PPPM 452/552: Public Participation in Diverse Communities
Spring 2016 CRN# 35032 / 35050

Instructor: Anabel López-Salinas
Office: 11B Susan Campbell Hall
Phone number: 541.346.8979
Email: alopez2s@uoregon.edu
Office hours: Tues/Wed 2:00-3:00 and by appointment
Class Time: 8:30-9:50 Tues. and Thurs.
Room:

Course Description
Course Description: This course focuses on strategies and tools for encouraging public participation in underserved and underrepresented communities. It will function both as a seminar on theories of public engagement and as a hands-on public participation project facilitated by the Latino Civic Participation Project. We will begin by examining key theories in public participation and by tracing the conflicted history of professional planners’ engagement with communities of color. We’ll discuss why building participation in marginalized communities—particularly among people of color—has to begin with conversations about issues of power, racism, and inequality. Our readings will highlight systematic barriers that impede public participation and prevent marginalized groups from participating in decision-making processes. We’ll discuss those barriers through the lens of critical race theory, such as Eduardo Bonilla-Silva’s “frames of colorblind racism” and George Lipsitz’s theory of the “spatialization of race.” We’ll also discuss why mainstream public participation tools and techniques have had limited success in among the poor and among communities of color. We’ll end by considering theories and strategies for building community engagement, such as facilitating community storytelling and creating opportunities for placemaking. In the second half of the course, students will have the opportunity to practice non-coercive, open-ended, bottomup community participation techniques. The course will culminate with a series of public participation workshops organized through Latino small businesses and churches to directly engage Latinos in Eugene and Redmond. These workshops will use James Rojas’ method of “participation-by-play” to create a welcoming, safe, and fun environment were participants can share their ideas for improving the public parks system in the Cities of Eugene and Redmond. Ultimately, this course will provide students a space to study and debate the theoretical underpinnings of public participation efforts and an experiential learning environment where students can apply what they learn in the classroom to community outreach efforts.