



MERRIMACK COLLEGE

Explorations Course Syllabus Optional Template Fall 2022

Professor: Dr. Kirstie Lynn Dobbs
Classroom: TBD
Office: Cushing Hall 17b
Office Hours: TBD
Email Address: dobbsk@merrimack.edu

Class Date/Time: TBD

Enduring Question Theme: Monsters and Heroes

Enduring Question: What is power? How do you get it? How do you use it?

Course Description:

Welcome to Rebels, Riots, and Revolution!

Explorations Courses focus on enduring questions. Enduring questions do not have easy answers; instead, they encourage examination of complex issues from multiple perspectives, introspection, evidence-based arguments, and learning how to respectfully discuss controversial and difficult topics. Each Explorations Course examines a unique enduring question. All Explorations Courses focus on the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as civic and community engagement. Students will also examine the Merrimack Connections curriculum. This course satisfies the Diversity Requirement in the Liberal Studies Core.

As a young person, have you ever wondered how you could make a change in your community? Have you ever felt powerless to make a difference, but at the same time, feel inspired by emerging youth leaders like Greta Thunberg for climate change and the scores of young people who marched in the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020? Young people are often viewed as the “movers and shakers” of the world but can be excluded from having a “seat at the table” when it comes to decision-making within a community. Yet, many young people today and throughout

history, are challenging existing power structures in pursuit of a more equitable, fair, and just world. In this course, we will answer three fundamental questions for making a change in a community: What is power? How do you get it? And How do you use it? These questions relate to the “Monsters and Heroes” theme given that power is central to any individual or group seeking to make a change, but how it is used and by whom often dictates whether these efforts are viewed as heroic or monstrous. In this course, you will become familiar with rebellion, revolution, and other forms of youth civic activism geared at promoting institutional and structural change for the benefit of society. Furthermore, as an explorations course, we will examine the Merrimack College Connections program which ALL students complete during their time at Merrimack.

Required Texts

- Van Inwegen, Patrick. 2011. *Understanding Revolution*. Lynne Reinner Publishers.
- Margolin, Jamie. 2020. *Youth to Power: Your Voice and How to Use It*. Hachette Go.
- Additional reading materials will be provided on Blackboard

General Education Learning Outcomes:

“Be comfortable with the uncomfortable”

- I. *Students will develop their capacity to learn and work as a diverse community through shared inquiry and dialogue based on mutual respect.*
 - Recognize diverse perspectives within scholarly communities
 - Describe one’s attitudes and beliefs in relation to those of other cultures and communities
 - Identify relevant communities for defining contemporary problems
- II. *Students will become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who demonstrate knowledge of, respect for, and appreciation of diversity across global and local communities, as well as other communities of interest.*
 - Identify opportunities to work with and learn from a diversity of communities and cultures
 - Identify scholarly knowledge that is relevant to civic engagement
 - Describe the world views, power, structures, understanding of human meaning and purpose, experiences of others historically or in contemporary contexts.

Course Learning Goals and Objectives:

1. Understand individual positionality and how privilege intersects with oppression in society:
 - a. Reflect on individual social identity and how it shapes political views and behavior
 - b. Research a historical political event
 - c. Synthesize literature related to racism and political activism in America
2. Explore individual identity and know who you are and how you can use that to inform positive change:
 - a. Discuss community engagement and ways individuals can directly impact political institutions
 - b. Students will engage in [learning activities](#) that train young people to facilitate productive dialogue across political differences
3. Assess the causes and consequences of different forms of political participation, and outline how individuals and groups can affect political outcomes across the globe:
 - a. Read literature related to shifting demographics and activism
 - b. Describe major political and social movements throughout history
 - c. Create your own podcast activity to elevate voices on campus and to market student work at the semester end Monsters and Heroes Symposium

Grading Breakdown

- Professionalization Score (10%)
- Perusall Reading Grade (15%)
- Historical Event Research Paper (25%)
- Create Your Own Podcast (30%)
- Final Exam (20%)

