**Course Outline**

**School of General Education**

**Brac University**

**BU201: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACTION**

## **Course General Information:**

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| **Course Code:** | BU201 |
| **Course Title:** | Community Engagement and Action |
| **Section and Class Time:** | 46 |
| **Consultation Hours:** | Monday and Wednesday (10:00am – 10:35am) |
| **Room Number:** | TBA |
| **Credit Hours:** | 3 |
| **Contact Hours/Week:** | 3 |
| **Category** | Gen Ed (Stream 4) |
| **Type *(Mandatory/Optional, Lecture/Laboratory/Project…)*:** | Mandatory, Project-based |
| **Prerequisites:** | NA |
| **Co-requisites:** | HUM103, EMB101 |

## **B.** **Course Catalog Description (Content):**

This course provides a platform for Residential Semester (RS) students to gain a preliminary understanding of the significance and complexities of community engagement from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The course will be taken concurrently with HUM103 and EMB101, which provides an opportunity for students to draw insights from ethical, historical, and political standpoints while gaining exposure to community work and its relevance for meeting national and everyday solutions. The course is organised to be delivered in three phases, bridged together to allow students to understand the importance of community engagement and learn from community-based partners some real-life issues and concerns that students can start to think about and engage with. Students will collaborate with community partners available internally and externally, which will allow them to build an evidence-based understanding of the particular community issue deriving from field-level research and experiences.

**C.**  **Rationale of the Course:**

In a rapidly changing, fast-paced world, it becomes increasingly difficult to pause and look back on how we have given back to the communities that we are a part of, from an individual stance. Cultivating civic responsibilities as a virtue from a young age, therefore, becomes essential to enable community-driven bottom-up changes in society. In light of this, introducing a course on Community Engagement and Action to first and second-year undergraduate students not only makes sense but also is a pragmatic step to take within the commitment Brac University has made to creating well-rounded civic leaders. The course aims at inculcating an individual sense of civic responsibility within each student and provides them with a first-hand experience of what it takes to become active agents of change within a community.

The students must get exposure to the myriad of community issues that are predominantly prevalent in the context of Bangladesh, to enable them to learn to empathise with their communities from an early age. The course is also a platform for students to practise their critical thinking and problem-solving skills by translating theoretical knowledge on community engagement and project development into self-designed action. It is an experiential learning experience where the students get to witness real-world impact, even within a small-scale framework. By completing this course, students will also be able to nurture their leadership and communication skills, helping them emerge as influential advocates who drive positive change within their communities.

**D. Course Objectives:**

* Identify the multiple meanings of “community” both online and offline
* Apply concepts of positionality, power, and ethics in community engagement work
* Explore the way our intentions as individuals and community members impact us and others collectively
* Consider diverse cultural and socio-political contexts for sensitive engagement
* Cultivate virtues and individual responsibility in a pluralistic society
* Embody the BRAC ethos of being an active changemaker

**E. Course Outcomes (CO)**

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| **SL.** | **CO Description** |
| **CO1** | Identify community problems within the community and ways that they can contribute to addressing those problems both online and offline. (Sensitivity and Inclusivity) |
| **CO2** | Reflect, critically about the role of community, citizenship and leadership in addressing social concerns (critical thinking and roleplay) |
| **CO3** | Facilitate community service experiences for themselves (agent) and others to address community concerns (Action and agency) |
| **CO4** | Synthesize complex information and diverse perspectives to make decisions (Decision making, Diversity) |
| **CO5** | Practice Social Advocacy and Policy Making |

**F. Program Outcomes (POs)**

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| **SL.** | **PO Description** |
| **PO1** | Describe a range of local and global issues/knowledge/ideas and their interconnections, beyond their major and minor |
| **PO2** | Demonstrate proficiency in university-level language comprehension, analytical writing skills and oral presentations |
| **PO3** | Apply knowledge towards ethical reasoning, problem solving in and outside the classroom, especially through activities that contribute to the SDGs |
| **PO4** | Value diversity and inclusion in race, religion, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, culture, economic and class backgrounds |
| **PO5** | Exhibit sensitive and ethical leadership through course readings taught, engaged pedagogical tools, class assignments, teamwork and exposure to real-life problems |

**G. Mapping of Course Outcomes(CO) with Program Outcomes (PO)**

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| **COs** | **PO1** | **PO2** | **PO3** | **PO4** | **PO5** |
| CO1 | **X** |  | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| CO2 | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| CO3 | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| CO4 | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| CO5 | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |

## **H. Course plan specifying content, co-curricular activities (if any), teaching learning and assessment strategies**

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| **Class Week** | **Session # & Session Topic** | **Content** | **Teaching-Learning Strategy** | **Assessment Strategy** |
| **Theme 1: Theoretical Explorations** | | | | |
| Week 1 | Session 1: Introduction  **Wednesday**  **23 Oct 2024** | Overview of the course and course objectives  Instructions for assignments and expectations  What is a community and what do community engagement and action mean | Student-centred discussion and eliciting knowledge from students’ lived experiences | Show images of communities in Bangladesh (raising awareness that they are part of multiple communities).  FFW1: Ask students to resonate with it - whether this is where you belong or don’t belong. How do you navigate it? Is there a problem they see in their neighbourhood  Wrap the class with an FFW2: What is your understanding of the community now and what do you feel about the community you belong to? |
| Session 2: Community Organization - Theories and Models  **Monday**  **28 Oct 2024** | Recap from session 1: what is the interplay (connections and tensions) between individual and collective? | Focused Free Write: How did you feel about yourself while doing the identity mapping? Write about your sense of belonging and not belonging in multiple communities in which your presence intersects  Active Citizenship: What do you think you can do for the community from where you stood/stand? | (Homework- Reflection 1): Provide students with their immersive projects’ background and instruct them to identify the models and actors/resource people involved   * Which community is affected by this issue? * Are you a part of this community (affected or the community working to help)? * If you are a part of the affected community, how do you feel about it? * If you were a resource giver, what would you have done about it? * Identify and understand the root causes of these issues, their impact and the need for sustainable solutions |
| Week 2 | Session 3:  Active and Activating Citizenship Through Community Engagement  **Wednesday**  **30 Oct 2024** | What is Community Engagement (CE), types of CE; Advantages & disadvantages of community engagement | Lecture and discussion  Share the HW from Session 2 in Groups | Group work: Provide students with their immersive sample projects from the Bangladesh context and instruct them to identify the models and stakeholders involved |
| Session 4:  Social Problems - A Bangladesh Perspective  **Monday**  **04 Nov 2024** | How is the problem already addressed at different levels?   * Government * NGO * INGO * Charitable Organisations * Civil society platforms * Think Tanks & Research Institutes * Corporate/ CSR * Community-based engagement | Lecture and discussion | Homework - Reflection 2: Identify two organizations that you think are doing good work for your community Why do you think so? |
| Assignment Prompt (Combining Sessions 1-4): 10-15% (800-1000 words) | | | | |
| **Theme 2: Ethics and Community Engagement** | | | | |
| Week 3 | Session 5: Ethics for Community Engagement-I  **Wednesday**  **06 Nov 2024** | Why is ethics important? How is ethics applied in CE work, Benefits of ethics consideration  Explore the individual positionality within these concepts/ situations   * Power and Responsibility * Ethics of Conviction vs. Ethic of Responsibility * Ethics of Care * Empathy, Sympathy & Affect * Ethical Dilemmas * Feeling-based ethical theories vs. reason-based ethical theories * Elements of empathy - what kind of person am “I” | Exercise 1: On using ethical reasoning to solve ethical dilemmas  Exercise 2: The Long Table: Provide students with a few ethical dilemmas surrounding the same case study. A selection of students is assigned to lead the ‘dinner table conversation’ while other students are motivated to join in/circle through to pitch in their perspectives.  The students facilitating the conversation will moderate the conversation by introducing facts and engaging other participants in reflecting on the dilemmas.  Key discussion points: Concepts and what has primacy over our ethical reasoning (feeling or reasoning). |  |
| Session 6: Ethics of Community Engagement-II  **Monday**  **11 Nov 2024** | Mechanics of fieldwork/knowing the “other”  Ethnocentrism  Cultural relativism  Questioning your assumptions | Flipped classroom with Students: to construct ethical issues that they observe in their respective immersive projects,  identify ethical dilemmas in their respective projects, identifying specific do’s and dont’s for.  Form groups. Students write down specific dos and don'ts and present  End with an open-ended question “What does it take to be an ethical leader in your community?” |  |
| Week 4 | Session 7: Meeting the Community Partners  **Wednesday**  **13 Nov 2024** | CP discusses the community issues in-depth and their real-life project issues | Workshop with external community partners |  |
| **Midterm: Submission on 18 Nov 2024** | | | | |
| **Stage 2: Project Development, Community Partner Engagement and Field Immersion** | | | | |
| Week 5 | Session 9-11: Project-Based Training  **Thursday, Friday & Saturday**  **14-16 Nov 2024** | TOT by BRAC BEP 14-16 Nov 2024 |  |  |
| Week 6 | Session 12  **Friday & Saturday**  **22 and 23 Nov 2024** |  |  | |
|  | **Friday & Saturday**  **6 and 7 Dec 2024** | 4 classes for the secondary levels | Students submit a journal reflecting on their 8 classes on 9 December 2024 | |
|  | **Friday & Saturday**  **13 and 14 Dec 2024** | 4 classes for the secondary levels |  | |
|  | **Friday & Saturday**  **20 and 21 Dec 2024** | 3 classes for the secondary levels | Students submit a journal reflecting on their next 8 classes on 23 December 2024 | |
| **Stage 3: Practicum** | | | | |
| Week 7-9 | Session: 11-16  **Monday**  **23 December 2024** | Students come back from immersion and attend class | | |
| **Stage 3: Feedback and Reflection** | | | | |
| Week 10-12 | Session: 17-20 | Stocktaking of immersive learning, what more could be done, and what resources are required.  What have they learned about the topic and what have they learned about themselves as doers and responsible changemakers? | | |

