

# Widening Circles

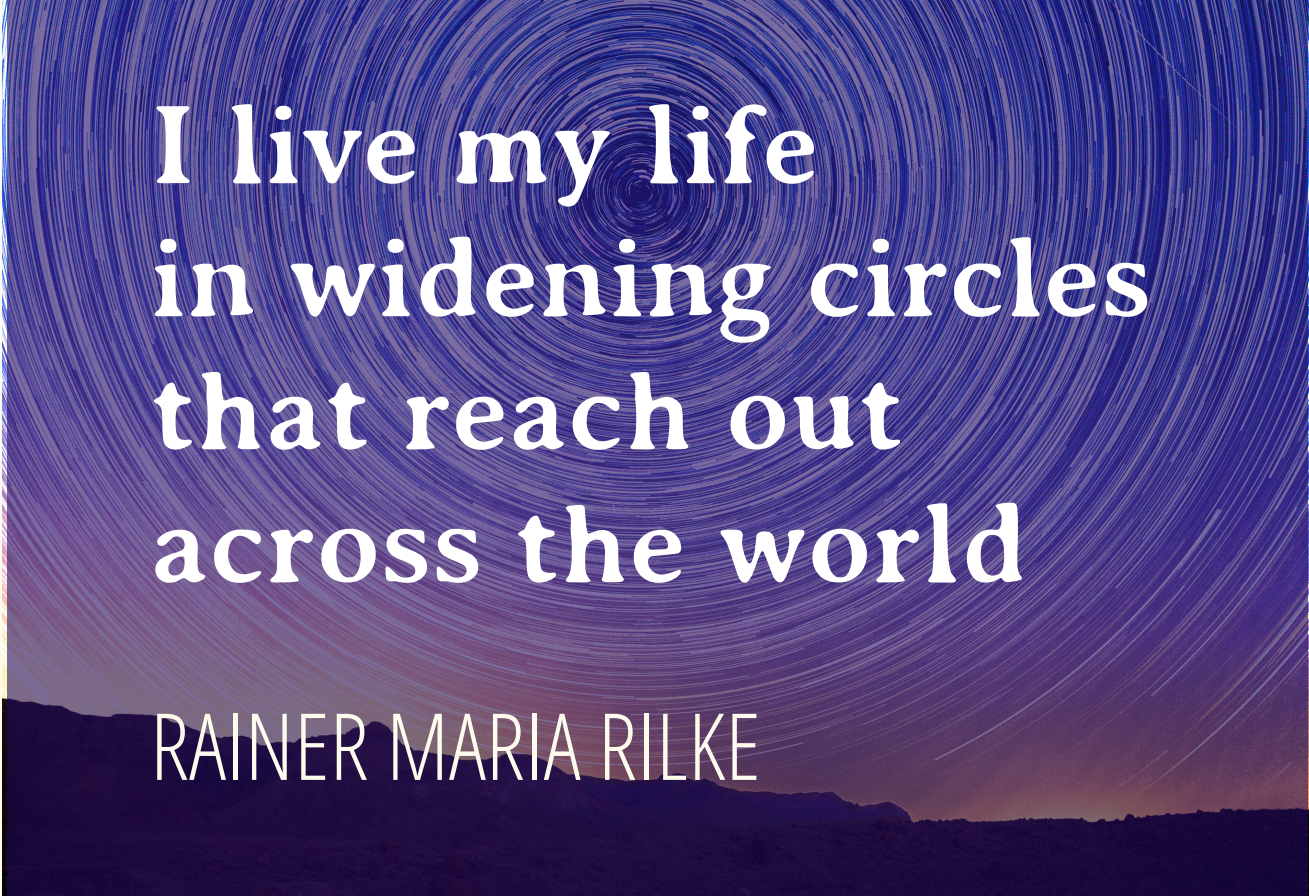
Online Communities for Learning & Action



