

## **USP 432: Theory and Philosophy of Community Development Winter 2024**

Mon/Wed 10-11:50 am  
**Urban Center 270**

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### **What *is* community development?**

Community development seeks to strengthen the capacity of community members to act collectively to improve their physical, social, economic, and political environment. Community development builds sustainable places through participation and empowerment. CD requires an understanding of the historical processes that have resulted in uneven development both within and between places and people, as well as the community activism that led to the development of the CD approach. Community development requires reflective practice, considering ourselves as individuals and part of the community. This includes developing a theoretical and practical analysis of structures of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality; social and political history and ideologies; and the economy and political economy.

### **Why learn theory and philosophy? Can't we "just do it"?**

In the words of John Forester, "Theory... is neither dogma, doctrine, nor a quick conceptual fix for timeless problems, a cookbook recipe for practice that truly serves the public... Good theory is what we need when we get stuck. Theories can help alert us to problems, point us toward strategies of response, remind us of what we care about, or prompt our practical insights into the particular cases we confront." (*Planning in the Face of Power*) Theory helps us to practice better.

### **Course objectives:**

This course is an investigation of theory and philosophy—the concepts, models, and perspectives of community development practice. The course considers organizations and institutions in CD, the programmatic activities of CD, and what it means to be a practitioner of community development. This course addresses CD on three levels: the structural—assessing systems and institutions and CD as a response; the programmatic—particular activities; and the practice—the personal and interpersonal development towards becoming a reflective practitioner of CD.

During the term, students will

- \* Gain an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of CD, advancing their analysis of community development as a field of study, a practice, a profession, and an orientation to social change
- \* Critically analyze historical and contemporary community development practice in light of these principles and develop responses to challenges presented by real world situations.
- \* Develop and articulate their own commitments to community development practice.

## Requirements and policies:

### Course Logistics:

All course content is available via the Canvas site as documents or links. Please read the module notes to get a sense of how to focus your thinking.

Course materials should be prepared for discussion on the day they are posted for. Please prepare all the materials, so we can have robust discussions and work sessions. These sessions will be an important part of your participation grade.

Readings listed in purple with a \*\* are to be annotated on the hypothes.is tool online. When you click the reading, it will open with the hypothes.is tool where you will make notes and engage in discussion with your classmates in the margins! This is a required component of participation for this class.

### Demonstration of Learning

#### Attendance, participation, and preparation

**20% of grade**

Please arrive to class *on time*, having completed the readings outlined on the syllabus. There are a number of opportunities to participate and demonstrate your preparation. Attendance in class is very important, but please do not come if you are ill and likely to be contagious! I strongly encourage you to continue to take precautions to avoid Covid-19, as there is a continued pandemic that as of January 2024 includes resurgent rates of spread!

*Reading annotation* Engage in comment and discussion via the hypothes.is site and in class. Reading posts must be completed before the class where discussion will take place; there are no late submissions for credit.

If you are going to be missing a single day of class, *there is no need to alert me*. Upon your return, you should work with your colleagues to obtain notes and check Canvas for any uploads. Only *after* you have reviewed this new information should you contact me with questions about "what happened." However, if you will be out for an extended period of time, let me know as soon as possible to determine what arrangements can be made. If you have an emergency that precludes you from turning in a major assignment, alert me as soon as you can.

#### Reflective writing assignments

**30% of grade**

Reflection 1 due 01/28  
Reflection 2 due 02/11  
Reflection 3 due 03/03  
Final reflection and self-assessment due 03/17

#### Visionary Future CD

**25% of grade**

Group document due 02/16 (Fri)  
Individual presentation 02/19 → Due 02/23 (Fri)

#### Rules for CD School

**25% of grade**

Discuss 03/11 due 03/17

## Grading:

**Your assessment of your own goals and achievements over the term will be the primary way that your work effort translates into a final grade.** I'm not super into grades as a competitive and uniform process of transacting activities for points. Your final grade is about where you started, and where you got to-- and you have the clearest reflection on that. If you think about the chunks of the class as the %s above, how did you do? Did you participate as fully as you'd hoped?

