

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE  
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
Transformative Participation for Democratic Practice  
Fall 2017 – Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Sonia Ospina  
**Location:** Waverly Bldg. Room 569

**Email:** sonia.ospina@nyu.edu  
**Office Hours:** Wed 3-5 pm or by appt

**Course description and format**

This course introduces participatory frameworks and tools that help students cultivate capabilities to engage others and participate with them in sustained collaborative problem solving within a highly contested public service environment. Examples of these capabilities, among others, include fostering and facilitating structured dialogue; seeing and helping others see the larger system; cultivating reflection to uncover and challenge assumptions that act as barriers to collaboration; practicing deep listening from the perspective of “the other”; recognizing, acknowledging, engaging, and bridging across differences in constructive ways; enacting values-based language in an embodied creative practice to “live” the talk.

Theoretically framed by ideas at the intersection of deliberative civic engagement and transformative participation<sup>1</sup>, the course offers students a hands-on, experiential learning opportunity to practice the aforementioned and similar capabilities. They will also clarify their relevance for impactful action in their immediate and prospective circles of influence. Cultivating these will increase their chances to generate impact for the common good from any public service role associated with democratic problem-solving: whether it is as a policy or financial analyst, a policy advocate, a public manager, a funder of public programs or a fundraiser to create them, an urban planner, an economic development or infrastructure expert, a community organizer, a social or a policy entrepreneur, or a public policy maker, to name a few.

The course format consists of four full-day experiential workshops (around 20-24 hours) and 6 classroom sessions through the semester (12 hours). In addition to course credits, students will also receive a certificate of participation for completing the workshops.

**Course justification**

A collaborative governance approach to public policy and management fosters public, civic and private actors’ collaboration and deliberation, working across boundaries to achieve public goals that otherwise would be difficult to attain (Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh, 2011). Collaborative governance spaces may emerge around policy-specific issues (like site-based management of schools, community policing, watershed councils, community health partnerships, regulatory negotiation, and natural resource co-management) or they may cut across policy arenas (like service delivery co-production; multi-sector partnerships; citizen-driven local development planning; participatory budgeting; and neighborhood councils).

---

<sup>1</sup> *Deliberative civic engagement* refers to intentional processes engaging diverse stakeholders in public spaces for “constructive, informed, and decisive dialogue about important public issues” (Nabatchi, 2012: 7- 8). *Transformative Participation* is a form of participation that encourages the empowerment of those involved, so they can negotiate and alter the structures and institutions that lead to marginalization and exclusion (White, 1996).

While the goal of these governance innovations is to shift from adversarial action to collaborative engagement and citizen participation, these are contested problem-solving scenarios and stakeholders may have differing interests, degrees of empowerment, languages, religions, cultures, races, nationalities, gender identities, disciplinary and professional backgrounds, work styles, worldviews and assumptions. In fact, increased social and cultural diversity in communities is accompanied by extreme power imbalances that may deepen inequality, social disparities, exclusion and the marginalization of vulnerable groups, thus reducing their capacity to participate in public decision making and collective action.

Navigating diversity effectively and fostering transformative participation and inclusive engagement of diverse stakeholders represent integral prerequisites of creative, collaborative problem solving grounded in democratic practice. This is particularly important given current emergent threats to democracy both in global and national political contexts. The course allows students to practice capabilities so they can gain efficacy in helping actors find common ground despite differences, engage in inclusive and collaborative interactions, participate on equal terms in deliberation, and enact a new type of leadership that capitalizes on diversity, builds inclusive learning communities, and generates collective responsibility for change.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- a) Recognize the power of drawing from artistic expressions like performance and storytelling to foster collective learning among a diverse group of individuals in contexts of marginalization, having experienced its impact through a creative learning process to uncover the principles of community engagement.
- b) Apply “art of hosting” techniques to foster participation and engagement in meetings, including considerations of effective meeting design, inclusive and critical facilitation, and creative tools for cultivating trust, joint ownership and conflict resolution. The application will include experience and reflection on difficult conversations around social identity.
- c) Use critical thinking by drawing from a *systems theory* framework to support collaborative problem-solving activities among diverse participants, thus guiding thinking and action toward consideration of root causes and structural solutions, in the face of extreme power imbalances and contemporary threats to democracy.
- d) Recognize the importance of self-reflection, inquiry and self-leadership to effectively promote transformative participation and inclusive engagement in others; and identify at least five areas of growth requiring further development to enhance the student’s efficacy to do so.
- e) Analyze a community case characterized by chronic inequality, exclusion, conflict, and/or fragmentation to propose a detailed strategy to engage stakeholders in conversations that matter so the community can prepare to embark in an effective and sustainable collaborative problem solving process.

