COURSE DESCRIPTION
The action research seminar is designed to give students multiple opportunities to engage the larger Central Illinois community as active citizens. Seminar students work independently and in teams with community partners. Course reading focuses on the civic engagement “crisis” in the United States and various strategies for addressing it. As they participate in applied research projects, students will be encouraged to develop a broad array of civic capacities.

COURSE SCHEDULE
Introduction
8-28 Action research, the ARC seminar, and three projects

Part One
Three Projects: Affordable housing survey, Hispanic fact sheet, Needs assessment
9-4 Topic: Bloomington, McLean County, Illinois
Reading: Democracy at Risk, 1-65; City of Bloomington Demographics Sheet
Community: Meet our Community Contacts: Judy Stearns, Alex Cardona, Marty Sallee

9-7 ARC noon brown bag: Action plans

9-11 Topic: Beyond voting: The civic engagement crisis
Reading: Democracy at Risk, 67-115
Community: Group #1 Cultural District neighborhood: Census tracts
Group #2 Hispanics in McLean County: Census tracts
Group #3 First Christian Church neighborhood: Census tracts
All groups: Walking your block group/Getting to know your block group

9-18 Topic: How government structures associational life: three routes to engagement
Group #1: What are the civic SWOTs of your neighborhood organization?
Group #2: What are the civic SWOTs of your nonprofit advocacy group?
Group #3: What are the civic SWOTs of your church?
Reading: Democracy at Risk, 117-154
Community: All groups: Meeting with your community contacts/Expanding your contact list

9-21 ARC noon brown bag: Mission statements

9-24 ESSAY # 1 DUE IN CLA 251 BY 5PM (what kind of association and political context?)
9-25  Topic: Community-based action research  
Reading: *Action Research*, 14-63  
Community: All groups: Meeting with your community contacts/Researching your issue

10-2  Topic: Skills or transformation? Bridging or bonding? Kinds of ties and democracy?  
Reading: *Democracy in Action*, 3-144  
Community: All groups: Researching your issue

10-5  ARC noon brown bag: Meetings and minutes

10-8  **ESSAY # 2 DUE IN CLA 251 BY 5PM (what kind of civic engagement?)**

10-9  Topic: Look, think, act  
Reading: *Action Research*, 65-134  
Community: Designing the housing survey; Hispanic fact sheet; needs assessment

10-16  Topic: The variety of community projects  
Reading: *Democracy in Action*, 149-220  
Community: Designing the housing survey; Hispanic fact sheet; needs assessment

10-19  Fall Break Day no brown bag

10-22  **ESSAY # 3 DUE IN CLA 251 BY 5PM (what kind of action, e.g. survey, fact, or assessment?)**

**Part Two: Conducting, Crafting and Presenting Your Survey/Data/Assessment**

10-23  Topic: Mapping with GIS and the US Census: Exercise #1  
Reading: American FactFinder website  
Community: Conducting the housing survey; Hispanic fact sheet; needs assessment

10-30  Topic: Mapping with GIS and the US Census: Exercise #1  
Reading: American FactFinder website  
Community: Conducting the housing survey; Hispanic fact sheet; needs assessment

11-2  ARC noon brown bag: Working in groups

11-5  **SURVEY/DATA/ASSESSMENT DRAFT DUE IN CLA 251 BY 5PM**

11-6  Topic: Mapping with GIS and Geocoding: Exercise #2/Stories from the field  
Reading: *Dreams of My Father*, 123-169  
Community: Crafting an analytical presentation

11-13  Topic: Mapping with GIS and Geocoding: Exercise #2/ Stories from the field  
Reading: *Going Public*, ix-xix; 1-32  
Community: Crafting an analytical presentation
11-16 ARC noon brown bag: Effective presentations

11-19 **MAPS DRAFT DUE IN CLA 251 BY 5PM**

11-20 Thanksgiving Break

11-27 Topic: Improving the quality of civic engagement  
Reading: *Democracy at Risk*, 155-178  
*Democracy in Action*, 222-261  
Community: Preparing to present your findings to the class

11-30 ARC noon brown bag: Assessing your work

12-4 Topic: Summing up: Improving the quality of civic engagement  
Community: Presenting your findings to the class: Groups #1 and #2

12-11 Topic: Summing up: Improving the quality of civic engagement  
Community: Presenting your findings to the class: Group #3

12-14 ARC noon brown bag: Feedback and class assessment

**12-14 FINAL GROUP DOCUMENTS DUE IN CLA 251 5PM**

**CLASS READING**  
The following texts should be purchased at the IWU Bookstore.


The following items can be found on ARC’s library outside Professor Jim Sikora’s office (CLA 263) or on the relevant group’s website.

- City of Bloomington, *Community Development Block Grant Program*  
- City of Bloomington, *Comprehensive Plan 1998*  
- City of Bloomington, *Comprehensive Plan 2004*  
- City of Bloomington, *Consolidated Plan 2005-2010*  
- Economic Development Council, *2006 Demographic Profile of Bloomington/Normal*  

Selections from the following items will be held on e-reserve with Ames Library.


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**
The grade in this course is based on following assignments:

- Essay #1: 10%
- Essay #2: 20%
- Essay #3: 20%
- Drafts: 10%
- Final Document: 25% (group grade)
- Class Participation: 15% (includes attendance at the ARC Brown bags)

**OFFICE HOURS**
Professor James Simeone
CLA 251
556-3126
TTH 4-5; W 9-11; 1-2; or by appointment
Homepage: www.iwu.edu/~jsimeone
e-mail: jsimeone@iwu.edu