XCC 433 Section A1:
Challenging Inequities in Urban Education

Fall 2019
Meeting Time and Location: Thursdays 3:30-6:15  PHO 202

Instructors:
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Credits: 4 credits [+4 BU Hub Units (Oral Communication, Creativity/Innovation, Teamwork/Collaboration and Research and Information Literacy)]

Course Description
The Cross-College Challenge offers a unique project-based learning experience in which interdisciplinary student teams from across BU’s undergraduate colleges tackle real-world problems and develop leadership, teamwork and communication skills. Students from any major will collaborate with both on- and off-campus sponsors exposing students to current challenges impacting BU and the City of Boston in areas such as arts management, technology, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and beyond. Some teams may also investigate enduring human questions such as inequality, social justice, and human creativity.

While every team will complete a project proposal, preliminary bibliography and final report, make a concluding oral presentation, reflect on their experiences at the end of the semester, and submit relevant project-specific final products, the faculty will also determine the number and timing of intermittent assignments that students must complete.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Challenging Inequities in Public Education
Inequality in school funding leads to inequality of educational opportunity. Relative to their more affluent peers, lower income students have access to fewer educational resources, including academic tutoring and programs that foster school engagement. Our client—826 Boston—is front and center in providing Boston’s students with enriching opportunities to enhance their creative writing skills and love of reading. As stated on their website, 826 Boston “is a nonprofit youth writing and publishing organization that empowers traditionally underserved students ages 6-18 to find their voices, tell their stories, and gain communication skills to succeed in school and in life.” The organization offers a variety of in-school and out-of-school tutoring and writing programs, free of charge, to over 4,000 Boston students annually. A network of over 2500 volunteers from the Boston area, including 700 adults who regularly volunteer, for the core of 826 Boston.
Our XCC course has been charged with understanding the volunteers’ experiences and strengthening the volunteer training program. After researching advances in social and emotional learning (SEL) and cultural competency, our teams will engage in qualitative and quantitative research that will shed light on ways in which the volunteers can be better supported in their work with students. At the end of the semester, our teams will prepare a written report of findings and recommendations and will present these at the XCC end of semester showcase.

Community partner: 826 Boston [www.826boston.org](http://www.826boston.org)
Primary contact: Patti Wilder, Volunteer Manager

**BU Hub Objectives:** XC 433 will meet [BU Hub Learning Outcomes](#) for Creativity/Innovation, Oral Communication, Teamwork/Collaboration and Research and Information Literacy. In particular:

**Creativity/Innovation Learning Outcomes** Students will demonstrate understanding of creativity as a learnable, iterative process of imagining new possibilities that involves risk-taking, use of multiple strategies, and reconceiving in response to feedback, and will be able to identify individual and institutional factors that promote and inhibit creativity.

1. Students will be able to exercise their own potential for engaging in creative activity by conceiving and executing original work either alone or as part of a team.
2. Students will demonstrate understanding of creativity as a learnable, iterative process of imagining new possibilities that involves risk-taking, use of multiple strategies, and reconceiving in response to feedback, and will be able to identify individual and institutional factors that promote and inhibit creativity.
3. Students will develop a deep understanding of the Boston 826 volunteers’ experiences through a survey and individual and focus group interviews.
4. Students will search for meaning and insights into the volunteers’ experiences through analysis of survey responses and individual and focus group interviews.
5. Students will generate ideas for enhancing the volunteer training as a result of insights they will glean from the survey and interviews.
6. Students will continually reflect on and discuss the analysis processes they are using to build innovative and creative ways to enhance the Boston 826 volunteer training.

**Oral and/or Signed Communication Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will be able to craft and deliver responsible, considered and well-structured oral and/or signed arguments using media and modes of expression appropriate to the situation.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding that oral/signed communication is generally interactive, and they should be able to attend and respond thoughtfully to others.
3. Students will be able to speak/sign effectively in situations ranging from the formal to the extemporaneous and interact comfortably with diverse audiences.
4. Students will receive training in professional and respectful communication with the Boston 826 volunteers with whom they will come into contact with during interviews and survey administration.
5. Students will receive training on respectful and responsive communication with team members.
6. Students will receive training and engage in practice presentations of their Showcase at the end of the semester.
7. Students will continuously reflect on what they are learning about oral/signed communication.

TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will receive explicit training in teamwork and sustained experiences of collaborating with others, students will be able to identify the characteristics of a well-functioning team.
2. Students will demonstrate an ability to use the tools and strategies of working successfully with a diverse group, such as assigning roles and responsibilities, giving and receiving feedback, and engaging in meaningful group reflection that inspires collective ownership of results.
3. Teams should complete a team contract in which they explicitly set goals, assign roles and responsibilities, discuss their processes, and identify how they will work together.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION LITERACY LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will learn and demonstrate the ability to search for, select, and use a range of publicly available and discipline-specific information sources ethically and strategically to address research questions.
2. By producing their project proposal, final report, and intermediate assignments in a series of iterative phases, students will demonstrate an understanding of the overall research process and its component parts, and be able to formulate good research questions or hypotheses, gather and analyze information, and critique, interpret, and communicate findings.
3. Throughout the semester, students will reflect on the research process and build towards a deep understanding of the critical importance of selecting and citing respected research findings

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Week #1: September 5
- Introduce the course and review the cross-college challenge
- Introduce to our community partner, 826 Boston
- Meet our primary contact at 826 Boston, Patti Wilder, Volunteer Manager
- Gather information for instructors to sort students into teams

Friday, September 6: XCC Course Launch Event 3:30-5:30pm PHO Colloquium Room
Week #2: September 12

- Identify the teams and exchange contact information
- Receive training on teaming and group contracts from colleagues at Questrom faculty
- Begin to learn about social and emotional factors in learning, mentoring, and the influence of identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, social class) on tutoring and learning.
- Discuss the team contract assignment due week #4

Readings due for this class:


Read the three brief pieces in the folder called “teaming” on Blackboard:

- Stages of team development
- Team leadership
- Team roles

Week #3: September 19

- Receive training from 826 Boston

Readings due for this class:


Go to the “student work” tab on the 826 Boston website: https://826boston.org/student-work/ There are 65 pieces of student writing. Read through several of them. Select a line from two different pieces that really stood out to you. What caught your attention? Why? We will do a go-around to share these lines with each other. Also, consider what you can learn about the students, the act of writing, and 826 Boston from reading the student work on their website.

There may be additional readings from/about 826 Boston and their own periodic evaluation of their volunteers’ experiences.
Week #4: September 26

- Continue to learn about social and emotional factors in learning
- Learn about creating interview and survey questions
- Discuss the project proposal assignment due week #7

Assignment due: team contract (submit on Blackboard by 11:59pm)

Readings due for this class:


These two pieces explore social-emotional learning and writing centers/writing conferences:


These two pieces explore the effect of a teacher’s social identity on students and student learning:


Week #5: October 3

- Review drafts of interview and survey questions
- By the end of class, have drafts of survey questions to send to Patti Wilder
- Review library research skills with our XCC librarians
- Discuss the bibliography assignment due week #10
- Create an informal informed consent to use with participants
- Contact potential interviewees to schedule interviews

Readings due for this class:

Everyone read these four brief entries from *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research*:


Each student will be assigned one of the following entries from *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research* and be prepared to share key learnings:

- Active listening
- Closed question
- Empathy
- Fieldnotes
- Natural setting
- Open-ended question
- Probes and probing
- Rapport
- Structured interview

**Week #6: October 10**
- Create brief evaluation forms for obtaining feedback at BUild Lab
- Incorporate interview and survey feedback from Patti Wilder
- Discuss any challenges with reaching interviewees/scheduling interviews
- Discuss the process of using Qualtrics for the survey

**Week #7: October 17**
- Practice interviewing at BUild Lab
- Bring in revised drafts of interview protocols.
- Launch survey in Qualtrics

**Assignment due: Project proposal with survey questions or interview questions (submit on Blackboard by 11:59pm)**

**Week #8: October 24**

We will not meet as a class this week. You will need to use this time to conduct and transcribe your interviews.