## **Pedagogical approach, course structure and requirements**

The course is framed under a participatory action-learning paradigm. It uses a non-traditional format anchored around four workshops, offering students cyclical opportunities to practice and engage in peer reflection around their experience.

The course is structured in modules tightly aligned with the workshops, each followed by shorter sessions. Each module will offer: 1) Participation in a workshop; 2) a theoretical perspective to explore the assumptions shaping the overall course and each workshop; and 3) a reflective peer-learning perspective, with structured opportunities for collective meaning making of what was learned in the workshop and its practical applications.

Students are invited to explore the following question: *At the most immediate sphere of influence, how can I effectively engage others in participation and collaboration to create impactful solutions to public problems, while cultivating and modeling democratic practices?* The full answer to this question will emerge as students complete the following course requirements:

- Full participation/performance in three out of four workshops (20%)
- Class participation where students discuss frameworks from the readings and share their efforts to make practical applications in their sphere of influence (10%)
- Midterm Report: efforts to apply frameworks and capabilities in one's sphere of influence (25%)
- Journaling, due in NYUClasses BEFORE class, on Weeks 1, 4, 7, 10 and 12 (five sets) (20%)
- Final Report: Case analysis assignment (25%)

## **Absenteeism, punctuality, and in-class conduct**

You are expected to attend three workshops and all class sessions (even those for the workshop you did NOT attend), and arrive on time. If you miss a class due to unavoidable circumstances, please send a message in advance and contact another member of the class to get what was covered in class. Missing more than two classes without excuse will affect your grade. Systematic tardiness, disruptive behavior (including unrelated side conversations, use of cell phone or computer for information withdrawal that is not related to class) is unacceptable and will also negatively impact your grade.

## Course Overview and Session Calendar

### **Introduction: COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE, DELIBERATIVE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND DEMOCRACY**

- **Week 1** (September 5): *Introductions, course overview, and course theoretical introduction*; journal 1 due

### **Module 1: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTICIPATION AND THE ROLE OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION**

- **Week 2** (September 15): *Workshop 1: Entering, Exiting and Building Community: Engagement and collaboration through arts, performance and storytelling*
- **Week 3** (September 19): No class
- **Week 4** (September 26): Theoretical discussion and Action-Learning Cycle 1; journal 2 due

### **Module 2: CATALIZING PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CONVERSATIONAL FACILITATION TECHNIQUES**

- **Week 5** (October 6): *Workshop 2: The Art Of Hosting & Dialogue Techniques*
- **Week 6** (October 10): No class
- **Week 7** (October 17): Theoretical discussion and Action-Learning Cycle 2; journal 3 due

Midterm uploaded on Monday October 23 (by midnight)

### **Module 3: RECOGNIZING, ENGAGING, AND BRIDGING DIFFERENCES: APPLYING CRITICAL LENSES CONSTRUCTIVELY**

- **Week 8** (October 27): *Workshop 3: Social Identities & Non-negotiable Conversations*
- **Week 9** (Oct 31): No class
- **Week 10** (November 7): Theoretical discussion and Action-Learning Cycle 3; journal 4 due

### **Module 4: UNDERSTANDING COMPLEX SYSTEMS AND LEVERAGING POINTS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE PARTICIPATION**

- **Week 11** (November 17): *Workshop 4: Systems Thinking: An Application Through The U Process*
- (November 20-24): Thanksgiving Week No class
- **Week 12** (November 28): Theoretical discussion and Action-Learning Cycle 4; journal 5 due

### **Conclusion: TRANSFORMATIVE PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT RECONSIDERED**

- **Week 13** (December 5): Conclusion
- **Week 14** (December 12): No class Final assignment uploaded by midnight

## Course Contents and Schedule of Assignments

### Week 1 (September 6)

#### **Introduction: COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE, DELIBERATIVE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND DEMOCRACY**

The aim of this introduction is to understand the relevance of capabilities for participation and engagement in the broader context of public policy and management, given the trends toward collaborative governance and deliberative civic engagement.

