

Border Crossing: Leadership, Value Conflicts and Public Life

PUBPOL 263, Spring Semester 2016

Tuesday/Thursday 10:05-11:20

Wednesday 10:20-11:10

149 Rubenstein Hall

Sanford School of Public Policy

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Border Crossing is a preparation course for students who plan to conduct community-based research projects or other service projects for community partner organizations in the U.S. or abroad. The course is designed to provide students with theoretical knowledge and critical reflection skills for entering diverse cultures and communities. Students will receive training in basic research methods, and conduct a service project in the spring for a local organization. Students will also explore a leadership framework for analyzing complex problem-solving work that involves learning to work with value conflicts productively—in order to mobilize groups, institutions and systems to do difficult work.

Traditionally the gateway course for Service Opportunities in Leadership (SOL), a signature program of the Hart Leadership Program, Border Crossing is being offered this spring as a stand-alone leadership seminar. This year we are putting SOL on hiatus in order to launch the Political Engagement Pilot Project (PEPP) for the new politics center at Sanford School, POLIS.

This course examines leadership as the art of working productively with value differences and value conflicts in groups, institutions, and social systems. It is inevitable that you will encounter value conflicts when you enter a new culture, and some of the most important work of this course will be our mutual reflection on the meaning, uses and misuses of these value conflicts. We will investigate case studies that present a spectrum of viewpoints, and our work will include a rich array of readings, discussions, class exercises and a service project. The purpose is for us to investigate ways that deeply-held personal values can either become impediments to public problem-solving efforts, or powerful resources for confronting systemic problems wisely and well. Our time together will give us numerous opportunities to explore what Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (an author whose work we will read) calls the ethics of responsibility.

Because this class is a research service-learning gateway course, the second half of the semester will include a research methods training module. We will present community-based research (CBR) strategies that can help you prepare for your summer field work. As part of the research training, we will also provide instruction on the ethics of research

with human subjects, and introduce you to the requirements of the protocol application to Duke's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which you will be required to submit if your proposed summer project is identified as being *research with human subjects*.

What are the highest goals of this class? Informed by scholarship and the ideas of your classmates, you will prepare yourself emotionally and intellectually to enter cultures ready to serve and to reflect critically on your experiences. You will think deeply about how to approach the inevitable value conflicts you will face as you immerse yourself in new communities and cultures. You will examine your own values and preconceptions. You will explore how you can, over time, become more effectively engaged in your own society. I look forward to doing this work with you. My hope is that this class will be stimulating for all of us, and that we will find our work together to be both challenging and enjoyable.

Course Outline

Week #1—Thursday, January 14

Welcome, introductions, overview of the course.

Week #2—January 19, 20, 21

What does it mean to help? Part I:

Karen Armstrong. *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*. New York: Anchor Books/Random House, 2011.

Week #3—January 26, 27, 28

What does it mean to help? Part II

Larissa MacFarquhar. *Strangers Drowning: Grappling With Impossible Idealism, Drastic Choices, and the Overpowering Urge to Help*. New York: Penguin Books, 2015.

Week #4—February 2, 3, 4

Case Study 1:

Gregory Boyle. *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*. New York: Free Press, 2010.

Film: *G-Dog*. Directed by Freida Lee Mock. Chanlim Films, American Film Foundation, S & M Productions, 2012.

Week #5—February 9, 10, 11

Case Study 2:

Katherine Boo. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*. New York: Random House, 2012.

Week #6—February 16,17, 18

Behind the Beautiful Forevers, continued.

Week #7—February 23, 24, 25

Case Study 3:

Anne Fadiman. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997, 2012.

Week #8—March 1, 2, 3

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, continued.

Week #9—March 8, 9, 10

Case Study 4:

Bryan Stevenson. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2014.

Spring break: March 15, 16, 17: NO CLASS

Service Project—Overview and training sessions

Our service project will cover a five week period, starting on March 22. We will begin with two weeks of preparation/training for our project with the partner organization, followed by two weeks of research methods training to help you refine your plans for your summer projects, followed by a weeklong overview of the adaptive leadership framework. We will wrap up our service project for our community partner by April 21.

