

DePaul University School for New Learning
Building an Electronic Catalog of Civic
Activism in Chicago –
an Evolving Reference

SW 221, Spring 2007

CNA Building, 55 E. Jackson. Room 402 - Mondays, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.



Thomas Tresser

Course Description

This is a new class for the School for New Learning that will be developing an online “Whole Earth Catalog” type of directory of social change organizations in the city of Chicago.

All research will be published to an online platform. The idea is to grow and expand the directory from class to class. It is possible to offer this class in other divisions of the university, and indeed, could be offered at other universities. The directory will be free to use by the general public and could become a portal for citizen activism in the city. The site will be designed in such a way that a user can pick an issue, say, “Recycling,” and quickly see a list of organizations that work on that issue. A user could also search by neighborhood, say, “Lincoln Park,” and quickly see a list of all activist groups working in that neighborhood.

A **blog** is a user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order.

Blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject, such as food, politics, or local news; some function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of most early blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual although some focus on photographs (photo log), sketchblog, videos (vlog), or audio (podcasting), and are part of a wider network of social media. The term “blog” is a blend of the words web and log (Web log). “Blog” can also be used as a verb, meaning *to maintain or add content to a blog*. In November 2006, blog search engine Technorati was tracking more than 57 million blogs. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>)

This online catalog will use the WordPress blog platform for online publishing and will include:

- lists of organizations indexed by the type of issue they address (e.g., environment, literacy, gun violence, etc.)
- lists of organizations indexed by the neighborhood they serve (e.g., Lawndale, Uptown, City-wide)

- Activism Pioneers – profiles of Chicago social change leaders of the past (e.g., Jane Addams, Saul Alinsky, Gail Cincotta, Ida B. Wells)
- Activism Heroes – profiles of Chicago social change leaders currently working
- Significant Events in Chicago Activism – short accounts of major events in the history of activism in Chicago.
- Timeline of Chicago Activism – headlines of significant events with cross index link to stories in the Significant Events section

The types of students who will find value in this class include those studying:

- social change
- neighborhood history
- journalism
- online activism
- user interface
- peer-to-peer publishing

The competencies to be covered are:

L7	Collaborative Learning
A2D	Can create an original work of art using an electronic medium
S1D	Can understand general computing principles and solve problems using computer-based applications
S3X	Science, Technology & Society – written by student & instructor

Students will be expected to contribute multiple listings to the Online Directory. They will be given the option of investigating:

- Organizations that work on a specific issue
- Organizations that work in a specific neighborhood
- Research for profile of a Pioneer or Hero
- Research for profile of a significant event in Chicago activist history

Content to be developed

- The issues taxonomy – this is a list of the social change issues that is covered in the Directory.
- The list of neighborhoods – a list of Chicago neighborhoods.
- The organization profile template - a short description of the agency, contact information, purpose, web link, primary neighborhood served, cross indexing links.
- The Pioneer/Hero profile template – a short biographical sketch of the individual, links to online references, an image.
- Significant Events template – a short description of the event with links to online references, an image, link to Timeline.
- The Timeline – this will be an interactive timeline of significant activist events in Chicago’s history.

Students will learn how to:

- Conduct research for finding organizations and placing them in the directory
- Conduct interviews of social change leaders and transferring these interviews online
- Construct and maintain a complex online information tool
- Test the usability of an online directory by conducting user-experience interviews

About the Instructor

Tom Tresser is a consultant, producer, educator and trainer who can help individuals, companies and communities leverage and amplify their creative assets in order to solve problems, create economic value and trigger civic engagement. Tom has been a long-time advocate for an increased appreciation for the role of creativity in the life of the community. In 1991 he started an organization that organized artists and cultural workers for political activism and taught "Arts and Public Policy" at Roosevelt University, where he organized a center for the study of cultural policy. Tom was Director Cultural Development at Peoples Housing, a nonprofit community development corporation operating in northeast Chicago, where he organized a community arts program that combined culture and economic development. Tom served as lead organizer for the Chicago Park District for two years in a pilot project that transformed a major regional park into a community cultural center. In April 2004, Tom was elected to a two-year term for the Local School Council for the Abraham Lincoln Elementary School in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. He lectures on "The Politics of Creativity" and conducts leadership training sessions for artists and creative professionals. He teaches classes on arts and civic engagement at DePaul University and Loyola University.



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The Learning Experience

We will use the text, "Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms" by Will Richardson, Corwin Press, 2006.

We will be using a PC equipped class and so there will be a \$25.00 lab fee for this class. You will only pay one fee of \$25.00 even if you are enrolled for more than one competency.

Required readings, supplementary materials and resources for successfully completing this class will be posted on the course Blackboard site and all students are expected to visit this site on a weekly basis.

You should be familiar with the Blackboard environment. Log on at <http://oll.depaul.edu>. When you log on you should see links to all the classes you have registered for. This class will have a website inside this environment.