Grading Scale

A 93-100	C 73-76
A- 90-92	C- 70-72
B+ 87-89	D+ 67-69
B 83-86	D 63-66
B- 80-82	D- 60-62
C+ 77-79	F 59 and below

Assessments/Methods of Evaluation:

Professionalization Score (10%)

Despite the pandemic, students are expected to engage with this course in a professional manner. By professional, I mean showing up to class on time, prepared, and ready to engage. To measure

professionalization, attendance will be taken at the start of each class. Students who are absent who do not communicate with me regarding their absence will be marked unexcused, and their professionalization score will decline. The key to maintaining a high professionalization score is communication! So communicate often!

Perusall Reading Grade (15%)

Each week you are assigned a set of readings to complete by Sunday at 11:59 pm. The readings that are outside of the assigned books for this class will be located on Perusall. Perusall is an annotating software system where you can access the weekly readings and annotate them as you read to help deepen your comprehension of the text. At the end of the semester, you will receive an overall grade on your engagement with these reading assignments. In class, we will do one of the first readings assigned in the first week together, so that you get an understanding of how to achieve a high grade on these assignments. To access Perusall go to www.perusall.com and create an account. After you have created the account, enter the access code for this course.

[LG1, LOc and LG3, LOa]

Youth Leadership Portfolio Project (25%)

Each student will develop materials related to youth and civic engagement throughout the semester. These materials will include personal reflections, writing samples, digital media, and other public outreach strategies. Elements of this project will be done in teams. At the end of the semester, students will turn in 5 major assignments that represents components of this project.

[LG1, LOb; LG3, LOb]

Create Your Own Podcast (30%)

This semester we have been returning to questions about power, civic activism, institutional and structural change, social justice, marginalization and oppression, and identity and community, not only through our readings but also through our in-class activities and the historical event research project. This final assignment weaves these dimensions of the course together: you will yourself make a podcast about social and political life that synthesizes themes from the course. Podcasts are increasingly a way that people—and especially people 35 and under—engage in politics, society, and culture, so this project also connects our study this semester to the broader political world. As such, this will be an open and public project: we will turn the class's podcasts into a simple website and a Spotify stream using Anchor (individuals can choose to opt-out of publicly posting their podcasts, with no negative consequences). Students will work in groups of 2-3 and will be required to engage with 1-2 students outside of our course taking the Monsters and Heroes FYE courses this semester. **[LG3, LOc and LG2, LOb]**

Final Exam (20%)

For your final in this course, you will complete a final exam (2-3 pages) on the themes and concepts in this course. You will need to draw from readings from the class. The prompt for this final will be available on Blackboard after our final class and will be due by the end of our final exam period. **[LG1, LOa and LG2, LOa]**

Suggested News Outlets

- *The Washington Post*
- *The New York Times*
- *The Economist*
- CNN
- NPR Politics Podcast; NPR's Up First
- New York Times' The Daily
- BBC Global News Podcast

Enduring Question Theme Shared Experience:

At the end of the semester, all students taking courses related to our enduring question theme "Monsters and Heroes" will contribute to an end of the semester symposium. This symposium will represent a collection of student work arising out of these sets of courses.

Our class's contribution includes creating a podcast. In this podcast, you are required to interview students taking the other Monsters and Heroes courses on what they have learned about the role of Monsters and Heroes in society and how these themes resonate with the broader society. You will also interview these students about what their contribution to the symposium has taught them about civic engagement. At the students' request, these podcasts will be published on our Monsters and Heroes website.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

America is becoming increasingly diverse, especially among youth. The growing number of Americans representing people of color has implications for voting, representation, and policy. We are also facing a crisis where these same communities were disproportionately impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. Thus, it is increasingly important to value diversity, equity, and inclusion. A healthy campus environment strives to amplify the voices of traditionally marginalized groups while learning from one another on how we can *all* be agents of social change. In the classroom, we will learn the material through a diverse set of lenses, theories, and viewpoints to better understand the complexities of local and global phenomena. My favorite quote guiding DEI in my work is from Ijeoma Oluo, who says, "When we identify where our privilege intersects with somebody else's oppression, we'll find our opportunities to make real change" (2019, 65). In sum, this syllabus reflects Merrimack College's institutional priority to work towards social justice with a diverse set of stakeholders.

