Planning for Change: Community Development in Practice
Amrita Daniere and Charles Levkoe

Logistics:
Mondays from 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm starting on September 14th, 2015 until April 8th, 2016 in Sid Smith Hall, Room 5017a.
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Course Description:
Planning for Change is a graduate yearlong course (September-April) that provides the unique opportunity to gain valuable practical experience as well as an introduction to research skills and analytical tools that connect critical theory to community development work. It is comprised of a service-learning placement within a community-based organization as well as in class seminars, readings, films, discussion, writing and reflection. You will work independently to complete a professional project on an actual problem with a community partner. In the past, students have been placed in situations where they conduct research studies, write analytical reports, design spaces for communities to work, live or play, create planning documents or provide advice on policy implications of regulations/laws for clients.

The objectives of the service-learning placement are to allow graduate students to gain practical experience, assist community groups to design and implement projects chosen by the community itself, reflect critically on their education and their role as a student and citizen, and begin to build longer-term commitments to communities and neighbourhoods throughout Toronto.

Learning Goals
In the course, you will learn about the political, economic and social contexts that structure community development, research methods and other skills related to the work with the community partners. The main learning goals of the course are:

- to apply practical research and theoretical tools to crucial issues within urban communities
- to incorporate the practice of critical reflection and apply a critical awareness of positionality into planning work
- to learn how to communicate effectively when creating and following a project proposal and work plan with different partners
- to complete a professional-quality project designed by and for a community organization
**Evaluation**

You will be evaluated based on communication and participation (in class and with community placements), a series of short assignments and reflections, a project proposal and progress report, and the quality of the final project.

*Fall Term (50% of total grade)*
- Reflections (3 in total): 45%
- Memorandum of Understanding: 10%
- Project proposal and meeting with instructors: 25%
- Communication: 10%
- Participation: 10%

*Winter Term (50% of total grade)*
- Reflections (2 in total): 30%
- Progress report: 10%
- Seminar presentation: 10%
- Final project (oral presentation): 10%
- Final project (TBD): 20%
- Communication: 10%
- Participation: 10%

**Overview of Course Seminars**

This course will hold group seminar meetings weekly in the fall term and bi-weekly in the winter term that will generally focus on assigned readings. Community partners are welcome to attend any or all seminar meetings, if they have the time or the desire.

The course outline will be adjusted on an ongoing basis to reflect the experiences and needs of the students based on their specific service learning placements. The first 30 minutes of each seminar will be used as a “check-in” for students to share updates, highlights and/or challenges in their placements. The final part of each class will be used to update the syllabus to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the learning goals and the students’ experiences.

The seminars in the first term (weeks 1-13) will be used to cover critical questions about the position of the practitioner in community development work and to address the political and economic context that structures the provision of community service. This term will also provide students with the particular skills and knowledge required to complete their service learning placements.

The seminar topics in the second term (weeks 14-26) will be identified by the students (based on the particulars of the service learning placements) and organized by the class with the support of the instructors. We will plan to meet on-site in the various placement locations if possible.

**Accessibility Needs**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please let me know and contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.services@utoronto.ca or http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility
Course Website

The course website is available through the University of Toronto portal (portal.utoronto.ca). All students enrolled in the class should be able to view the link to the course once they enter the portal using their UTORID and password. Information on the Portal login procedures available here: http://portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/login-and-access-your-course. All course materials – including the course outline, reading lists, assignments, and links to additional readings – will be posted on the website.

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism (which includes the submission of someone else’s work as your own and the re-submission of academic work that had been previously submitted in another course for credit) is a very serious offence at the University of Toronto. Assignments are carefully reviewed for evidence of plagiarism, and penalties can be severe (including marks of zero on an assignment or in an entire course, and in extreme cases, expulsion from the university). If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, or how to appropriately reference other people’s writing, please ask – it’s better to be safe than sorry! Please consult the “Rules and Regulations” section of the Arts and Science Calendar (http://www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/ofr/calendar/Rules_&_Regulations.html for further information and check the ‘How not to plagiarize’ website at: http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize.

