

Env St. 402, sec. 5
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH FILM
Wednesday, 2:30-5:30 pm, 202 Bradley Memorial

Instructors:

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:25-3:25

Location TBA

Background

In November 2007, the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Culture, History and Environment (CHE), in partnership with Working Films, hosted *Tales from Planet Earth* (TfPE), Wisconsin's first environmental film festival. Nearly 3,500 people participated in 25 free film screenings and discussions that sought to re-define ideas of "environmental film" in ways that might include stories about the complex and reciprocal relations between people and the places they live, work and play. The tremendous public response confirmed that engaging stories can build community and foster compassion and environmental activism that reaches across class, race, and "town-grown" lines.

Building on that success, CHE and Working Films is expanding TfPE in 2009 into a community-driven film festival in which numerous partners – university departments and students, local and regional non-profits (environmental, labor, ethnic, faith-based), filmmakers, and citizens at-large – actively shape and use the festival as a platform for community engagement. Over the past 18 months, we have been developing relationships with these partners while at the same time screening filmmakers' works-in-progress at public workshops to brainstorm potential community engagement strategies for their films.

This course -- *Community Engagement Through Film* -- will pick up where the Nelson Institute and Working Films left off and develop specific community/audience engagement campaigns that leverage the power of the *Tales From Planet Earth* film festival, the diverse audiences assembled to watch and discuss the films, social media tools used to capture people's immediate desire "to do something," related activities off-site during the festival, and the individual films/stories themselves to **support the** ongoing work, efforts and needs of the community partners. The net result, if we are successful, is a more *just* Madison and a more *just* Wisconsin.

By participating in this course you are joining us in a community engagement project where we intend to explore and learn together how to use the power, reach and emotional resonance of great non-fiction storytelling to build community, strengthen ongoing social and environmental justice work, and foster growth toward a more inclusive and environmentally just Wisconsin. Welcome – we have a lot of work to do!

Course Description: In this course students will be asked to actively think about how a community, its organizers/educators, laborers, residents, farmers, activists, and others can use a free environmental film festival to engage and empower youth, parents, students, faith-based leaders and elected officials in addressing the environmental and social challenges facing diverse groups throughout the state of Wisconsin. We hope the festival will become an opportunity for audience members and community partners to reflect on what is “just” in Wisconsin, what is not, and paths forward to alleviating environmental inequality.

Course Requirements & Grading

Class Discussion/Reading assigned texts...	10%
Fieldwork/Relationship Building with community partners	15%
Just TEAM work	10%
Film Festival	5%
Project #1, #2, and Final	60%

CLASS DISCUSSION: This class is more like a workshop than a traditional seminar. In class you will be expected to come ready to discuss your fieldwork, its relationship to assigned readings, the process of designing your engagement module and stewardship of your relationship with the community partner.

Each class member needs to commit to being an active participant and learner – as well as a dedicated TEAM player. In addition to working with a specific film/community partner, each class member will assume responsibility for a discreet task that appeals to their expertise (website building/maintenance, social media, press work, transportation/special housing needs, documentation) and is useful to the whole.

Success in the class depends largely upon the time, energy, and commitment you invest. You will be required to arrive at class having completed assigned fieldwork with your community partners, analyzed the engagement data you’ve collected formally and informally, read assigned materials and be prepared to engage in a thoughtful and constructive conversation that takes seriously the issues and themes that will evolve through both individual and collective field work.

FIELDWORK & RELATIONSHIP BUILDING: This portion of your grade is not relegated to any one project. Authentic relationship building between you as a student "ambassador" representing the Nelson Institute/UW with our community partners is ongoing. It starts with Boot Camp, when you are first introduced to the community partners and continues with your fieldwork and documentation. It is made visible and concrete at the actual film festival through the events and related "actions" you collectively put into practice with the audience. And it culminates with practical follow-up, evaluation and packaging, when a collection of the festival films and engagement events travel to four cities in Wisconsin as part of the MAKING IT HOME Festival. By stewardship we mean honoring the mission and vision of both the community partners and the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies.

JUST MADISON ROOM: The JUST MADISON ROOM will be the equivalent of the TFPE Community Engagement "war room." Division of labor and skill sets will enable all of us to maximize resources, create replicable templates, keep on top of continuity & diversity of audience "to-dos" and "asks," keep on top of our press deadlines and opportunities and provide students with a chance to hone a skill set. The skills and tasks needed to truly participate in community engagement are myriad -- here are a few: social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr), access & transportation coordination (as a tool for community organizing, creating compelling narratives and press releases, developing "to-dos" & "asks" for audiences, documentation (still, flip cameras, sustainability coordination, etc.

