

CAST SYLLABUS

Title

The CAST (College After School Team): A University - High School Urban Community Collaborative Learning Experience

Course Number

BCHS 2511 (Independent Study in Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, Graduate School of Public Health). CRN 07018.

Instructors

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Description

This course allows university students to participate in an after-school program (The CAST: College After School Team) for high school students at a local urban high school. The CAST provides a framework wherein university students can collaborate with high school students on projects related to school and community issues impacting health, well-being, and achievement. While engaged in group learning processes and projects, university students also serve as role models and exert positive peer pressure to prepare the high school students they work with for college, and to train and encourage them to become leaders in their own school and community.

University students in this course are expected to form meaningful mentoring relationships with high school students. The course should appeal to students interested in a variety of fields, including medicine, social work, public health, urban studies, and education. It is open to students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Textbook

There is no required textbook. Readings will be provided as part of the training sessions that make up the first part of the course.

SPECIAL COURSE REQUIREMENT: PLEASE NOTE

University students taking this course or participating in The CAST must have current Act 33 / 151 (child abuse) and 34 (criminal record) clearances. Each of these clearances costs \$10. Getting clearances, especially Act 33 / 151 clearance, generally takes about 2 weeks, so students interested in the course may want to apply for these before the semester begins.

You can [Download Act 34 Criminal History Request Form - SP4-164](#) for [Acrobat Reader](#)

Act 151 (Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance) may not be reproduced but can be obtained from our office or from the Childline and Abuse Registry, Department of Public Welfare, P.O. Box 8170, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8170 (phone 717-783-6211).

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisite courses. Permission of the instructor is required.

Meeting Time

The CAST will meet on Fridays from 2 to 5 PM. University students meet from 2 to 2:30 PM, before the high school students arrive, to help with set up and to go over any issues that arise. High school students arrive at 2:30 and are present until 4:30. Sessions typically begin with 30 minutes or so of ice-breakers and physical activity such as dancing, followed by a call to order and announcements for the full group. The remainder of the time is generally spent in breakout groups working on team building exercises or projects. After the high school students leave, University students remain from 4:30 to 5 PM to help clean up, give feedback on the session, plan upcoming project activities, and take care of other CAST business.

Besides the Friday sessions, University students taking the course will also be required to spend 2 additional hours per week, arranged at their own convenience, working on projects with high school students.

Examples of potential projects (from Fall 2004) include:

- Organizing and training a core of "youth ambassadors" for pregnancy prevention (*with the East Liberty Family Health Care Center*)
- Male Responsibility and Leadership Project (*with Healthy Start*)
- Making a documentary film about The CAST (*with a professional filmmaker*)
- Learning about international food issues, including nutritional aspects
- A study on cafeteria food and nutrition (*with nutrition specialists*)
- An energy audit of the high school building (*with Conservation Consultants*)
- Community gardening and renovation of a community center (*with the Union Project*)
- Developing an educational puppet show on lead poisoning for pre-schoolers (*with Healthy Homes Resources*)
- An exploration of stereotypes in rap music
- Air pollution monitoring project (*with GASP: Group Against Smog and Pollution*)

Meeting Location

The CAST will meet at Peabody High School in East Liberty. Peabody is easily accessible via public transportation (The #500 PAT Bus) from the Pitt Oakland Campus.

Student responsibilities (NOT BAD, BUT PLEASE READ CAREFULLY)

Responsibilities for University students taking the CAST for 1 credit will most likely be comprised of the following activities, totaling about 6 hours per week.

1. Attend all Friday sessions at Peabody High School from 2 to 5 PM throughout the semester.
2. For an additional 2 hours per week, at a time to be arranged *at your convenience*:
 - a. In the first 3 weeks, attend training sessions and help with outreach in recruiting Peabody students for the program.
 - b. Subsequently, meet with others in your group to work on group projects.
3. Serve as a case manager and point of contact for the Peabody students whom you are mentoring (the exact number of Peabody students assigned to each mentor is to be determined, but will be from 2 to 4). This should take about ½ hour per week and will mean:

- a. Maintaining high school students' contact information.
 - b. Contacting their parents or guardians and introducing yourself and the program.
 - c. Encouraging them to continue to attend and participate in the program each week (if they do not, they may be dropped from the program and you may need to find new students to mentor).
 - d. Helping them keep tabs on their academic progress in high school, what standardized tests they need to take, where they are in the college application process, etc., and referring them for help when needed.
4. Keep a weekly journal (~1 page/week) of your experiences in the course. This should take about ½ hour per week.

Choosing high school students to mentor

Mentors should choose between 2 to 4 high school students, based on common interests when possible. If you can, find 2 to 4 high school students who are already on friendly terms with each other and are interested in some of the same things that you are that may be a "natural" team.

It is recommended that male mentors team up with male high school students, and that female mentors team up with female high school students. Positive young male role models are especially needed for high school boys with disadvantaged backgrounds, as many Peabody students are. It is also recommended that college students mentor high school students in the corresponding year (college freshmen mentor high school freshmen, etc.) so as to allow the formation of long-term mentoring relationships that can last until you both graduate.

Help desk

For Spring 2005 we plan to have a help desk staffed by Pitt students available at CAST sessions for high school students who want to be with us after school on Fridays but who may need to work on something specific themselves (e.g., homework, test preparation, college applications).

Credit Options

The CAST can be taken in the Spring Term of 2005 as **BCHS 2511** (Independent Study in Behavioral and Community Health Sciences) (CRN number: 07018).

The course can be taken for 1-3 credits. Students who attend CAST sessions weekly and complete the other requirements for this course as outlined above under "Student Responsibilities" will receive 1 credit. Students interested in doing additional related work, such as researching and writing a term paper or becoming involved with research and programmatic aspects, may potentially take the course for up to 3 credits with instructor agreement.

University students who do not wish to receive credit may still participate in The CAST provided that (1) they have current Act 33 and 34 clearances (2) they sign a letter of agreement stating that they will make every effort to fully participate in CAST activities (outlined above under "Student Responsibilities") for the entire semester.

Grading

Students completing this course will receive a grade of either "Satisfactory" or "Not Satisfactory". There is no letter-grade option.

2005 Pitt Spring Term Calendar with CAST Tentative Schedule			
January	5	Wednesday	PITT CLASSES BEGIN
	7	Friday	CAST 1: Meet and Greet
	14	Friday	CAST 2: Form Groups
	17	Monday	<i>MLK's birthday</i>
	18	Tuesday	Add/drop period ends
	21	Friday	CAST 3: Group activities
	28	Friday	CAST 4: Project Selection ("Project Marketplace")
February	4	Friday	CAST 5: Projects 1
	11	Friday	CAST 6: Projects 2
	18	Friday	CAST 7: Projects 3
	25	Friday	CAST 8: Projects 4
March	4	Friday	CAST 9: Projects 5
	11	Friday	<i>Pitt Spring Break 3/ 6-13</i>
	18	Friday	CAST 10: Projects 6
	25	Friday	<i>Pittsburgh Public Schools Spring Break 3/24-28</i>
April	1	Friday	CAST 11: Projects 7
	8	Friday	CAST 12: Projects 8
	15	Friday	CAST 13: Projects 9
	22	Friday	CAST 14: Project Presentations Last UG class day
	23	Saturday	Final CAST Session: Awards Banquet
	25-30, incl.	Monday-Saturday	UG finals. Grad classes meet; finals in last class