

**Practicum Paper Guidelines  
Aims, Timetable, Strategy, and Ethics**

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**Aims:**

The practicum paper is an important part of the course's aim to integrate democratic theory and practice. The paper also expresses and contributes to the Democracy Collaborative's commitment to universities engaged in their surrounding communities.

An excellent paper will apply both class readings and critical discussions to a government or community agency and test out or evaluate these same concepts in the light of what the group is doing (or failing to do). To what extent, if any, do some key concepts and theories studied in the course illuminate the aims, problems, and options, and optimum course of action of the group studied. To what extent, if any, does the experience of the group provide a basis for supporting, criticizing, modifying, or rejecting scholarly or theoretical concepts?

Your paper will be handed in to your professors for comments, revision, and a grade. But you also may choose to provide your group with a copy in the hopes that an "outsider" perspective may prove useful to the group itself. (For both opportunities and dangers of "outsider" perspectives, see David A. Crocker, "Cross-cultural Criticism and Development Ethics," [www.puaf.umd.edu/IPPP/reports/vol24summer04/vol24summer04.pdf](http://www.puaf.umd.edu/IPPP/reports/vol24summer04/vol24summer04.pdf))

Consequently, the practicum papers should be closely linked to class readings and critical discussions so that the practicum experience contributes to the critical reflection and scholarly part of the course and is not an independent exercise. The general problem with the university's involvement in community engagement is that such engagement gets hived off from the reflective and critical components. To see how this danger might be avoided, take a concrete example from class on Sept. 20. If a student is doing a practicum in a homeless shelter, he/she may survey clients and get a sense of their attitude towards government: whether it is a venue for democratic protest, an appeaser and a source of support and solace for the client, or part of the problem that made him/her homeless in the first place. Can we discern hints of a 'negative liberty' or a 'positive/civic liberty' attitude?! How does this impact on the theoretical distinction between the "liberal discourse of negative liberty" and the "democratic discourse of positive liberty"? To further the sort of integration we seek, we will ask each group to frame a theoretical question that they hope to (begin to) answer (or reframe or dissolve?) in their engagement and paper.

Hence, there are two opposite pitfalls to avoid: (1) An uncritical and unreflective report on a unit with little reference to the scholarly concepts and classroom approaches to democratic theory and practice; (2) A overly theoretical paper that fails to apply and test out theories and concepts in relation to the unit you are engaging and the context in which it is operating. Taking seriously what Dewey means by "critical intelligence" will help you avoid both pitfalls.

**I. Steps and Dates:**

1. From the list of governmental units and nongovernmental agencies, please pick three and list in the order of your preference and **email your preferences to Professor Crocker by noon Saturday, October 2.**

2. Your professors will put each of you in groups of two or three members and announce your groups by Monday, October 4.
3. One of your professors or someone from the Democracy Collaborative's Engaged University Initiative will contact each of the 8 or so groups to be studied, explain the course and practicum paper, and (hopefully) enlist them in the project.
4. You should convene your group as soon as possible and make contact with the group contact person (knowing that we will already have paved the way for your engagement).
5. There is no hard-and-fast recipe for learning about and from your group; being able to understand its history, challenges, problems, options; and being in a position to produce a good analytical and evaluative paper. Among the possibility strategies are: (1) read relevant documents produced by or about your group; (2) interview various leaders, rank and file, members, and "clients" or beneficiaries, rival groups; (3) attend group meetings or work sessions; (4) engage in "participatory action research" ("*investigacion-accion*") by becoming part (if invited) of at least one "public action" of your group (e.g., voter registration, public protest, public forum).
6. Paper Topic proposal: Your team should deliberate together and decide on at least one (theoretical) question they hope their practicum question to answer. Give us a brief paragraph in which you clarify the question and why you think it might be important. One outcome is that the practicum experience may be such that the initial question is not so much answered as reframed or dissolved on the basis of the group's experience. **Due date: Monday, Oct. 11.**
7. **Practicum Paper Due: December 13.**

## II. Strategy and Ethics

1. Some groups may be happy to have an outsider do a practicum paper on them. But providing you this opportunity will cost them time and energy that they could be using on other projects. What's in it for them? What are your obligations to the group you are studying? They may welcome an outsider analysis, evaluation, and set of recommendations as a means of stimulating internal deliberation. Hence, you may want to write your paper knowing that they will receive a copy. The group might want you to volunteer some time to their activities (and this might be part of your "participatory action research"). A couple of hours a week might be worth considering and not too onerous for you. Anything more than that, and we should consider providing you with an independent reading course (for 1-2 hours) with credit to be received next semester.
2. The Democracy Collaborative will be involved in a CoRAL (**C**ommunity **R**esearch and **L**earning Network) entitled "Bowling Together" next April 30 at GW. See [www.coralnetwork.org/conference](http://www.coralnetwork.org/conference). Some of the practicum papers might be suitable for the conference, and we might offer to organize a session at the conference.

