A vital democracy depends on the active participation of citizens. Who is able and motivated to engage (much less to lead), however, is often limited—leading to significant challenges for the values and practice of democracy. This class seeks to overcome some of the limits to participation by working with children in Los Angeles on civic engagement projects. We will combine theory and practice in a “hands-on” civic engagement project. Taking the lead, students in this class will work with many people and organizations to implement the pilot program of USC Penny Harvest in Los Angeles. The Penny Harvest is “a school based service-learning program that civically engages children in gathering pennies, making grants, and taking action in their neighborhood. It builds strong ties between students and caring adults and between isolated schools and their surrounding community.” The goal of the Penny Harvest is to involve children (aged 4-14) in identifying and addressing needs in their neighborhoods and across the globe to help “lessen the national problem of Americans’ civic disengagement from their communities and from each other.”

In conjunction with the Penny Harvest children, the students in the class will take initiative to be entrepreneurial learners as we discover how civic engagement in a large city works to address community issues, and what the challenges to youth involvement in Los Angeles are. As an entrepreneurial endeavor, we need to think creatively to solve problems and overcome challenges. Your thoughts and field research will contribute significantly as we act and evaluate each step of the process.

The goals of this class are to:

- Creatively act and reflect on how political and civic engagement can make a difference
- Conduct an original field research project to address a “wicked” problem relevant to leadership and youth civic engagement
- Facilitate youth leadership development
- Work collaboratively as well as independently
- Present your ideas convincingly both orally and in writing.

Course Requirements and Grading:

In order to accomplish these goals, students will keep a journal of reflections and participate in three collaborative projects: a school team, a field research project group and the Leadership Academy.
school teams are responsible for assisting coaches in the elementary schools and recording field notes on the progress of the program in each school. The field research project groups conduct an original research project on one aspect of civic engagement and the Penny Harvest in Los Angeles. The class will also collaborate to create a Leadership Academy for the Penny Harvest Roundtable student leaders.

**Grades will be based on the following percentages:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Academy</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Oct. 19 (Wednesday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork and School Team Report</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Each week in schools (Final Nov. 29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Reports (10% and 10%)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Each week (Sept. 20 and Nov. 22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project, Topic with References &amp; CITI</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Sept. 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project, Part I</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Project Paper &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Nov. 29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All written assignments must be double-spaced with regular fonts and margins, proofread, spell-checked, and paginated. **All written assignments are due electronically AND in hard copy at the beginning of class on the assigned dates.** Any unexcused late assignments (if they are accepted) will be graded down one full grade per day. Missing assignments will be counted as zero points.
Academic Conduct and Support Systems

**Plagiarism** – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* [https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions](https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, [http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

**Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university.** You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity [http://equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu) or to the Department of Public Safety [http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety](http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety). This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/) provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [http://sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

**Help with Disabilities:** *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

**Help during Emergencies:** If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* [http://emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

**Readings and Schedule of Classes:**

Because of the intensive field work in this class, the weekly reading assignments have been adjusted to maximize time for your field work and school activities. The multi-disciplinary readings are available through the library’s webpage or will be distributed to the class. Suggested readings are provided for additional guidance and interest. (Required readings should be done prior to class)

**August 23**  
**Introduction**

No required readings.

**August 30**  
**The Penny Harvest: Student Engagement in Community**

This week, we will consider why student civic engagement matters. We will also have a training session on the Penny Harvest and its role in engaging children in their communities.

**Required Reading:**


Additional Reading:

**September 6  Penny Harvest Site Visit**

We will travel to Boyle Heights to explore and meet with some civic leaders. Arrangements for transportation will be made in class. Be sure to meet promptly at 2 at the designated rendez-vous point.

**Required Reading:**


**OR**


**September 13  Individuals and Associations in Civic Life**

This week we will discuss the connections between democratic practice and civic engagement. Does it matter who participates, or if we participate? How has civic engagement changed over time in the United States? How does civic participation address current political and social issues?

**Required Reading:**

Tocqueville, Alexis de. “Of the Use of Which the Americans Make of Public Associations in Civil Life.” In BB, pages 497-504.


by Theda Skocpol, pages 1-23.

Additional Reading:

September 20  Field Research Session I: Identifying Topics and Ethical Research Practices (Guest: Professor Susan Rose, Executive Director, USC Office for the Protection of Research Subjects)

During this session, we will discuss creating field research projects and conducting ethical research with human subjects, especially children. This week is essential preparation for our work in the schools and on the field research projects. Field Research Project Topics and the required CITI online training certification will be due next week.

Required Reading:

Additional Reading:

Assignment Due: Submit compiled Journals for weeks 1-4.

September 27  What Predicts Civic Engagement? (Guest: Dr. Robert Labaree, USC Libraries)

As social scientists, we analyze the how, why and effects of human behavior. This week, we will consider different theories to explain why people engage in civic and political activities. How does civic engagement lead to empowerment?