Week #10—March 22, 23, 24

Week #11—March 29, 30, 31

The writing assignments for this two-week training period will be announced. The reading assignment will include the two articles listed below, and additional articles—to be announced:

Brenda Ueland. "Tell Me More," from *Strength To Your Sword Arm*. Duluth, Minnesota: Holy Cow! Press, 1993.

Fran Peavey. "American Willing to Listen," from *The Wisdom of Listening*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003.

Readings will also include select chapters from the following book:

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence*. New York: Schocken Books, 2015.

Research Methods Training Module

Week #12—April 5, 6, 7

Preparation for summer community-based research (CBR) projects: training in research methods and critical reflection skills; Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol application for research with human subjects. (Assigned articles about community-based research will be accessible on Sakai.)

Week #13—April 12, 13, 14

Research methods training, continued.

- Letter Home (about service project) is due Monday, April 11 on Sakai;
- Letter Home training workshop to be announced.
- Service project continues until April 21.

Week #14—April 19, 20, 21

Leadership and adaptive learning:

- William Deresiewicz. "Solitude and Leadership." *The American Scholar*, Spring 2010.
- Sharon Daloz Parks. "Toward a More Adequate Myth: The Art of Leadership," from *Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2005.
- Jonathan Sacks. "On Dreams and Responsibilities," from *To Heal a Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility*. New York: Schocken Books, 2005.
- Alma Blount. "Courage for the Tough Questions: Leadership and Adaptive Learning," *From Command to Community: A New Approach to Leadership Education in Colleges*, edited by Nicholas V. Longo and Cynthia M. Gibson. University Press of New England, 2011.

Week #15—April 26

Wrap up reflections, parting words, and celebration brunch

(Graded research proposal is due by 12:00 noon, Monday, April 25.)

Course requirements

- Complete and punctual attendance in all classes and discussion sections.
- Please finish the reading assignments each week prior to Tuesday's class. Show up for each of the classes and discussions sections ready for full and vigorous discussion.
- Complete 12 weekly writing assignments and/or in-class quizzes.
- Participate in our group service-learning project (March and April); write a *Letter Home* about what you learned from your experiences.
- Submit a (graded) research proposal for a community-based research project.
- Submit a final paper that integrates what you have learned throughout the semester about the key themes of the course. (Guidelines will be provided.)

Grading policy

Weekly assignments	40%
Class participation	30%
Research proposal	10%
Final paper	20%

Evaluation

We will keep careful track of your work. What I am most interested in is your growth over the course of the semester, and how the quality of your inquiry improves from week to week. I will give you midterm grades for the weekly assignments and for class participation.

A note about participation

Please participate actively in class with the goal of helping us create great group discussions. Pay attention to both the content and the dynamics of our class discussions, and look for creative, effective ways to help us deepen our conversations throughout the semester. Make your comments count. This is a safe place to express yourself honestly, so please take some risks to bring fresh perspectives to our work. *Quality matters far more than quantity.* If your tendency is to talk a lot, try observing more, and you will be more effective. If you are shy about speaking in class, I can help you.

Electronics policy

Help us create a high quality learning environment this semester that is delightfully free from distractions when we meet. No open laptops while class is in session, and no texting. Please silence your phones.

This course is designed to be an energizing, eye-opening learning experience that will challenge you to give it your best. You will have multiple opportunities to stretch yourselves so you can learn something useful about border crossing and leadership. A core part of your leadership development this semester will be your own ability to be

fully present. Help us create a learning environment where we listen to each other, and can be inspired by the depth and creativity of our group conversations.

