

## Practical Activism Group Project Project Packet

\*If anyone is absent from PA workdays, please let me know. These class dates are a privilege and should not be missed if at all possible.\*

### The Basics:

There have been several iterations of this assignment in my 304 courses. Often students work in small groups, sometimes in pairs on a topic of their choosing. A class built on the idea of what social institutions are and how to facilitate social change, the one time I have witnessed students engage in social change in this course was during the 2014 Seahawks Super Bowl Win in an effort to cancel the course midterm. No, it didn't happen, and no, it will not happen this year. What I learned from that class is that although 4 people can create an interest in change, it often takes a larger group to see a project/goal/objective through. This quarter, you will be working as a class-yes, all 45 of you-where you will focus on a particular social institution and the contestation surrounding it, exploring these issues in more detail. Project work will include further research, mapping the historical and contemporary points of contestation surrounding your chosen social institution, conducting PRACTICAL ACTIVISM, and a presentation with invited guests of your choosing. Each of you will also individually write a medium-length paper to consider the topic in more depth.

### This Week's Tasks: Project Rationale, Resources, Community Agreements

Before you begin working on the project, the class must first revisit our established Community Agreements and make any additions they see fit that pertain to the project. (For an example of what these Community Agreements might look like, please go to page 9 to view the agreements from 2015).

This week's goal is to familiarize yourself with a social institution. What social institution? The class will have to decide this as a group. You can choose to use consensus, majority rules, or debate to determine what your institution is. Keep in mind that the institution you select **MUST** be one that you can do either one practical activist or several practical activist components on or at. It should be an institution you all have access to and/or have shared knowledge about and be significant to all of you, in some way, shape or form. I do not expect you to have to travel (e.g., miss class or spend \$) to the selected institution. You may have to do additional research to learn about the selected institution. Students in past years have opted to keep it local. My advice is to keep it practical. It can be big or medium or many small things put together. Do what makes sense to all of you and integrates everyone's skills. Many changes can happen where you currently reside or through social media.

After you select your institution, you will start to outline your institution in regard to what you need to know before you do your P.A. component. Questions of relevance:

1. Why this institution?
2. What is the history of the institution?
3. Is this institution a part of a larger institution (CP majors, I'm talking to you about ecological systems)? If so, what is that larger institution? Brief history.
4. What is going on at this institution that makes it an ideal location for P.A.?

Although you can find a lot of information about your selected institution by doing a google search, you are not guaranteed that the information you find will be a) correct or b) neutral. Therefore, **please do not use Wikipedia and blogs.** *\*\*Use of unauthorized websites will result in a reduction in your grade for this project\*\*.*

While researching your institutions, you might want to use different key words to describe what you are interested in finding out about your institution. For example, if you are interested in cults, you might want to first search about religion, and then do a search for religion + cults. By the end of the class meeting, you should leave with **5 artifacts as a class** for you to select from that offer you an understanding of that particular social institution-how it was developed, the rationale for why it exists, what it is supposed to do/serve, current issues that connect to your practical activism of the institution. Your artifacts can be academic articles, newspaper articles (please ask me regarding the source you choose), or current social movement documentation.

**By the end of each class:**

Email to me one word document that addresses the above and contains a list of resources that you are using in your project (if the institution has a webpage, that should be in the document). I would also like to know how the class came to decide on the institution. This can be a working list. Also list any questions/concerns you have for me.

