

**PROJECT GUIDE HANDBOOK IC SPRING 2013 Mon/Wed 1:00 -3:50**  
**JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY CHANGE STRATEGIES , PERSONAL AND SYSTEMIC**  
Elan Shapiro (607) 592-8402 [eshapiro@ithaca.edu](mailto:eshapiro@ithaca.edu)

What's in this Guide?

● Thank you!	P.1
● Outline of Project Guide's Responsibilities	p.2
● Overview of the Project	p.3
● Deciding on Outcomes and Tasks	p.3
● Outline for Project Summary	p.3
● Team Process and Community Skills	p.4
● Staying Organized	p.5
● Keeping Students Accountable	p.5
● Staying in Touch	p.5
● Background Readings	p.6
● Project Presentations/Community Presentation	p.6
● Final Project Report & Portfolio	p.6
● Feedback / Evaluation Process	p.7
● Course Description	p.8
● Class Schedule	p.8-9

Thanks for considering being a project guide in **Justice and Sustainability Change Strategies Personal and Systemic**. My intention is for it to be a significant contribution to our community! It's a challenge to foster closer connections between young people and community organizations. Students are often pulled between idealism and disempowerment, and the community groups are resource-deprived but understandably cautious or even cynical about university-based efforts. Often, though the university's efforts are well meaning, those efforts have paternalistic, top-down, "charity"-oriented frameworks or components. The quality of faculty guidance and community-based guidance students get is a critical factor in the success of this collaboration. And this is where you and I come in.

Ideally, what students learn with you will deepen what they learn in the classroom, and what they learn in the classroom will enrich their ability to work well with you. This should be especially so in this course, since we're focused not only on information and concepts but on **making personal and systemic changes that are just and sustainable**. **Please have a look at the short course description at end of this document so you are aware of ways we can coordinate our efforts.**

I realize that leading a project group can take a good amount of preparation and effort and may also be a new and/or daunting task for some Project Guides. I will do my best to support your work in as many ways as I can, so please keep me in the loop about what you need and want, and how things are going. I very much appreciate and celebrate your willingness to do this work!

## OUTLINE OF PROJECT GUIDE RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Read the course description** (near end of this handbook) to be aware of the goals and structure of the course, **and read this handbook**, to be clear about what's involved
- **January- Design a 13-week project** (4 hrs. per week, up to 3 hours in community, one hour follow-up) for the 2-4 students in your group. Let Elan know if you have questions or need support with the project design. Define the tasks and outcomes, and, if appropriate, a timeline. Make suggestions to Elan about how students should be prepared to work in the project (such as communication, cultural competency, teamwork).
- **Jan 23---** Write up a short **Project Description** by Wednesday Jan 23, 2 or 3 paragraphs that covers your organization's mission, and the project goals, tasks and expectations, hoped for outcomes, and benefits for students. **(seeoutline**
- **Jan 30---**Do a brief **Project Presentation** about your project in class on Wednesday, January 30 IC Center for Natural Sciences at IC- Room 1A(formerly 119) (about 15mins + answering questions) between 1:15 and 3:50. Arrange the time with Elan. Be clear about what students will be asked to do and what benefits they will be likely to receive
- **Feb 6 -First Project meeting:** Wed, February 6<sup>th</sup> -1:00 (or 1:10, depending on location and transportation) Include Orientation to the Project in your community home base, can include a tour of neighborhood and/or agency
- **Project weeks Feb 6-May 6- Schedule** is in this handbook- Meet with your students once a week for an hour or two, preferably on Wednesdays between 1:00 and 3:30 unless you arrange another time that works for all.
- **Spring break: March 9 - 17**
- **Remind the students** to be conscious of how they are handling leadership, roles, tasks, communication, and accountability. Check about their community connections.
- **March 7 Short Feedback/Evaluation** Give Elan and students feedback on how the individual students are doing. Focus feedback on how they can improve their work during the rest of the project. (details below)
- **April- Discuss with students** how their **Final Project report and presentation** can be done in a way that supports the continuation and improvement of your project. Consider if it will also be helpful for students to present to your organization or constituents.
- **April 29- May 2 Read and give feedback on rough draft of the students' Final Report** (receive by Mon April 29, give them feedback by Thu May 2). They will send Final version to you and Elan by May 6
- **May 1 or 6- Attend (if possible) Final Presentation by student team** at IC (CNS Room 1A): Wed May 1 or Mon May 6, to support the students and share a bit with our class. You choose which day and which part of the afternoon session works for you.
- **May 10- Send Elan Final Evaluation** for each student, due Fri., May 10 (details below). Focus feedback on how they can grow as citizens and leaders. He incorporates your feedback into evaluation/feedback they receive and their final grade.