Assignments

1. *Weekly assignments.* Assignments will include point-of-view essays (500 words) and quizzes (with fill-in-the blank, short-answer, and short-essay formats) about the readings each week. Total of 12 weekly assignments.
2. *“Letter Home” about the service project.* This is a reflective, narrative essay about your experiences with the service project we will do for five weeks in March and April for a community partner. Earlier in the semester our writing coach will train you in how to write the Letter Home. (Although this is a required assignment, it will not be graded.)
3. *Graded research proposal—3 pages.* Due Monday, April 25. In this assignment I will ask you to present a research question and to describe which research method(s) you would use to conduct a community-based research (CBR) project for a community partner. The proposal could be for a hypothetical project, or it could be for a real community-based research project that will be supported by SOL, DukeEngage, a Dean’s Summer Grant, or another source of research funding.
4. *Final paper—3 pages.* Due on our exam date, Tuesday, May 3. (Guidelines will be presented in class.) I will ask you to write about a border crossing issue salient to our work together this semester. By addressing a complex issue in a carefully reasoned, nuanced way, and by addressing options for public deliberation on the topic, you will have an opportunity to integrate what you have been learning throughout the semester.

Coaching points for weekly assignments

Whether you are writing a point-of-view essay or taking a quiz about the reading assignment, the following questions are important: What is your analysis of the reading? What are the author’s core themes and arguments? What are your own thoughts and ideas in relation to the author’s viewpoint?

Your point-of-view essay should be a concise, well-crafted, energetic piece of writing that is a pleasure to read. Limit it to 500 words and let every word count. As you write, think of yourself as priming the pump for our class discussions. Use the essays to develop your own distinct voice, and remember that you are doing so in order to add something useful to our class discussions, and to enhance the quality of the learning experience for all of us. So be strategic in your writing.

As the semester progresses, you will be able to relate earlier readings and class discussions to the texts for the current week. I am interested in your reflections about the various people and issues we will study in relation to the core themes of the class:

- The challenges and opportunities presented by “border crossing;”

- The ways that religious, ethical, political, and cultural values influence service and participation in public life;
- The art of working with value conflicts productively; exploring the ways that profound differences in perspectives could become strategic resources for addressing complex social problems.

I am also interested in your response to the authors' viewpoints. Do you agree or disagree? What points do you find most compelling, most interesting, most challenging? Pick a salient aspect of the text and focus on that. You will do your best writing when you anchor yourself in specifics, and write about something significant in the text that really grabs your interest.

Please remember that the readings are your primary focus of analysis. Use your creativity in these papers, but *anchor them closely to the text to demonstrate that you are coming to grips with the reading in some important way.* I am looking for original, challenging thought and excellent writing on a *coherent thesis* closely related to the texts and themes of the course. I may read excerpts of your papers in class, or ask you to post your work on Sakai so we can all read what you have to say.

Required texts

1. Karen Armstrong. *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*. New York: Anchor Books/Random House, Inc., 2011.
2. Larissa MacFarquhar. *Strangers Drowning: Grappling With Impossible Idealism, Drastic Choices, and the Overpowering Urge to Help*. New York: Penguin Books, 2015.
3. Gregory Boyle. *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*. New York: Free Press, 2010.
4. Katherine Boo. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*. New York: Random House, 2012.
5. Anne Fadiman. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997, 2012.
6. Bryan Stevenson. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2014.
7. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence*. New York: Schocken Books, 2015.

Service project

Participation in our class service project is a core requirement of the course. Working in small groups over a five-week period from March 22th through April 21th, you will have creative license to design and implement a simple outreach project that benefits our partner organization and the population it serves in a kind and useful way. Please count on spending 18-20 hours on the service project this spring.

The project itself will become a form of border crossing work for you, and there will be a lot to learn from it. Your assignment is to work with your classmates to find the most skillful and appropriate ways possible to help our community address a topic of their choosing. The help we provide may include a mix of direct service work and research. Details will be announced in class.

Our course readings will help prepare you for the project, but they will not make the project easy to do. This will not be a casual or light-hearted assignment. It is not that our service project is complicated, but it will require sensitivity, respect and maturity on your part. Please plan on bringing your careful attention to it in order to do it well. Your planning work with your classmates, and your border crossing work when you actually conduct the service project, are both guaranteed to stretch you in unexpected and worthwhile ways.

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