Required Reading:

Additional Reading:

Assignments Due: Research Project Topic and completed certificate for CITI/IRB Training. Training can be found at: http://www.usc.edu/admin/oprs/citi.

October 4  The Civic, the Political, and the Philanthropic

Are civic engagement and political engagement compatible or at odds with each other? How can they work effectively together to advance democracy and a just society? This week we will learn about and conduct a focus group.

Required Reading:

October 11  Leadership

In preparation for the Leadership Academy, we will examine different theories of leadership and how best to teach children about leadership.

Required Reading:
Chapter 18: “Collaborative Civic Engagement: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Teaching Democracy with Elementary and University Students” by Crigler, Goodnight, Armstrong, and Ramesh


http://search.proquest.com/docview/214194289/5A908C24D6C24B5DPQ/8?accountid=14749

Mindtools website resources: Complete brief questions on Leadership styles at http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_50.htm and review other resources especially:


http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_84.htm

Additional Readings:
Sanders, Hopkins, Geroy - Journals of Leadership & Organizational Studies
http://search.proquest.com/docview/203138879/A401CA7C914A42ADPQ/8?accountid=14749
Zagorsek, Dimovski, Skerlavaj- Journal for East European Management Studies
http://search.proquest.com/docview/232767793/A401CA7C914A42ADPQ/10?accountid=14749
Scott Bryant- Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies.
http://search.proquest.com/docview/232767793/A401CA7C914A42ADPQ/10?accountid=14749
Handy, Rodgers, Schwieterman- Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences

October 18 Leadership Academy Preparation Session

This week we will complete plans and have a practice run-through of the agenda for the Leadership Academy.

No required readings this week.

Assignment Due: Detailed schedule, program and exercises for Leadership Academy.

October 25 Research Session II and Debrief on Leadership Academy

We will debrief about the Leadership Academy and develop timelines, responsibility charts and assessment plans for each Field Research Project.

Required reading:
Each student will find and read research literature and models relevant to their projects in order to collaborate on Part I of the field research projects which are due next week.

November 1 Children, Philanthropy and Policy in California (Guest: Dr. Denise McCain-Tharnstrom)
This week, we will examine what philanthropic organizations and political actors are doing for children in Southern California. How might the Penny Harvest fit in the current milieu?

Required Reading:

TBA

Assignment Due: Field Research Project, Part I.

November 8  Civic Engagement and the University (Guest: Craig Keys, Associate Vice President, Civic Engagement, USC)

Institutions of higher learning are important civic actors. During this session, we will consider the role that USC plays in Southern California. What role should it play?

Required Reading:

Assignment Due: Read the USC webpage and search for different kinds of civic engagement. Bring some questions to class to discuss with Associate Vice President Keys.

November 15  Bureaucracies in Action

Bureaucracies provide the institutional structure and support necessary to implement programs and policies at many levels and are often the targets of civic engagement activities. We often think of them negatively, but there are advantages as well as disadvantages to bureaucratic governance.

Required Reading:
LAUSD webpage. http://home.lausd.net/

November 22  Research Collaboration Meetings
This week, students will work collaboratively on Final School Team Reports as well as Field Research Papers and presentations.

Assignment Due: Final Journal with Concluding Reflections

November 29  Student Presentations of Final Projects

Assignments Due: School Team Reports, Field Research Projects and Presentations
Assignment Details:

Participation (10%): Participation in class discussions, elementary school field-work, field research projects, Leadership Academy, and evaluations of program are essential to the class. Come prepared with questions for guests and reflections about readings, field work and research. Due: each week.

Field Work and School Team Report (15%) Due: each week with Final Cumulative School Report due: November 29.

Each student will be responsible for working approximately 2 hours per week at your team’s school. The number of weeks will depend on the school. Towards the beginning of the semester, students will sign up for one of the elementary school teams. For each visit to the school, students will write up field notes which will be integrated into a cumulative school report. The School Team Report provides vital feedback for the pilot project and will be used by Penny Harvest personnel to implement the program.

The School Team Report is a cumulative summary of your school team’s field work observations. The field work reports should be written during and/or promptly after each school visit based on what happened during that visit. If there are multiple USC students in a school, you may share responsibility for creating and maintaining this record of what has happened at your school. Enter your weekly record of observations into the existing school template. For the weeks when you are not at the school, enter the date and explain why (e.g. Testing in the school, USC vacation, No Roundtable meeting, etc.).

The School Reports should include a detailed description of your school experience with specific examples and anecdotes. Writing detailed school reports will be crucial to drawing connections between the theoretical material and your field experiences as you compose your weekly journal entries. Address the following points with as much detail as possible:

- What activities/lessons are accomplished in each meeting
- What challenges and triumphs did you face in terms of student participation and engagement
- Provide specific examples of what the children said or did (share their stories here)
- How USC students are involved in the meetings
- Coach preparedness, engagement and confidence in the program and areas in which the coach/school may need further support from us
- What changes would you recommend to solve any problems that arose or to make the Penny Harvest work better?