## OVERVIEW

Each team will have 2-4 participants. Students are expected to put in up to 4 hours a week each, including the 1 or 2 hours a week they have with you (as needed), for 13 weeks of the semester. Project Guides will hopefully be able to **present about their project for up to 20 minutes at IC on Wed., Jan 30** (leaving time for questions) Location TBA. The first project day will be Wed Feb 6. **To keep track of it all you can use the outline above and/or the schedule at the end with highlighted lines indicating project weeks, evaluations, and presentations.** Teams will periodically report in or share materials or issues in class for feedback and do a final presentation and report for the class and/or the organization/ community, as appropriate. Team members will and get a short evaluation from you midway and at the end.

We will introduce and reinforce communication, teamwork and cultural competency skills and issues early on in the class to support their success in working with your project. Your suggestions in this regard are welcome.

## DECIDING ON OUTCOMES AND TASKS

Think through what the students could do that will significantly further the work of the your organization or project and make a positive difference now and for the future. The work you assign them should also provide an opportunity for participants to learn by working with each other and with community members. Identify a reasonably achievable set of outcomes and tasks for **12 project sessions plus a final presentation session (Feb 6 to May 6)**. This does not have to be a grand accomplishment; *it can be a small but necessary step in a process that might span many semesters or years.* (That's why I ask that the team document their accomplishments, connections, lessons learned and proposed next steps, in a Final Report, for the next group to build upon.) My hope is that they can make a substantial contribution, make connections with diverse community members, and develop a sense of identification with this community. This outcome is rare in the current academic bubble, but we have it achieved it often through these projects, with your help.

What actually happens will *probably* differ substantially from the sequence you plan for, both because of the many unknowns, and because of the value of engaging the team's creativity and the community's participation and input. But defining a reasonable set of tasks and outcomes over 13 weeks that will work for you and the students will help the chances of success and satisfaction all around.

## OUTLINE OF PROJECT SUMMARY

**Name of Project**

**Overall Agency/Initiative's Mission**

**Current programs.** (short, optional. but nice)

**Summary of Project & Goals of this project** think of what agency, community members, and students will get from this project

(optional, nice : **Link to this course**)

**Specific Project tasks** (What students will actually do. If possible , think of chunks of the 12 weeks :e.g., weeks 1-4, 5-8 , 9-12 . Weeks 12 & 13 are mostly wrap up and prep of final project presentation and report

**Specific Project outcomes** (by the end of the 13 weeks)

**Special requirements or preferences** (skills, traits, need for availability at times other than the regular weekly meeting time?, need for a car/driver in the group?, etc.)

**Group size preference:** (2-4)

**Project Guide Contact Info , (also, preferred way and times of being contacted)**

**Location and time of first meeting**

## **TEAM PROCESS AND COMMUNITY SKILLS**

While it's important to help the team and its members stay on track, its best to *support the team's own development and sharing of leadership*, rather than simply being the leader/taskmaster and telling them exactly what to do. By inviting student input and creativity you not only get a new perspective on your work and its challenges, but you also create students' ownership of their work with you, and increase their dedication to the tasks. If they feel like they have no input or their creativity is not valued, their motivation is decreased.

Please encourage team members (and I will, too) to be conscious of how they are handling leadership, roles, tasks, communication, and accountability. They will use team and project skills they already have, and will build on what we are practicing in class. For example, if some are putting in a lot more time than others, or different leadership or work styles are clashing, a frank and friendly discussion early on could make a big difference - if they have the support and the feedback skills to do it reasonably well. We are actively practicing communication and feedback skills early in the course.