**Tasks for this Week or Next: Practical Activism Brainstorm, Justification and Project Timeline/Outline**

\*Check Canvas for an email from me regarding your class outline\*

The first class (or two) should be used primarily to brainstorm your practical activism components. What is Practical Activism? For CP folks, think of it as being a “pragmatic realist”. What I am asking is for you to take your institution and the issue that you have identified and to **DO SOMETHING**. However, be realistic. You cannot expect to eradicate poverty in 10 weeks (but you can try!); you can think of creative ways you can work with your community or the UWB campus to raise awareness and create activism that is knowledgeable, problem/situation focused, sustainable, open to divergent ways of knowing & issues of diversity, and is practical. I am really asking you to do something. Work together on this. Use the internet to see what others have done in other countries and in these United States. **You do not have to create a revolution-you just have to elicit a spark, but a spark that has the potential to light a fire.** Practical activism does not mean putting fact posters up around campus or your community (think of how many flyers get left on your windshield and how many you see littered in the parking garage). Be reasonable and feasible. Be inclusive of all members of our community so they can participate in multiple ways. Be anarchists. Just don't get arrested. (“Practical activism”-brought to you by the students of UC Santa Cruz).

Use this class period to think of what you want to do and what your justification/rationalization is for your process. P.A. is all about the activism making sense in order to raise awareness and create change in a swift manner. Points to ponder:

- 1) Do you want to do one big thing? Several small things?
- 2) When will they take place? How will people be involved?
- 3) Will there be separate groups working on different components?
- 4) Who is your target audience?
- 5) How will it raise awareness?
- 6) Who would you want there for your presentation? Or is this not a formal presentation, but one where we go and see your activism?
- 7) Timeline?

**COURSE SCHEDULE WITH PRACTICAL ACTIVISM WORKING DATES**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>CLASS ACTIVITIES</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	
<b>M</b>	<b>Introductions &amp; Expectations</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Class Lecture and Discussion; Community Agreements</b>
<b>Week 2</b>	
<b>M</b>	<b>Class Lecture and Discussion; Prepping for P.A.</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Practical Activism Work (No Lecture)</b> -Decision making process -Organizational and procedural discussions -Revising Community Agreements (if needed)
<b>Week 3</b>	
<b>M</b>	<b>First Hour: Continue Practical Activism Work</b> <b>Second Hour: Class Lecture and Discussion</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Class Lecture and Discussion</b>
<b>Week 4</b>	
<b>M</b>	<b>First Hour: Continue Practical Activism Work</b> <b>Second Hour: Class Lecture and Discussion</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Paper One Due</b></span>
<b>W</b>	<b>Practical Activism Work (No Lecture)</b> -Selecting an institution -Written justification of choice
<b>Week 5</b>	
<b>M</b>	<b>Class Lecture and Discussion</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Practical Activism Work</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	
<b>M</b>	<b>First Hour: Continue Practical Activism Work</b> <b>Second Hour: Class Lecture and Discussion</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Practical Activism Work (No Lecture)</b> -Identifying the change needed -Determining the action -Written documentation of action plan and logic model with evidence from course materials
<b>Week 7</b>	
<b>M</b>	<b>Class Lecture and Discussion</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Practical Activism Work</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Paper Two Due</b></span>

-Action plan and preparing for activism; planning activities and organization and campus coordination (if needed)		
<b>Week 8</b>		
<b>M</b>	<b>First Hour: Continue Practical Activism Work Second Hour: Class Lecture and Discussion</b>	
<b>W</b>	<b>Practical Activism Work (No Lecture)</b> -Continued preparation and linking action and action plan back to course materials	
<b>Week 9</b>		
<b>M</b>	<b>First Hour: Continue Practical Activism Work Second Hour: Class Lecture and Discussion</b>	
<b>W</b>	<b>Practical Activism Work (No Lecture)</b> -Preparing for action, final steps, completing any documentation that should accompany the action day	
<b>Week 10</b>		
<b>M</b>	<b>Practical Activism Action Day (No Lecture)</b>	
<b>W</b>	<b>Full Class Debrief</b>	<b>Individual Paper and Reflective Letter Due</b>

**Points Breakdown:**

**Practical Activism (50 points):**

You collectively determine what the activism is and when it will take place. This must be communicated to me.

