

# **STREET ROOTS: EXPLORING ISSUES OF HOMELESSNESS**

(A Portland State University Studies Capstone Course)

**UNST 421, 6 credits**

**Fall Term 2012: Tuesdays 2pm — 4:50pm, Cramer Hall Room 159**

**Instructor: Colleen Kaleda, MS**

**Office: Cramer Hall 117**

**Office Phone: 503.869.3089**

**Office Hours: By appointment (Tuesdays preferred)**

**Email: [kaleda@pdx.edu](mailto:kaleda@pdx.edu)**

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

- **Communication:** Learn and put into practice the basics of journalistic research, interviewing, writing, photography and editing.
- **Inquiry and Critical Thinking:** Establish familiarity with the basic issues of poverty and homelessness and gain understanding of the factors that contribute to homelessness.
- **Ethical and Social Responsibility:** Gain understanding of the role public policy plays in homelessness.
- **Variety of Human Experience:** Gain understanding of the homeless perspective through direct communication with the homeless.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GENERAL INFO:**

First, know that this Capstone will challenge you intellectually, mentally and at times emotionally. Facing issues of homelessness and poverty are tough, and you will be expected to engage with the homeless themselves, homeless advocates and others during your project work for our community partner, *Street Roots*. Second, know that this is a writing-heavy Capstone: students will write three in-class reflection essays, one book review, and the main project will be a polished piece of publishable journalistic writing. Third, know that this will be a discussion-heavy Capstone: students will be expected and encouraged to actively participate in class discussions with guest speakers, the professor and fellow students.

## **ARTICLES/PHOTOGRAPHY FOR STREET ROOTS**

The main focus of the Capstone will be the reporting and writing of stories, complete with original photography, for publication in *Street Roots*, Portland's homeless newspaper. Students should budget about 25 hours of out-of-class time for project work. Student stories become the property of *Street Roots* upon delivery to the paper, and student use and/or publication of the material, in whole or in part, for any other purpose must be discussed with and approved in advance by *Street Roots*. Articles will be reported and written in student teams. It is the responsibility of the student teams to divide work equally and to meet regularly for the writing, photo selection, revision and editing process. The final article will be graded as a whole package, including photography and captions.

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:**

Specific requirements for out-of-class assignments will be discussed in class and written instructions will be handed out. Specific topics for in-class reflection essays will be announced immediately prior to the start of the in-class writing time.

Because this is a 400-level writing-focused Capstone, there will be no re-grading of papers. It is the student's responsibility to turn in a polished final draft by the deadline. Grammar and spelling errors will negatively affect all assignment grades. The professor encourages students to consult fellow students, other university resources, and the professor for writing and revision assistance. I am always happy to read, edit and discuss drafts in-person in my office.

Readings are required and the basis for class discussion. Students are expected to come prepared to class by keeping up on readings. Preparedness is an important factor in a quality discussion and participation is part of the final grade for each student.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Regular class attendance is expected. Students are asked to notify the professor in advance if a class session will be missed for any reason. More than one absence will negatively affect the student's grade in the course.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT CODE**

It is strongly recommended that you read the Student Conduct Code (see <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conduct.html>). It details your rights and responsibilities as a student and as a member of the Portland State Community.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

If you are a student with a documented disability and registered with the Disability Resource Center, please contact the instructor immediately to facilitate arranging academic accommodations.

### **DEADLINES:**

There will be no late assignments accepted. Deadlines are strictly enforced and late assignments will receive a zero unless the student has an illness, emergency or other special circumstance and contacts the professor in advance about it. Printing problems do not constitute special circumstances or an emergency.

### **TEXTBOOK:**

Morrell, Jessica P. (2007). *Voices from the Street*, Portland, Ore. Gray Sunshine Press.

### **BREAKDOWN OF COURSE GRADING:**

CLASS ATTENDANCE, DISCUSSION, PARTICIPATION: 20% of grade

BOOK REVIEW: 10% of grade

AFRICA EXCHANGE REFLECTION: 10% of grade

IN-CLASS REFLECTION ESSAYS (3 @ 5% each): 15% of grade

PRESENTATION OF INDIVIDUAL BOOK: 5% of grade

STORY/PHOTOGRAPHY PACKAGE: 40% of grade

## COURSE CALENDAR

### **Tuesday, September 25**

First Half: Introduction to the course, our community partner Street Roots, *Voices from the Street*, and to each other. Overview of the syllabus, book list, and what will be expected of students. All-class brainstorming session surrounding the issues we'll be reading about and "exploring through reporting" this term. African journalist exchange assignment given.  
Second Half: Joanne Zuhl, Editor of Street Roots will overview the paper's role and history and present story choices to class.

### **Tuesday, October 2**

First hour: story and group assignments. Students will receive their individual book assignments today.

**\*\*\*Class will re-meet at 3:15 pm at Sisters of the Road Café (NW 6th & Davis).** Jeannie Lawer, café manager and longtime volunteer at Sister of the Road, will give us a walking tour of Old Town/Chinatown and the homeless services there. We'll end the tour with a stop at the offices of Street Roots: 211 NW Davis (503-228-5657).

### **Tuesday, October 9**

**\*VOICES BOOK REVIEWS DUE – beginning of class**

- **First in-class essay (20 minutes)**
- Review of interview techniques & Primer on Writing: How to turn your notes and quotes into a story, and getting "the story behind the story".
- Photographing Your Story: Shooting for Success

### **Tuesday, October 16**

**\*AFRICA EXCHANGE REFLECTIONS DUE**

**All-class discussion on global homelessness and poverty issues**

End of Class: Meet in teams for rough draft planning. Groups will receive consultation/editing appointment time for 10/23 class.

**\*\*NOTE: First drafts (800 words or more, in story form) due by 12noon on Monday, October 22 via e-mail to [joanne@streetroots.org](mailto:joanne@streetroots.org) and [kaleda@pdx.edu](mailto:kaleda@pdx.edu)**

### **Tuesday, October 23**

1-on-1 consultations with professor and Joanne Zuhl. Each team member must attend your pre-assigned consultation time. **\*\*Please bring digital samples of your photography to appt.**

**Tuesday, October 30**

**\*\*\*No formal class meeting today \*\*\***

**MEET IN TEAMS TO WORK ON STORIES**

**Tuesday, November 6**

**Second in-class reflection essay (20 minutes).**

Primer on writing/refining the story, choosing the best photography

Meet in story-teams, professor check-ins with each team

**Tuesday, November 13**

**\*FINAL STORY DELIVERY DATE**

**Class will meet at 2:15 pm at Street Roots offices in Old Town** (bring final drafts and photos on flash drive for delivery, as well as two identical printed copies of your story)

De-brief discussion @ Street Roots with Joanne Zuhl

**Tuesday, November 20**

**\*INDIVIDUAL BOOK PRESENTATIONS (7 min. long, all students will present)**

**Tuesday, November 27**

**Third in-class reflection essay (20 minutes)**

Review/evaluation of projects, University Studies Goals, final discussion, class evaluations