

FAA 199-Fall 2008**Civic Engagement in East St. Louis, IL**

In Class: November 12 & November 19

Wednesday, 5:00pm-6:30pm

Field Trip: November 14-15

Meeting place: 317 Noble Hall

Instructor: Sang S. Lee

Office Hours: 324 Noble Hall

Tues. & Thurs. 3pm-4pm

Or by appointment

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Course Description:

Community-based organizations play increasingly important roles in expanding the supply of jobs, affordable housing and social services in many low-income urban communities. Supported by local religious organizations, financial institutions, regional foundations and municipal governments, community development corporations have emerged as the primary organizational vehicles for neighborhood stabilization and community revitalization in many U.S. cities.

This course is designed to introduce students from across campus to community development practices and the participatory approach followed by the East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP). This is a unique opportunity to work alongside residents and neighborhood leaders on vital projects identified by grassroots organizations. A hands-on approach to instruction is employed, as participants will take part in an Outreach Weekend experience in East St. Louis, Illinois. Students will tour the city and meet neighborhood leaders before engaging in the weekend projects of physical improvements in the community. As preparation for the trip students will participate in a mandatory lecture that addresses structural inequality and highlights the history of the partnership between the East St. Louis community and ESLARP. Students will be required to complete two written assignments and be prepared to discuss their experiences during the post-trip reflection session.

The class can be repeated for up to 3 credit hours, spread out over 3 separate semesters.

Course Format:

This course involves two in-class instructions and one supervised weekend fieldtrip (Friday and Saturday), the ESLARP Outreach Weekend, to East St. Louis, Illinois. The ESLARP Outreach Weekends are conducted each semester. The weekend experience typically begins on Friday mornings at 7 a.m. and will conclude on Saturday evenings returning to campus before 9 p.m. ESLARP will fund all travel, food and lodging expenses necessitated by these trips. The lecture will take place on the Wednesday before the trip and reflection will take place the Wednesday following the trip.

Course Requirements:

1. Mandatory attendance and active participation in-class and at the Outreach Weekend.
2. Completion of assigned readings.
3. Completion of written assignments. No late papers will be accepted.

Course Objectives:

- Give students an introductory understanding of critical economic, social, environmental, and political problems confronting residents in one of our state's most distressed urban neighborhoods.
- Give students a hands-on learning experience where they can meet key community members and work with the community members on a project that will improve their neighborhood.
- Encourage students to become civically engaged and volunteer-minded members of the campus community and beyond.

Grading:

The course will be graded pass/not pass. Completion of assignments and participation in class and during the field trip is necessary for a passing grade.

Instruction Dates:

November 12 (Classroom)

Reading: Reardon, Kenneth M. (1998). "Enhancing the Capacity of Community-Based Organizations in East St. Louis," in the Journal of Planning Education and Research, 17, 323-333. The reading will be available on the course's website (http://www.eslarp.uiuc.edu/view/faa199_fall08.aspx).

November 14-15 (ESLARP Outreach Weekend)

Arrive at Temple Buell Hall by 7am on Friday, November 14th. We will return to campus by 9pm on Saturday, November 15th.

November 19 (Classroom)

Due: Short answer assignment