

Community, Youth, & Education Studies (CYES)

Overview:

Are you someone who:

- Is frustrated by the low test scores, high suspension, expulsion and dropout rates of Students of Color in our schools?
- Decries the high incarceration rates of Black and Brown young men in our society?
- Is angry at the way our society blames children (and parents and teachers) for the above realities and so many other forms of social inequality?
- Wants to move beyond learning about these problems and others and work to change the realities facing our youth and families in Worcester and beyond?

Then perhaps you should consider Clark's new Major (and Minor) in Community, Youth, and Education Studies (CYES).

Educational and community programs either serve to maintain the current inequities in our society or they work towards the transformation of those inequities by engaging youth and their families in a critical analysis of their world and an engagement to change the social reality. This new program squarely identifies itself with embracing educational spaces as spaces for transformation. We define education broadly to include not only schools, but all spaces of learning, including but not limited to popular education, community organizing, youth work and more. We define education as something distinct from schooling and school systems. Since we learn in all types of contexts, education occurs everywhere. It can involve media, grassroots organizing, research and traditional classrooms. For us, education is a relational practice that involves youth and adults in communities working together to understand and grow individually and collectively. Education, then, is a powerful tool to engage others in a critique of their social world and organize for social change.

Our work as activists, educators, organizers, and scholars involves the *critical examination* of inequality related to race, class, gender, sexuality and nation as it plays out from the micro to the macro levels of society. However, the commitment to transformation must move beyond critique to engage in *actions* of resistance to these forces of oppression and to create more socially just and equitable spaces, communities, and worlds. This means we engage with communities and schools and organizations recognizing that such sites are spaces of negotiation and contradiction. We believe that through engaging in this messy, collaborative, and

situated work we can foster cultures of courage, humility, and reflection that we feel are necessary for personal, community, school, and larger social transformation. This, of course, means that we must become *reflexive practitioners* who understand that our work in the world is shaped by the identities that we embody and recognize the ways in which our social locations shape our work. It is only through this praxis, a cycle of reflection and action, that we can develop more complex theories for both understanding our social world and for changing it.

What's in a name?

The name of this major is Community, Youth, and Education Studies (CYES). This program seeks to be an interdisciplinary major that bridges what in other universities might be considered the separate fields of Community Development, Critical Youth Studies, and Education Studies. Each of these fields is already defined as an interdisciplinary field. We embrace the power of interdisciplinarity by integrating these fields. The basis of the integration is social justice praxis.

The acronym for the program, CYES, can be understood in two ways based on how it is pronounced: "see-yes." As such it reflects for us an important aspect of Clark's motto, Challenge Convention and Change our World. It is a call to not stay in the Ivory Tower and look around the world to merely critique and denounce the problems. Rather, we take the critiques and announce a new and better world. Thus, we "see" the world as it is, but then we affirm, "yes" we can make change. Stated differently, we seek to "see" the ways that we can (yes) affect change.

Additionally, the acronym's pronunciation can also be heard as a bilingual (Spanish and English) double affirmation that "Sí, Yes," we can change the world when we find ways to come together across our communities' many linguistic, racial, gender, socioeconomic and other forms of social division. It is an embracing of and celebration of such differences, and a commitment to work towards "productive diversity" as a lever for social change.

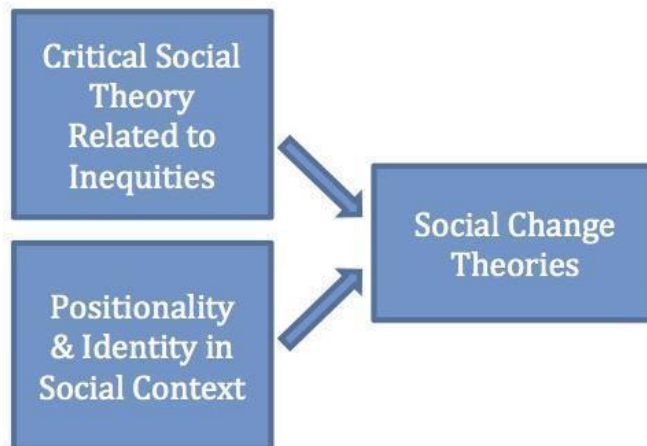
Core Commitments:

A Developmental Trajectory: We have created a developmental sequence of educational experiences grounded in a strong foundation that links theory, ideological critique, reflexivity, and activism — and leading to capacities for social change and transformative action in the world. Students in the major will take a sequence of courses that develops them to critically interrogate their social world, reflexively examine their social location within that world, and engage in social change.

