

CSA 506: College Environments
The Pennsylvania State University
Fall 2011
Thursdays, 11:15 am – 2:15 pm
403 Rackley Building

Instructor: Kimberly A. Griffin, Ph.D.
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Availability: My office hours are on Mondays from 2-4:30 pm and Thursdays from 2:30-5pm.
The sign-up sheet is outside of my door.

Teaching Assistant: Ezekiel Kimball
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Availability: I am generally on campus from 8:30-5 Monday to Friday. You're welcome to stop by my desk (located next to Dr. Geiger's office) or to contact me to schedule a time to meet if you want to be certain I will be there.

Course Description

Simply stated: context matters. While many would like to think that individuals' behaviors and outcomes are shaped by a person's character and internal characteristics alone, environment can have a powerful, and often unconscious, influence. This principle has been widely applied in social psychology, and particularly applies to the experiences of community members on college campuses. In his college impact model, Alexander Astin (1993) acknowledges that while student background characteristics must be taken into account, the college environment – where students attend college, who they attend with, and the activities they choose to engage in – have a powerful influence on their outcomes. Strange and Banning (2001) similarly describe the college environment and context having multiple components which have a powerful influence “through an array of natural and synthetic physical features, through the collective characteristics of inhabitants, the manner in which they are organized, and as mediated through their collective social constructions” (p. 200).

Throughout this course, we will engage in a collective examination of the environments students and staff inhabit on college and university campuses. Theoretical frameworks and empirical findings will be used to engage our thoughts about and deeper understanding of college environments on students and the work of student affairs professionals. The intent of this course is to familiarize you with higher education settings, particularly in terms of structure, mission, climate, culture, and structure. We will also address how community members from different backgrounds can see and be shaped by the same environment in distinctive ways. Finally, this course also has an intentional emphasis on translating theory and research on the impact of environment on students to practice, as we consider strategies for enhancing these environments to encourage student learning and development.

Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand and apply frameworks key to analyzing the influence of campus environments
- Identify components which compose a healthy or hostile campus culture and climate
- Describe distinctions in how students from different social identity groups perceive and are affected by their campus climate and environment
- Make connections between institutional mission, type, and environmental context
- Identify and present distinctions between the mission, structure, and experiences of student affairs professionals at different institutional types
- Engage in various environmental assessment strategies
- Develop and articulate strategies to improve campus environments for student development and success

The following CSA Learning Outcomes are addressed in this course:

2. Student Development and Outcomes
 - 2.1.1 Understanding of college impact theories
 - 2.1.3 Understanding of effective educational interventions
 - 2.3 Ability to apply theory to develop effective educational programs
4. Inter- and Intrapersonal Skills
 - 4.1.2 Demonstration of interest in and ability to learn about individuals different from oneself
5. Commitment to and understanding of issues related to social justice
 - 5.1. Knowledge of existing systems of oppression, how they influence students' experiences, and the role of advocacy in student affairs
6. Research and Assessment
 - 6.1.2 Knowledge and ability to design and implement thorough assessment efforts

- 6.1.3 Knowledge and ability to create instruments and/or protocols for assessing important questions
- 6.1.6 Knowledge and ability to convey key findings/recommendations to stakeholders and constituents

Required Texts

Hirt, J.B. (2006). *Where you work matters: Student affairs administration at different types of institutions*. New York: University Press of America.

Hurtado, S., Milem, J., Clayton-Pedersen, A., & Allen, W. (1999). *Enacting diverse learning environments: Improving the climate for racial/ethnic diversity in higher education*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report Volume 28, No. 8. Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

Strange, C.C. & Banning, J.H. (2001). *Educating by design: Creating campus environments that work*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Additional readings posted on ANGEL, available at campus libraries, or distributed in class.

HIGHLY Recommended Texts

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). (2009). Washington, DC: Author. [Note – the 5th edition is also acceptable]

Evaluation & Grading

Students will be graded based on the following point structure:

Class participation & integrative comments	25%
Reflections (2 – 10% each)	20%
Campus Space Audit Project	15%
College in the Media	15%
Environmental Intervention Paper & Poster	25%

Final Grading Scale

A = 100-94	B = 86-84	C = 76-74	D = 66-64
A- = 93-90	B- = 83-80	C- = 73-70	D- = 63-60
B+ = 89-87	C+ = 79-77	D+ = 69-67	F = < 60

Class Policies

Instructor's Expectations

This course is designed to be an interactive experience for all participants, with frequent opportunities to discuss, reflect upon, and apply course readings and concepts. Rather than just summarizing the readings, we will be critically engaging and building on the ideas described in the work assigned. **Thus, everyone must come to class prepared. All students are responsible for completing the week's assigned readings and activities prior to class** to help promote the engaging environment I hope we can create in the classroom.