We also focus on cultural competency early on in the course, so draw out and discuss the social challenges occurring in our community, such as cultural, racial, class, gender and generational issues. Greater cultural competency and community identity and outreach skills are important student outcomes of the more successful projects. At the same the same time, this skill development should enhance their effectiveness in working with you, other staff, and the people you serve and/or collaborate with.

## **Orienting Students To The Project**

Your **first meeting with students on February 6th** will be an opportunity for you to orient them to the people, places and tasks that they will be engaged with this semester. In past years, Project Guides have found it helpful at the outset to orient students by having them experience a part of the community that they may not be familiar with, and/or the setting of the project or agency and how it works. You can share any orientation experience you like (video, field trip, staff or community meeting, etc.). Students will be more motivated and effective if they understand and feel allegiance to the group, mission and people they will be working with and supporting.

## **STAYING ORGANIZED -MEETING WITH TEAMS**

In order to keep students on track and productively engaged, I ask that, if at all possible, you **meet regularly with your team for an hour or two every week (some exceptions are OK and its also fine to have someone else substitute)**. **Wednesdays between 1:00 and 3:30 or 3:40** are easiest group work times for the students because they have no other scheduled activities at that time, but any day and time you come up with *together* is fine.

This contact time can help assure that the team and team members stay on task, get authentic and constructive feedback from you, learn together what changes to make to move the project forward, and build their community and cultural competency skills. With good prep and strong team members, you may not need to meet for very long every week. It's very situational. I recommend taking plenty of time at the beginning to carefully orient students to your group and the task, as well as the neighborhood and people you work with, as appropriate.

## **KEEPING STUDENTS ACCOUNTABLE**

Here are a few suggestions for helping students stay engaged and accountable.

- Engage students' creativity and insights, and ask for their feedback.
- Create clear and firm deadlines for each task, and, if possible, communicate with students if they miss a deadline. Communicate with me if they are consistently missing deadlines.
- Create clear goals for the project and expectations of students, and communicate these to the students at the beginning of the project. Students appreciate knowing what the bigger purpose of their work is and what difference it will make to the organization or community.
- Make sure students have a clear idea of what success and excellence look like.
- Give students one major task at a time. You may want or need to interrupt that task/project to have them to focus on another priority, but giving them a wide range of things to do can lead to frustration and incompleteness. On the other hand, I understand that students may very well be doing organizational capacity building while also providing ongoing services, rather than doing these tasks in a sequence.
- Regular, honest communication about both what you are happy with and where you would like to see improvement helps students feel more accountable to you personally.

## **STAYING IN TOUCH**

*I will arrange with you to drop in on your first (Feb 6) or second (Feb 13) project session to get connected to you and your team, and help with anything that needs clearing up.* I will also call or email once or twice during the semester to check in about how things are going, and I'll check first to see any preferences you have.

In addition, I hope you will give *me feedback anytime* on how your group is doing, and on individuals having difficulties, in order to ensure team & project success. This will allow me to support and lighten up your load, as well as to notice common patterns that need adjusting for the class as a whole. I can discuss these issues in class and/or also meet with individual students, or strategize with you about individual students that are having difficulties.

## **BACKGROUND READINGS**

*If appropriate*, at the beginning of the project, give students some general background reading or videos in your project area to give them some context and orient them to the work they will be doing. I will cover copy costs, if necessary.

## **PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

There will be opportunities during the semester for the students in your team to present their work to the other students in the class. These presentations will help to inform the class on the current progress of the project and the students' involvement in the community. Students will also be asked to prepare one 10-15 minute project presentation during the 2nd half of the semester prior to the **"Final Project Presentation"** in the last week of classes. The project presentations challenge the group to summarize and synthesize their accomplishments and are also intended to help students sharpen their skills in public outreach and community education. I encourage students to be as creative as they like, yet also effective in communicating with the particular group they are presenting to. **I encourage you to think ahead with students in mid-April about how their presentation can benefit your project. In what way might the slide show, photos, posters or summaries be useful in your outreach or development or community education work?**

**The 25-35 minute presentation at the end of the course, will be given to the class (1:00-3:50) in one of the last 2 classes, on Wednesday, May 1 or Monday, May 6.** You choose whichever date and time is better for you, assuming you can attend. **Ideally, you can be present for that presentation**, both to support the students and also so the class can connect with you again and perhaps hear some thoughts from you about the project and how it went.