- *Introductions, course overview, and theoretical introduction to the course*

#### **Required readings:**

- This exercise counts as a required reading: Go to the following page <http://intersector.com/cases/> and browse the featured cases of cross sector collaboration. Choose a few that call your attention and read quickly what they are about. Choose ONE case among those, and study it in greater detail (either download the case study or click on the five tabs that describe it). Be prepared to tell others (who have not read the case you chose) what this case is about: what was the problem? Who participated in the collaboration? How successful was it and why? And finally, why is it an example of collaborative governance and/or of deliberative civic engagement?
- Emerson, K, T. Nabatchi and S. Balogh. 2011. An Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. Advance access doi:10.1093/jopart/mur011 READ ONLY: Pages 1-4;10-13 & 19-23
- Nabatchi, T. 2012. An introduction to Deliberative Civic Engagement. In T. Nabatchi, et al. (Ed) *Democracy in Motion: Evaluating the Practice and Impact of Deliberative Civic Engagement*. DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199899265.003.0001 READY ONLY: Pages 1 - 6
- Leighninger, M. 2012 Mapping Deliberative Civic Engagement: Pictures from a Revolution. In T. Nabatchi, et al. (Ed) *Democracy in Motion: Evaluating the Practice and Impact of Deliberative Civic Engagement*. DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199899265.003.000

***Journal # 1 due in NYUClasses BEFORE class***

#### **Recommended:**

- Bingham, L. B., Nabatchi, T., & O'Leary, R. (2005). The new governance: Practices and processes for stakeholder and citizen participation in the work of government. *Public Administration Review*, 65, 547-558.
- W. H. Voorberg, V. J. J. M. Bekkers & L. G. Tummers (2015) A Systematic Review of Co-Creation and Co-Production: Embarking on the social innovation journey, *Public Management Review*, 17:9, 1333-1357, DOI: 10.1080/14719037.2014.930505

## **Week 2 (September 15)**

### **Module 1: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTICIPATION AND THE ROLE OF THE ARTISTIC EXPRESSION**

#### **Workshop 1: Entering, Exiting and Building Community: Engagement and collaboration through arts, performance and storytelling**

Workshop Trainers: Urban Bush Women

[http://www.urbanbushwomen.org/about\\_ubw/mission\\_values](http://www.urbanbushwomen.org/about_ubw/mission_values)

This workshop is based on experiential learning. We embody effective leadership practices that strengthen and develop our understanding of community engagement. This workshop is not a presentational how-to guide about community relations. It is a dialogic mapping of experience using tools that may include theater games, writing, and movement exercises. EBX is a value-centered approach for work in communities, particularly those that are perceived as disenfranchised, economically poor and in crisis, so that we build and expand a movement of practitioners in community organizing that decolonize approaches and methodologies and move toward building self-determined, liberatory engagements in communities. We use dance to investigate these concepts, so come prepared to move! The power of EBX is in the combination of values-based language – engagement vs. outreach, dialog vs. debate – with an embodied practice of those concepts. Deepening values through the company’s dance practice offers a unique framework in which anyone who experiences UBW’s work – students, colleagues, company members and UBW leadership alike – can turn idea into action, channel discomfort, embody their hopes – and in doing so, to transform. “This is not a workshop you take and check off the list and say I took that. This is a practice of a way of thinking, evaluating, behaving and constantly questioning,” said Jawole Zollar, founding Artistic Director of UBW.

## **Week 3 (September 19): No class**

## **Week 4 (September 26)**

### **Theoretical discussion and Action-Learning Cycle 1**

#### **Required readings:**

- This exercise counts as a required reading: Go to the following page “Creative Citymaking” in the webpage of Intermedia Arts:  
<http://www.intermediaarts.org/creative-citymaking> read the text and watch the video. With that knowledge in mind, explore the rest of the information by clicking in the links on the left side box and be prepared to discuss your impressions about this initiative’s specific projects and how you would consider using art to engage communities from government. What stops you from incorporating arts into your work more fully?
- Aprill, A. et al. 2006. Can the Arts Change the World? The Transformative Power of the Arts in Fostering and Sustaining Social Change. RCLA, NYU/Wagner

- Cornwall, A. 2008. Unpacking “Participation” models, meanings and practices. *Community Development Journal*. 43: 269-283
- Head, B.W. 2007. Community Engagement: Participation on Whose Terms? *Australian Journal of Political Science*. 42(3): 441-454
- Eyben, R., C. Harrys and J. Pettit. 2006. Introduction: Exploring Power for change. *IDS Bulletin*. Vol 37(6): 1-10. Institute of Development Studies, UK