This type of classroom environment also requires that students be active participants in the learning process. Students will be graded on their engagement in each week's lesson and classroom participation. This does not mean one has to make sure to speak at least one time in each class or that talking a lot will guarantee full credit; rather, students are expected to make thoughtful contributions, ask questions, listen attentively, and participate in class activities.

A note on the syllabus: it is intended to a living, fluid document, not a static set of rules for us to abide by. It may (and is very likely to) change based on need for greater depth, group interest in a particular topic, or time constraints. While sometimes this will mean additional assignments or work outside of the classroom that may or may not be graded, often adjustments to the syllabus will be in the students' favor. I am open to change and adjustment and welcome discussion and feedback.

Classroom Conduct

Eating and drinking in class are totally fine – I understand that 3 hours is a long time, and that a snack can keep you focused and awake. All I ask is that students please try to avoid bringing snacks or foods that are overly loud or disruptive when eaten.

I also understand that several students like to use their laptops to take notes in class. Using a laptop for note taking is acceptable, but **not** for checking email, IMing or gchating with a friend, or taking a peek at the New York Times. **It is distracting and disrespectful to me or whoever is leading the class at that time.** In the past this has been a problem in several of my classes, so I am going to ask the following. *If you intend to bring your laptop to class to take notes, you must sign in – I will keep a list at the front of the class. Further, you must submit your notes to me via email by 9 am on Friday morning. If you do not, you will be docked one letter grade off of your final participation grade*

A similar policy applies for PDAs and smart phones. I know that many classes have policies about ringing phones in class, and I also ask that you please activate the silent ring function. I also would like to request that your phones/PDAs stay off the desk, out of your lap, and

definitely out of your hands during class. **To state it plainly, please no texting or playing with your phone during class.** *If I see you doing so, you will be docked one letter grade off of your final participation grade.*

Your actual presence in class is considered as part of your participation grade. Each week, students are expected to be present and ready to begin class **on time**. If you must miss or be late for class for a legitimate reason (e.g., illness, family emergencies, work emergencies, court appearances, conferences), **please contact me to discuss your absence in advance**. *One unexcused absence or two incidences of unexcused tardiness will result in a deduction of one letter grade from your participation grade. Students should also be careful not to accrue too many excused absences. Three excused absences or late arrivals/early departures from class will also result in a deduction of one letter grade from a student's participation grade.*

Students must hand in all assigned work and projects in accordance with deadlines. If you must hand in work late for a legitimate reason, please contact me to discuss the situation prior to the due date (the sooner, the better!). **If you contact me 12 hours before or anytime after an assignment deadline with an excuse for a late assignment, the assignment will still be considered late.** Grades on late assignments that have not been previously discussed and negotiated with me in advance will be reduced by two letter grades. Students have one week to complete a late assignment. All assignments that are more than one week late will receive a 0.

Any time that an assignment is due, the deadline will be **5pm**. **Please note, assignments that come in after 5pm will be considered late (even if it is 5:03pm).** **All assignments will be due to either my box in the Rackley Building or an ANGEL dropbox unless otherwise noted.**

Re-Write Policy

Students will be given the opportunity to re-write or re-do any assignment on which they receive fewer than 80 points. Anyone interested in completing a re-write must notify me within a week of receiving their grade, and all re-written assignments and papers must be submitted within two weeks. Re-written assignments will be re-graded, and the student's previous grade will be replaced with the grade they are assigned on the re-written paper.

Academic Integrity

As scholars and practitioners, it is important for your written work and contributions to class to be your own. All students should be familiar with policies on Academic Integrity outlined by Faculty Senate Policy 49-20 and the College of Education (<http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/current-students/academic-integrity>). All acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception are completely unacceptable, and any assignment which has plagiarized elements will automatically receive an F (0 points). If including sentences, paragraphs, or other portion of the work of others

in papers or presentations, be sure to cite this work appropriately based on guidelines presented in the *APA Manual* (6th edition).

Generally, it is safest to avoid using Control C and Control V when working on your papers and reading resources.