An introduction to Blackboard can be found online at:

http://www.itd.depaul.edu/website/media/blackboard_flash_tutorials/Students/

Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance is required. Attendance will be taken. Students who miss more than two class sessions Students missing more than two classes of our ten week course will not have met the requirements for a passing grade. If you expect to miss a class, please inform the instructor in advance. It's your responsibility to do all required work, including any quizzes, so ask a fellow student to take notes for you and get an extra copy of any hand-outs.

Students are expected to be in class on time, and to remain until class ends. Each member of the class will make a name card for their classroom desk (materials supplied).

Class Schedule

April 2, 2007 (#1)

- Statement of the instructor's limitations and biases
- Introductions – students will say their name, where they are from, what they hope to learn from this class and tell us a bit about their writing experience and any volunteer work they do.
- Outline of the course and ground to be covered
- Introduction to the blog platform
- Students create online profile for themselves, including image, upload to the blog
- Learn students interests, start editorial schedule for content creation

April 9 (#2)

- Create taxonomy for the directory
- User interface design
- Create templates for content
- Assignments for S1D students
- Start research and writing

April 16 (#3)

- Issues in online activism and using blogs for social change
- Publicizing the online catalog using the Internet

April 23 (#4)

- Proposals for written assignments are due. Each student must submit a short written proposal for the paper(s) they intend to write for their competency. A proposal form will be posted on the class Blackboard site.
- Students continue to create content and post it to the directory

Writing Assignments

L7	Collaborative Learning: Students choosing this competence will create a blog where they will document and comment upon their learning experiences for this class.
A2D	Can create an original work of art using an electronic medium Students choosing this competence will create and post a multimedia essay using video, images, Flash or other web-based media. The topic of the essay will be one of the organizations or civic leaders encountered from this class.
S1D	Can understand general computing principles and solve problems using computer-based applications Students seeking this competence will be assigned leadership tasks in managing courseware and online editing.
S3X	Science, Technology & Society – written by student & instructor Topics will be limited to: (1) State of the struggle around “Net neutrality,” (2) Use of the Internet in the 2008 Presidential race, or (3) Issues revolving around social networking sites such as MySpace.

April 30 (#5)

- Hands on introduction to podcasting technologies
- Students will team up to produce podcasts and post them to the directory

May 7 (#6)

- User experience testing. Students will get volunteers to use the directory and observe their efforts and conduct interviews to determine design strengths and weaknesses.
- Students will report their results and draft re-design specs for the directory

May 14 (#7)

- First paper is due (Students working on only one competency turn in their only paper, students working on two, turn in their first paper)

May 21 (#8)

- Continue to create and post content to web site

NO CLASS MAY 28 – Memorial Day**JUNE 4 (#9)**

- No class – students will use this time for production of content, preparation of presentations.
- Students working on two competencies transmit their second paper via email by 6pm.

JUNE 11 (#10)

- **Students individual presentations based on their research papers**

Evidence to be Submitted

For each competence there will be one writing assignment as outlined above. More detailed guidelines will be distributed in class. The paper shall be at least six pages (typed/word processed, double-spaced, 1” margins on all sides) and reference at least five outside sources. Please consult “Using Sources and Writing Research Papers at the School for New Learning” which is posted at

<http://www.sn1.depaul.edu/contents/current/forms/usingsources.doc>

The student’s overall performance in this class will be determined by the following criteria:

Attendance	10 points
Class participation	15 points
Producing online content	50 points
Individual writing/research assignment(s)	25 points (15for content, 10 for presentation)
Bonus for attending all classes	05 points

Written Work Will be Evaluated As Follows:

A = designates work of high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; reflects a clearly identifiable thesis and argument that demonstrates cogent and creative development and support of idea. Well-written with no errors (spelling, sentence fragments, unclear sentences, etc.). Excellent analysis and well-supported conclusions. Demonstrates complex understanding of topic and familiarity with supporting sources (readings, online resources and discussion). Fully and clearly responsive to question(s) asked.

B = designates work of good quality; reflects clearly organized and comprehensive understanding of issues at hand; presents substantive thesis and argument with evident development and support of ideas. Moderately well-written with few errors. Good analysis and well-supported conclusions. Demonstrates correct understanding of topic and familiarity with most supporting sources (readings, online resources and discussion).

C = designates work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas but develops argument in superficial or simplistic manner; may only address part of the assignment or be otherwise incomplete. Content may show either less than correct familiarity with the topic or bulk of supporting sources, is not fully responsive to the question(s) asked, or is poorly written (major mistakes made).

D = designates work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment; demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic; may indicate that student has not done reading assignments thoroughly. Content is very poorly written.

DePaul University Academic Integrity Policy

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students’ own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university’s academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution.

Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details. The DePaul Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: (a) The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. (b) Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency. (d) The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement." Plagiarism will result in a failure of the assignment or possibly of the course. If you are unsure of how to cite a source, ask!

DePaul University Incomplete Policy

Undergraduate and graduate students have two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to "F" grades. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification. The SNL student who wishes to receive the grade of IN must formally request in writing that the instructor issue this grade. This request must be made before the end of the quarter in which the student is enrolled in a course.

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