**Week #9: October 31**
- Bring in transcripts.
● Read through them.
● Talk about data analysis.

Readings due for this class:


Week #10: November 7
● Making meaning of qualitative data

Assignment due: Bibliography and concept map (submit bibliography on Blackboard by 11:59pm, and bring the concept map to class at 3:30pm. Concept maps are a working document, and we will use them in class.)

Week #11: November 14
● Based on the results, work on the deliverables
● What are similarities and differences in qualitative and quantitative data?
● How can we structure a report to be most useful to our client?

Week #12: November 21
● Continue to use findings to create deliverables
● Based on what we learn from volunteers’ experiences, what training materials can we locate or create that could be implemented by future 826 training facilitators?
● Discuss effective oral presentation skills

Reading due this class:


Thanksgiving: November 28 NO CLASS

Week #13: December 5
● Mock presentation before showcase
Final edits to deliverables and provide these to the client
Wrap-up and evaluation of course

Assignment due: Final deliverables to client and uploaded on Blackboard on December 5th by 11:59pm

Assignment due: Oral presentation during XCC showcase: December 14th 9am-12:30pm

Assignment due: Final reflection uploaded on Blackboard on December 16th by 11:59pm

Assignments

Team Contract (due 9/26 by 11:59pm on Blackboard; 5% of final grade) You will receive training in the Team Learning Assistant (TLA). You will be able to identify the characteristics of a well-functioning team, which will be crucial as you work in teams of 3-5 students to carry out this project. This application supports sustained collaboration with others and promotes the skills, tools, and strategies needed for good teamwork, including assigning roles and responsibilities, giving and receiving feedback, and engaging in meaningful group reflection that inspires collective ownership of results. A template and explicit instructions will be provided for completing the team contract.

Project Proposal (due by 10/17 by 11:59pm on Blackboard; 20% of final grade) The project proposal begins with a description of the overarching question(s) guiding this project, as provided by our community partner, 826 Boston. What does 826 Boston want to know? Why do they want to know it? What need is this project addressing? Next, the project plan includes the following sections: background, methods and approach, deliverables, timeline, collaboration with faculty and other key informants, and references. At this point in the course, we will have explored topics related to community-based research and qualitative approaches for data collection, including surveys and interviews. The project proposal needs to include the refined interview protocol and/or survey questions.

Annotated Bibliography and Concept Map (due 11/7 by 11:59pm on Blackboard, and bring the concept map to class at 3:30pm. Concept maps are a working document, and we will use them in class; 15% of final grade) Qualitative research is an inductive process that moves from participants’ perceptions and experiences to theories that can organize and explain the data. Often qualitative research yields a tremendous volume of research from interviews and open-ended questions on surveys, and researchers turn to the existing theoretical and empirical literature to help make sense of the themes that emerge in the different sources of data.

You are asked to write annotated bibliography entries that include a citation in APA style, a brief (no more than 3 sentences) overview of key findings or argument in your own words, and a brief (no more than 2 sentences) link to how this source relates to the meaning and implications of your findings. Include the full quotation(s) that you plan to use from this source, along with an in-text
Concept maps are helpful in qualitative data analysis. This concise and visual tool can be used to organize data and explore the links between and among codes, themes, and categories of themes. Qualitative researchers do not simply report out the findings from each interview question; they listen to their data and determine what story they want to tell. A concept map can ensure that the key pieces are included and integrated, and the story can be told in a logical, thoughtful narrative.

**Open and Closed Peer Reviews (Due dates vary)** Peer review involves sharing one's writing and ideas with a group of peer readers who offer feedback and suggestions for improvement. Throughout the semester, students will review one another’s work in both open and closed peer reviews. An open peer review occurs when the writer knows which student is reviewing his/her writing, while a closed peer review is a review done anonymously. The peer review assignments will help students develop their ability to give and receive feedback, and engage in meaningful group reflection that inspires collective ownership of results.