Assignments and Writing Style

All formal writing assignments should be completed following the guidelines for style and citation outlined in the APA manual – evaluation of proper formatting will be included in the grading of all assignments. All assignments should be typed in Times New Roman, 12 point font with one inch margins on all sides. Please do not use alternative fonts or sizes, or adjust the margins. And yes, I really do check for these things ☺.

“Safe Space”

In order to facilitate participation and help all students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas in the classroom, it is important that we create a respectful, open environment where everyone is valued. It is more than OK to express strong feelings or disagree with classmates ideas, but I ask it is done respectfully. Please be thoughtful about your words and actions, and focus on critiquing ideas rather than an individual’s qualities as a person. Also, I ask that when details regarding personal matters arise in discussion, that they do not leave the classroom.

Students with Disabilities

Any student requiring academic accommodations based on a disability is respectfully asked to discuss her/his needs with me on or near the first day of class. Appropriate accommodations to facilitate student engagement, participation, and completion of coursework will gladly be provided.

Recognition of Religious Pluralism

Accommodations will gladly be made for students who must turn in an assignment late or miss class time in observance of religious holidays. It is important to notify me of your absence/need for extension at least three weeks prior to the holiday.

Course Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic and Readings</i>
8/25	<p>Introduction – The Power of Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. <i>American psychologist</i>, 32(7), 513. [Posted on ANGEL] - Renn, K. A., & Arnold, K. D. (2003). Reconceptualizing research on peer culture. <i>Journal of Higher Education</i>, 74, 261-291. [Posted on ANGEL]
9/1	<p>Physical Environments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strange & Banning – Chapter 1 - Bitner, M.J. (1992). Servicescapes: The impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees. <i>Journal of Marketing</i>, 56(2), 57-71. [Posted on ANGEL] - Kinzie, J. & Mulholland, S. (2008). Transforming physical spaces into inclusive multicultural learning environments. In S. Harper (Ed.), <i>Creating inclusive campus environments</i> (p. 103-120), Washington, DC: NASPA, Inc. [Posted on ANGEL] - McClain, L., Medrano, D., Marcum, M., & Schukar, J. (2000). A qualitative assessment of wheelchair users' experience with ADA compliance, physical barriers, and secondary health conditions. <i>Topics in Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation</i>, 6(1), 99-118. [Posted on ANGEL]
9/8	<p>Human Aggregate Environments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strange & Banning – Chapter 2 - Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen - Pg. 1-24 - Milem, J. (2003). The educational benefits of diversity: Evidence from multiple sectors. In M.J. Chang, D. Witt, J. Jones, and K. Hakuta (Eds.), <i>Compelling interest: Examining the evidence on racial dynamics in colleges and universities</i>. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press. [Posted on ANGEL] - Hagerdorn, L.S., Chi, W., Cepeda, R.M., & McLain, M. (2007). An investigation of critical mass: The role of Latino representation in the success of urban community college students. <i>Research in Higher Education</i>, 48(1), 73-91. [Posted on ANGEL]
9/15	<p>Constructed Environments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strange & Banning – Chapter 4 - Magolda, P. (2001). What our rituals tell us about community on campus: A look at the campus tour. <i>About Campus</i>, 5(6), p. 2-8. [Posted on ANGEL] - Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen - Pg. 25-54 - Rankin, S. (2005). Campus climates for sexual minorities. <i>New Directions for Student Services</i>, 111, 17-23. [Posted on ANGEL]

