

Erasmus students  
2008/2009 season – summer semester

## **Creativity and innovation in urban areas.**

**Teacher:** mgr Piotr Bielski, Sociology of Organization & Management Department, room A116, e-mail: piotr.bielski@gmail.com

**Type of studies:** Erasmus

**Type of class :** conversation seminar (konwersatorium)

**Language:** English / Spanish. The basic language is English, however, if students reach consensus, it can be switched to Spanish.

**Hours:** 30.

**Methods of Teaching:** reading, discussion, practical projects and students' presentations, work in groups, meetings with experts, field work

**Conditions of evaluation:** presence and active participation of students is important and will influence the final note. Moreover, students are expected to prepare practical projects individually or in small groups (2-3 persons). The projects will focus on possibilities of applying creative and innovative solutions to specific urban communities in Lodz, municipality, selected Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), companies. To give just a few proposals, the practical projects may be about analyzing what a cultural centre could do in order to attract more people to its offer and improve its quality. Alternatively, discovering how could the Municipality of Lodz adapt an empty, abandoned factory for the public good? How can the main street of Lodz be changed to be more attractive for both inhabitants and tourists? The topics of the project will be decided according to the students' interests. The teacher will assist the students in preparation of practical projects. The students will present practical projects on the seminar.

The final note will be the average of note of participation in classes and evaluation of the practical project.

**Presence:** the students are allowed to miss the classes only 2 times. If they happen to be absent 3 times or more, they are obliged to consult the relevant topics with the teachers on the tutorials.

**Preparation:** the students are expected to read indicated fragments of books or articles and to be able to comment on them during the seminar. The teacher will provide students with a copy of a text or the texts will be available on-line.

### **Goals of the course:**

European Commission declared the Year 2009 to be the European Year of Creativity and Innovation. Creativity seems to be the keyword of the contemporary world of business, science and social development. Thus a practical course on creativity and innovation is a valuable offer to students of social sciences, as well as economy and business studies.

The goal of the course is to help students in developing their creativity and encourage them to apply their creative ideas and abilities to practical challenges, especially in the urban reality.

First part of the course is focused on getting to know what are the creativity and innovation both from theoretical and practical perspective. The students will be acquainted with such concepts as creative class (R. Florida), creative regions, creative groups, creative commons. The case studies of creative actions and ideas such as "thematic villages", "time bank", "yoga of laughter" or "guerrilla gardening" will be studied. The concepts of system thinking (Peter Senge) and "lateral thinking" (E. de Bono) will be introduced.

In second part of the course, the students will be encouraged to study and describe practical creative and innovative projects of revitalization, social activation, social entrepreneurship being applied in the city of Lodz. The course may include visits to place of interest where creative solutions are taking place, such as modern art gallery, vibrant cultural centre or innovative company. The experts in field of creativity such as trainers or experts in revitalization of urban areas or social entrepreneurs might be occasionally invited as the guests of the course.

**Basic course manuals:**

Bornstein David (2004), *How to Change the World. Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*, Oxford University Press

Florida Richard (2004), *The Rise of the Creative Class. And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, New York, Basic Books