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Global Social Justice

The Right to the City in Global Perspective

Liza Weinstein, Professor, Department of Sociology

For the first time in human history, a majority of the world's population now lives in cities and urban areas. The challenge of ensuring that diverse urban residents have a dignified life and access to opportunities in the face of global inequalities requires insights and skills from many fields, including architecture and engineering, public health, economics, sociology, and anthropology. This project will provide students with the skills required to understand how just and inclusive spaces can be created across geography and settlement type, from immigrant enclaves to informal settlements, to gentrifying neighborhoods.

Immigration Justice

Gordana Rabrenovic, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology

Immigrants are an integral part of American society. They helped build our country and contribute to its growth and success. Immigrants are also an easy target to blame for social, economic, and political problems that our society faces. In addition, they are often denied equal access to societal resources and are the focus of prejudice and hate attacks. To address these challenges, immigrants often seek legal remedies, participate in host countries' political decision-making processes, and build coalitions with other immigrants and with members of their host societies. For the project, students will identify a particular problem facing immigrant groups in Boston. They will then propose how to build a coalition that works to ensure immigrants have fair and just access to resources and opportunities related to that specific problem. Finally, they will present their proposals to the City of Boston office on Immigrant Advancement.

Globalized English and the Global Professional

Antonio Ocampo-Guzman, Associate Professor, Department of Theater; and Peter Maber, Senior Lecturer in English, NCH

There are around 400 million native English speakers, while estimates suggest up to 2 billion have English in addition to their first language. But a host of ideological problems accompany that data. When English is the shared common language between global professionals, it brings with it great opportunities, and at the same time serious limitations. As much as it facilitates communication, English may perpetuate oppressive colonial legacies and imperial realities, and eliminate cultural differences. This project course scrutinizes the ways in which English can be both inclusive and exclusive and will examine strategies for overcoming its limitations as a global language. The community will investigate the related topics of what it is to have an identity and to be able to represent oneself in a global world. Projects include an investigation into the trajectories of global professionals who have successfully navigated two or more different cultures and/or languages, a



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consideration of students' relationships with the English language, and a collaborative effort to formulate strategies for the future.

Racism and Racial Inequality in the United States

Heather Streets-Salter, Professor, Department of History

Why is racism and racial inequality so entrenched in the United States? This project takes a global and historical approach to understanding contemporary racism and racial inequalities, with a view to envisioning substantive, effective reforms. We explore what 'race' actually is and its history as a concept. We examine the global influence of racism in the context of slavery and empire, paying particular attention to the racial inequalities and systems of structural racism that developed in settler colonies. Projects center around the development of a presentation to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination identifying three reforms geared toward increasing racial equality in the United States.

Rhetoric and Civil Discourse

Robert Lederer, Assistant Lecturer in English, NCH

Does referring to "climate change" as the "climate emergency" propel more political action? Why do Republicans favor the term "illegal aliens" while Democrats talk about "undocumented workers"? Are we really "at war" with coronavirus? The language that we use to describe political and social issues affects how we understand them, as well as the actions we take (or do not take) to resolve them. In this course, students will be asked to think seriously about language: how it is mobilized by some politicians, commentators, and corporations to obscure the truth, and how it can be used by writers to express reality and drive political action. For the project, students will analyze the rhetoric of a particular civic debate and write their own article about the issue. In the process, they will consider how to communicate their ideas most effectively and ethically in this polarized era.

Tragedy in the World and the Arts

Flora Lisica, Assistant Lecturer in English, NCH

What is the purpose of creating and consuming tragic art? Humans have sought to create art in response to devastating events for millennia, from statues and poems commemorating the deaths of individuals to plays and films depicting the struggles of war. We will explore how different artists over time have responded to different tragic events in different artistic mediums, including literature, film, music, the visual and the plastic arts, and think about what role such art might serve in society, for different individuals and communities. For the projects, students will be asked to select a tragic event - private or public, recent or historical - and to imagine how to address this event in an artistic medium of your choice. This will lead you to investigate how different artistic mediums affect us in different ways, how artworks are received by diverse kinds of audiences, and what purpose the arts serve in reflecting on what is happening in the world.



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Social Activism in an Age of Global Crisis

Jonathan Kaufman, Professor, Department of Journalism

We live in the age of information and news paradoxes. There is more global communication, more sources of information, and more points of view available than ever. Yet this has led not to greater understanding and problem solving, but misinformation, distrust, and polarization. Even the very nature of truth is under attack. At the same time, the United States and the world face growing crises—climate change, racism, refugees, inequality—that require citizens to come together and governments, corporations, and institutions to change. We must learn how to use both the traditional and innovative tools of media, communication, and social media to solve global—and local—problems. How can ordinary citizens and activists use the new and powerful tools of media along with traditional tools to create campaigns that mobilize citizens and push politicians, corporations, and citizens to change their views and behaviors and adopt policies and programs that the advocates believe are correct?