

**FOCUS AWARD
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
CIVIC/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

CURRICULAR

Com 110—Communication as Critical Inquiry PEP Project

Project Description:

Illinois State University was selected as one of eight institutions to participate in a national American Democracy Project initiative, the Political Engagement Project (PEP). This project, directed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, addresses the serious problem of political disengagement in young people and advocates a dramatic increase in college and university efforts to strengthen student interest in politics. The primary mission of the Political Engagement Project is to enhance ISU students' awareness and understanding of political engagement and impact their level of political involvement and leadership. The PEP project rests on the assumption that institutions of higher education must educate students for political engagement in order to develop the kind of informed political participation that is essential for a meaningful democracy.

Student Outcomes:

The COM 110 PEP project aims to positively influence the following competencies related to political engagement:

- **Knowledge**—an understanding of politics and political processes.
- **Judgment/deliberation**—abilities to use reasoning to justify claims, present evidence in support of a position, and weigh competing claims.
- **Skills**—the abilities to engage in political discourse and processes (e.g., developing communication, critical thinking, as well as information and media literacy skills).
- **Motivation**—being interested in public affairs, feeling committed to being actively engaged, and feeling a sense of political efficacy. In this course students develop these competencies through a number of activities and assignments; however, we want to point out that there is no “magic bullet” for developing political engagement. Instead, this course aims to establish the foundation for students' future political engagement upon which other courses in the general education program and their major will build.

University Goals/Outcomes:

The focus of PEP at Illinois State is curricular. Established goals for the Political Engagement Project will be accomplished primarily through PEP courses which have student learning outcomes in place to guide faculty and student participation in formal learning activities.

- Create a curricular plan with student learning outcomes that will demonstrate increased student awareness of, and engagement in, political systems and processes (Years 1, 2 and 3)
- Strengthen partnerships leading to more coordination between curricular and co-curricular activities to enhance political activism by students, faculty and staff (Years 2 and 3)
- Foster political activism in undergraduate students that leads to an increase in political leadership and participation on and off campus (Years 1, 2 and 3)
- Develop students' understanding of political and social engagement as a life-long responsibility of all citizens (Years 1, 2 and 3)

Community Outcomes: *The community benefits by:*

- A more informed and active electorate.
- Student projects will raise awareness of important social issues affecting the community.
- Students will also be working to address and potentially solve important social issues affecting the community.
- Enhancing the relationship between the university and the community.

Com 128—Gender in the Humanities Activism Assignment

Project Description:

The entire class focuses on one social problem related to gender. Student groups are then assigned a portion of that problem. After educating themselves thoroughly on the topic, each group creates and delivers an on-campus public-information campaign about that topic utilizing quad-chalking, flyers, potty-talks, residence hall/fraternity/sorority house /athletic team presentations, and facebook groups as communication vehicles.

Student Outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are able to:

- Fulfill the general education curriculum requirements involving the utilization and demonstration of: critical thinking skills; group communication skills; and public speaking skills.
- Understand the gender-related social problems that plague our local and national community.
- Apply their course-related knowledge outside of the classroom.
- Understand how to become active in improving their community.

- Serve as a “voice” for people who do not have one.

Community Outcomes:

The community benefits by having an:

- Increased public awareness of the topic as it affects themselves or their loved ones
- Increased public knowledge on the topic in general
- Increased public knowledge on campus/community support programs related to the topic

Com 163—Television Production Public Service Announcement

Project Description:

Students work together in small groups to write and produce a thirty second Public Service Announcement video to be aired during TV10 News. The PSA’s can either focus on a non-profit group or on a particular message that affects the viewing public. The goal of the PSA is to motivate or educate the viewer in regards to a particular social issue or non-profit organization.

Student Outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are able to:

- Participate as an active member of a video production team as a project is taken from the initial conception stage through the final creation of a broadcast-quality video.
- Understand the three stages of television production; pre-production, production and post-production.
- Demonstrate proficiency in writing, planning, shooting and editing for television.
- Demonstrate their proficiency in communicating to the viewing public via the medium of television.

Community Outcomes:

The community benefits by:

- Receiving information about local and national non-profit groups and the services they provide.
- Receiving informative and motivational messages about social issues affecting the local community.
- Having a means of delivering information from local non-profit organizations to the local community at no cost.