Praxis: Renowned critical pedagogue, Paulo Freire, describes praxis as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it." For Freire, it represents an on-going cycle of collectively theorizing the world and then acting to create change based on that theorizing. As a result of the impact of our actions, we refine and re-

develop our theories to better guide our actions and so on. This idea of praxis is a central construct of the work in the major. The time in class can be seen as a space of reflection and theorizing that guides students in going out to engage in work in the community based on that theorizing. This action, then, guides the ongoing reflecting/theorizing. Thus, our classes are designed to be community-engaged spaces and students will be expected to engage in social change work in the community.

Three Theories of Understanding: The program is framed around three theories of understanding that, when integrated, form the overarching theoretical framework for the program. As illustrated below, the first two theories, critical social theory and positionality and identity in social context, provide the analytical framing for developing effective theories of change that avoid replicating the very inequities they seek to address (see the visual below). Ideally, the first two theory courses should be taken before students take one of the social change theory courses. This flow of coursework reflects this major's developmental model rooted in research on how people learn in complex practice and consistent with the LEEP development model.



- **Critical Social Theory:** We must carefully and critically investigate the social world to understand how inequality occurs. We draw from social theory rooted in experience and historical analysis to make sense of the overt and hidden systems that create the social order as experienced differently by different people. Only with a critical understanding of our social world can we challenge the conventions and assumptions that maintain the status quo and effectively create a more just society. *Questions we consider: How do we make sense of the world? How do we explain the inequalities that are connected to race, class, gender, nation, religion and other forms of social difference? How does power and privilege*

work in the world?

- **Positionality and Identity in Social Context:** This theory of understanding recognizes that larger macro structures shape individuals' personal identities. In this theorizing, we explore how our situated identities are mediated by the social world. Further, we embrace reflexivity about our own social identities to understand the ways in which each of our social locations shapes our experience of the world and our ability to interact with and effect social change. *Questions we consider: How does social identity shape people's experience in the world? How has our own social identity helped to shape our trajectory in the world? How does our social identity affect our interactions with others across social differences related to race, class, gender, nation, and more? How does who I am shape what I can do?*
- **Theories of Social Change:** This theory of understanding integrates the previous two theories to figure out our personal theory of social change. How does our critical understanding of the world combined with our social identity and our personal passion help us to understand how we can affect change in the world. Through the exploration of different change theories, we attempt to articulate our own theory of change. *Questions we consider: In what ways does positive social change occur? Who defines what counts as "positive?" What are the complexities and tensions associated with social change? How am I best situated to promote and enact social change?*

What Our Graduates Can Do?

We see the CYES major as preparation for engaged scholarship and leadership in the 21st century, working for social justice across a wide-range of educational, cultural, institutional, and linguistic boundaries and borders. The concentration is an ideal foundation for a wide range of professional work, preparing graduates to be: an urban teacher, a community organizer, a youth worker, a Peace-Corps volunteer, a public policy advocate, a web-design specialist for an organization that challenges convention to change the world. But most significantly, we are preparing our students not for careers that currently exist, but rather to be able to adapt to a dynamic and diverse world and, more importantly, to become agents of future social, economic and cultural transformations.

Some of the Fields Our Graduates May Enter

- Activists
- Adjustment Counselors
- Coaches
- Community Organizers
- Community/ Adult Educators
- Career/College Counselors
- Lawyers
- Media Producers
- Peace Corp Volunteers
- Public Policy Advocates
- Public Health Workers
- Refugee Workers
- Social Entrepreneurs
- Social Workers

- Teachers
- Union Organizers
- Urban Planners
- Youth Workers

What are the requirements for the Community Youth & Education Studies (CYES) Major?

CYES is an interdisciplinary major. As revealed in the descriptions above and below, the program attempts to embody Clark's motto and the educational foundations of LEEP (Liberal Education and Effective Practice)

Gateways

All CYES majors will pass through three gateways: 1) an entrance gateway, 2) an advancing to candidacy gateway, and 3) a praxis project and portfolio defense gateway. Each gateway will be read by committees and will involve advising/feedback to determine the next phase of the program all the way through graduation. Each is described in more detail below.