**Community Presentation** (optional, but may be useful) I encourage you to consider if there is value to your project of having the students present their work, including findings and/or recommendations, to your Board of Directors, program staff, or a neighborhood group or city agency. If a community presentation is appropriate, the students would ideally first present to the class, for the mutual education it provides, and also to get feedback and practice before presenting to a community audience. The community presentations would ideally take place in late April or early May, and not later than May 6. I will help students with the logistics (e.g. food and drinks, meeting space, etc.). It will create a better outcome if students send you a rough draft or rehearse with you before doing their public presentation.

## **FINAL PROJECT REPORT AND PORTFOLIO ("DELIVERABLES")**

I will support the students in putting together a Final Project Report &/or portfolio ("deliverables"), which can be closely integrated with their Final Presentation. Like the presentation, the Project Report is a team collaboration intended to be of value to your organization. Depending on what you and your group decide, it can emphasize **feedback** to your organization for future project development; have components that can be used for **presentations** to donors and foundations; and/or be adaptable as **outreach, orientation** and/or **education** for other volunteers, interns, and campus departments and professors. This last function can make it easy for the next group of IC or CU

volunteers or professors to pick up the essentials of the project and have a sense of what they may be building upon.

The report does not have to read like a formal academic document. It should read like a user-friendly handbook, in language, style, and format, relevant for community members, local organizations, and agencies, and/or future volunteer teams that will build on the work already done. The report should include project **Goals, Methods, Steps, Challenges, Successes and Outcomes, Lessons learned, and Recommendations** for project improvement. Lessons learned can be about the community; the organization; the people students worked with; cultural differences; race and class issues; and how they related to all of this.

As Project Guide, I ask that you read the **rough draft of this report (sent to you by Friday April 26)** and **give the students feedback by Tuesday April 30**. My and your evaluation of it will be based on its usefulness and accessibility for the project and the community, and/or for future faculty and student contributors..

**“Portfolio”/“Deliverables”** Based on your project’s specifics, students may create **portfolio materials** related to the “capacity building” work that they do with you: reports on surveys or other research they have done; curriculum modules; brochures; posters; videos; website pages; etc. - anything that supports your organization’s “capacity” to serve the community. *Some or all of these materials may have been submitted and revised at different points in the semester.* If they haven’t already been submitted along the way, the students will get **final drafts of the portfolio items** to you the same day as the Draft Final Project Report, **Monday, April 29, by midnight**. You and I, both, will give the students **feedback by Thursday, May 2 5PM**, and they will be asked to submit the revised **final versions by Monday May 6, by midnight**. This may sound like a lot of extra work, but I have found that these extra steps result in a much better quality outcome for your project.

## **FEEDBACK/EVALUATION**

There are no exams or final papers, and the projects take up half the course hours, so your short evaluations are an important part of the feedback and the grade that students get. Clear and constructive feedback is an important part of their development as citizens, as learners, and as community advocates. Please write up and send me **short evaluations (1-2 sentences in each of the 5 areas listed below) for each of the students by March 7 and May 10** (see criteria below). I also encourage you to take 20-30 minutes for **mutual feedback** on the 5<sup>th</sup> project session, on **February 29**, so there is time to make changes that make the process work better for the rest of the semester.

The areas we focus on in evaluating are:

- 1) Reliability/accountability/consistency/completeness
- 2) Quality/rigor/depth/innovation/creativity
- 3) Initiative/leadership/taking charge
- 4) Teamwork/collaboration/effective communication
- 5) Cultural competency and sensitivity

Quantitative – Give a number from 1-5 for each area. 1 worst - 5 best,

Qualitative- One sentence or two for each area is enough.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

### JUSTICE & SUSTAINABILITY CHANGE STRATEGIES, PERSONAL & SYSTEMIC

INSTRUCTOR: Elan Shapiro, 607-592-8402 Admin Annex 106, and Community presenters & Project Guides  
 Mon & Wed 1:00 PM - 3:50 PM CNS 1A (formerly CNS 119).