What is self-assessment?

*At the end of the term, every institution where I've worked has required me to issue a final grade for students. So, I ask the students to grade themselves. I wish I didn't have to do this. I wish the conversation I had with students could focus purely on authentic assessment, process, and formative feedback. But I have found that asking students to give themselves a grade also makes the why and how of grades a valuable subject of the conversations we have—valuable because they will go on to be graded in other courses and thinking critically about how and why grading happens helps that become more productive for them. [-Jesse Stommel](#)*

*Reflection grades.* You may submit in any format- type it, audio/video, write in your journal and upload a pic. Draw something. Reflections are works-in-progress; expect your thinking to be incomplete at times, to evolve, to include questions and 'wondering.' They are for you to think about yourself and your practice in CD, to aim towards the Rules for CD School and your final self-assessment.

*Annotation and participation.* Jump in! In particular be present and fully engaged in asking questions of me, yourself, and your classmates. Reading is *critical* in this class, and you've got to dig into the readings and work on deciphering them—some of these readings are tough! And we will get into the ideas together. Your attendance for the group world-building is required and essential.

*Visionary Future CD.* This is a creative assignment. The opportunity is for you to use your imagination about everything you hope for the world to come. Everybody is creative—you don't have to be a master of arts to do a great assignment. Just let yourself stretch beyond what you think is possible now. Join in the world-building with your full head and heart for the visionary CD assignment.

*Rules for CD School.* This assignment invites you to look back at what you have learned in the CD program across many classes, and to demonstrate your engagement with the ideas in all the classes, including this theory class, about what CD is, what it can do, and what kind of person does it.

## Communication

Outside of office hours, your primary mode of communication to me is my pdx.edu email account. In order to get a timely response, the subject line of your email should include "USP 432" and some clue about the contents. It is preferable that you use your pdx.edu account to contact me, but if you don't, please include your first and last name as it appears on the roster in the body of the email.

To schedule a meeting with me outside of office hours, use the appointment link on google calendar. You don't need to email me to ask!

*\*The Platinum Rule.* The Golden Rule tells us, "Treat others as you would like to be treated." By following the Platinum Rule, we will treat others as *they* wish to be treated. We will extend courtesy and consideration in our classroom community. Through discussion, our ideas may be questioned and challenged, but always in a respectful manner with the goal of mutual learning.

## Academic Integrity

Demonstrate academic honesty. Review the [Student Conduct Code](#) to know your rights and responsibilities as a member of the Portland State University community. This code describes behavior for which a student may be subject to disciplinary action. [Academic misconduct](#) will not be tolerated. An act of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, misrepresenting or improper/no citing that leads the instructor/viewer of content to believe that the writing and content are original to you, or unauthorized possession of examinations will automatically result in a grade of "F" for the affected assignment and the case will be referred to university authorities. If you are still unclear as to what constitutes plagiarism, consult this [site explaining plagiarism](#) from the PSU Library. When in doubt, cite the source. For assistance with APA citation format, see: [Purdue OWL: APA Formatting and Style Guide](#).

## Accommodations For Learning Differences

It is Portland State University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please register with the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#) (503-725-4150 or [drc@pdx.edu](mailto:drc@pdx.edu)) in order to establish reasonable accommodations. Once you have registered with the DRC, please schedule a time to talk to me so that we can discuss your needs for the term.

## Assignments

**Reflective writing assignments** are due Sunday nights. Feel free to turn them in early!

*Reflection grades.* You may submit in any format- type it, audio/video, write in your journal and upload a pic. Draw something. It should be the equivalent amount of thinking that's in one juicy page of writing. It should reflect course materials, including discussions in class and things from other CD courses, your internship or field experience, and your own life in community.

Reflections are works-in-progress; expect your thinking to be incomplete at times, to evolve, to include questions and 'wondering.' They are for you to think about yourself and your practice in CD, to aim towards the Rules for CD School and your final self-assessment.