Courses

The major is made up of a 11-course sequence including a core foundation course, a 3-course sequence of *theories of understanding* courses that connect with the three core understandings (outlined above and again in the portfolio expectations below), a Socially Just Research Practices course, a praxis design course, a community-based praxis internship/apprenticeship/project, a culminating Capstone/LEEP legacy project, and an interdisciplinary set of elective courses.

Extracurricular Programs

Throughout the program, students are expected to participate in co-curricular events, at least one Difficult Dialogues Seminar, special forums, and CYES student symposia.

Portfolios

All CYES majors produce a digital portfolio that provides a record of work accomplished throughout the program, a space for reflection, and a mechanism for demonstrating to others original work and accomplishments. As part of the portfolio development, students are expected to develop three core portfolio pieces: 1) A theoretical framework for understanding the social world, 2) A piece on social identity that examines students' understandings of their social identity in relation to their social world, and 3) A theory of change rooted in the social context. Each of these theoretical pieces is interconnected and developmental. Students will be asked to write papers and develop presentations throughout their coursework. They will be asked to reflect on and re-work their ideas in a finalized portfolio.

In addition to the three theoretical pieces, each student will develop a major Participatory Action Research project (which we call the Praxis Project). This project will be developed through a sequence of three courses. The final Praxis

Project and the entire portfolio will be presented and defended for graduation. This digital portfolio can be converted into a digital resume upon completion in the program.

What are the Gateways?

Entrance Gateway:

Students are admitted into this major or minor on the basis of their commitment to working alongside community and/or youth, enacting change in community contexts and exploring the relationship between theory and praxis.

The first step in the process is to make an appointment with a program advisor to learn about the CYES major/minor. Then students must prepare 2 papers. The first paper is a critical reflection of one's learning and experiences to date. It should include A) a description of work (projects, internships, etc.—both in and outside of the Clark classroom—that has been most interesting, challenging and/or transformative, and why; B) a reflection of one's strengths and assets as a learner; and C) any information that one wishes to share with program faculty. The second paper is a declaration of one's commitment to Community, Youth, and Education Studies. As such, it should include a description of the student's objectives and goals in pursuing the concentration; and an indication of subjects, topics and questions that one might pursue with the support of program faculty, peers, and mentors. An advisor will read both papers.

The next part of the process involves a roundtable discussion made up of at least one CYES advisor and group of new students. *In this discussion, students will share their papers and learn about their peers' questions and ideas.*

Advancing to Candidacy Gateway:

The culmination of the Praxis Design Course engages students in constructing their proposal for their praxis project. This proposal will include an introduction, a theoretical framing of their research project grounded in a review of relevant literature and a comprehensive method and methodology section. Also, students will need to complete the human subjects protocol for the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This Praxis Design Proposal will be read and signed off by two readers (one of whom is typically the Praxis Advisor and the instructor of the Praxis Design course), indicating that the student has advanced to candidacy to begin their culminating praxis project required of all graduating CYES majors.

Praxis Project and Portfolio Defense Gateway:

Upon advancing to candidacy, students are expected to complete a praxis project (see below). Majors can work on praxis projects alone or in small collaborative groups. Each praxis project must have both an activist and research component. Each major will write an individual final thesis paper based on the research conducted in their praxis project. The final thesis will be one of several portfolio pieces including the three theories of understanding pieces that will compose the

final portfolio.

Capstone Sequence: Praxis Project, Thesis, and Digital Portfolio (Required)

The CYES major is designed with high standards and high levels of support. All CYES majors are required to complete a capstone sequence that involves the completion of a praxis project, thesis, and digital portfolio. The capstone thesis and portfolio demonstrate a CYES student's capacity for integrating theory and practice; showing creativity, discipline, resilience, and intellectual excellence – needed to engage in original, self-directed work of consequence for the neighborhood or community at large.

Students are guided and supported in this process by a three-course, three-semester “praxis sequence” that begins during the spring of their junior year. Students complete an individual final thesis based on the research conducted in their praxis project site. The Praxis Design course (CYES 290) supports students in the development of their praxis project proposal and IRB submission and approval. The Praxis Project Seminar (CYES 292) and Praxis Capstone (CYES 294) courses support CYES majors as they complete their final thesis. The final thesis will be one of several portfolio pieces including the three theories of understanding pieces that will compose the final portfolio. The Praxis Capstone (CYES 294) supports students in the completion of the thesis, final portfolio, and thesis defense.