Writing

Clear writing and communicating is essential. You will be expected to write clearly and effectively on tests and assignments. The University provides some resources through the writing centres (http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/centres/arts-and-science). Brief advice on specific elements of writing for university courses can also be found at (http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice).
Weekly Schedule (Fall Term):

Week 1: September 14th - Introduction and Overview and Meeting with Community Partners (Meet in Sid Smith Room 2125 5-8 pm; Refreshments will be served)

Part 1
- Introduction and Overview of the course
- Overview of service learning goals and concepts
- Placement interview sign up: Interviews will be held Sept 22 from 2-5 pm and Sept 24 from 3 to 5 pm in Sid Smith room 5063

Part 2
- Presentations and meeting with community partners

Readings:

Review Community Partner Placement opportunities on Blackboard in advance (please email the instructors if you are not able to access the website)


Week 2: September 21st - Service Learning as Pedagogy and Practice

- In-class visit from the Centre for Community Partnerships (Jennifer Esmail): An Introduction to Service-Learning: The Complexities of Service-Learning as Pedagogy and Practice
- Distribution of WSIB and other forms
- Service learning as experiential education and participatory research
- Teaching using service learning
- The art of critical reflection
- Class contract (led by PhD student Anelyse Weiler)
- Placement interviews

Readings:


Week 3: September 28th - The Context of Planning, Community Development and the 3rd Sector (1st Reflection piece due)
- Planning, community development and the 3rd sector
- Service learning Placement Discussion – roles and responsibilities

Readings:


Week 4: October 5th – Systems Thinking and Social Change in Community Service Learning
Workshop led by Anita Abraham (Meal Exchange)

Readings:

TBA

Week 5: October 12th – THANKSGIVING (No Class)

Week 6: October 19th – Cultural and Racial Diversity in the City (MoU due)
- Marginalization and cultural diversity in the City
- The role of advocacy and pluralism in planning and community development

Readings:


Week 7: October 26th – Democracy and Participation in Planning and Community Development

- Democracy and planning
- Participation in planning and community development
- View Leonie Sandercock video on planning in Vancouver

Readings:


Week 8: November 2nd – Community-based and Participatory Action Research (2nd Reflection piece due)

- Community based and feminist research methods
- Participatory action research

Readings:


Week 9: November 9th – No Class Meeting
Week 10: November 16th – Communication Workshop

Part 1: Panel of Community Partners
- Activist research and beyond the academy

Part 2: Rebecca Vogan, Innis College Writing Instructor
- Communicating research ideas, results and priorities

Readings:


Week 11: November 23rd – Film Screening and Discussion ‘The Garden’
(3rd Reflection Piece due)

Readings:


Week 12: November 30th – No scheduled class (Progress report/workplan due)

Week 13: December 7th Meetings with instructors
- Each student will meet individually with one of the instructors during class time

Evening of December 7th: Social gathering with Community Partners (Location TBA)

---Winter Break---
Weekly Schedule (Winter Semester):

Week 14: January 11th – Self Care and Self-Management (Charles and Amrita)
- To identify strengths, weaknesses, values and performance as researchers and workers
- To articulate how students can best contribute to work/projects
- To learn practical strategies and resources that will support mental health
- To demonstrate how students can apply these strategies and resources
- To gain the skills to externalize negative affect in labour relations

Readings:


Week 15: January 18th – No Class Meeting

Week 16: January 25th - Topic TBD (4th Reflection piece due)

Week 17: February 1st - No Class Meeting

Week 18: February 8th - Topic TBD

Week 19 (Reading Week): February 15th –No Class Meeting (Progress Report due)

Week 20: February 22nd - Topic TBD (5th Reflection piece due)

Week 21: February 29th - No Class Meeting

Week 22: March 7th - Topic TBD

Week 23: March 14th - No Class Meeting

Week 24: March 21st – Final Oral Presentations
- Oral presentations
- Community Partners invited to attend

Week 25: (Easter Monday) - No Class Meeting

Week 26: April 4th - Final Class Meeting (Final Project Due)
- Debrief and discussion
- Course evaluations
Course components

Seminars
We will hold group seminar meetings weekly from September through November, with weekly assigned readings. Community partners are welcome to attend any or all seminar meetings, if they have the time or the desire.

