Unsilence (www.unsilence.org) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization. Through storytelling, the arts, and game design, we unsilence hidden injustice. It is our intention for Unsilence Lab at Northwestern University to serve as an authentic space for the research and design of dynamic, highly-interactive Unsilence learning experiences.

**Course code:** SESP 351

**Quarter:** Winter 2019

**Where:** Annenberg Hall, Room G08, School of Education and Social Policy

**When:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 2.00pm - 3.20pm

**Expectations:** 10 hours of work, per week

**Emerging and Authentic Learning:** It is a goal of Unsilence Lab for us to create and sustain, together, a research and design experience that is driven by our real needs and by authentic learning. In light of this, this syllabus is a starting point for us. While our first week is structured, the following weeks will be determined by how we – as a group – decide to work. As design projects develop and enduring questions arise, specific readings, assignments, reports, final presentations, and other tasks will become clear. We are a community and so all conversations and all constructive feedback are always welcome.

**Course Grades:** While grades will not be assigned throughout the quarter, final course grades for Unsilence Lab will be based on: attendance and participation at weekly lab sessions; the completion of assigned tasks, reflections, and reports; professionalism, effort, and adherence to deadlines; communication and a commitment to teamwork; and the quality of your work product.
Instructor:
Danny M. Cohen, Ph. D. is a human rights artist. With a background in youth leadership and informal education, he trained as a learning scientist at Northwestern with a specialization in Holocaust memory and human rights pedagogy. An associate professor of instruction here at the School of Education & Social Policy and The Crown Family Center for Jewish & Israel Studies, Danny teaches about collective memories and the design of Holocaust, genocide, and human rights education. He is the founder of Unsilence, a national nonprofit that uses storytelling, the arts, and game design to unsilence hidden injustice and support communities to break taboos and have tough conversations about human rights. A faculty fellow of the Auschwitz Jewish Center, he designed and facilitated the pedagogical track of the inaugural docent training program at the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center. In addition to authoring academic articles on Holocaust and human rights education, Danny is a human rights fiction writer. His debut novel, TRAIN, was selected as the inaugural text of the national Museum Teacher Fellows book club of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Originally from London, Danny lives in Chicago with his husband and their daughter. He is also a visual artist, a singer-songwriter, and a member of the band They Won’t Win. Email: dannymcohen@northwestern.edu; Skype: dannymauricecohen

Academic Integrity: Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, “Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic guide.” All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html

Accessible NU: Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with AccessibleNU (847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All information will remain confidential.

Support: When delving into any content about injustice and violence, all emotional responses – including numbness – are normal. Be aware that course content may trigger personal issues for you or your classmates. Please be aware that what you say and write can affect others. When you write, and when you speak, please always try to be respectful and kind. Also, please know that NU’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can provide you support and guidance with personal issues you might have. Visit: www.northwestern.edu/counseling NU’s Center for Awareness, Response, and Education (CARE) is a great resource, too. CARE provides “information, advice, crisis counseling, support, advocacy, referrals and education about sexual violence (including sexual assault, rape, intimate partner violence and stalking) as well as consent, healthy relationships and healthy sexuality to the Northwestern University community.” Visit: www.northwestern.edu/care Please note that if Danny reads anything within a written assignment – or hear anything during class – of concern, he may need to follow up appropriately.
Winter 2019 Projects

Unsilence Handbook

Together, we will create a new Unsilence Handbook – an accessible annotated bibliography – that makes clear how and why games can support social justice learning, as well as make clear the psychological, emotional, and other benefits of unsilencing. To be used by educators, Unsilence facilitators, and Unsilence designers, it is our goal that this new Handbook will support practitioners to justify their use, creation, and implementation of Unsilence content and programs.

SHADOWS Puzzles

Together, we will develop, create, and hopefully publish a series of classroom-friendly games and puzzles that shed light on human rights. Building on existing puzzles from Unsilence’s SHADOWS human rights treasure hunts (from summer 2018) – and inspired by puzzles from Unsilence’s Hidden Pages webquest (www.unsilence.org/hidden-pages) – we will work to develop and build online puzzles and games to address a range of injustices that will likely include immigration and asylum rights, racism and police brutality, mass incarceration, the lack of access to physical and mental health services, and more.

Field Trip: As part of the development of the SHADOWS Puzzles, you will organize, all together, a student-led Unsilence Lab field trip to Evanston Games and Café (1610 Maple Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201) to explore and research different types of games.

roadTrip

Advanced Unsilence Lab students will continue to develop “roadTrip,” a new Unsilence interactive feature that brings to light the rights, histories, and contemporary experiences of people who are transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming, as well as the stories of their families and allies.

Journal Entries

At the end of each week throughout the quarter, with the aim of promoting deep reflection, you will post a Journal Entries to Canvas by 5pm each Friday, under your personal thread. You will reflect on your Unsilence Lab experiences from that week. There is no need to develop a formal argument. Stream-of-consciousness, informal prose, a list of questions, and bullet-points are all appropriate. Try to avoid “the pressure to be profound”; a Journal Entry should be simple and honest. If you respond to one another’s Journal Entries, please be respectful.
Learning Goals for Week 1 *

1. Unsilence Lab students will begin to become familiar with key Unsilence Features and will be able to draw connections between hidden injustice and human rights.

2. Unsilence Lab students will begin to explore the design of Unsilence interactive experiences and “serious games” in general and reflect on why games can support social justice learning.

Tasks to complete before our second class (Thursday Jan 10) *

1. APPLICATION: If you have not done so already, please submit your informal essay (500 words) explaining why you care about human rights and why you are a good fit for Unsilence Lab. Send your essay to Danny in the body of an email.

2. CANVAS: Start your own Personal Reflection Thread on Canvas. You will post all informal reflections, Journal Entries, and some other assignments as a reply to this thread.

3. SILENCING: Find on Unsilence.org and experience A Tour Guide at Auschwitz and Metal Detector, and before looking at the drop-down menus, take notes on the personal, cultural, and institutional silencing in each story. Then check your answers against the drop-downs and take a few notes on what you found surprising. Post your informal notes to your Canvas Personal Reflection Thread.

4. OXYGEN & TOMORROW: Find on Unsilence.org and experience the two separate features Oxygen and Tomorrow. Write an informal reflection (500 words - bullet points are encouraged) on the relationship between the features and personal, cultural, and institutional silencing. Post your informal reflection to your Personal Reflection Thread on Canvas.

Tasks to complete before our third class (Tuesday Jan 15) *

1. Complete your first weekly Journal Entry. Post to your Canvas Personal Reflection Thread.

2. HUMAN RIGHTS: Find on Unsilence.org and read The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and The Rome Statute’s Crimes Against Humanity. Take notes on any human rights that surprise you or are thought-provoking and post your informal notes to your Canvas Personal Reflection Thread.

3. REPORT: Conduct research and build an argument to address the following questions: How can games support social justice learning? What are the psychological, emotional, and tangible benefits of unsilencing? You may work in pairs, if you wish. Please use APA Style. Post your report to your Canvas Personal Reflection Thread.

* Advanced students who were enrolled in Unsilence Lab Fall 2018 should speak with Danny to receive alternative/advanced assignments.