COM 201 – Communication and Social Issues Social Movement Assignment

Project Description:

Students are encouraged to choose a social issue that concerns them and the ISU campus or surrounding community. They research that issue and discuss its significance. Then, after careful study of activist campaigns, the students prepare, develop and initiate their own activist campaign to address their social issue of significance. At the end of the course, students present their experience to their classmates and write a formal paper explaining the process, implementation and outcomes of their campaigns.

Student Outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are able to:

- Gain increased awareness of the Bloomington/Normal community.
- Understand the needs faced by less-privileged members of their community.
- Understand how they can use their skills and abilities to serve others in their community.
- Recognize specific social issues and how they impact members of a community.
- Interact with and learn more about members of their community who do not have a direct relationship with the university.
- Recognize and experience course lessons on group processes in an applied setting.
- Raise community awareness of an issue.
- Serve their community.
- Learn how to become a more active citizen.
- Develop skills necessary to be an advocate for a cause that interests them.
- Awareness that as students, they can make a difference in their communities.

Community Outcomes:

The community benefits by:

- Receiving volunteer services for less-privileged individuals.
- Becoming aware of social issues and of campus/community support programs related to the issues.
- Enhancing the relationship between the university and the community.
- Increasing awareness of civic engagement possibilities.
- Knowledge that students can make a difference.

COM 210—Communication and Critical Thinking Letter Writing Assignment

Project Description:

Students research, develop, and assemble letters to elected political officers requesting a specific plan of action. During this process, they work together in small groups to bolster their arguments and increase topic awareness before sending their letters.

Student outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are better able to:

- Engage in political discourse
- Identify policies affecting them on a local, state, national, and international level.
- Establish relationships and influence their respondents
- Evaluate the effectiveness of their petitioning
- Students better understand policy
- Positively impact and represent their community

Community outcomes:

The community benefits by:

- Increased awareness of policies affecting community members
- Establishing relationships with the university and students involved with the policy
- Possibility generating the desired result with the policy outcome

COM 210—Communication and Critical Thinking Diversity Project

Project Description:

Students interview an individual who is of a different race, socio-economic status, and gender or sex. Students present a developed argument based on their experience with the participant and project.

Student Outcomes:

After participating in this project, students benefit by:

- Having a better understanding of humanity
- Learning how to embrace diversity
- Having an increased awareness of specific societal issues and their impact on a community
- Interacting with and learn more about members of their community who do not have a direct relationship with the university.

Community Outcomes:

The community benefits by:

- Having an opportunity to share their expertise and experience.
- Learning how to embrace and appreciate diversity.
- Often establishing close relationships with their student reporter.

- Creating social and political discourse.
- Enhancing the relationship between the community and university.

Com 223—Small Group Communication Community Engagement Assignment

Project Description:

Student groups are assigned a non-profit organization at which they volunteer their time. Then they create, plan and organize, implement, and evaluate a fund raising event or public information campaign for that organization.

In Dr. Bill Semlak's COM 223 section in fall 2007, students participated in the Jingle Bell fundraising activity. The 26 groups raised over \$11,00 for the Arthritis Foundation. Several groups won awards from the Foundation.

Student Outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are able to:

- Gain increased awareness of the B/N community.
- Understand the needs faced by less-privileged members of their community.
- Understand the needs of organizations who serve less privileged members of the community.
- Us understand how they can use their skills and abilities to serve others in their community.
- Recognize specific social issues and how they impact members of a community.
- Interact with and learn more about members of their community who do not have a direct relationship with the university.
- Recognize and experience course lessons on group processes in an applied setting.
- Build a resume.
- Raise community awareness of an issue.
- Serve their community.

Community Outcomes:

The community benefits by:

- Receiving financial assistance for less-privileged individuals.
- Receiving volunteer services for less-privileged individuals.
- Becoming aware of social issues and of campus/community support programs related to the issues.
- Enhancing the relationship between the university and the community.