### Reflection 1: DUE 01/28

**Write your own identity politics statement like the Combahee River Collective. Use the prompts from class discussion as well as these additional questions as you consider how you reflect on and analyze your experiences to develop a politics in the world.**

Our identities and experiences shape our knowledge and attitudes about the world. They also affect others' perceptions of us. Our positionality relates to our place in various social hierarchies--race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality, (dis)ability. We also gain new perspectives and attitudes as we learn from others and consciously choose belief systems. Our standpoint can incorporate the vision and analysis of groups we do not belong to by identity.

Reflect on your positionality in community development: In what ways does my background influence how I experience the world, what I emphasize in my CD work, and how I evaluate and interpret others and their experiences? How do I know? What are social, political, historical and contextual realities that have shaped my community partners' ways of knowing and interpreting the world? How consistent and inconsistent are those realities with mine? How do I know?

Additional questions that might spark your thoughts:

Whose sorrow and heartbreak do you allow to affect you, to empathize with instead of pity?

Think about an issue you care a lot about. How has your thinking about this issue changed over time? What made that happen (and could it happen again)? What was the BIG LIE about that issue, and what made you buy into it? How did you reject it?

Who do you carry with you in spaces where you don't feel a sense of belonging?

What do people get wrong about your experience and/or community? Are there ways that you uphold those wrong ideas?

**Reflection 2: DUE 02/11**

**What core knowledge and skills does a community developer (ie YOU) need to build in order to be prepared to address the structures and systems of inequality that CD seeks to address?**

What practices do you cultivate (or need to cultivate) to learn about yourself? Who has wisdom to offer to your struggles?

Where do you need to grow personally to get to where you want to be? Where do you need to grow intellectually or professionally to get to where you want to be? Who can you build with, learn with, get/give feedback with, to reach these goals?

One of Corita's rules is: "Be self disciplined. This means finding someone wise or smart and choosing to follow them. To be disciplined is to follow in a good way. To be self disciplined is to follow in a better way." Is there someone you follow (from near or at a distance!) to learn more about yourself, about practice, about social change? Who is it and how do you 'follow in a better way'?

**Reflection 3: DUE 03/03**

**How do you cultivate hope as a verb and action? How does thinking about a visionary future support your own capacity for imagining the future you wish CD to bring about?**

In social change work, we can sometimes get tired. One way to maintain positivity as the work bogs us down or the politics look pessimistic is to remind ourselves of why we do the work. What motivates you? How would you fill in the following sentences:

I have a VISION for a better world. It looks like...

I have VALUES that guide me in my activism. They are...

I HOPE to change the world. What makes me feel hopeful is...

## Final Reflection and self-assessment: DUE 03/17

**Please write two paragraphs on what you learned! And provide yourself the grade you feel you earned. Your grade should correspond to your reflection about your learning and efforts throughout the term. The prompt for the reflection:**

1. Corita also says, "Always be around. Come or go to everything. Always go to classes. Read anything you can get your hands on. Look at movies carefully, often. Save everything--it might come in handy later" What movies, readings, people, movements, ideas from this course do you think will come in handy later for you?
2. What will you take away from this quarter? This can include...
  - A learning goal you had at the start and achieved
  - A new idea about what CD is for, what CD does, how to do CD
  - Thoughts on the usefulness of theory in CD during This Unprecedented Time
  - A reflection about your own capabilities and resilience in times of weird stuff going on
  - Revisiting any of the previous reflection prompts
3. What grade would you give yourself for this term? Why?

## Visionary Futures Community Development

### Background to the assignment: Visionary world building

Community development goals are to transform our communities and ourselves--not just to address incrementally the issues of today. A vision of 'beloved community' includes healing and repair, cultural practices and wellness, governance and community voice. If we imagine beyond reacting to our current conditions we can envision community and community development practice in ways that help us see where we are really going. If we really grappled with the implications of our theories about 'what's going on?' — racial capitalism, settler colonialism, anti-Blackness, ableism and audism, misogyny and transmisogyny, etc— where could we get to?

