This is a hands-on project course that will take us out into the community, asking low income, African American women working in healthcare, teamwork, respect, time, and turnover affect their jobs. We will invite managers, employees, developers, and community members to share their (often diverse) interpretations of these problems—to hear each other and seek common solutions.

This is also a methods course in which you will learn to use the tools of intercultural inquiry that help people communicate across racial, social, and cultural differences. Our tools include an introduction to doing an “activity analysis” of workplace problems to the rhetorical strategies for collaborative problem-solving across differences. There will be a chance to work on a multi-media dialogue tool as well.

We will use these tools to bring urban voices—and the grounded knowledge and expertise of silenced groups—into a public dialogue. Our project will culminate in a Carnegie Mellon Community Think Tank with people in healthcare, management, policy, workforce development—and low wage jobs—on the problems we uncover.

This course calls for a diverse team: the issues we investigate are intercultural studies, medical communication, women’s issues, management, workforce development. The methods will be useful to professional writers planning to work in multicultural workplaces and educators interested in public rhetoric, service learning, and intercultural dialogue.

Contact: Linda Flower, Dept. English/Center for University Outreach