Oluo, Ijeoma. (2019). *So You Want to Talk about Race*. Hachette Book Group, Inc. New York, NY: 255.

Community and Civic Engagement

Through my research, I have conducted focus groups with students at Merrimack College regarding their definition of community and civic engagement. For the purposes of this course, we will use the Merrimack student-derived definition which states that youth civic engagement

represents a matrix of activities occurring both online or in real life, in the private or public spheres, and with others or individually. It is about recognizing or redressing a social justice issue through active community engagement that shapes, improves, or benefits society.

Email Correspondence

I am very flexible and more than happy to accommodate students based on their needs. Students may email me at any time during any day of the week to ask for extensions or other accommodations. However, please give me at least 24 hours to respond. I typically do not answer emails on the weekends. If you email me Friday night after 5:00 pm, please do not expect a response till Monday morning. If you email me after 5:00 pm during the week, please do not expect an email till the following day.

Participation and Engagement

Students are expected to attend the course synchronously each week. For excused absences, you have two weeks to make up any missing assignments, no exceptions. If your situation for missing class requires a longer leave of absence, please contact me or the college ASAP.

Missing Class

If you miss class, you are still expected to complete ALL asynchronous assignments in the module by SUNDAY at midnight of that module week. Accommodations can be made, but you need to alert me that you need an extension before the assigned due date! If a student needs to miss class due to sickness, transportation issues, family matters, etc, students must complete work within two weeks of missing class. Exceptions will only be made in extraordinary circumstances.

Due Dates and Late Policy:

All assignments must be turned in on their due date through Blackboard. Students must be present for exams and group presentations. Only unforeseen emergencies with valid documentation will permit students to remake exams and their group presentations. Any assignments that are turned in late will receive a 5 percent deduction for each day (24 hours) that the assignment is tardy. Assignments that are two weeks late will no longer be accepted, and you will receive a zero on the assignment.

Please anticipate all possible contingencies (computer failure, printer issues, etc.) and please contact me before or as soon as possible if an issue arises. If a student contacts me about an issue after the assignment is due, I can no longer make accommodations for that assignment.

Missed classes/Late Assignments: The only excusable reasons for missing a class or exam or handing in an assignment late are serious illnesses, mandatory quarantine, and family emergencies. In these cases, you must both 1) notify me of your situation in a timely manner and 2) provide appropriate documentation. Assignments handed in late without documentation will be penalized by 5% for each date they are late. Students will have two weeks to make up late assignments. **If assignments are not made up within two weeks, the student will receive a score of 0. No exceptions.**

Credit Justification Statement

In this course, students will be expected to do the following amount of work:

- Classroom hours: 3 hours per week
- Prep work for class-based discussion: 4-5 per week (on average)
- Researching and writing: 2-3 per week (on average)
- Total: 9-11 hours per week

Access to Blackboard

All course materials will be uploaded to Blackboard. This includes class lectures (videos), rubrics, and assignment sheets. Grades will also be posted on this site. To access Blackboard, go to <https://blackboard.merrimack.edu/ultra/institution-page> and use your Merrimack login credentials to access the course site.

Academic Integrity Policy

Honesty and academic integrity is expected of all students. All written work for this class must be your original work. Presenting material from other sources, either print or electronic, as one's own work constitutes plagiarism. Please review Merrimack College's Academic Integrity Policy: <http://catalog.merrimack.edu/content.php?catoid=9&navoid=202#academic-integrity>
Please consult the library's website for a complete discussion on academic integrity <http://libguides.merrimack.edu/content.php?pid=120821> for a complete discussion of academic integrity.