In your final school report include a concluding summary and reflections on your overall experience with the Penny Harvest program at the school. This grade will be based on the overall thoroughness of observations and analysis of civic engagement in your school through the Penny Harvest.

NOTE: JEP will be coordinating the field work in the schools. Every student needs to register with JEP and complete the requirements for volunteering in the schools, including: getting a TB test and a background screening. TB screenings must be done over two days and will be available at the student health center on campus. Dates will be announced in class. ALL VOLUNTEERS IN LAUSD SCHOOLS
MUST HAVE A CURRENT TB TEST CERTIFICATE. If you have had a test within 2 years, you may submit those results to satisfy this requirement.

Weekly Journal Entries: Due: each week. For grading: Week 1-4 Journal due September 20 (10%) and Final Cumulative Journal due November 22 (10%). (Observations based on fieldwork. In-class discussions, readings, your research projects, and your own experiences). Students are responsible for keeping a weekly journal throughout the semester. Your journal entries, along with class readings, will serve as a basis for class discussions and a reflective, critical thinking evaluation of your experiences. To reflect is to take ownership of and make insights about your education and your civic and political engagement. What are you learning each week and cumulatively over the semester about the topic, the research project, experiences in the school and about yourself? How do your other classes and life experiences relate?

Each journal entry should be no more than 2-3 pages long (double spaced) and should include reflections on 3 areas in roughly equal proportions:

- Reflections on readings and research projects;
- Evaluations/reflections on 1) your own experiences, 2) your field experiences in the schools (reflect on detailed school reports), and 3) your team research experiences; and
- Reflections on how the readings help you to understand these three experiences and vice-versa.

For each entry, record your name, the date and week of the report. Some weeks, I will ask you to comment on a particular question. Other weeks, you may write on your own or raise questions in class that students will want to address in their journals. You are free to comment on any aspect of the readings and field experiences that you encounter.

Weekly Journal Entries will be reviewed each week by the program assistant who will provide constructive comments and suggestions for revising. PAs will not give grades, but will keep a record of your assignments and comments. I will read all journals and comments regularly and grade them twice. This grade will be based on individual student work.

Field Research Projects:

Students will work in teams to address a “wicked” problem that is a challenge for the community or Penny Harvest program in LA and of interest to the team. Possible topics have grown organically out of the Penny Harvest discussions of the children and the teachers in the schools. Some suggestions:

- Creating a video with children of non-traditional living arrangements to increase children’s understanding and empathy for the homeless and those living in shelters.
- Working with schools and police to help implement closer ties between police and children. (This idea grew out of the children reporting that violence, guns and gangs keep them from participating civically, as well as from long conversations about the challenges between youth and the police).
- Working with community on proposed bio-tech park.
- Evaluating data collected last spring from PH schools re: child civic engagement and community networking to prepare for grant-writing and possible meeting with potential funding sources.
Choose your own topic in consultation with Claire and me.

The project has three due dates:

1) **Research Topic with Scholarly References. (5%) Due: September 27.** Submit a 3-5 page description of the project that you propose to address. Include a clear statement of the project, a detailed section that reviews the scholarly literature relevant to the topic, and a complete list of references using Chicago style. What have researchers found? In searching the literature, find materials that children could read to glean information on the problem and mark them in the reference list. There should be 4-5 references per individual in the group.

Each student will also **submit CITI certificates** for completed human subjects training.

2) **Research Project, Part I (10%) Due: November 1.** Incorporating the above assignment, Part I should be 7-10 pages and include the following sections:
   a. A clear statement of your research project. Include a mission statement that describes what you want to achieve, what product you will produce, how you will make it visible, and how you will assess its effectiveness.
   b. A literature review that discusses the main arguments in past research that have motivated your project and helped to define what you are doing Explain how you will build on and contribute to what is already known.
   c. A detailed analysis of how different people see the problem. (Look at the problem from different standpoints to describe and compare the multiple interests –how do they conflict or share common ground? How does your team propose to contribute?
   d. A review of models of civic engagement on this problem (e.g. what have other universities, NGOs, government, neighborhood organizations done? What worked and what did not? How will you use this to design your own project?)
   e. A timeline for completing the project that details who will be responsible for completing each task and assessment of the project’s effectiveness.

3) **Final Project, Paper, and Presentation (30%) Due: November 29.** Each team will submit their final project (the product, the paper and the presentation). The product is the item that you created (e.g. video, program, database, focus group interviews, etc). The final paper should incorporate Part I assignment and include the following:
   a. Introduction: a description of the project and its significance
   b. Research and Models Review: a review of the existing research and models and discussion of what your project will contribute
   c. Analysis of Different People’s standpoints and how you used them
   d. Brief description of the product you created
   e. Challenges you encountered, how you handled them or would do things differently
   f. Assessment of the product’s effectiveness
g. Discussion: reflect on what your project has contributed to past literature and models for addressing the problem. What have you learned from your research? What could have been done better? What still needs further research?

h. Conclusion: summary and your thoughts about the meaning of the research project for youth civic engagement and leadership.