Com 310—Application in Public Relations

Project Description:

The COM 310 course is designed to allow public relations students to learn and apply skills to real world issues. Teams of students assess, design, implement, and evaluate pro-social or health related public communication campaigns. Topics include the raising of awareness of family caregiving (as part of the national Bateman competition, sponsored by the Public Relations Society of America), the adoption of a 3-day emergency kit for households, as well as other campaigns yet to be determined.

Student Outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are able to:

- Analyze issues and the environment around an issue to understand causes, symptoms, and relevant factors relating to an issue.
- Determine various ideas and products that could be promoted relating to an issue/problem.
- Conduct audience analysis to assess knowledge, attitudes, practice, and perceived barriers to behavior adoption.
- Analyze data to create stronger campaign materials that meet audience wants, needs, desires, and channel preferences
- Develop strategic messages to achieve organizational objectives
- Develop and implement public relations tactics
- Evaluation of campaign effectiveness

Community Outcomes:

The community benefits by:

- Increased public awareness of the topic as it affects themselves or their loved ones
- Increased public knowledge on how to protect themselves or their loved ones
- Increased public acceptance of the importance of a topic or issue
- Increased action on the topic or issue
- Raised awareness about the topic or issue across the various community stakeholders

Sustainability:

The campaign will be sustained by:

- Development of a detailed campaign evaluation summarizing the campaign, implementation of campaign, effects of campaign, and recommendations for further campaign development.
- Establishing relationships with community members involved with the topic or issue. Consultation and collaboration opportunities will exist between student members and community members.

- Possible relationship building with the Public Relations Student Society of America to create opportunities for further campaigns or events.

COM 361—Regulation of the Communication Industry Social Capital/Civic Engagement Projects

Project Description:

Social Capital is defined as “people’s connections with the life of their communities not merely with politics” (Putnam, 1995), and these connections “should aim at improving their local communities in order for such activities to be defined as civic engagement” (Moy et al., 1990, p. 30). For this project, students work on expanding their social network through going to group events like election campaigns, town hall meetings, presentations of a civic nature, or political party meetings. Students learn that communicating with others in these contexts helps build our community’s and their own social capital. Examples of activities students participate in include the following:

- City Council Meetings
- County Commission Meetings
- School Board Meetings
- Library Board Meetings
- Rotary/Kiwanis Clubs
- Public hearings on various issues
- Volunteering with children or elderly
- Community access cable channel participation
- Radio call in shows
- Letters to the editor
- Community festivals
- Public speeches
- Parades
- Attending local plays
- Attending concerts by local bands
- Volunteering in a political campaign
- Authoring a locally published (online or print) advocacy article that identifies you as author by name.

Com 372—Theory and Research in Intercultural Communication

Project Description:

COM 372 is designed to give students a working knowledge of theory and research. Every year, the students do some sort of primary data collection project, in which they must collect and analyze data that is some way related to culture and communication. This may be face-to-face data (questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observation), mediated data (content analysis, questionnaires, critical media analysis), or experimental

data. In an effort to bring students more civic engagement, and to make their projects more practical, a “civic engagement” component has been added to their project in two ways: 1) the final project must be relevant to or actually engaging in civic engagement (though students still have choice of how this will play out in the project; in most cases, students will be encouraged to partner with a particular agency). 2) a “mini-research” project in which students do two supplemental activities that can bolster their research can be substituted with time volunteering with their partnered agency, and conceptual reflection on that time.

Student Outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are able to:

- Understand journal article research pertinent to intercultural or intergroup communication
- Be able to conduct research of a specific type pertinent to intercultural or intergroup communication. (Through the class, students should also have a familiarity with other types of research)
- Be able to articulate the connection between primary research and community, drawing practical implications from their research to the target organization
- Gain an understanding of different perspectives (class, ethnic, gender, etc.) as they pertain to the partner organization
- Discuss the interrelationship of social, personal, and cultural factors as they pertain to the context of the organization.

Community Outcomes:

The community benefits by:

- Increased awareness of the agency and its issues on the part of the students who research the project and on the rest of the class, who hear of the project in public presentation of projects
- A set of students more in tune with the needs of their community and more likely to volunteer their skills to community development in the future
- Specific knowledge for the partner organization derived through the student group’s research, useful for policy shaping or implementation
- Increased public knowledge of the issues, from any university or community media coverage of the project

COM 389.58—Documentary Production on Social and Political Issues

Project Description:

From the newsreel footage of the civil rights movement to films such as *The Thin Blue Line*, documentary film and video has played a central role in shaping the lives of individuals and society as a whole. This class will emphasize the power of documentary and the potential to address issues of social significance. This class will encourage you to tap the political, social and cultural resources within your community.