Seminars will incorporate films as a medium for learning that engaged with core concepts in the course or particular issues, e.g. urban health. Guest speakers will also be invited to the seminars to provide opportunities, such as a session for anti-oppression training. Additionally, some of the seminars will be devoted to specific skill development. If there are specific demands for the projects that students do not feel sufficiently proficient with, e.g. report writing, community engagement, or Microsoft Excel, seminars will be used to better equip students to complete work to the highest quality. After the preliminary-phase of the course, instructor-led seminars will take a less prominent role to provide space for students to discuss what is happening in their work as well as discuss and comment on assigned readings.

In the Winter semester, students registered in JPG1812 will form groups and each group will be required to organize and lead one two-hour seminar (class meeting) focused on a specific set of themes/concepts/practices to be chosen by the class as a whole.

Reflection
Critical reflection on experiences, a cornerstone of service learning, often takes the form of writing in a journal (or journaling). To prevent journals from being filled with merely descriptive content, the instructors will work with the students to incorporate analytical questions or frameworks into the reflection, such as providing key questions for students to respond to or asking students to incorporate analysis of academic reading into their work where appropriate.

Communication
Communication is critical for students to learn about the organization, to work with their partners and fellow students, and to receive feedback on their work. Students will be required to arrange regular communication with community partners, preferably meetings in person at the community partner’s office that would ideally occur every other week. The more communication, the more likely it is that the effort put in by the students will result in work that is defined by, and will be useful to, the community partner. Faculty and community partners will also be in regular communication to ensure that both parties are aware of how work is going and to give feedback where possible.

Course feedback
A required component of the course will be a short form for students, faculty and community partners to fill out assessing the course at the mid-term in December and at the end of the course in April. This will ensure feedback is received, as course evaluation forms are often forgotten or completed by students only. This ensures that feedback comes from the community partner. Feedback from the mid-term will be collected and organized by faculty. It will be shared in January with all participants in an anonymous fashion to make improvements to the course and work being done on behalf of the partners.
Assignments

Reflections (due Sept 28th, Nov 2nd, Nov 23rd, Jan 25th, Feb 22nd)
(Please hand in TWO paper copies, one for each instructor).
Reflection will continue throughout the entire course. We also will assign formal short reflective pieces (approximately 4 pages, double spaced) that can take different styles such as essays, poetry, drawing, photographs, short films or spoken word, to encourage the incorporation of a variety of learning formats into classroom learning. Reflection pieces can provide a valuable learning experience not just for the individual student but also for all students, faculty and community partners. In essence, we ask you to reflect internally on what you have learned from the material you are presented with in class and the experiences you have in your placement in a creative way. We will work together to come up with interesting and appropriate themes for each of the formal reflection pieces. During the course of both semesters, each student will be given the opportunity to share their reflections, at least once, with the rest of class. The reflections should synthesize experiences from the placements, course readings, in-class reflection exercises, and group discussions.

Memorandum of Understanding (October 19th)
A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a document describing the agreement between you and your community partner. The MOU will not be a formal agreement but should reflect the communications in the early part of the placement. The MOU could include: a brief description of the intended project; the project's propose, objectives and goals; an description of the community partner; skills you may offer to the project; specific tasks you will complete; your expectations of the placement; a communication plan; a rough timeline; and, any other details you feel may be relevant to put in writing. The MOU will be shared with the community partner as part of the communication. The MOU should be about 2-4 pages in length.

Project proposal and work plan and meeting with instructors (due November 30th, individual meetings to be held the week of December 7th)
• A description of the project or issue that you will present to the class at the end of the year. This will be based on negotiation and consultation between yourself and the community partner.

• A brief review of readily available information on the situation/problem, including reports or other documents, names of knowledgeable consultants, officials, citizen group representatives, or other possible sources of information.

• The main tasks planned for the remainder of the year. This does not have to be in great detail, particularly for the later phases of the project, but it should demonstrate a genuine effort to think through what needs to be done in a sequenced way. A typical plan might include data gathering, consulting other people, places or books, analysis, development and assessment of options and recommendations. You might also include some ideas about what form your final project will take. For example, would your community partner prefer some kind of written report, or are they looking for a pamphlet, a video and promotional materials or an urban design?

• A schedule indicating when specific tasks are to be performed for the entire year.

