 27)  
**Colonizing and Decolonizing Knowledges**

Required Readings:


Guest Speaker: Dr. Sandi Pierce, Othayonih Research

Week 7 (March 6)  
** Provincializing Knowledge and Confronting Positivism**

Required Readings:


Week 8 (March 13)  
**The Shifting Institutional Contexts of Higher Education**

Required Readings:


Guest Speaker: Steve Phillon, Director, Research Group on Immigrant Workers in Minnesota, St. Cloud State University

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 18th – 22nd
Week 9 (March 27)  Crossing Borders in Activist Research
Required Readings:

Week 10 (April 3)  Teaching and Community Service Learning
Required Readings:
Guest Speaker: Dr. Tania Mitchell, Department of Postsecondary Teaching and Learning, University of Minnesota.

Week 11 (April 10)  Social Policy and Activist Scholarship

Handout: Guidelines for Effective Policy Briefs
Week 12 (April 17)  Individual Meetings with Instructor
No required readings. Work on your papers and presentations. Meet individually with instructor.

Week 13 (April 24)  Presentation and Discussion of Policy Briefs
Hard copy of policy Briefs Due in Class Today. If you are writing a policy brief, be sure to e-mail it to the entire class by noon on Tuesday.
Readings: Read the policy briefs written by your fellow students; review some of the policy briefs posted on the Scholars Strategy Network that speak to your scholarly and activist interests.

Week 14 (May 1)  Presentation and Discussion of Community-Based Projects
Community-Based Research Projects or Proposals due in class today.
If there are relevant materials about your community-based project that you would like to share with the class, be sure to e-mail them to the entire class by noon on Tuesday.

Week 15 (May 8)  What Did You Learn? How Will It Matter?
Discussion of What We Accomplished; Final Course Evaluation; Celebration