Accessibility Services & Accommodations

Merrimack College provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities through the Accessibility Services Office. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact the Accessibility Services Office via the online request form found on the website, via email, or by visiting us on the third floor of McQuade Library (subject to change if the college is remote).

- Accessibility Services website: www.merrimack.edu/aso
- Accessibility Services email accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu

Students are encouraged to contact the office as soon as possible via the website or via email at accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu to ensure adequate time to meet and create a plan. Students already registered with Accessibility Services are encouraged semesterly to request for their letters to be emailed and students are responsible to then email the letter to their instructors personally. The Accessibility Services Testing Center remains available to students whether in-person or remote. While it is understood that some students will not use all accommodations in all courses, accommodations can not be made retroactively.

Tentative Weekly Course Calendar

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment
Week 1 Aug 29 & Aug 31	M: Introduction to course W: Identity Tree Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Syllabus● Why Men Rebel [Perusall]● Jeffrey (2012) [Perusall]

<u>Week 2</u> Sep 5 & 7	M: No Class - Labor Day W: What leads to rebellion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Revolution Ch. 1-2 • Understanding Revolution Ch. 3
<u>Week 3</u> Sep 12 & 14	M: The Life Course of a Revolution W: Structural Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Revolution Ch. 4-5 • Understanding Revolution Ch. 6-7
<u>Week 4</u> Sep 19 & 21	M: Ideology W: Leadership and Mobilizing the Masses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Revolution Ch. 8-9 • “How Americans Became Civic” [Perusall]
<u>Week 5</u> Sep 26 & 28	M: Outcomes of Revolution W: What do we mean by Civic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Good Citizen (p. 21-59) [Persuall] • The Good Citizen (p. 177-194) [Perusall]
<u>Week 6</u> Oct 3 & 5	M: What is a good citizen? W: Two faces of citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBB (p. 1-40) [Perusall] • BBB (p. 235-288) [Perusall]
<u>Week 7</u> Oct 10 & 12	M: Historical Perspective of Youth in Revolt W: The Worldwide Youth Revolution of the 1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice and Moffett (1-28) • Margolin (227-297)
<u>Week 8</u> Oct 17 & 19	M: Re-examining Youth Activism W: Young Adult Political Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margolin (p. 29 - 60) • Margolin (p. 61-95)
<u>Week 9</u> Oct 24 & 26	M: Me Too Movement (student-led discussions) W: Supreme Court Nominations School (student-led discussions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margolin (p. 96-126)
<u>Week 10</u> Oct 31 & Nov 2	M: No Class - Indigenous Peoples Day W: School Shootings (student-led discussions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice and Moffett (p. 191-227) • Rice and Moffett (p. 127-159)
<u>Week 11</u> Nov 7 & 9	M: Messages Received? (student-led discussions) W: Immigration (student-led discussions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice and Moffett (p. 160 - 190) • Oluo (p. 1-36)
<u>Week 12</u> Nov 14 & 16	M: Black Lives Matter (student-led discussions) W: What is racism?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oluo (p. 53-82) • Oluo (p. 179-188; 225-238)
<u>Week 13</u> Nov 21 & 23	M: Privilege and Intersectionality W: Racism and Student Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McCann and Jones-Correa (p. 1-44) • McCann and Jones-Correa (p. 85-119)

<p><u>Week 14</u> Nov 28 & 30</p>	<p>M: Resilience and Civic Engagement Among Latino-Immigrants W: Young Latino Immigrant Civic Activism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize podcast assignments
<p><u>Week 15</u> Dec 6 & 7</p>	<p>M:TBD W:TBD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symposium Participation
	<p><u>FINAL EXAM</u></p>	<p>Final Reflection</p>