Student Outcomes:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- plan and create videotapes which communicate specific, identified messages to particular audiences;
- utilize visual and audio technology in a technically competent and creative way;
- successfully operate and maintain a variety of video cameras and recorders, microphones and mixers, and television projection devices;
- use non-linear video editing software and hardware with skill and elegance;
- acknowledge their power as a an active member of a democratic society.

Students in this class help publicize political and /or social problems and those individuals in the community who seek to help solve those problems. The students produce a final finished piece that will be submitted to a film festival and possibly aired on outlets such as TV-10.

CO-CURRICULAR

Project Oz Idol Event

Project description:

Members of Lambda Pi Eta (LPH) and Communication Opportunities for Majors and Minors (COMM) teamed up with Project Oz to host the first Bloomington-Normal Idol. Students from five local high schools participated in a number of performance categories (e.g., vocal, dance, poetic expression, etc.). Approximately 1000 members of the community attended the event and all proceeds went directly to Project Oz.

Student outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are able to:

- ISU students benefited by sharpening their professional skills. Members of LPH and COMM helped to plan the event (including scripting, public relations, and on-site support) and two members of these organizations emceed the event.
- The ISU students also gained a significantly better understanding of the pressing needs in our community. Project Oz works with populations in transition and at-risk youth. The ISU students gained a better appreciation of those populations as well as the way community organizations work to address such problems.
- The high school students participating were provided a forum to showcase their talents. In addition, all participating students were in good academic standing and signed a form indicating that they were drug and alcohol free. As a result, the event served as a powerful positive youth development activity.

Community outcomes:

Community benefits by having an:

- The Bloomington-Normal community benefits directly from the services that Project Oz provides. The event also raised awareness in the community of Project Oz and the need for more sustained efforts to address problems like homelessness and domestic violence in Bloomington-Normal.

A video about this event can be seen here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yX_7GN-Ddck

National Freedom of Speech Week Event

Project description:

Members of the Illinois State University debate team prepare and present debate-style speeches where they argued about an issue relating to Freedom of Speech. Two debaters presented a case – one in clash with

the other – and then defended their position against their opponent. The speeches, while persuasive in nature, were also meant to be informative for audience members. After the debate, the audience was encouraged to provide comments or ask questions about the issue.

Our debaters are regionally and nationally competitive, as they travel to tournaments across the country throughout the academic year. As a result, the skills they develop enable them to host public debates such as this one. Further, they are able to take their persuasive talents to other schools and influence other students across the nation.

Student outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are able to:

- Utilize their problem solving and critical thinking skills to research social issues and devise potential solutions for them.
- Learn how to adapt to different audiences by tailoring their message to both a competitive audience and a more diverse campus community.
- Improve individual communication and persuasion skills in attempting to convince audiences to join them in their project.
- Understand the process of deliberative democracy, whereby those who control the podium and audience members alike are empowered to speak about issues that concern them.
- Experience seeing their work come to fruition and the satisfaction of realizing that a single person can make a difference.

Community outcomes:

Community benefits by having an:

- Increased public awareness of current events and social problems as well as increased opportunities to help solve those problems.
- Opportunity to witness how much students can accomplish when learn about social issues and work together to attempt to help.
- Increased public knowledge of the oldest co-curricular program on campus.

Forensics Union—Debate with University of Illinois on War in Iraq

The Illinois State University policy debate team competed against the University of Illinois policy debate team on November 10, 2007. The debate addressed the question of whether or not the United States military should withdraw from Iraq. The debate was judged by Illinois State University faculty members in the history and philosophy department. The debate was attended by approximately forty individuals comprised of students, faculty members, and members of the community. Following the debate an in-depth discussion about the issues discussed, that included judges comments and audience participation, took place.