## III. Options

Each student should send give us three ranked preferences for groups on/with which you would like to do your practicum paper. Preferences should be sent electronically by email to Professor Crocker no later than Saturday, October 2. Here are some options, with some additions and subtractions from the original list in syllabus revised Sept. 21.

**Agencies that partner with the Engaged University Initiative of the Democracy Collaborative:**

**1. Prince George's County Council**

Tony Knotts, Chair  
301.952.3860  
[tknotts@co.pg.md.us](mailto:tknotts@co.pg.md.us)

All legislative powers of the County are vested in the County Council. In addition, the County Council sits as the District Council on zoning and land use matters, and as the Board of Health on health policy matters. The County Council meets as a legislative body at 10:00 a.m. every Tuesday in the Council Hearing Room on the main floor of the County Administration Building in Upper Marlboro. The District Council meets at 10:00 a.m. on second and fourth Mondays. The Board of Health meets as required. The Council recesses in August and December. All County Council sessions are open to the public, and citizens are encouraged to attend.

**2. Multicultural Alliance of Prince George's County**

Edwin Udenkwo, President  
9402 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772  
301 - 459 – 3115  
301 - 839 – 3739  
[udenkwo@yahoo.com](mailto:udenkwo@yahoo.com)  
[info@mcapgc.org](mailto:info@mcapgc.org)

The Multi-Cultural Alliance of Prince George County is a coalition of culturally diverse groups and individuals from community of African, Caribbean, Pacific, Latin American Nationals and others that affirm multiculturalism.

**3. Gateway Community Development Corporation**

Nick Francis  
4102 Webster Street  
North Brentwood, MD 20722  
Phone (301) 864-3860  
[www.gateway-cdc.org](http://www.gateway-cdc.org)

Gateway Community Development Corporation (CDC) seeks to revitalize the three municipalities of Mount Rainier, Brentwood and North Brentwood to create a safe, attractive, vibrant and well-educated community enriched by the presence of artists and arts organizations, where diversity is embraced as an asset. Gateway CDC uses civic engagement, arts resources and leveraged partnerships to advance commercial and residential development and expand programs and services to residents and business owners in our communities. Formed in 1997.

**4. Desiree Griffin Moore**

Executive Director  
[cfncrdgriffin@erols.com](mailto:cfncrdgriffin@erols.com)  
Prince George's Community Foundation  
P.O. Box 3418  
Capital Heights, MD 20791-3418  
301-464-6706  
[www.pgcf.org](http://www.pgcf.org)

Our community foundation is the Prince George's Community Foundation. It was founded in 1994 to enhance the quality of life in the county by building and sustaining philanthropic capital. In 1999, it became a regional affiliate of the [Community Foundation for the National Capital](#)

[Region](#). This partnership gave the Prince George's Community Foundation an entirely new platform to maximize its programmatic and financial resources. The partnership leverages an investment portfolio of more than \$200 million and grants millions to charitable organizations throughout the Washington Metropolitan area. A board of local citizens representing business, government and the community set the strategic direction of the Foundation and oversees its operations. Foundation programs are run by a small professional and knowledgeable staff.

### **5. CASA of Maryland**

310 Tulip Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912  
Gustavo Torres, Executive Director  
301-270-3609

[www.casademaryland.org](http://www.casademaryland.org)  
[info@casamd.org](mailto:info@casamd.org)

CASA of Maryland is a community organization that was founded in 1985 by Central American refugees and North Americans. CASA was created in response to the human needs of the thousands of Central Americans arriving to the D.C. area after fleeing wars and civil strife in their countries of origin. While CASA was established to meet the special needs of the Central American population, we serve immigrants from virtually every country in Latin America, as well as Africans, Asians and U.S. citizens, as needed.

### **6. Advocacy Institute**

1629 K St., NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20006-1629  
Phone: 202-777-7575

[www.advocacy.org](http://www.advocacy.org)

Founded in 1985, the Advocacy Institute works to make social justice leadership strategic, effective, and sustainable in pursuit of a just world.

### **7. Glut food coop**

Founded in 1969, Glut is a not-for-profit charitable trust. Glut is a worker-managed cooperative which seeks to provide quality nutritious foods at a reasonable price.

Glut food coop  
4005 34th St.  
Mt. Rainier, MD 20712  
301 779-1978

[www.glut.org](http://www.glut.org)

**Other agencies (not yet in partnership with the University of Maryland), some of which have been suggested by class members**

### **1. Innovations in Civic Participation**

1776 Massachusetts Ave, NW  
Suite 201  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: 202-775-0290

[www.icicp.org](http://www.icicp.org)

Susan Stroud, Executive Director

Founded in 2001, Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) is a non-profit social change organization that provides expertise, ideas, information and advocacy support in the United States

and around the world to develop and strengthen policies and programs that promote political and civic engagement through service.