FILM FESTIVAL: You are required to attend the film festival. During the festival, you will present your specific community engagement strategy (see project #1) and in addition to overseeing your engagement event you will need to see at least four films plus the George Stoney retrospective. We will have a sign up sheet at each of the screenings for you to sign in.

PROJECTS

Project #1: Leveraging the Film Festival & The Power of a Good Story

Draft: Due October 28th

Final presentation: Due November 6th as part of Master Classes

In addition to researching, designing, coordinating strategic outreach and organizing for your community engagement event, including prep for press documentation, weekly tweets each student will be responsible for presenting their strategy (PowerPoint suggested) at a Special Master Class during the Festival (Time and Place TBA). The organizers and local presenters/community hosts of the Wisconsin Humanities Council MAKING IT HOME project will attend.

Project #2: Measuring Impact & Strategic Follow Up

Draft: Due Nov. 18 emailed to instructors for feedback & quick turnaround

Final Report: Due Dec. 2, in class presentation

Using a set of tools, questions, matrix and criteria designed by the class, each student will be asked to measure the Community Engagement project they designed for measurable impact, success, usefulness and added value. This presentation needs to draw from a formal exit interview, be visual, and include narrative details, anecdotes, examples of press coverage, screen shots of social media interaction ie; (twitter) and concrete evidence of what worked and what didn't. This will be an in-class presentation/report using Power Point.

Final Project: Bringing it Home

Draft: Due Dec 9th

Final presentation: Due Finals Week (Time and Place TBA)

This final project is an opportunity to package your outreach and community engagement strategies into an effective, accessible, user-friendly model which will be used by the MAKING IT HOME coordinators and perhaps other film festival programmers. We want you to make your work and accomplishments fully transparent. This will serve as a summary synopsis of projects #1 & #2, re-written in easy to read, accessible, engaging, user friendly language to be published on the *Tales from Planet Earth* website as a case study. You must include some of the following: digital still images, embedded video, links to press, links to social media driven ASKS, tweets, and a brief impact assessment (possibly adding a more detailed downloadable document about impact) and a What's Next/How to Get/Stay Involved Section in support of the Community Partners.

If any problem arises, either academic or personal, that might jeopardize your performance in the course, or your relationship with the community partner you are working with, you must inform us of the problem ASAP by leaving a message with Gregg Mitman 262-1723 or Judith Helfand (917) 545-116.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, we urge any student in this course with a disability to inform us as soon as possible so we may make any necessary accommodations to ensure full participation in all ways. All such requests are confidential.

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the UW policies on plagiarism and to assume responsibility for honesty in all course work.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Over the past year, the Nelson Institute has established a relationship with each of the following community partners through screening events around particular films. Each of the groups listed has expressed a willingness to work together with you over the course of the semester in developing a community engagement/outreach campaign for the film(s) that will help advance their organization's needs and/or goals. You need to be respectful of your community partner's time, and be willing to listen and learn from their experiences. The intent of this course is to shift

the community-service learning experience away from an old model of “doing for” to a new model of “working with.” Working with community partners is about authenticity, reciprocity, a commitment to sharing knowledge and resources, and blurring the boundaries between the university and community.

ORGANIZATION	ISSUES	FILM/THEME	STATUS	CONTACT INFO
Centro Hispano	Latino Community	Rivera films	Hosted screening, full partner	Kent Craig, Kent@chc 255-3018
First United Methodist Church	Food Pantry, Global Hunger, Homelessness	The Hunger Season	Hosted screening, full partner	Scott Foss, sfoss@fun 256-9061
MACSAC	Local Food	WOYP	Interested, met with Judith and Molly	Kiera Mulvey, info@r 608.226.0300
Porchlight	Homelessness, Economic Development, Local Food, Community Resiliency	Cooked	Hosting the COOKED screening, full partner	Please work through M Schwebach, mayoung , (608) 265-5712 Jennifer Hall, jhall@porchlightinc.o 2534
Troy Gardens	Urban Gardens	WOYP	Met with Gregg, full partner	Nathan Larson, education@troygardner 240-0409
CHOW	Kids and Food	WOYP	Only have time to work on event after WOYP screening with Chef Tory	Lili Miller, lili@letoik restaurant.com , (608) :
Dane County Public Health	Emergency Preparedness, social capital, community resiliency	COOKED/Trouble the Water	Full partner	Jenny Lujan and Jenni JWeitzel@publichealth JLujan@publichealthr
International Crane Foundation	Community-based conservation	Milking the Rhino	Met with Peter Boger, full partner	Joan Garland, jgarland@savingcrane 608-356-9462 x142
DCHS Four Lakes Wildlife Center	Animal rehabilitation	Mine	Met with Peter Boger, full partner	Kristen Anchor kanchor@giveshelter.o (608) 838-0413 ext. 19