Praxis Design Seminar (CYES 290):

This seminar prepares students to conceive of their activist project both in theoretical and practical terms. This semester of reading, reflecting, and designing equips students to implement their praxis project in which they design and carry out their own independent activist research project. This is the space where students refine some of their portfolio pieces on the three theories of understanding and use these theories to guide the design of their project. The conclusion of this course guides students in the development of a theoretically grounded and methodologically sound praxis project proposal, and IRB approval for their planned research. This proposal will be read and approved by the student's praxis project committee: the student's major advisor (and teacher of the course), a second reader from the CYES faculty, and a community member of the committee, as the advancement to candidacy gateway.

Praxis Project Seminar (CYES 292):

In this course students work independently or in small groups to enact their praxis projects designed in the Praxis Design (CYES 290) course. This course will engage students in the implementation of the community-based praxis project, including the collection and on-going analysis of data, helping them to navigate the inevitable problems of practice that arise. While CYES praxis projects will typically occur during the fall semester of the senior year, they could also occur on a semester

abroad or over the summer. The praxis project can also be implemented as part of an internship or apprenticeship program. Prerequisites: Praxis Design and Advancement to Candidacy Gateway passed.

Praxis Capstone (CYES 294):

Engaging deeply in the world of *praxis* – a cycle of theorized action and reflective theorizing – students (now in the spring semester of their senior year) will take the CYES Capstone course to integrate theory with community-based action. This seminar supports students in producing (and defending) original work of quality and consequence. Students bring their knowledge gained from their Praxis Design and Praxis Project Seminar courses to reflect on the process, further develop their theory of change, refine their portfolio pieces and develop a final paper and project for presentation/defense. Towards the end of the Praxis Capstone course, CYES majors will submit their portfolio including their praxis project thesis to a committee for review. The committee will be composed of the praxis project thesis chair who will be a CYES affiliated faculty, a second university faculty reader, and a community member (ideally someone involved with their project). A fourth non-voting member of the committee will include a junior level CYES major. The committee will evaluate the praxis project thesis and the entire portfolio and then meet with the candidate in a final defense of their presented work. The Capstone Project is judged and juried by two faculty and a community member and presented in a CYES Colloquium on Engaged Scholarship. Students will either receive a Pass, Pass with Honors, or a Non-Pass.

To be eligible to take the Capstone Course – CYES 294 – students must have:

- Successfully completed CYES 290 and CYES 292, which entails having completed:
 - A detailed research proposal approved by their Praxis Committee;
 - An approved IRB proposal to conduct their praxis research.

To complete CYES 294, students must:

- Submit a first draft of their thesis by March 15;
- Present their work at Academic Spree Day and/or at a national conference;
- Complete an oral defense with first and second readers and community committee member(s);
- Receive a passing grade for CYES 294.

Upon satisfactory completion of CYES 294 and the program, the CYES program may recommend graduation with honors. For an Honors designation, the praxis project thesis should be of publishable quality, generate new knowledge or tools, and leave a legacy for the community, program, or institution that demonstrates the role of engaged activist scholarship.

Can I Minor in CYES?

Yes, there is also a minor offered. The minor involves a 6-course sequence which includes the following components:

- Completing the Entrance Gateway (see above).
- Completing the foundation course (see below).
- Completing the three theories of understanding courses (see below).
- Completing 2 additional elective courses approved from this handbook or by the program coordinator (see “electives” below). The Socially Just Research Practices courses can count as one of the electives.

What Courses Will CYES students take?

Foundation Course (1):

The foundation course builds a strong foundation for understanding the challenges and opportunities with respect to urban schooling, activist community organizing, youth work, and social change. It also provides a framework for the core understanding of praxis and the three theoretical frameworks: Critical social theory, identity theory, and theory of social change. Out of this course students should develop an initial critical theoretical framework for social analysis.