***Journal # 2 due in NYUClasses BEFORE class***

**Recommended:**

- Fung, A. 2006. Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance. *Public Administration Review*. December 2006
- <http://www.workingwithstories.org/aboutpni.html> Participatory Narrative Inquiry
- White, S. (1996) Depoliticising development: The uses and abuses of participation, *Development in Practice*, 6:1, 6-15, DOI: 10.1080/0961452961000157564  
To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0961452961000157564>
- Innes, J.E. and D. Booher. 2004. Reframing public participation: strategies for the 21st century. *Planning Theory and Practice*. 5(4): 419-436

**Week 5 (October 6)**

**Module 2: CATALIZING PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CONVERSATIONAL FACILITATION TECHNIQUES**

**Workshop 2: The Art Of Hosting & Dialogue Techniques**

Trainers: Going up Stream Consultants <http://goingupstream.net/>

We invite you to a leadership workshop to **build skills for hosting challenging conversations** around social justice, equity, and other core issues. Participants will learn new methodologies, models, and practices to build greater engagement and participation into their systems change and social transformation efforts. Participants will: learn facilitation techniques that encourage broad participation and decision-making, explore leadership models that go beyond a traditional top-down approach, and practice building relationships across expertise, experience, and issues.

**Week 6 (October 10): No class**

**Week 7 (October 17)**

## Theoretical discussion and Action-Learning Cycle 2

### Required Readings:

- Cases:
  - Cases A and B:
    - Everyday Democracy. Creating healthy Neighborhoods through action and policy change (1 page)
    - Harper, L.S, (Ed). 2010. Food for Health: Building a Healthy Food System for NYC. A Guide. Everyday Democracy.
  - Case\_C\_Mitchell, L.J. (n.d) Hosting Collaboration through Conversation and Inquiry in Local Communities. UK
- Wheatley, M and D. Frieze. 2011. Leadership in the Age of Complexity: From Hero to Host. The Berkana Institute (4 pages)
- Corrigan, C. (n.d) From consultation to participatory engagement: a concept paper and design plan to creating ownership and activating leaders in community engagement initiatives. Downloaded from [www.chriscorrigan.com](http://www.chriscorrigan.com)

*Journal # 3 due in NYUClasses BEFORE class*

### Recommended:

- Dunford, A. and B. Stilger. (n.d.) Alive in Community: Designing and Hosting Transformative Gatherings. The Berkana Institute
- Owen, H. A Brief User's Guide to Open Space Technology. Downloaded from Chris Corrigan webpage resources tab
- Corrigan, C. (nd) Hosting in a Hurry: Putting the Art of Hosting into practice. Downloaded from [www.chriscorrigan.com](http://www.chriscorrigan.com)

**ATTENTION:** *Mid term report uploaded on Monday September 23 (by midnight)*

### Week 8 (October 27)

#### **Module 3: RECOGNIZING, ENGAGING, AND BRIDGING DIFFERENCES: APPLYNG CRITICAL LENSES CONSTRUCTIVELY**

#### **Workshop 3: Social Identities & Non-negotiable Conversations**

Trainers: Going up Stream Consultants <http://goingupstream.net/>

How do we make our workplaces and teams not just more equitable, but more effective by addressing issues of race? How do we work towards deep, meaningful collaborations, not just in public policies and advocacy campaigns but by tapping our own diversity in workplaces? How do we recognize and address race and diversity as strengths in teams? In this day-long workshop, we will address some of these questions by applying Art of Hosting techniques to the specific reflection on how diverse social identities—by race, sexuality, gender, (dis)ability, and other social axes— can be obstacles or drivers to shape and expand our



collaborations and work. Along the way, we will draw upon existing theories and discuss strategies to recognize, acknowledge, engage, and bridge across differences in constructive ways.