COURSE DESCRIPTION: In this course we study and practice strategies for creating systems change, towards a fair and life-enhancing economy and community. These approaches which also require personal transformation. Key skills we develop are: systems thinking and ecological redesign; undoing oppressive “isms” and reshaping our social narratives; cultivating inclusive and sustainable behaviors; facilitating cooperative initiatives and enterprises; and building social movements. This course requires and engenders reflection, courage, openness, and leadership, and is best suited for people who want to stretch their boundaries and develop positive connections and collaborations with our local community.

We’ll study a small number of texts and other instructional materials in depth and create a classroom learning community that draws on the course resources, and the experiences and interests of students, as well as local change agents in a variety of justice and sustainability initiatives. On Mondays we focus on group learning and skills training, including community presenters, and occasionally do field trips. On Wednesdays we apply and integrate the learning through team projects *in our community* focused on social or ecological justice and renewal. In addition to the project session in the community , you may do up to an hour a week more of related research or other follow-up, usually not requiring transportation, at times that work with your schedule and with the project’s needs

### Justice and Sustainability Change Strategies - Class Schedule

<i>Wed 1/23</i>	Class #1: Introduction to course & group; Defining Social Justice & Sustainability and the global crisis	
<i>Mon 1/28</i>	Class #2 Mindfulness and NonViolent Communication.	
<i>Wed1/30</i>	Class #3 Power of Narrative . <b>Presentations by Project guides</b>	
<i>Mon 2/4</i>	Class #4 Systems Thinking	
<i>Wed 2/6</i>	<i>Project Session #1</i>	
<i>Mon 2/11</i>	Class #4 Systems Thinking and Ecological Design	
<i>Wed 2/13</i>	<i>Project Session #2</i>	
<i>Mon 2/13</i>	Class #5 Racial Justice . Changing the Narrative	
<i>We 2/15</i>	<i>Project Session #3</i>	
<i>Mon 2/20</i>	Class #6 Economic Justice . Changing the Narrative	
<i>Wed.2/22</i>	<i>Project Session #4</i>	
<i>Mon 2/27</i>	Fieldtrip #1 Downtown Ithaca Community . New Economy Vision	

We 2/29	Project Session #5 <b>Mutual Feedback session with students</b>	
Mon 3/5	Class #7 Cultivating Sustainable Behaviors	
Wed 3/7	Project Session #6 <b>First project evaluations of students due</b>	
3/9- 3/17	SPRING BREAK	
Mon 3/18	Class #8 Cultivating Inclusive Behaviors	
Wed 3/20	Project Session #7	
Mon 3/25	Class #9 Facilitating Cooperative Initiatives I	
We 3/27	Project Session #8	
Mon 4/1	Field Trip #2	
Wed 4/3	Project Session #9	
Mon 4/8	Class #10 Facilitating Cooperative Initiatives II	
We 4/10	Project Session #10	
Mon 4/15	Class #11 Building Social Movements	
Wed 4/17	Project Session #11	
Mon 4/22	Class #12 Social Movements, Integration	
Wed 4/24	<b>Project Session #12 (Draft final project report and “deliverables” due to guides and Elan Mon 4/29 midnight. Provide feedback to team by Thu 5/2 5pm)</b>	
Mon 4/29	Class #13 Integration	
Wed 5/1	<b>Final Project Presentations I</b>	
Mon 5/6	<b>Last class Final Project Presentations II</b> Student team submits Final Project Report and revised “deliverables”, if any, to Project guides and Elan by midnight	
5/7-5/11	<b>Final Exams Week- Closing Class Session (required) during class exam time</b> <b>Project Guide Evaluations of students due to Elan by May 10</b>	
Wed 5/15	<b>Final grades Due (online) by 10:00 P.M.</b>	