**The Paper (75 points): \*you will be given a rubric at a later date\***

**\*\*Please note the scope may change once you decide on the larger project. If I need to adjust the paper focus to meet your project goals, I will do so and will let you know ASAP.\***

Each student is required to write an **INDIVIDUAL** paper on your institution. There are parts of this paper that will be very similar for each person (shown below), but the paper should be your **OWN WORK**. I do not tolerate plagiarism and I will ask you for clarification if I find something to be suspect. Because some parts are the same and some are different, I would recommend not proof-reading one another's papers...ask another friend or go to our fabulous Writing Center for help (you pay for this service-use it!). I am happy to give feedback, but I will not proofread your papers-I will give feedback on outlines and any questions you have about structure, etc.

Your paper will center on your institution and the outcome of your practical activism (what you did). You will center your paper on the Child's Transcommunality reading and how it connects to the class title, "Institutions & Social Change". Use this reading to discuss social change and how it connects to the project (this should be central to your overall argument in your paper). Additionally, you will include two readings from the course and two outside documents.

**Paper Length: 5 full pages NOT counting reference page-name and title on separate piece of paper.**

**References:** In this paper, I expect to see a list of references in any style you choose, in addition to in-text citations. Seek out the Writing Center if you have questions about this. Given the page restrictions, no footnotes are allowed.

**Evaluation Letter & Individual Practical Activism Assessment Survey (anonymous) (25 points):** A single spaced letter to me, your Professor. This is your time to evaluate your participation, the group collaboration, and to applaud your peers who excel. Please include the grade you would give yourself on this project. One single spaced page minimum.

In addition, you will each be asked to complete an anonymous survey about your experience doing this project. I take your feedback very seriously and work hard to improve on this project for future students. Surveys will be completed in class by another faculty member (Professor Silva will not be in the room).

**Frequently Asked Questions about the Practical Activism Group Project**  
**-Advice from Past 304 Students-**

**1. How do 45 students agree?**

\*304 2015: "We each brought different ideas to the class meeting of what we wanted to focus our work on. We decided as a group that we would spend the first 10-15 minutes talking to peers and seeing if we were in agreement, then people went up to the front of the class, wrote their idea on the board, and pitched it to us. We then made pros and cons and went from there."

\*304 2018: "Not everyone was on board with our final choice, but we all agreed to support the group work."

**2. Will there be an appropriate amount of class time dedicated to this project?**

\*Professor Silva: Yes. You have 4 full class days to work on the project, in addition to the time I will carve out of the beginning of class for work. Yes, you will have to figure out how to work with one another beyond class (google docs, etc), but the expectation is that you can do this in class. I am also willing to be creative with our syllabus and adjust topics so you can do this work.

**3. How do we decide what we are doing?**

\*Professor Silva: That is up to you. You can decide by a majority or a consensus.

\*304 2015: "Go with the majority. If the vote is close, then have a dialogue about it or you won't get anything done."

\*304 2016/2017: "Go with majority but don't bully others into your idea."

**4. What if someone picks a controversial topic that is against your personal beliefs?**

\*304 2017: "We didn't avoid controversial topics and we had one student that was not okay with an aspect of our project. We used our community agreements we created on the first PA day (Wednesday) and having someone moderate the discussion to help us figure out how we could mediate it. We also went to Professor Silva."

**5. Are we writing a 45-person paper?**

\*Professor Silva: Nope. Everyone writes their own paper.

**6. How does everyone participate? Can we break into groups?**

\*304 2015: "Groups saved us. We figured out what groups we needed to do the project and then everyone chose where they wanted to be. So you could use your strengths. It was awesome."

\*304 2016: "We didn't have clear groups which made the project hard to do."

**7. What if we cannot resolve issues that arise?**

\*304 2015: "Go to Dr. Silva."

\*304 2015: "We designated mediators in the class that helped with this. And then would talk to Dr. Silva."

\*304 2016: "We had to end our project because we created a hostile environment."

**8. What happens on PA workdays?**

\*304 2015: "You do the work on your timeline. Take advantage of the class time and show up."

**9. What if it fails?**

\*Professor Silva: You can still learn from failure. We adjust as needed.