### Bottom line: what you will turn in

*By Friday, February 16*

- A group based google doc with notes from your worldbuilding session

*By Sunday, February 25*

- Your CD visionary future

### Timeline: how we will get there over Weeks 4-9

Week 5-Wed Prefiguration and time, visionary futures

Week 6-Mon Place-making and the 'beloved community'

*Week 6-Wed GROUP WORK SESSION Worldbuilding exercise*

*Week 6-Fri GROUP DOCUMENT DUE*

*Week 7-Mon INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS*

*End of Week 7 INDIVIDUAL FUTURE ASSIGNMENT DUE*

### Detailed parameters for completion:

#### The world building

As a group: Think through and discuss what it 'looks like' to be in the future of [abolition; land back; no borders; ubi]. Take notes on your ideas and questions in a shared google doc - considering the prompts about what questions are important to ask in this new world, how it 'works.'

Your group scenario should describe a 'completed' future for the topic. Individually, each person should pick different times in the future (1 year? 10? 50? 100?) to explore aspects and dimensions of the world, relating to CD, that are most important to you and your practice. Those would be 'incomplete' or 'in progress' moments in time. They will reveal other questions we need to ask, skills we need to develop, structures or institutions that require revision or building....and more!



## **Your own visionary future**

As an individual: Prepare to present on Monday February 19<sup>th</sup>, and turn it in at the end of the week.

*Background:* What is your time/place? What are the parameters there- what is the state of [topics]? What are some basics of the land, people and society, governance, economy?

*Future CD:* Content from the future that reveals what is going on, what has been addressed, what is still being worked on? How have communities evolved and what might CD need to address, how does CD practice look?

This can be presented creatively. Examples...

- It's 2036 and you're in charge of Portland Housing Bureau, writing a memo to staff about goals.
- A speech by a community elder giving advice about what they've lived through.
- A short story about someone navigating the ongoing changing circumstances.
- A grid of pictures and explanatory captions for Instagram of the future.
- News story reporting on a community activity or organization's program.

Whatever format you choose, it should show that you've thought about how your world vision helps us, today, to think and act towards what we want in the world.

It should reveal: How do we actually evolve? How do we do the work of getting to those visions (hint hint that's CD) - what practices do we need to cultivate, whose voices do we need to lift up, what knowledge and skills do we need? What ameliorative activities? What new activities? What do we keep or renew?

## Rules for CD School

## Discuss in class Week 10

### Written version due Sun 03/17

Corita (formerly known as Sister Corita Kent) was an artist and teacher, and a social justice advocate. While teaching in the art department at Immaculate Heart College, she created 10 Rules for Students, Teachers, and Life. These rules are famous (...and not unproblematic!). Underlying these rules are philosophies about how to learn, how to do art, and how to be an artist. (and these are 3 distinct things to unpack!).

*As an individual OR in a group of up to 4 colleagues, create your Rules for CD School. They should:*

#### IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT RULES

- Rule 1** FIND A PLACE YOU TRUST AND THEN TRY TRUSTING IT FOR A WHILE.
- Rule 2** GENERAL DUTIES OF A STUDENT: PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR TEACHER. PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.
- Rule 3** GENERAL DUTIES OF A TEACHER: PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR STUDENTS.
- Rule 4** CONSIDER EVERYTHING AN EXPERIMENT.
- Rule 5** BE SELF DISCIPLINED. THIS MEANS FINDING SOMEONE WISE OR SMART AND CHOOSING TO FOLLOW THEM.  
TO BE DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A GOOD WAY.  
TO BE SELF DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A BETTER WAY.
- Rule 6** NOTHING IS A MISTAKE. THERE'S NO WIN AND NO FAIL. THERE'S ONLY MAKE.
- Rule 7** The only rule is work.  
IF YOU WORK IT WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING.  
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO DO ALL OF THE WORK ALL THE TIME WHO EVENTUALLY CATCH ON TO THINGS.
- Rule 8** DON'T TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYSE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY'RE DIFFERENT PROCESSES.
- Rule 9** BE HAPPY WHENEVER YOU CAN MANAGE IT. ENJOY YOURSELF. IT'S LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK.
- Rule 10** "WE'RE BREAKING ALL OF THE RULES. EVEN OUR OWN RULES. AND HOW DO WE DO THAT? BY LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR X QUANTITIES." JOHN CAGE
- HELPFUL HINTS: ALWAYS BE AROUND. COME OR GO TO EVERYTHING. ALWAYS GO TO CLASSES. READ ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON. LOOK AT MOVIES CAREFULLY. OFTEN. SAVE EVERYTHING-IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY LATER.  
THERE SHOULD BE NEW RULES NEXT WEEK.