The debate served as an opportunity to provide a forum for students and community members to hear opposing sides of an argument revolving around a central political issue of our time. The discussion period that followed the debate allowed the audience to share their beliefs about United States military occupation of Iraq. This forum provides individuals both an outlet to express their personal beliefs and an opportunity to hear, and critically evaluate opposing viewpoints.

Forensics Union—Mock Presidential Debate

Project description:

Members of the Illinois State University speech and debate team prepared and presented persuasive-style answers from Student Government Association moderators. Each of the seven Forensics students represented a particular Presidential candidate, and answered the questions as if they were the actual candidate. After the moderators completed their questions, audience members were invited to ask questions or provide comments.

Our debaters and speech competitors are regionally and nationally competitive, as they travel to tournaments across the country throughout the academic year. As a result, the skills they develop enable them to host public debates such as this one. Further, they are able to take their persuasive talents to other schools and influence other students across the nation.

Student outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are able to:

- Utilize their problem solving and critical thinking skills to research social issues and devise potential solutions for them.
- Learn how to adapt to different audiences by tailoring their message to both a competitive audience and a more diverse campus community.
- Improve individual communication and persuasion skills in attempting to convince audiences to join them in their project.
- Understand the process of deliberative democracy, whereby those who control the podium and audience members alike are empowered to speak about issues that concern them.
- Experience seeing their work come to fruition and the satisfaction of realizing that a single person can make a difference.
- Increase their knowledge about the democratic process in general, and the platforms of the 2008 Presidential candidates in particular.

Community outcomes:

Community benefits by having an:

- Increased public awareness of current events and social problems as well as increased opportunities to help solve those problems.

- Opportunity to witness how much students can accomplish when learn about social issues and work together to attempt to discuss them.
- Increased public knowledge of the oldest co-curricular program on campus.
- Increased knowledge about the platforms of the 2008 Presidential candidates.

Public Relations Student Society of America

Project Description:

PRSSA is a student run organization. The primary purpose is to give PR students an opportunity to apply their skills to further develop learning. Many of the opportunities for application are to conduct PR campaigns for not-for-profit organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity, Relay for Life, Make-a-Wish foundation, and Susan G. Komen breast cancer awareness. Further efforts are currently underway to establish relationships with other health or pro-social organizations. PRSSA has also designed a campaign to raise awareness for ethical practice of public relations across the Illinois State University campus.

Student Outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are able to:

- Conduct needs assessment and audit
- Conduct primary research to understand audiences
- Develop strategic messages to achieve organizational objectives
- Develop and implement public relations tactics
- Evaluation of campaign effectiveness
- Campaign and event coordination
- Press and media relations

Community Outcomes:

The community benefits by:

- Increased public awareness of the topic as it affects themselves or their loved ones
- Increased public acceptance of the importance of a topic or issue
- Increased action on the topic or issue
- Increased funds through fundraising activities

Sustainability:

The campaign will be sustained by:

- Each year, new students become involved with PRSSA. PRSSA will continue to act as PR counsel and developers of public relations materials for the duration of the relationship.

Forensics Union—Persuasive and After Dinner Speech Project

Project description:

Members of the Illinois State University speech team prepare and present persuasive-style speeches where they champion a cause or try to find solutions for a social problem. In addition to traveling across the country and competing against other college students with these speeches, team members present their speeches to the campus community to raise awareness on their topics and host fundraisers to help combat these social problems.

Our persuasive message reaches beyond the lecture halls used for campus events and speech tournaments. It reaches into countless public speaking classrooms around the country. As one of the most talented speech teams in the United States, our persuasive and after dinner speakers frequently advance to the final round at the National Championships. Those final rounds are videotaped and distributed to public speaking teachers around the country, exponentially increasing the reach of the message as it's viewed by thousands of students each year. The potential impact of the message is infinite.

Student outcomes:

After participating in this project, students are able to:

- Utilize their problem solving and critical thinking skills to research social issues and devise potential solutions for them.
- Learn how to adapt to different audiences by tailoring their message to both a competitive audience and a more diverse campus community.
- Improve individual communication and persuasion skills in attempting to convince audiences to join them in their project.
- Understand the steps involved in forming workgroups to plan public events geared towards raising money and persuading audiences.
- Experience seeing their work come to fruition and the satisfaction of realizing that a single person can make a difference.