Theories of Understanding (3):

Effective social change work requires a commitment to praxis that involves an on-going cycle of critical analysis/reflection on the world coupled with thoughtful action. Following a foundation course, CYES majors take a set of 3 courses that provide lenses and tools for thinking about and participating in engaged scholarship that contributes to social change. The courses come from an interdisciplinary set of courses that reflect and highlight the three theoretical frameworks of CYES:

- **Critical Social Theory**
- **Positionality and Identity in Social Contexts**
- **Social Change Theories**

Socially Just Research Practices (1)

These courses (see below) engage students in the practices of participatory action research (PAR), with youth, teacher researchers, or others, in which the process of engaging in research is also an effort in creating community-based social change. Students will examine the methodological theory and begin to develop the project alongside community members.

PRAXIS SEQUENCE

CYES 290: Praxis Design (1)

CYES 292: Praxis Project Seminar (1)

CYES 294: Praxis Capstone (1)

Electives (3)

Electives can be taken from any of the approved courses affiliated with the three theories of understanding (critical social theory, social identity theory, and theories of social change). There are also additional courses not affiliated with the three theories of understanding that can be taken as an elective, with approval from the chair of the major.

Course Options to Fulfill Major Requirements

Foundation Course (1):

- EDUC 060: Public Schools and Democracy
- EDUC 152: Complexities of Urban Education

Theoretical Strands Courses (3 courses—1 from each category)

Critical Social Theory Related to Inequity (1)

- EDUC 155: Education and Social Policy
- GEOG 286: Special Topics (Geographies of Poverty & Inequality)
- ID 265: Global Issues in Education
- SOC 137: Race and Ethnicity Across Borders: Comparing the Local and Global

Positionality and Identity in Social Contexts (1)

- HIST 016: American Race and Ethnicity
- EDUC 227: Culture, Language, and Education
- EDUC 254: Education in Film: Media Representations of Race, Class, Gender & Schooling
- EDUC 255: Ethnography at School
- EDUC 291: An Exploration of Multicultural Children's and Young Adult Literature
- SOC 160: Global Cultures & Identities
- SOC 260: Roots & Routes: Immigrants, Diasporas, and Travel

Theorizing Social Change (1)

- EDUC 281: Critical Pedagogies
- IDCE 203: Youth Work: Practice and Social Justice
- IDCE 358: Advanced Topics in International Development (Education and Youth in a Global Context)
- ID 220: Critical Pedagogy for Social and Environmental Justice: Liberal Arts Education in Practice

Socially Just Participatory Research Practices (1)

- EDUC 153: Participatory (Action) Research with Youth
- EDUC 264: Knowledge, Development, and Instruction
- CYES 250: Socially Just Participatory Research Practices

- ID 132: Research Methods for International Development and Social Change

Electives: (3) -- chosen from the list below or from another course(s) granted approval by the program chair.

- CYES 298 or EDUC 298: Internship
- CYES 299 or EDUC 299: Directed Study (must be approved)
- EDUC 060: Public Schools and Democracy
- EDUC 152: Complexities of Urban Schools
- EDUC 155: Education and Social Policy
- EDUC 194/195 Field Experience
- EDUC 208: Literacy Across the Curriculum
- EDUC 227: Culture, Language, and Education
- EDUC 254: Education in Film: Media Representations of Race, Class, Gender & Schooling
- EDUC 255: Ethnography at School
- EDUC 260: Literacy Development
- EDUC 261: Human Development and Learning
- EDUC 264: Knowledge, Development, and Instruction
- EDUC 280: Teaching English Language Learners
- EDUC 281: Critical Pedagogies
- EDUC 329: Graphic Novels in the Classroom
- EDUC 291: An Exploration of Multicultural Children's and Young Adult Literature
- GEOG 286: Special Topics (Geographies of Poverty & Inequality)
- HIST 016: American Race and Ethnicity
- IDCE 203/303: Youth Work: Practice and Social Justice
- ID 220: Critical Pedagogy for Social and Environmental Justice: Liberal Arts Education in Practice
- ID 240: Fundamentals of Youth Work
- ID 358: Advanced Topics in International Development (Education and Youth in a Global Context)
- ID 265: Global Issues in Education
- PSYC 060: Education and Effective Practice
- PSYC 242: Cognition in the Classroom
- PSYC 274: Children with Disorders
- SOC 137: Race and Ethnicity Across Borders: Comparing the Local and Global
- SOC 160: Global Cultures and Identities
- SOC 252: Race and American Society
- SOC 260: Immigrants and Immigration in the 21st Century

Praxis Sequence (3)

- CYES 290: Praxis Design
- CYES 292: Praxis Project Seminar
- CYES 294: Praxis Capstone

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