Tom Yoshikami is the contact person, resource, and font of knowledge for you to translate your community engagement ideas into reality at the festival. Tom, along with Molly Schwebach, is in charge of the festival’s budget, knows the ins and outs of making things happen at the University (which can be quite complicated when it involves money), and has had years of experience in community arts programming and administration. Please be sure to be in dialogue with Tom early in the process to ensure that we have the resources, time, and permissions for any events and activities planned.

Suggested Readings and Resources:

Despite the plethora of local, regional and international film festivals, more than two decades of interactive Point of View (POV) Public Television, new models for measuring a film's impact with a social/political/market-based scale rather than merely box office dollars, the field we call Community Engagement through Film is still young. There is no seminal book we can refer you to; rather, we'll draw from literature that is dynamic, evolving, often first-person in the form of scholarly articles, news articles from the arts and the business sections, blogs, websites, audience "talk-backs," film festival press, filmmakers-on-twitter, podcasts and online discussion forums for documentary filmmakers. There are a few noted scholars who have been studying this area of media activism in various ways for the past decade including David Whiteman (Univ. of South Carolina), Barbara Abrash (NYU Center for Media and Culture) and Pat Auferheide (American University). We will use/reference their articles and essays as we go and encourage them to join us at the festival in November.

Background

Kelly Ward and Lisa Wolf-Wendel, "Community-Centered Service Learning: Moving from Doing For to Doing With," American Behavioral Scientist 43 (200): 767-780.

Gregg Mitman, "Afterword," in Reel Nature: America's Romance with Wildlife on Film, 2d ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), pp. 209-220.

David Whiteman

"Out of the Theaters and Into the Streets: A Coalition Model of the Political Impact of Documentary Film and Video." Political Communication 21(1):51-70, January 2004. [Perhaps the most comprehensive overview of impact.]

"The Evolving Impact of Documentary Film: Sacrifice and the Rise of Issue-centered Outreach." Post Script: Essays in Film and the Humanities (special issue on "The Current State of Documentary Filmmaking"), 26(3):62-74, Summer 2007. [A case study of one of Ellen Bruno's films.]

"Impact of 'The Uprising of '34: A Coalition Model of Production and Distribution.'" Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media 45 (Fall 2002), www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc45.2002/whiteman/index.html. [This is available on the web and is an analysis of Judith's work.]

"Reel Impact: How Nonprofits Harness the Power of Documentary Film." Stanford Social Innovation Review 1(1):60-63, Spring 2003.

"The Uprising of '34: Filmmaking as Community Engagement." Wide Angle: A Quarterly Journal of Film History, Theory, Criticism, and Practice 21(2):87-99 (2001). (With Barbara Abrash.)

Barbara Abrash

[Making Your Documentary Matter: Public Engagement Strategies that Work.](#) *The Center for Social Media.* 2006/01/01. 

[Digital Media and the Public Sphere.](#) *The Center for Social Media.* 2006/01/01. 

[Beyond Broadcast: Reinventing Public Media in a Participatory Culture Rapporteur Report.](#) *The Center for Social Media.* 

Websites: Up and Running, Using Social Media Tools, Leveraging, & Making Impact

The Age of Stupid <http://www.notstupid.org>

A Sea Change <http://www.aseachange.net/take-action-today.html>

The End of the Line <http://endoftheline.com/campaign/widget/>

The Yes Men <http://challenge.theyesmen.org/>

Twittering for Justice

The Reckoning

http://skylightsocialmedia.org/discuss/mobile_phone_social_networks/#content

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKeocAwYako>

<http://beta.twitvision.com/>

For more examples and ongoing examples see our class Delicious site:

http://delicious.com/workingfilms/community_engagement_through_film

CLASS SCHEDULE

September 2

- Overview of TfPE '09 Film festival
- Explanation of the "JUST MADISON ROOM"
- Assignment/Self-Selection of Community Partners
- Review Fieldwork Questions (Project 1. Part A)

Skills Building:

Review Community Mobilizing "Tools"

The Press Tool: Linking the films to Madison, partners and the region

What makes these stories work? (e.g, *Two Towns of Jasper*; *Invisible Revolution*; *Blue Vinyl*; *Healthy Baby Girl*; *Trembling Before G-D*)

The Cultural/Performance Tool (*Everything's Cool*; *Trembling Before G-D*)

Hand Out: Questions (part A)

Assignments:

Schedule meeting with your community partner

Commit to doing an interview/site-visit and be ready to present on September 9 or 16th (initial face-to-face fieldwork must be done in the first two weeks)

Do an online communication audit/social media analysis of your Community Partner.