1. Cover the three concepts- how to learn, how to do, and how to be
2. Be written as these short, pithy rules are
3. Include footnotes that fully explain your ideas and the theoretical underpinnings, with citations to the class texts. Each rule should be footnoted with ~150 words that make specific reference to the theories and philosophies, readings and class discussions that you are using to define concepts, responsibilities/ethics, strategies, etc.
4. Include a short bio of yourself (150 w max), with relevant reflective information. For example, you might include your team type, your motto, your positionality, your personal definition of CD.

*If you work as a group: along with each individual bio, include a collective reflection (250 w) about how you worked together as a team, your process and collaboration.*

**\*\*See Canvas Assignment for details\*\***

## Schedule overview

	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment due
1	Mon, Jan 08	Introduction to the course		
	Wed, Jan 10	Reflective practice	<b>**Solnit- 'Hope is an embrace of the unknown'</b>	
2	Mon, Jan 15	MLK DAY		
	Wed, Jan 17	The Capitalisms	Stoecker- neoliberal What do we mean by racial capitalism?	
3	Mon, Jan 22	'Identity Politics'	<b>**Combahee River Collective</b>	
	Wed, Jan 24	Disability Justice	Short video and article by Pineda Principles of Disability Justice-Sins Invalid Six ways of looking at crip time	Identity politics statement
4	Mon, Jan 29	Anti-Blackness and structural racism	<b>**Lipsitz- Racialization of Space</b> Kelley- What does BLM want? <i>OYO: watch short film on Chicano Moratorium</i>	
	Wed, Jan 31	NO CLASS: watch film	<i>WATCH FILM OYO</i> Finding our way- film by Leonie Sandercock	
5	Mon, Feb 05	Decolonization	<b>**Decolonization is not a metaphor</b>	
	Wed, Feb 07	Visionary Futures	Octavia Butler- rules for world <i>Listen to podcast before class!</i>	Knowledge, skills, and practices

	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment due
6	Mon, Feb 12	Place-making examples	Sign up to be in charge of 1 <i>Rasquache</i> Black placemaking Indigenous Planning Anarchistic Approaches Does Time Colonize? Disability Justice in UP	
	Wed, Feb 14	Group work	Craft vision and choose times along	Group document on visionary future
7	Mon, Feb 19	Individual presentations		Individual future CD vision
	Wed, Feb 21	Right to the City	**Harvey – The Right to the City Marcuse – From critical urban theory to the rtc Reading RTTC part 1	
8	Mon, Feb 26	Oppositional CD	**DeFilippis, Fisher, Shragge – What’s left in the community?	
	Wed, Feb 28	Philanthropy	**Smith- Intro to the NPIC, The revolution will not be funded Foxworth- The need for Black rage in philanthropy	Practices of hope
9	Mon, Mar 04	CO +/-or CD	Fisher + DeFilippis – Community organizing in the US	
	Wed, Mar 06	Visionary organizing	<i>American Revolutionary: Grace Lee Boggs film</i>	
10	Mon, Mar 11	Art & practice of CD	adrienne marie brown- Emergent Strategies Revisiting rules for art school	
	Wed, Mar 13	Wrapping up		Rules for CD School