

ENGLISH 705: Public Rhetorics and Community Engagement Colloquium

Professor: Rachel Bloom-Pojar, Ph.D.

Tuesdays 6:30-7:45pm (synchronous online, connection details tbd)

Course catalog description: 1 cr. Graduate. Colloquium in public rhetorics, professional writing, and community engagement. Investigation of disciplinary foundations and professional concerns in public rhetorics, professional writing, and community engagement.

Spring 2021 Description: This section of the Public Rhetorics and Community Engagement Colloquium will focus on *Ethically Engaging with Communities*. It will help students identify ways they can authentically build relationships outside of academia for community-engaged research, writing, and/or teaching. Weekly discussions will focus on the various “behind the scenes” experiences that are part of community-engaged research but are not often reflected in the final versions of publications. We will discuss what “community engagement” means for each of our paths with research, teaching, and/or professional work. We will also consider how community engagement might positively impact our personal lives and overall sense of fulfillment in the work that we do. This engagement does not need to lead to a major research project and ideally won’t be driven by an academic research agenda. Instead, we will focus on ethical practices for community-driven research that centers and supports local organizations and initiatives. Ultimately, this course will help students consider how to take their time in authentically building relationships and ethically engaging with communities to avoid the damaging and paternalistic approach academics have historically taken when doing work about/in communities.

For weekly assignments, students can expect to either read and respond to 1-2 articles per week or to engage in activities that help them learn more about, and make connections with, community organizations they are interested in working with (for professional or personal reasons). The final deliverable for this course will be a reflection on the semester and a proposal for future steps with community engagement. Deliverables, assignments, and each student’s engagement with the course topic will look a little different depending on their goals and interests, but we will all come together to consider what ways our interests intersect and how we can build a supportive community as colleagues. Our synchronous meetings will provide time to discuss weekly topics and progress. We will also have the opportunity to check in and support each other through asynchronous chats and resource sharing.