**10. What about snow??**

\*Professor Silva: In 2016 and 2018, we lost two weeks due to snow. To account for inclement weather, the class can vote on whether to continue the project at a smaller scale or do an alternative assignment, either in a small group or as an individual.

**How to Succeed in this Project**

<b>DO....</b>	<b>DO NOT...</b>
Show up and be present. Be open to listening and realize you are a team.	Skip class. If students don't show up, tell Dr. Silva. Don't be offended if your idea was not chosen. You have to come together as a group for this to work.
Allow for others to speak and express their feelings. This can be stressful and also a lot of fun. Check ins are critical.	Be rude to one another or talk behind one another's backs. It is not good for the group as a whole.
Appoint students to lead the class. Figure out who will start meetings, who will end them, who will be point people. And designate people to help moderate so work can get done.	Just put people in roles without asking them.
Talk to Professor Silva.	Stay silent. I cannot help if I don't know what is going on.
Be realistic.	Copy what another class did. It failed for 304 2016.
Apply the knowledge you have received from other classes to this one. Use your skills and resources.	Come with a bad attitude or be negative. It will not help.
Collaborate and think about outreach.	Think it rests on you individually. This is a group project.
Go back to the ground rules for class. Honor them when working together, especially when you are determining your activism.	Ignore the ground rules. You will hurt people and may hurt yourself.
Create community agreements the first day you meet without the Professor.	No agreements = communication breakdown.

More Pearls of Wisdom from Students:

- Be realistic with the time you have
- COMMUNICATE!!
- Be patient and flexible
- Respect one another
- Have weekly check-ins before each class
- Don't rush the process
- Do not miss group work days
- Get organized
- RELAX. It will all work out.

- When making groups, don't put yourself in a group because that is where your friends are. Select the group that you have the strongest skills and can contribute the most.
- Establish group leaders but these should be determined by the group. The leads should collaborate.
- Use circular seating (when you can move the desks) for discussion.
- Meaningful participation-you know what it looks like.
- Get to know your classmates. Learn their strengths and weaknesses. And be honest with your peers about where you can excel and where you might need help.

### COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

**-WE, THE STUDENTS OF BISSEB 304 WINTER 2016, AGREE TO UPHOLD THESE AGREEMENTS. IF SOMEONE BREAKS AN AGREEMENT, WE WILL WORK WITH THAT PERSON TO ADDRESS IT AND WILL SEEK THE INPUT OF PROFESSOR SILVA. –**

1. Speak for yourself and not for others.
2. Raise your hand when you want to speak or as the group leaders to write your name on the board. If you have spoken more than once, let someone else speak before you speak again.
3. We acknowledge that we bring our full selves into this room. That includes our identities, such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, ability, religion, etc. Identities are not separate from privilege and access to power. If someone calls out your privilege, do not react. Sit and hear them out.
4. Less calling out, more calling in. If you do not know how to do that, seek the advice of a class lead. Use encouraging words when inviting each other into the discussion. Phrases like “what are your thoughts” and “I hear you” and “does this resonate with you” go a long way.
5. We value lived experience in this room. Speaking from your experience is appreciated.
6. We try our best to avoid assumptions. Before speaking, think if who you might be speaking of and how that might impact those in the room.
7. We will use consensus for all class decisions. If we find that consensus is not working, we will meet with Professor Silva to discuss alternatives.
8. Group leaders are not gatekeepers nor are they people who will punish others. They are here to help move the conversation forward.
9. When conflict arises that cannot be resolved through dialogue, we will ask to meet with Professor Silva. Each person(s) will be speaking from their experience of the conflict and Professor Silva will work with those involved and the group leaders on a solution.
10. We will consider how each aspect of this project must be inclusive. We will make space for those who prefer to be “behind the scenes” or are not comfortable for any reason. No one needs to disclose why they have a preference.
11. We will end each working session with an anonymous “exit ticket” where each person will say one positive part from that day and one thing we can improve. The group leaders will then organize the responses for our next meeting.