### **Week 9: (Oct 31): No class**

### **Week 10 (November 7)**

#### **Theoretical discussion and Action-Learning Cycle 3**

#### **Required readings:**

- Case: Bradshaw Dieng, J, J. Valenzuela, T. Ortiz. 2016. Building the We: Healing Informed Governing for Racial Equity in Salinas. Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation (35 pages)
- Siu, A. and D. Stanisevski. 2012. Deliberation in Multicultural Societies: Addressing Inequality, Exclusion and Marginalization. In T. Nabatchi, et al. (Ed) Democracy in Motion: Evaluating the Practice and Impact of Deliberative Civic Engagement. DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199899265.003.0005
- Edstrom, J. et al. 2016. Intersectionality: A key for Men to Break Out of the Patriarchal Prison? IDS Bulletin. Vol 37(6): 57-74. Institute of Development Studies, UK
- Lee, A. and T. Glad. 2011. Collaboration: The Courage to Step into a Meaningful Mess. Berkana Institute (4 pages)

*Journal # 4 due in NYUClasses BEFORE class*

#### **Recommended:**

- Walby, S, J. Armstrong and S. Strid. 2012. Intersectionality: Multiple Inequalities in Social Theory. *Sociology*. 46(2): 224-240
- Vangen, S. 2017. Culturally diverse collaborations: a focus on communication and shared understanding. *Public Management Review*. 9:3, 305-325, DOI: 10.1080/14719037.2016.1209234

### **Week 11 (November 17)**

#### **Module 4: UNDERSTANDING COMPLEX SYSTEMS AND LEVERAGING POINTS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE PARTICIPATION**

#### **Workshop 4: Systems Thinking: An Application Through The U Process**

Trainers: Synergos <http://www.synergos.org/>

Increasingly, global leaders are facing challenges that are not just difficult or complicated, but are complex, meaning they are: *dynamic* (with cause and effect far apart in space and time), *generative* (in which the future is unfamiliar and undetermined), and *social* (involving actors with diverse perspective and interests). Adequately addressing such challenges requires capabilities to see and help others see the larger system, foster reflection to uncover mental models that act as barriers and shift the collective focus towards co-creating the future. Leaders can be supported in these capabilities with tools such as Theory U, the social technology for change management developed by Dr. Otto Scharmer of the Presencing Institute and MIT. Theory U helps leaders in a multi-stakeholder process to shift the nature of institutional relationships to enhance collaboration and develop innovative solutions to persistent challenges. The *Systems Thinking: An Application through Theory U* workshop will be structured as an experiential learning opportunity to better address such challenges, whether from the perspective of businesses, government or civil society. It will equip students with systems thinking skills through exposure to the Theory U methodology, case studies and practical application. In addition to establishing an understanding of systems thinking and its application, the class will cultivate students' leadership and relational skills in areas including: systems thinking for issue analysis, stakeholder zapping, seeing from new perspectives, cultivating social capital, building trust with diverse Partners, and prototyping.

**(November 20-24): Thanksgiving Week No class**

**Week 12 (November 28)**

**Theoretical discussion and Action-Learning Cycle 4**

**Required readings:**

- **Watch:** The Essence of Theory U and Presencing, by Professor Otto Scharmer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IUyGBBcdJY> (5:15 minutes)
- Scharmer, Otto. (2007) Addressing the Blind Spot of our Time: An executive Summary of the new book by Otto Scharmer. Theory U: Leading from the future as it emerges. Read pages 1-12 and then choose ONE of the mini-cases presented between pages 12-18 (13 pages)
- Case: Synergos in Namibia: Improving Maternal and Child Health
  - View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=An7wTWfrJao>
  - Read: Namibian Health Authorities Tackle Maternal Mortality
- Bowman, K. et al. 2015. Systems Thinking: An Introduction for Oxfam Program Staff. Oxfam,UK. (24 pages)

***Journal # 5 due in NYUClasses BEFORE class***

**Recommended:**

- Oxfam. 2014. Quick Guide to Power Analysis. Oxfam

### **Week 13 (December 5)**

#### **Conclusion: TRANSFORMATIVE PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT RECONSIDERED**

#### **Required readings:**

- This exercise counts as a required reading: Go to the following page <https://www.raceforward.org/practice/tools/preventing-racial-inequity-schools-and-beyond>, listen to the video and download and study the two page document on Racial Equity Impact Assessment. Think about policy decision areas where you believe this would be helpful and be prepared to discuss why and how you would go about doing it if you were involved.
- Kelly, M. and S. McKinley. 2015. Cities Building Community Wealth. Democracy Collaborative. Takoma Park
- Participate. 2012. What do we know about how to bring the perspectives of people living in poverty into global policy making? Participate. IDS

### **Week 14 (December 12): No class**

- **Case study analysis due:** E-PARC Case. Building a Healthy Community, Parts A and B (see instructions in NYUClasses)