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kuh, G. D., & Whitt, E. J. (1988). <i>The invisible tapestry: Culture in American colleges and universities</i>. Jossey-Bass. [Posted on ANGEL - Executive Summary (pp. iii-vii) and skim Threads of Institutional Culture (pp. 53-74)]
9/22	<p>Assessing Environments (Part I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strange & Banning – Chapter 9 - Hurtado, S., Griffin, K.A., Arellano, L., & Cuellar, M. (2008). Assessing the value of climate assessments: Progress and future directions. <i>Journal of Diversity in Higher Education</i>, 1(4), 204-221. [Posted on ANGEL] - Museus, S. (2007). Using qualitative methods to assess diverse institutional cultures. <i>New Directions for Institutional Research</i>, 136, 29-40. [Posted on ANGEL] - Kuh et al. (2005). Assessing conditions to enhance educational effectiveness: The inventory for student engagement and success. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. [Posted on ANGEL - Chapter One (pp. 3-8), Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment (pp. 25-28), and Supportive Campus Environment (pp. 57-60)]
9/29	<p>Improving Sociological Aspects of Campus Environments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strange & Banning – Chapters 5-7 - Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen - Pg. 55 - 101 - Chang, M. (2000). Improving campus racial dynamics: A balancing act among competing interests. <i>Journal of Higher Education</i>, 23(2), 153-175. [posted on ANGEL] - Cheng, D. (2004). Students’ sense of campus community: What it means and what to do about it. <i>NASPA Journal</i>. [posted on ANGEL]
10/6	<p>Assessing Environments (Part II) – Campus Space Audit Presentations</p>
10/13	<p>“Safe Spaces”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patton, L. (2006). The voice of reason: A qualitative examination of Black student perceptions of Black cultural centers. <i>Journal of College Student Development</i>, 47(6), 628-646 [posted on ANGEL] - Ryan, R. (2005). The evolution of an LGBT center at a public institution. <i>New Directions for Student Services</i>, 111, 71-74. [posted on ANGEL] - Patton, L.D., & Hannon, M.D. (2008). Collaborating for cultural programming: Engaging culture centers, multicultural affairs, and student activities offices as partners. In S. Harper (Ed.), <i>Creating inclusive campus environments</i> (p. 139-154), Washington, DC: NASPA, Inc. [posted on ANGEL]
10/20	<p>Organizational Environment</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - McCormick, A. & Zhao, C. (2005). Rethinking and reframing the Carnegie Classification. <i>Change</i>, 37(5), 51-57. [posted on ANGEL] - Chapter 3 – <i>Educating by Design</i> - Berger, J. (2002). The influence of organizational structure of colleges on learning. <i>Peabody Journal of Education</i>, 77(3), 40-59. [posted on ANGEL] - Manning, K. & Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. (2006). <i>One size does not fit all: Traditional and innovative models of student affairs practice</i>. New York, NY: Routledge. [posted on ANGEL - Chapter One (pp. 3-20)]
10/27	<p>Comprehensive Institutions, Research Universities, and Liberal Arts Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hirt – Chapters 2, 4, & 5 - Pascarella, E., Wolniak, G, Cruce, T., & Blaich, C. (2004). Do liberal arts colleges really foster good practices in undergraduate education? <i>Journal of College Student Development</i>, 45(1), 57-74. [posted on ANGEL]
11/3	<p>Community Colleges & Proprietary Colleges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hirt – Chapter 7 - Schuetz, P. (2005). Campus environments: A missing link in studies of community college attrition. <i>UCLA Community College Review</i>, 32, 60-80. [posted on ANGEL] - Kinser, K. (2006). Principles for student affairs in for-profit higher education. <i>NASPA Journal</i>, 43(2), 264-279. [posted on ANGEL] - Kirp, D. L. (2003). <i>Shakespeare, Einstein, and the bottom line: The marketing of higher education</i>. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [Posted on ANGEL - Chapter 13 (pp. 240-254)]
11/10	<p>Women’s Colleges & Institutions with a Religious Mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hirt – Chapter 3 - Kinzie, J., Thomas, A., Palmer, M., Umbach, P., & Kuh, G. (2007). Women students’ at coeducational and women’s colleges: How do their experiences compare? <i>Journal of College Student Development</i>, 48(2), 145-165. [posted on ANGEL] - Explore the Women’s College Coalition Website - (http://www.womenscolleges.org/)

12/1	<p>Minority Serving Institutions (Part I): Tribal Colleges and HBCUs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hirt – Chapter 6 - Fries-Britt, S. & Turner, B. (2002). Uneven stories: Successful Black collegians at a Black and White campus. <i>Review of Higher Education</i>, 25(3), 315-330. [posted on ANGEL] - Guillory, J.P., & Ward, K. (2008). Tribal colleges and universities: Identity, invisibility, and current issues. In M. Gasman, B. Baez, & C.S.V. Turner (Eds.), <i>Understanding minority-serving institutions</i> (p. 91-110). Albany, NY: SUNY Press. [posted on ANGEL] - AIHEC. (2000). <i>Creating role models for change: A survey of Tribal College graduates</i>. Alexandria, VA: Author. [posted on ANGEL]
12/8	<p>Minority Serving Institutions (Part II): HSIs and Asian American/Pacific Islander Serving Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hirt – Chapter 8 - Laden, B. V., Hagerdorn, L.S., & Perrakis, A. (2008). ¿Dónde están los hombres?: Examining success of Latino males students at Hispanic Serving community colleges. In M. Gasman, B. Baez, & C.S.V. Turner (Eds.), <i>Understanding minority-serving institutions</i> (p. 127-140). Albany, NY: SUNY Press. [posted on ANGEL] - Park, J. & Terenishi, R. (2008). Asian American and Pacific Islander serving institutions: Historical perspectives and future prospects. In M. Gasman, B. Baez, & C.S.V. Turner (Eds.), <i>Understanding minority-serving institutions</i> (p. 111-126). Albany, NY: SUNY Press. [posted on ANGEL]
12/15	<p>Environmental Intervention Poster Presentations</p>