• You will be required to meet with one of the course instructors to discuss your proposal and work plan on December 7th or at some mutually convenient time during that week.
Progress report (due February 15th)
Each student will prepare a progress report that describes the results of work completed up to this point. In some cases, this will represent an early and very incomplete draft of the final report. It is difficult to specify any particular number of pages, since the nature of projects will vary widely, but the main body the document should normally be about 10 pages long (double-spaced). You should feel free to include appendices or references to support any of your work to the main body of the report.

Final project (oral) (March 21st)
This is an oral assignment. Each student or student group will spend 10-15 minutes telling us about their project and what they have learned from their placement and their research so far. Students should feel free to use PowerPoint or other means of visual communication to share their story. Community partners will be invited to attend these presentations and invited to provide public feedback on the work so far. This will be an opportunity to get input from a variety of people regarding your work so far as well as for all of us partake in refreshments in a constructive atmosphere!

Final project (TBD) (April 4th)
The report should take the form negotiated by you and your community partner. This could be a report of some substantial length (20-30 pages) but, depending on the situation, this could be also an eportfolio, design, a pamphlet, a map, a digital website or other type of material. The student will work closely with the instructors and the community partner to make sure that the final project meets both the academic requirements of the course as well as the needs and preferences of the community partner. An initial idea should be proposed in the MOU and revisited through the proposal, update and reflections. The grade for the final project will be jointly determined the instructors with input from the community partner.

Communication
The communication grade will be calculated based on feedback from the student, faculty and community partner assessment and be collected at the same time as mid-term and final evaluations for the course.

Participation
Participation will be based on regular attendance in class and the service learning placement and engaged participation in seminar meetings. Students will also be required to provide overviews and updates about their service learning projects during class time.
Student-led Seminars (selected dates, Winter semester)

Seminar groups must provide a handout (electronically is fine) at least one week prior to the seminar, with some guided reading questions to help the rest of the class focus their reading.

During class time, seminar groups will give a brief overview to highlight the key issues and ideas developed in the chosen articles (approx. 30 min). Following that, it will be up to each seminar group to determine how they would like to spend the remainder of class time in discussion of the selected articles.

Here are some examples of how you might organize your session:

- Divide your seminar group into pairs and each pair is responsible for leading 1 hour of discussion
- Divide the class up into groups and spend one hour in small group discussion and the second hour in a full class discussion
- Divide the class into groups and have a round-robin discussion where each person from the seminar group meets for 30 minute discussions with each class group
- Organize a class debate with different ‘teams’
- A ‘poster making session’ where the class is divided into groups and each group teaches the others about a particular reading
- Invite your community partner to provide a case study and context to your topic

This is only a small selection of ideas, there are many possibilities – please be creative!

A detailed outline of the seminar must be provided to the instructors at least 2-weeks in advance of the session date.

Your group will be assigned a group grade for the overall quality of its seminar presentation based on student evaluations as well as instructor assessment. The instructors are looking for creative, energetic and interesting class meetings that hold the students’ attention and teach them valuable skills and/or inform them about topics and subjects that we have not yet covered in class.
Confirmed Partners

**Agincourt Community Services** [www.agincourtcommunityservices.com](http://www.agincourtcommunityservices.com)
Agincourt community services is a non-profit, multi-service agency at the heart of Agincourt addressing needs and empowering children, youth, newcomers, homeless and underserved communities to build a better tomorrow. Students will assist the Homelessness and Outreach areas of this organization to better achieve their program goals.

**Artscape** [torontoartscape.org](http://torontoartscape.org)
Artscape provides affordable, appropriate, secure and stable work and live workspace for artists and arts organizations. Artscape catalyzes and/or anchors creative communities and cultural facilities in neighbourhoods and this has multi-dimensional individual, community, public and private benefits. The research intern would support Artscape’s impact research by assisting with:
- refining study area geographies and research methodologies
- demographic analysis and production of area profiles
- mapping needs (for example: base mapping and analytical mapping)
- data collection and analysis
- field work (for example: user intercepts, surveys, or business counts).

**City of Toronto Planning Department**
Several key departments within the City are able to offer placement to graduate students to work on current projects including working with the Waterfront Secretariat on development of key publicly-owned sites, on the new Relief Line planned to connect Downtown Toronto to the Bloor-Danforth Subway east of the Don River and assisting the Community Services and Facilities team to review and assess development proposals. In addition, there are placements within Strategic Initiative, Policy and Analysis Division in both the Housing Team and Official Plan Team as well as a position within the Office of the Chief Planner.