## **2. Advancement Project**

1730 M Street, NW #910

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 728-9557

Email: [ap@advancementproject.org](mailto:ap@advancementproject.org)

[www.advancementproject.org](http://www.advancementproject.org)

Advancement Project is a democracy and justice action group that works with communities seeking to build a fair and just multi-racial democracy in America. Using law, public policy and strategic communications, Advancement Project acts in partnership with local communities to advance universal opportunity, equity and access for those left behind in America.

## **3. Inter-American Development Bank**

Various units are promoting good governance and more inclusive, deeper democracy in Latin America. Contact: Edmundo Jarquin, Head, State, Governance, and Civil Society Division, Department of Sustainable Development (202-623-2067); Isabel Licha, Inter-American Institute for Development, IADB (202-623-3437); Bernardo Kliksberg, Latin American Initiative for Social Capital, Ethics, and Development (202-623-3765; Email: [etica@iadb.org](mailto:etica@iadb.org), Website: [www.iadb.org/etica/ingles/index-i.cfm](http://www.iadb.org/etica/ingles/index-i.cfm)).

## **4. The World Bank**

Anna Amato, Friday Morning Group (Values for Development Group)

E-mail: [aamato@worldbank.org](mailto:aamato@worldbank.org)

Website: [www.worldbank.org/fmg](http://www.worldbank.org/fmg)

Katherine Marshall

Director and Counselor to the President

Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics

202-473-6923 (tel)

202-522-7524 (fax)

202-438-5093 (cell)

"Participation and Civic Engagement Team" under Social Development Department in the World Bank. The team works on civic empowerment issues including civic engagement in public expenditure management. [www.worldbank.org/participation/web/index.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/participation/web/index.htm)

## **5. Park and Planning Commission (MNCP&PC). Contact: Paul Lord (class member)**

## **6. Washington Area American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)**

**7. AmericaSpeaks** ([www.americaspeaks.org](http://www.americaspeaks.org)) organizes large-scale public deliberations, including the Listening to the City events (which are an integral part of Washington, DC's annual budget process), and the deliberations on rebuilding the World Trade Center site, which caused the whole plan to be fundamentally changed. This would be a good group for anyone who is interested in deliberation--from a practical perspective. Director: Carolyn Luckensmeyer (See Peter Levine)

**8. The League of Women Voters** is heavily involved in assuring the reliability of this year's vote through advocacy and oversight. Of course, they have a broader agenda as well.

**9. Common Cause** ([www.commoncause.org](http://www.commoncause.org)) is best known as a citizens' membership group that advocates for campaign finance reform. However, since the passage of the McCain-Feingold bill, they have diversified and rethought their agenda a lot. At its most general level, the goal of Common Cause is to strengthen democracy.

10. There are some interesting media-reform NGOs in Washington, such as the **Center for Digital Democracy**, **Public Knowledge**, and the **Media Access Project**. (See Peter Levine, Van Munching 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 301-405-4767; Email: [plevine@umd.edu](mailto:plevine@umd.edu).)

**11. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services:** *Program to integrate patient advocates into the process for determining Medicare coverage (reimbursement) of new medical technologies.*

Six to twelve patient/public advocates would be selected through the standard nomination process to be members of the Medicare Coverage Advisory Committee (MCAC). Each panel chosen to address a specific question regarding the evidence supporting a new health technology would have an advocate assigned. Patient advocate representatives could also be convened as a stand-alone subcommittee to address specific patient-centered issues. In addition, CMS staff could consult with individual participants from the selected pool on an ad-hoc basis. The representatives of the public would be trained by CMS in the coverage process and assessment of clinical evidence to effectively participate on the MCAC panel vis-à-vis clinical and methods experts. Clinical evidence is set against a background of values and judgment. The proposal has the potential to stimulate evidence-based dialogue on controversial issues by explicitly incorporating patient viewpoints and a broad societal perspective as a backdrop for CMS coverage decisions. Enhanced quality and acceptability of our decisions may result. If successful, the program could be expanded to other policy areas. Contact: Class member, Carlos Cano.

**12. City Council College Park.** Contact: Eric C. Olson, Councilman, District 3

**13. American Association of University Women – College Park Branch.** AAUW promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive social change. Contacts: President, Laura McGough (301-422-6439), Program Vice-President, Eddie Crocker (301-699-5969), Public Policy, Sarah Nash Moseley (301-927-5091).

**14. Islamic Society of Baltimore**

**15. Citizens for Global Solutions** **Citizens** works to educate Americans about their rights and responsibilities as global citizens: “We envision a future in which nations work together to abolish war, protect our rights and freedoms, and solve the problems confronting humanity that no nation can solve alone. This vision requires effective democratic global institutions and norms that apply the rule of law while respecting the diversity and autonomy of national and local communities.”