**Final Deliverables (Due 12/5 at 11:59pm on Blackboard; 35% of final grade)** The final deliverables for this project are two-fold. First, students will provide 826 Boston with a concise, organized report based on the survey and interview data collected from current volunteers. This report will be a strengths-based evaluation of various aspects of their volunteer training; in particular, we are focusing on the volunteers’ understanding of social-emotional learning and recognition of the impact of their own social location (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, social class, etc). Secondly, based on the evaluative research, students will locate and/or create materials that the facilitators could add to the existing curriculum to further prepare and support new volunteers.

**Concluding Oral Presentation (Due 12/14 during the Showcase)** Prior to the Showcase, we will review the skills of effective and engaging oral presentations, and practice and polish the final presentations during class. At the Showcase, each team will present for 15 minutes using PowerPoint or Prezi slides, and then will engage with the audience in a period of questions and answers. The presentation should focus on the deliverables and outcomes, and should touch on the process, such as engagement with the community partner and decision-making over the course of the semester.

**Final Reflection (Due 12/17 by 11:59pm on Blackboard; 5% of final grade)** After completing the project, providing the deliverables, and giving a presentation, students are asked to reflect on the process of carrying out a qualitative inquiry with a community partner. This reflection should describe the knowledge and skills developed in each of the XCC learning objectives associated with this course: Oral Communication, Creativity/Innovation, Teamwork/Collaboration and Research and Information Literacy. More guidance will be provided in class, and students will be encouraged to consider creative approaches for this culminating reflection.
Supplemental Reading List

This project requires significant knowledge about many inter-related topics: volunteering, mentoring, writing tutoring/writing centers, a strengths-based approach, social-emotional learning, and social identity and its impact on teaching and learning. The following readings may be useful in deepening your own understanding and informing your work on the project:

Readings on volunteer mentors and tutors:


Readings on social-emotional learning and writing centers/writing conferences:


Readings on the effect of a teacher’s social identity on students and student learning:


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Assignments and Grading:
Team contract (due September 26th) 5%
Project proposal, including survey questions or interview questions (due October 17th) 20%
Bibliography and concept map (due November 7th) 15%
Team participation, attendance, and open and closed peer reviews (due dates vary) 10%
Final deliverables (due December 5th) 35%
Concluding oral presentation during showcase (December 14th 9am-12:30pm) 10%
Final reflection (December 16th) 5%

Course Materials
All course materials, including readings, links to podcasts, syllabi, assignment guidelines, and assignment submission are available on our course’s Blackboard site.

Instructional Format, Course Pedagogy, and Approach to Learning
Class time will be used for a combination of lectures, discussions, and group work (including library research and writing workshop activities). Participation is very important in this class, as students will be asked to explain the readings and concepts, to offer analysis of research, and to express their opinion.

Attendance. Participation and Attendance: Since this course is a once weekly seminar, your regular attendance and participation are essential both to your own learning and to your classmates’ learning. Consequently, regular attendance is essential, and missing class will have a direct impact on your final grade. Under ordinary circumstances, missing more than one week of class will lower your final grade. Missing more than two weeks of class may lead to a failing grade in the course.

Grading Scale in this Course

A  = 93 - 100
A-  = 90 - 92
B+  = 87 - 89
B   = 83- 86
B-  = 80 - 82
C+  = 77 - 79
C   = 73 - 76
C-  = 70 - 72
D   = 60 - 69
F   = 59

COURSE POLICIES

Grade Consultations:
We are happy to meet with you to discuss grades. However, you must wait at least 24 hours after receiving a graded assignment before contacting either one of us to discuss grades. The purpose of
this policy is to give you time to read and consider our written feedback on your work. If you do
come to see us about a grade, we will expect you to have read this written feedback beforehand.

Technology Policy:
Because this class will involve in-class writing exercises and group activities that employ online
applications on a regular basis, you should bring a laptop to class every day. However, ultimately,
this is a small seminar class that relies on class discussions. These discussions are crucial to
success in this class, and you are required to keep the laptop closed and powered off during class
discussion.

Cell phones are a distraction and can disrupt productive conversations and even prevent them from
happening. Cell phones must be turned off during class. Students who use laptops or tablets for
any other purpose (gaming, emailing, web browsing, etc.) will be marked absent for the day.