**Friends of the Greenbelt** [www.greenbelt.ca](http://www.greenbelt.ca)
Friends of the Greenbelt is a not-for-profit, charitable organization, the Friends is dedicated to promoting and sustaining the Greenbelt as a permanent feature, enhancing the quality of life of all Ontarians. The students involved with this organization may work on issues related to agriculture planning such as buffers and other mitigation measures which will involve research and helping to develop planning tools.

**Friends of the Pan Am Path** [panampath.org](http://panampath.org)
The Pan Am Path is a multi-use path to connect Toronto’s trails and create an active-living legacy for the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games. It has connected over 80km of trails across Toronto and brings together residents, local organizations, artists and businesses to create truly vibrant public spaces that are reflections of those communities along the route. The organization would like to engage students with follow-up work to create an enduring presence of the path throughout the city.

**Greenest City** [www.greenestcity.ca](http://www.greenestcity.ca)
Located in Parkdale, Greenest City is dedicated to building healthy, inclusive neighbourhoods using environmental education initiatives. Greenest City embraces the commonalities and the contradictions inherent in a diverse urban community and strives to facilitate experiences in which all participants can find meaning and relevance. Students may work with the Toronto Urban Growers and other partners to create a West End Urban Agriculture Hub – to be a resource on Urban Agriculture for other organizations and individuals looking to start or further develop urban agriculture projects.
Meal Exchange [www.mealexchange.com](http://www.mealexchange.com)
Meal Exchange empowers youth to take an active role in creating a just and sustainable food system. For over 20 years, Meal Exchange has been supporting student volunteers on campuses across Canada with innovative solutions to address poverty, hunger and food insecurity in their communities. In recent years, Meal Exchange programs have evolved into broader food insecurity initiatives, peer-to-peer youth education as well as programs that address food system sustainability. Meal Exchange recognizes the power of the post-secondary institution as a centre for innovation, youth volunteering, and social change. Students placements will help to finalize research for the Real Food Challenge Canada, to help students across North America shift $1 billion of food towards local, fair, humane and ecologically sound food systems.

Sustain Ontario: The Alliance for Healthy Food & Farming [www.sustainontario.com](http://www.sustainontario.com)
(To be confirmed) Sustain Ontario is a province-wide, cross-sectoral alliance that takes a collaborative approach to research, policy development and action by addressing the intersecting issues related to healthy food and local sustainable agriculture. Students may be asked to work on a Municipal and Regional Food Policy project. During the fall and winter we will be creating additional resources for our online toolkit of policy options for stakeholders in various regions of the province. The pieces of this project will likely involve, but need not be limited to:
- Supporting the planning and implementation of municipal food policy and local food events
- Conducting outreach and interviews with municipal food policy and local food advocates

The Toronto Food Strategy [www.toronto.ca/foodconnections](http://www.toronto.ca/foodconnections)
The Toronto Food Strategy is a project of Toronto Public Health (TPH) that works collaboratively with a broad range of partners to champion and support a healthier, more sustainable food system for all. The work of the Food Strategy is focused on the notion that the City could reap many more benefits if it started to identify, name and intentionally leverage its power and resources in favour of a healthy and sustainable food system. Students may have the opportunity to support one or more current projects, depending on their service learning needs. A potential opportunity is supporting the expansion of the Healthy Corner Store project by creating a toolkit of background and implementation materials for participating storeowners (e.g. consumer & neighbourhood fact sheets; resource guide on fresh produce display, purchasing & handling; working with TPH Dieticians to create in-store nutrition training for storeowners).

Hospitality Workers Training Centre [http://hospitalitytrainingcentre.com](http://hospitalitytrainingcentre.com)
The Hospitality Workers Training Centre works with Toronto’s hospitality employers and workers to train, support and strengthen the industry’s workforce. The organization helps people access jobs in Hospitality and ensure that those currently working in Hospitality get the training they need to advance. Created as a partnership between the Hospitality Workers’ union (UNITE HERE Local 75) and major hotels in Toronto and modeled on the Culinary Training Academy of Las Vegas, they operate as an independent non-profit that works alongside the Hospitality industry.