Reading (for Sept. 9):

Kelly Ward and Lisa Wolf-Wendel, "Community-Centered Service Learning: Moving from Doing For to Doing With," *American Behavioral Scientist* 43 (200): 767-780.

Gregg Mitman, "Afterword," in *Reel Nature: America's Romance with Wildlife on Film*, 2d ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), pp. 209-220.

David Whitman, "Using Grassroots Documentary Films for Political Change." June 26, 2001.

http://www.mediarights.org/news/Using_Grassroots_Documentary_Films_for_Political_Change/MediaRights.org

Look at the following websites, their campaigns and/or "asks", their blog entries on how they are using festivals to date and how or if they are using social media tools. Which ones interest you and seem like they could be models for TfPE?

Made In LA www.madeinla.com

What's On Your Plate <http://www.whatsonyourplateproject.org/>

The Age of Stupid <http://www.notstupid.org>

A Sea Change <http://www.aseachange.net/take-action-today.html>

The End of the Line <http://endoftheline.com/campaign/widget/>

The Yes Men <http://challenge.theyesmen.org/>

ALSO look at www.digiaactive.org (for examples of organizing using online tools)

September 9

- Report From the Field (Half the class report on their experience in the field. Focus on Handout Questions 1-6)
- Strategic Audiences, Community Building & Partner Goals

- What are one or two key strategic goals/outcomes of the community partner that would define the festival as a "successful" event.
- Who needs to be in the room to create a "successful" event
- Who is the organization's number one constituency?
- Who are the people in town the organization wants but struggles to reach?
- Who are the strategic thinkers, key activists, and decision makers that need to be in the room to help them achieve strategic goals?

Skills Building:

“The Ask Tool” -- analogue, digital, human
(Review websites from assignment for good “asks”)

The Panel Discussion Tool

Assignment:

Those who have not met with their community partner should conduct fieldwork and be ready to report back.

September 16

- Report From the Field (Half the class report on their experience in the field.
Focus on Handout Questions 1-6)
- Strategic Audiences, Community Building & Partner Goals
 - What are one or two key strategic goals/outcomes of the community partner that would define the festival as a "successful" event.
 - Who needs to be in the room to create a "successful" event
 - Who is the organization's number one constituency?
 - Who are the people in town the organization wants but struggles to reach?
 - Who are the strategic thinkers, key activists, and decision makers that need to be in the room to help them achieve strategic goals?

Skills Building:

The "Social Media" Tool

The Transportation Tool

New Constituencies Tool

Picturing/Measuring Impact Tool #1 (local tie-in to problem, press connect)

Assignment:

Schedule a follow-up visit with your community partner. Work with them to define goal(s) and various tools that they/the festival can use to make their goals happen. Tweet a highlight or a resource. If you have news or some pix post on Face Book. SUGGESTED HASHTAG to put at end of tweet – #tfpe09

September 23

DO NOT MEET IN CLASS/CONTINUE WORK WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Site visits/Interviews/Field Participation with Community Partners
- Strategy Session with Community Partners

Goal: Come up with defined goals and tools to make it happen.

Assignment:

Be prepared to present to class on the 30th.

Be thinking about what kinds of advertising space your event will need in program

Identify tie-in stories, characters, narrative of the organizations that can serve as a press "hook". Take some digital pictures.

Tweet a highlight about your process or a resource. If you have news or some pix post on Face Book. SUGGESTED HASHTAG to put at end of tweet – #tfpe09

September 30

- All Students/Community Engagement Teams present goals/strategy/tools for
 - leveraging the festival
- Brainstorm individual project & collective needs
- Revisit Concept of the "JUST MADISON ROOM" -- Assign Roles

Skills Building:

Picturing/Measuring Impact #2: SHOOT IT/BLOG IT/DOCUMENT IT/FEEL IT/PROVE IT/USE IT

Finding a "hook" and making social media stories "sexy", timely and press worthy.
How to pitch to press

Assignment:

Fashion your tie-in story ideas linking your community partner and local/regional residents or a local problem/solution to the story in the film. Be ready to present two ideas to invited local press with pictures (you've taken or collected), facts, stats, community partner info. This will be an informal and fun "pitching" session to university communications people. If appropriate, please include examples of how you are using social media as part of the story. As prep for your pitch -- review websites, blogs, press hits looking for examples of other films/engagement campaigns, making the leap from the film to the local issue or the work of an organization or legislation -- featuring an "ask", cultural event/"performance"/ritual. (Instructors will give you films/sites to look up).