Community outcomes:

Community benefits by having an:

- Increased public awareness of current events and social problems as well as increased opportunities to help solve those problems.
- Opportunity to witness how much students can accomplish when learn about social issues and work together to attempt to help.
- Increased public knowledge of the oldest co-curricular program on campus.

Forensics Union—Fundraising for Indian and Pakistani Villages and Vienna Webcast

In 2007 the speech team began inviting on-campus groups to sell concessions at our tournaments to raise money for good causes. A political science class took us up on our invitation to sell food at our November tournament and all the money raised (approximately \$300) went to fund small business loans for Indian and Pakistani villages.

The speech team also hosted a webcast international speech tournament with Webster University Vienna as a way of establishing a connection between our program and the multi-national one in Vienna. Beyond sharing performances, ISU team members were afforded the opportunity to interact with students who have never visited the United States.

Student Radio Station WZND—WZND’s Annual All-Media Turkey Bowl

Project Description:

WZND holds an annual bowling tournament to raise money for the ISU Child Care Center. Students are responsible for inviting all area media, including radio stations, television stations and newspapers. They are also responsible for arranging for the bowling alley, food, decorations, and raffle prizes for the day. Students work together in their radio areas of interest (sales, public relations, promotions, graphic and web design, and production) to fulfill any the necessary requirements for the day. Before the actual tournament, students visit the ISU Child Care Center to paint pumpkins with the kids to get a better feel for the importance of what they are doing.

Student Outcomes:

- Students gain practical experience by working with clients to trade for the needed items for the event, writing press releases and working with the media, designing all print and web materials, and writing and producing commercials for clients.
- Students spend the afternoon with media professionals and learn how to function professionally at a charity event.
- Students interact with media professionals, which often results in jobs and internships.
- Students develop awareness of the child care center and the needs of the children.

Community Outcomes:

- Students have raised over \$20,000 for the ISU Child Care Center and the Miller Park Zoo over the last 20 years.
- Students have raised awareness of the ISU Child Care Center.

- Local media enjoy the one time of year they are all in the same location at the same time for a good cause.

Sustainability:

- This project has been ongoing for 20 years.

Documentary Project Student Organization

Objectives:

- This student organization is dedicated to helping create opportunities for students to create documentaries or short issue films on social and political issues.
- Students watch, study, and produce documentaries in this vein.
- Students work together in preproduction research, production, and post-production, including promotion and exhibition.

The community is benefited by the immediate increased discussion of particular issues as well as the long-term benefits of having graduated students who better understand the potential political power of communication through effective video communication.

Student enthusiasm has been vital in the maintenance of this organization. Students have completed constructing a constitution, although they have not yet received approval as a registered Illinois State University student organization.

TV-10 News

Objectives:

- This student produced program consists of a daily newscast which is available to a potential viewership of 80,000 people on-campus and in the surrounding community.
- Students go out into the community and gather stories in the fields of news, sports, weather, current events and political activity. These stories are presented in a daily half-hour news program available on local public access and campus cable.
- Students work together to develop stories as well as produce and promote each newscast.

The community benefits because this is the only newscast originating and focusing on Bloomington/Normal and the greater McLean County area. Many of these students go on to work at in the Peoria Television market which serves our community as well. This program relies heavily on the hard work and self-motivation of the students.

TV-10 PSA Production Project

Objectives:

- This student project creates Public Service Announcements which air on local and campus cable.
- Students research not-for-profit organization or public awareness issues and produce 30 second spots which bring those issues and organizations into the public awareness.
- Groups of 2 to 4 students work together through each step of the process (from pre-production research to finished product). These spots are presented daily during the TV-10 news and all other TV-10/Student Television Workshop programming.

The community benefits through exposure to these ideas and agencies. The students gain valuable experience in the field of video production.

TV-10 College and Main Program

Objectives:

- This half-hour weekly program provides community outreach and public awareness of Extended University programs and events.
- Students are responsible for all production and post-production elements of this program. This program is shown weekly on campus cable and local Public Access cable.
- Students work together in the studio and editing rooms to produce this show. They also create promotional spots to help attract viewership.

The community benefits through increased awareness of the programs and events provided by the Extended University.