

CIVC 101 Spring Term 2023
Term-Long Engagement Project

The CIVC 101 course is founded on a belief that effective social change can only happen when people are **informed** about social issues, **proximate/engaged** with communities where those social issues are prevalent, and **reflective** about their experiences and capacity to make social change. This project, which will span the length of the term, asks you to choose a social issue that interests you and do activities to become more informed, engaged, and reflective about the issue as you consider how you want to make social change.

As part of the project you will:

1. **Choose a social issue that interests you** and provide a definition and background of your understanding of that issue and why you chose it.
2. **Do an activity that increases your knowledge of the social issue**; the following activities are examples:
 - a. Read a book about the social issue.
 - b. Watch a documentary or listen to a podcast about the social issue.
 - c. Read at least five (5) articles about the social issue from different sources.
 - d. Attend a webinar or other informational event that focuses on your social issue.
 - e. Other options can be proposed to your instructor.
3. **Do an activity that increases your proximity/engagement with the social issue**; the following activities are examples:
 - a. Volunteering (please check out the Lindy Center's [civic engagement database, Galaxy](#), for volunteer opportunities in Philadelphia, and/or look in BlackBoard Learn for updates on in-person volunteer opportunities in Philadelphia)
 - b. Intentionally planned philanthropic activities—could be donating your own money to a couple causes or fundraising among friends and family for a specific organization or campaign
 - c. Participating with an organization doing activism/community organizing around a social issue (canvassing, surveying community members, writing to government officials, signing petitions, etc.)
 - d. Political research/action (researching politicians working on the issue and/or specific pieces of legislation about the issue, writing to politicians, attending local or national political meetings about the issue or legislation, etc.)
 - e. Participating in community events, such as panel discussions, lectures, or workshops, around a social issue
 - f. Getting active in a student group related to that social issue
 - g. Speaking with someone experiencing that social issue or someone working to alleviate that social issue
 - h. Other options can be proposed to your instructor.
4. **Dialogue with peers** (fellow students, family members, friends, etc.) about your social issue—your instructor will specify how to do this but it could be a one-on-one conversation with

someone of your choosing or a small group discussion with classmates orchestrated by your instructor and TA.

5. **Reflect** on what you've learned, done, and dialogued about in a final reflection paper.

Deliverables and deadlines:

FOR INSTRUCTORS—the project should be done in phases throughout the term, with deliverables every couple of weeks, to keep students active and accountable and to track their progress. The below table is a suggested way to orchestrate this, but you are welcome to make modifications as long as the project retains the above elements described. Please be sure to post all relevant information for students as early as possible (we even encourage you to add this information to the weekly schedule in the syllabus). You can use BBLearn for the deliverables as well—you will have to create your own assignments as they are not pre-loaded by the Lindy Center.

Deliverable	Description	Suggested Due Date	Suggested point value
Project proposal including social issue, knowledge activity, action, and dialogue.	Submit a couple sentences describing the social issue you've chosen: why did you choose this issue? How do you define it? What do you hope to learn? Then, provide a proposal for what knowledge activity you plan to do, what engagement activity you plan to do, and who you plan to talk to for the dialogue requirement. Be as specific as possible (for instance, if you are going to read an article, say what it is and link to it; if you are going to volunteer, say where and what you will be doing; for your dialogue, say who you will speak to and when).	End of week 4	5
Summary of knowledge activity, action, and dialogue.	Submit a couple sentences detailing your progress on your	End of week 8	5

	<p>knowledge activity, action, and dialogue. As with the first deliverable, be specific. It is okay if your intentions have changed but include why that is and what your new activities will be. You also do not need to be finished with everything but have a plan to finish before the end of the term. Be sure to distinguish for students that this is simply a summary of the steps they are taking—their own personal reflection should come in the final paper.</p>		
Small group dialogues in week 9	<p>Break your class up into small groups (can be done based on similar social issues or randomly) and have them meet during your class time in week 9, as this is usually an off-week. You can provide each small group with the same prompts to share a bit about their social issue and the things they've learned, and some reflection to do together. If you want, the Lindy Center can help find facilitators for the small group discussions so there is someone to observe in each discussion. If you do not do this, then make sure your students are having a dialogue in some other way.</p>	Week 9	10
Final reflection paper	See sample prompt below	End of finals week	10

The total point value of this project (all parts combined) is 30 points—instructors can determine the exact point values for each deliverable. Grades will be assessed taking the following into account: meeting the above deadlines, your meaningful engagement with the assignment and your classmates, your contributions to the small group discussion, and the critical reflection depth of your final paper.

FINAL REFLECTION PAPER sample prompt:

*****NOTE: these specs are for a paper but we highly encourage you to allow students to submit creative reflections in place of a written paper; this could be an art piece, podcast episode, video, recorded presentation, etc.**

Please submit a paper, 2 pages minimum, reflecting on your personal experience completing the term-long project. As you have already turned in summaries of your knowledge and engagement activities and your one-on-one discussion, we expect that this assignment will not be a repeat of that information but will, instead, be a more critical analysis of how you went about the project, what you learned or realized about the world/your social issue/yourself, and how you anticipate moving forward given what you learned. Format is less important than readability and demonstrated critical thinking.

The below questions are prompts to get you thinking about what you can write; feel free to use these to organize your paper and your thoughts but do not feel obligated to answer any of these if there is something else you would like to write about.

- How did you decide on your social issue? What personal connection do you have to it, if any?
- What did you learn about that issue through your knowledge activity? What did you already know? What questions did you have before the knowledge action? What questions do you have now? How did your understanding of the issue evolve or change based on the source that you chose for the knowledge activity? What other sources could you turn to next to grow your understanding or learn a different perspective?
- Considering what we learned this term, did your identities, communities you belong to, or understanding of larger systems in society affect the way you saw or perceived this issue?
- Describe what it was like for you to talk to a peer about this issue. How did you approach and prepare for that conversation? What did your peer(s) know about the issue and what were you able to teach them or help them reflect on? Did the conversation enhance your knowledge or understanding of the issue? If so, how? If not, what would have made it better for you? Do you feel moved to have more conversations in the future? What, if anything, will you do differently?
- Do you anticipate engaging in action related to changing this issue after this class? If not, are there other issues you anticipate engaging with? Give some examples of things you learned in this term that will inform the way you engage in that issue in the future.
- What does this current moment mean for your social issue and the people experiencing it? How is the pandemic affecting individual experiences? How is the pandemic affecting structural issues and root causes? What do you think will come out of this current moment?

Please include an appendix with any supplemental materials that would give us more context for your actions (for instance, if you emailed a political representative, include a screenshot of the email). We will not deduct points if you do not have these materials, but they will give us a more complete picture of your project and provide context for your reflections.