COME TO CLASS WITH DRAFT DETAILS -- Special Engagement Events for listing in the festival program (we will provide format)

Tweet a highlight, process pt., news or a resource. If you have news or some pix post on Face Book. SUGGESTED HASHTAG to put at end of tweet – #tfpe09

October 7

Troubleshooting/Fine-tuning/Pitching

- Present draft engagement plan including -- Goals/Activities/Needs
- Meet the Press: Pitching Your Story Ideas to Local Press (Tom Sinclair, Terry
 - Devitt, Gwen Evans, Anne Strainchamps, Sue Lampert Smith and others)
- Q&A with Press -- Turning "impact" into stories

Skills Building:

Thinking about impact. What does impact mean?

Assignment:

Final information for Special Engagement Events to be listed in the Festival Program (Oct. 14th final deadline -- no info -- not in program)

Tweet a highlight, process pt., news or a resource. If you have news or some pix post on Face Book. SUGGESTED HASHTAG to put at end of tweet – #tfpe09

October 14

- Turning your "pitch" into a Press Release
- Appropriating Social Media Tools for your Target Audiences
- Designing Criteria for Measuring Impact
Class creates questions, matrix, and criteria for measuring "impact." How are the Community Engagement Projects making impact, successful, useful, and of added value to the ongoing work of the Community Partners? (Use Fledgling model to kick off discussion/workshop)
- Harnessing the momentum and turning it into concrete/mobilized follow-up

Assignment:

Talk to community partner about possible follow-up (volunteer opportunities, meeting, new contacts for database, etc.). Need to be ready for interest, need to be ready to mobilize, need to be ready to do follow-up. Tweet a highlight, process pt., news or a resource. If you have news or some pix post on Face Book. SUGGESTED HASHTAG to put at end of tweet – #tfpe09

October 21

- Workshop each individual Program/Engagement Strategy for component parts
- Activate the Just Madison Room

Assignment:

Prepare for presentation of Project #1 (based on handout)

Tweet a highlight, process pt., news or a resource. If you have news or some pix post on Face Book. SUGGESTED HASHTAG to put at end of tweet – #tfpe09

October 28

- In-Class Presentations: Project # 1 Draft (Power Point) -- FEEDBACK & TWEAKING
- Dealing with the Details/Troubleshooting Engagement Strategy

Assignment:

Fold feedback into final presentation

Come up with strategy for documentation at/during festival

Tweet a highlight, process pt., news or a resource. If you have news or some pix post on Face Book. SUGGESTED HASHTAG to put at end of tweet – #tfpe09

November 4

- Working out last-minute kinks
In-Class Final Presentations of Project #1 and plan for documentation
Guest filmmaker Alex Rivera

November 11

- Initial impressions on impact -- using matrix and criteria
- Present documentation in some form and follow-up events/plans

Assignment:

Gather/Collect all documentation and social media of your engagement strategy for draft presentation and analysis.

Tweet a highlight, process pt., news or a resource. If you have news or some pix post on Face Book. SUGGESTED HASHTAG to put at end of tweet – #tfpe09

November 18

Using Your Documentation (Stills, Audio, Press Clippings, Flip Video, TV reports, & Social Media Experiment/s) to tell the story of impact

Assignment:

Project # 2 due December 2nd

Tweet a highlight, process pt., news or a resource. If you have news or some pix post on Face Book. SUGGESTED HASHTAG to put at end of tweet – #tfpe09

November 25 NO CLASS

December 2

Project #2 In-Class Presentations

Assignment:

Prepare first drafts of summary synopsis of projects #1 & #2, re-written in fun, easy to read, accessible, user friendly language to be published on the *Tales from Planet Earth* website. You must include some of the following: digital still images, embedded video, links to press, links to social media driven ASKS, a brief impact assessment (possibly adding a more detailed downloadable document) and/or a "tool-kit" for how to use this movie.

December 9

Lessons learned for MAKING IT HOME Partners and future festivals

Workshop Final Projects

Tweet a highlight, process pt., news or a resource. If you have news or some pix post on Face Book. SUGGESTED HASHTAG to put at end of tweet – #tfpe09

Finals Week

Presentation of final projects (Time and Place TBA)

Tweet a highlight, process pt., news, or a resource. If you have news or some pix post on Face Book. SUGGESTED HASHTAG to put at end of tweet – #tfpe09