Email Policy:
Email is preferred method contacting us. You may wish to send your email to both instructors so
that we can all be aware of student questions.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the bedrock of any scholarly community. The objective of Boston
University in enforcing academic rules is to promote a community atmosphere in which learning
and the pursuit of knowledge can best take place.

As articulated in the Academic Conduct Code “All students at Boston University are expected to
maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity. It is the responsibility of every student
to be aware of the Academic Conduct Code’s contents and to abide by its provisions”
(http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/).

In general, academic misconduct is conduct by which a student misrepresents his or her academic
accomplishments, or impedes other students’ opportunities of being judged fairly for their
academic work. Students should pay particular attention to the rules regarding plagiarism,
teamwork, submission of work to more than one course without permission, and conduct in a
professional field assignment. If students have any questions about academic integrity or how it
applies to the assignments in a specific course, students should consult their instructor.

Incomplete grade policy

Students receiving a grade of Incomplete must complete an “Incomplete Contract.” This contract
should be filled out by both the student and instructor to dictate the completion deadline and
circumstances of an Incomplete grade. Both student and instructor will need to sign this form and
the signed form should be returned to the SED Student Records Office, Room 115, for processing.
Incomplete grades should not be awarded without this contract.

Students have one year to resolve the terms of the contract or the grade will become the grade
earned at the time the “I” grade was issued.
Policy on Late Work
Students must arrive to class on time in order to fully participate in the class. If they arrive late and miss the individual or group work on an in-class question, there is no make-up. Credit is offered only if they are present in class when the work is being completed.

- Excuses for late work are not recognized on or after the due date. In other words, if a student expects an assignment to be late it is best to communicate with the instructors prior to class and design a plan for late paper submission. Arriving in class and offering an excuse will not earn an extension on or after the due date without a reduction in grade. It is best to plan ahead so that there is time to communicate with the instructor.
- Excused absences for illness (yours or a family member’s) will be granted provided that students submit documentation from the medical professional in question.

Statement of Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

BU is committed to equal access for students with disabilities. If you have a specific disability and require accommodations in this class, please let me know early in the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made. You must provide me with a letter of needed accommodations prepared by the Office of Disability Services. Contact information for that office is as follows: (617) 353-3658 V/TTY or access@bu.edu. All discussions and written materials will be kept confidential.

Credit Hour Explanation

This course is a 4-credit course. It has a scheduled course lecture/discussion time of 3 hours per week. Students are expected to engage an additional 1-hour of course-related work each week during the semester. This includes: meeting in small peer groups, preparing written reflections, and meeting with the professor.

TITLE IX

Boston University recognizes that sexual assault, harassment, discrimination and other forms of sexual misconduct can have a profound impact on a person’s personal, academic, and work life. The University encourages any student coping with such a situation, and who is uncertain of their options or simply need help, to call one of the following confidential resources:

On Campus
- BU Sexual Assault Response & Prevention Center 617-353-7277 | sarp@bu.edu 930 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215
- Boston University Chaplains 617-358-3560
- Student Health Services 617-353-3575
- Behavioral Medicine 617-353-3569

Off Campus
- Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network 1-800-656-467
- Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC) 800-841-8371
And, because Boston University is committed to fostering an environment that is free from all forms of sexual misconduct, any concerns, questions, or disclosures related to sexual misconduct can be directed to any of the Wheelock College Title IX Deputy Coordinators (http://www.bu.edu/safety/sexual-misconduct/title-ix-bu-policies/sexual-misconducttitle-ix-policy/title-ix-team/) or any other reporting resource on campus (http://www.bu.edu/safety/sexual-misconduct/reporting/).

All disclosures of sexual or gender-based violence or harassment on or off campus made to faculty, teaching assistants, or other university employees must be forwarded to the BU Title IX Coordinator (617-353-9286).

Information above was adapted from the Boston University Title IX Policy found at: http://www.bu.edu/safety/sexual-misconduct/title-ix-bu-policies/sexual-misconducttitle-ix-policy/