Exemplary Project Descriptions
Focal faculty (DeMeulenaere, Park, and Michaels) have been piloting elements of the new program -- the Praxis Sequence -- over the past three years. This sequence entails three courses, over a year and a half, which student participate in as a cohort -- mentored by a single CYES faculty member on a rotating basis, with input from all CYES faculty. It includes a Praxis Design Seminar, Praxis Project Seminar, and Praxis Capstone Seminar, each of which is explained in more detail in the Exemplary Project section.

The Praxis Project Sequence: All CYES students are expected to complete a praxis project. Majors can work on praxis projects alone or in small collaborative groups. Each praxis project must have both an activist and research component, embedded in the community (e.g., classroom, after-school program for youth, community health organization). Each major writes an individual final thesis paper based on the research conducted in their praxis project. The Praxis Seminar and Capstone courses support CYES majors as they complete their final thesis, which will be read by a committee composed of a faculty from CYES, 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 then meet with the candidate in a final defense of their presented work. Students will either receive a Pass, Pass with Honors, or a Non-Pass. All students passing will be expected to present their final project in a final Praxis symposium.

- Praxis Design Seminar: This semester-long seminar prepares students to reflect and conceive of their activist project both in theoretical and practical terms. This semester of reading, reflecting, and designing equips students for designing and carrying out their own or group “activist research” project. This is the space where they 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. This proposal will be read by both the student’s advisor (and teacher of the course) and a second reader as the advancement to candidacy gateway.

- Praxis Project Seminar: This course builds on the Praxis Design Seminar in which students work independently or in small groups to enact their praxis projects designed in the Praxis Design course. This one credit course will engage students in the implementation of the community-based PAR project, including the collection of data. While these 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 Seminar: Engaging deeply in the world of praxis (a cycle of action and reflective theorizing) students in their senior year will take a CYES capstone course to integrate theory with community-based action, producing and defending original work of quality and consequence. Students bring their knowledge gained from their Praxis Design and Praxis Project 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. The Capstone Project is judged and juried by two faculty and a community member and presented in a Colloquium on Engaged Scholarship. All students will be given a Pass, Pass with Honors, or not Pass designation. For an Honors designation, the project should produce new knowledge or tools, leaving a legacy for the community, program, or institution that demonstrates the role of engaged activist scholarship.