1. **Required Readings & Other Resources**

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| **Class Week** | **Session #** | **Required Readings & Other Resources** |
| **Stage 1: Theoretical Explorations of Community and Community Engagement** | | |
| Week 1 | Session 1: Introduction | What is Community Engagement?  <https://aese.psu.edu/research/centers/cecd/engagement-toolbox/engagement/what-is-community-engagement>  FRIDA Garden of Change Map (interactive)  <https://youngfeministfund.org/GardenofChangeA.html> |
| Session 2: Community Organization - Theories and Models | Theories and Frameworks in Community Work  <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/communitydevelopmentpractice/chapter/chapter-3-theories-approaches-and-frameworks-in-community-work/> |
| Week 2 | Session 3: Active and Activating Citizenship Through Community Engagement | Civic Engagement  <https://democracyinstitute.ceu.edu/articles/jonathan-becker-what-civic-engagement-and-not>  Onaka, F., & Onaka, F. (2017). Community Transformation in Asian Societies. An Introduction. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, *42*(3 (161)), 277–288. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44425371>  Critique of Voluntourism  <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/sep/13/the-business-of-voluntourism-do-western-do-gooders-actually-do-harm> |
| Session 4: Social Problems - A Bangladesh Perspective | Leave No one Behind Documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYZuVwl5Tcs&t=196s>  <https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/46934_CH_3.pdf> |
| Week 3 | Session 5: SDGs and Bangladesh | National Development Narrative & Local Realities Documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHwYM84tOWw&t=2s>  Bangladesh SDG overview: <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/bangladesh>  Bangladesh SDG Report 2023: <https://gedkp.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SDGs-Progress-Report-2022-Final-output-file-1-February-2023-Full-book_compressed.pdf?post_id=3032> |
| Session 6: Community profiling and Problem Identification | Community Profiling Worksheet (Link to be provided later)  Connect Dreams to Actions Worksheet (Link to be provided later) |
| Week 4 | Session 7: Active Citizenship I- Community and Self | Social and emotional learning: <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/#social-emotional-learning>  Social and emotional learning video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouXhi_CfBVg&t=209s> |

**J. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

1. **Active participation - 15%**

In line with the objectives of the School of General Education, this course will heavily focus on a range of learning exercises during our classroom sessions. Therefore, in addition to clarifying lecture and reading materials, the in-class sessions will be devoted to a variety of readings, reflective writing, small-group discussions, and collaborative learning exercises. The students are expected to engage in these learning exercises actively, both within the classroom and during workshops facilitated by external partners. By active participation, we mean completing the assigned tasks on time and with enthusiasm, demonstrating inquisitiveness, and attentiveness, and being respectful and tolerant of differing opinions of their peers.

1. **Reflection Journal - 10%**

Students will be expected to complete the Reflection Journal provided by the faculty, which contains reflective questions pertinent to certain class and workshop topics. A set of deadlines will be provided by which the students are expected to complete specific questions, and the answers will be graded by the faculty on an ongoing basis. The completed Reflection Journal will be submitted to the faculty along with the final presentation. This constitutes 10% of the final grade.

1. **Project Immersion - 15%**

Students will be evaluated on their participation in the TOT sessions, their facilitation during secondary-level classes, and the submission of  **project immersion reports** assigned following alternate immersion classes. Evaluation will include a formative assessment contributing to 15% of their overall grade.

1. **Mid Term Assessment - 25%**

Students will be graded on the first phase of the course. They will submit a take-home exam based on the theories covered in the class.

**6. Final Assessment - 35%**

Students will prepare a documentary based on the ToT sessions and the classes they conducted. They will follow the procedure provided by the faculty members. A total of 35% will be counted towards their grade.

**K. MARKS DISTRIBUTION**

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| **Method** | **Active Participation** | **Reflection Journal** | **Mid Term Assessment** | **Project Immersion** | **Final Assessment** |
| **% of Total Grade** | 15% | 10% | 25% | 15% | 35% |