Course Assignments

First a note on course assignments – please feel free to schedule an appointment to discuss or conceptualize course projects with me. These meetings should take place at least one week in advance of the assignment due date. I am happy to give thoughtful feedback on the content and make more general recommendations on writing style (e.g. organization, grammar, APA format). Also, I’ve found that my colleagues and classmates offer me some of the best feedback and suggestions on my work – I encourage you to consult with your classmates on your work.

1) Integrative Comments (Every week – posted by Wednesday at 8pm on E-Portfolio site)

Each week, you will prepare an integrative comment (in other words, addressing more than one of the week’s readings) and post it on your CSA E-Portfolio site. *If you do not have an e-portfolio or if your comment for the week is especially personal, please email your comment to me directly by Wednesday at 8pm. Late assignments will not be accepted.* Your comments should be approximately 250 words long.

Your integrative comment should be your reaction to the readings. The key here is to go beyond summarizing the readings to critically engaging the ideas being presented or the ways in which ideas are being approached in research. Your integrative comment can take multiple forms – it can address questions the readings raised for you, how multiple readings addressed a similar idea, express your thoughts or questions about how a topic was studied, or your ideas about how the ideas presented in a given week apply to your practice as a student affairs professional.

These comments will be graded pass/fail, and will be factored into your class participation grade. You are allowed to skip one comment at any point during the semester – but please email me and let me know that you are using your one “get out of your reflection free” card!

2) Reflections (September 26; November 7 – due by 5pm to ANGEL Dropbox)

Reflection is an important aspect of your development as a student affairs scholar and practitioner. Students will complete two reflections throughout the course of this class. Reflections should be approximately 4-5 pages long.

The reflections that I am asking you to do in this class are perhaps a bit different from what you’ve been asked to do in other classes. Perhaps it is better if you think about the assignment as a task where you are being asked to integrate personal thoughts and/or experiences which relate to the topics we’ve covered in class, the course readings, to course discussion (to a lesser extent), and what you’ve learned that helps you understand your experiences or changes your perceptions.

In each reflection, you will be asked to present key themes from readings and discussions in previous weeks, and integrate these themes into your past experiences in higher education, your development as a student affairs professional, and the CSA Learning Outcomes. Reflections are also a space to share how your thoughts or ideas on a topic we've discussed in class have developed, changed, or been challenged by this class in concrete ways – making connections between your thoughts and the readings and offering critical responses to the readings is key to successfully completing this assignment.

3) Environmental Audit Project (Presentations: October 6; Papers due: October 10 at 5pm)

In teams of three or four, students will be asked to complete an environmental audit on a public space frequently used or inhabited by students on campus. You will be evaluating the space based on its:

- Physical Environment
- Human Aggregate Environment
- Constructed Environment
- Campus Racial Climate

Teams are expected to conduct a comprehensive environmental audit of their space. This audit should include:

- 1) At least four 1 hour visits to the space for observation (2 observations during busy times, 2 observations during quieter times). During these visits, group members will take notes on what they observe in terms of:
 - a. The characteristics of the physical space
 - b. Who is using the space
 - c. How individuals interact (or do not interact) within the space
 - d. Any other general perceptions or observations

* Note: Taking pictures or using short videos is a great idea to capture the way the space looks empty or busy or how individuals are interacting with one another.

- 2) Data from short interviews with 4-5 individuals who utilize the space to gauge their perceptions, feelings, and experiences within the space.
- 3) An analysis of any documents (e.g. brochures, handouts, publications) or websites which represent this space.

There are two deliverables for this project: an audit report and presentation.

Audit reports will be 10-15 page documents completed by the group on the findings of their project. Creativity is encouraged in completing your report, but your evaluation of this campus space based on the **three environmental perspectives from Strange and Banning (Physical Environment, Human Aggregate Environment, and Constructed Environment)** as well as **dimensions of the campus racial climate framework** must be addressed in this report. The report should also include recommendations for ways that educators and administrators can improve the space through engaging students from diverse populations, better align the environment with Penn State's mission and values, and present the strengths of their environment in the most accurate and favorable light.

Teams will also have an opportunity to present their findings, with each group having 30 minutes to share their work (20-25 minutes for presentation, remaining time for questions and discussion). In addition to addressing the core components of the audit report, presentations should be creative and visually appealing and stimulating. Be sure to use artifacts to facilitate our understanding of what the campus space you've chosen is like (here is where the pictures and the videos come in!). Use of presentation tools like Power Point is also supported and encouraged.

4) College in the Media (November 19 by 5pm)

As fans of pop culture, I am sure many of us can think of movies and television shows which have used a college or university campus as a primary backdrop in the lives and development of the show's characters. **However, how accurately are these environments and their potential influence being represented?** In this 6-8 page paper, you will choose a particular movie or television series centering on activity at a college or university to focus on and compare the portrayal of the college and its influence to the scholarly literature.

In addition to including papers and resources presented in class, please integrate additional literature in your analysis.

Please use several specific examples from the television show or movie to illustrate aspects of the college environment and how it can affect different student groups is (or is not) accurately portrayed. Also, make a series of recommendations which could be made to producers and writers regarding what can and should be added or ways scenes could be changed to more accurately represent students' experiences at the specific type of institution.

Just to get you started, "college movies" include films like: Rudy, Higher Learning, With Honors, PCU, Animal House, School Daze, Revenge of the Nerds, Back to School, Mona Lisa

Smile, Van Wilder, The Program, We Are Marshall, Drumline . . . see? Plenty to choose from!
And feel free to be creative.

**5) Environmental Intervention Project (Topic: October 26; Paper: December 12;
Poster: December 15)**

The purpose of this project is to expose you to how a social identity group experiences the campus environment and build your abilities as social justice allies who seek to support and improve the experiences of all student groups. It is important to note that this project should focus on ENVIRONMENT and not just the general issues student groups face. In other words, you should not just document things like identity development issues, academic preparation, or campus engagement in isolation of the campus environment. The focus should be on the topics we've discussed in class – how environment shapes students' behaviors and outcomes.

First, choose a social identity group that you do not belong to. For example, as an African American woman, I may choose to gain a greater understanding of Asian American students. Or being that I have no physical limitations, I could explore the campus experience of students with disabilities. Please be ready to share the group that you will be focusing on by **October 26**. Your topic proposal should include two or three paragraphs containing background information about the group you plan to study, why you have chosen to study this group, and a summary of the theoretical lens that you plan to use (note: it *might* make sense to start thinking and even writing about this theory when we discuss it in class).

In this project, students should aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of common issues students from their chosen social identity group face on college campuses as viewed through one of the environmental theories we've discussed in class. At a minimum, this should include: a presentation of the environmental theory you are using to frame your work; literature review of published scholarship on the environmental challenges their group faces that are consistent (or not consistent) with the theory you've identified; three interviews with students who are members of this group about their experiences and thoughts on improving their environment; attending one social event or group meeting; and an interview with a student affairs professional who serves this community. Feel free to be creative about other ways of understanding the experiences of students in your group of choice!

The goal of collecting all of the information is to do something of a needs assessment. **What are your group's core concerns? What do they want and need to improve their environment?**

Based on their expressed needs, literature, and theory, you are going to develop an environmental intervention which is designed to help improve the campus experiences of members of this group. The intervention could be anything you think would be helpful – a new

campus office, workshop, mentoring program, social justice course, allocation of campus space – ANYTHING. Provide details regarding your intervention (e.g. your plans, specifically what it would look like) and how it meets students' needs.

There are two deliverables which will result from this project: a report and poster to be presented at our last class session.

The paper will include a synthesis of what you have learned through your literature review and engagement experiences, as well as a description of a specific environmental intervention designed to address your chosen group's needs. The paper should be 12-15 pages and is due on December 12th.

The poster (on either a presentation board or foam core) must be a visual representation of the experiences which have facilitated your understanding of the student group you've chosen, common needs and challenges the social identity group faces, and the key components of your environmental intervention. The poster will be presented in class on December 15th. Again, be creative! Use pictures, maps, diagrams, and other means to present your work. We will discuss putting together a poster in class, but some resources helpful in developing your posters are:

- <http://www.acm.org/crossroads/xrds3-2/posters.html>
- <http://lorien.ncl.ac.uk/ming/dept/Tips/present/posters.htm> - Design section
- <http://www.engr.psu.edu/ae/ecc/> - if you'd like to get your poster printed (this is NOT required)