**10 Unit Course:  
Content Overview**

## Widening Circles combines the following elements:

- Exploration and **engagement with pressing social issues in your own local context** — whether defined as a neighborhood, a campus, a town, or a region
- **Online internships** (and opportunities for face-to-face internships, travel permitting) with Omprakash Partners — **grassroots social impact organizations in over 45 countries** around the world, working in fields including education, health, human rights, migration, sustainability, and social enterprise
- **Peer-to-peer learning and personalized mentorship** within our Omprakash EdGE online learning ecosystem
- **Curriculum 'concentrations' in thematic areas** including Education & Social Change, Global Health, Environmental Justice, Disabilities in Global Context, Human Rights, Migration & Borders, and Social Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- Periodic webinars and group calls to support **community-building and critical reflection**
- **Digital storytelling to document your ongoing engagement;** eventual creation of a digital portfolio to share with loved ones as well as future employers or admissions officers
- **Ongoing dialogue and contemplation** about your own location within global flows of power and resources — and the implications of this positionality within the context of your current life trajectory



I live my life  
in widening circles  
that reach out  
across the world

RAINER MARIA RILKE

**The Widening Circles online coursework is comprised of ten 'units,' each of which is oriented around an essential question.**

Throughout each unit, you will engage with a wide variety of multimedia content including peer-reviewed articles, news articles, book excerpts, video clips, blog posts, and case studies. You will have the opportunity to asynchronously engage with peers throughout the unit, and will be presented with a Response prompt at the end of each unit. On the next pages, we offer a preview of the content from each unit.

*In Units 1-2, we work to orient ourselves within the present moment and establish a shared framework for reflection, dialogue, and action.*

**Unit 1:** How can we use this pandemic as an opportunity for personal growth and social transformation?

- **Watch:** NYTimes, *Earthrise*
- **Read:** Anundhati Roy, *The Pandemic is a Portal*
- **Listen:** Brené Brown, *On Shame and Accountability*

**Unit 2:** What are the risks of trying to 'help others' when crossing significant differences of culture and power — and how might 'raising consciousness' be a more radical force for social change?

- **Watch:** Ernesto Sirolli, *Want to help someone? Shut up and listen!*
- **Read:** Ivan Illich, *To Hell with Good Intentions*
- **Listen:** Krista Tippett and Ta-Nehisi Coates, *On Being*

*In Units 3-5, we use the theme of inequality as a lens through which to understand the different contexts and relationships in which we are immersed — both at home and away.*

**Unit 3:** How are you situated in relation to global structures of power and inequality, and how does COVID-19 illuminate and exacerbate these axes of difference?

- **Watch:** Bayo Akomolafe, *Cancel Culture and the limits of Identity Politics*
- **Read:** Ross Gay, *The Book of Delights*

- **Listen:** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., *Beyond Vietnam - A Time to Break Silence*

**Unit 4:** How does the natural environment reflect and reproduce structural violence in human society — and, as humans, what might it mean to strive for environmental justice?

- **Watch:** The Borneo Project, *Broken Promises*
- **Read:** Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*
- **Listen:** Global Oneness Project, *Sanctuaries of Silence*

**Unit 5:** What prevailing ideologies and policies have created our current moment of extreme social and economic inequality — and what might it mean to imagine alternatives?

- **Watch:** *Poor Us: An Animated History of Poverty*
- **Read:** Marshall Sahlins, "The Original Affluent Society"
- **Listen:** Alnoor Ladha, *On Capitalists & Other Cannibals*

*In Units 6-10, we shift towards the work of storytelling and raising consciousness as we deepen our engagement across differences.*

**Unit 6:** In what ways, and for what reasons, do so many efforts to address social inequalities actually end up reinforcing the status quo — and how might praxis offer a viable alternative?

- **Watch:** Kevin Starr, *Lasting Impact*
- **Read:** Paul Kivel, "Social service or social change"
- **Listen:** The Wildfire Project, *Transforming Toxic Movement Culture*

**Unit 7:** How can storytelling be a force for healing and transformation?

- **Watch:** Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The danger of a single story*
- **Read:** The Guardian, *Through Positive Eyes: living with HIV and Aids - a photo essay*
- **Listen:** Edward Said, *Orientalism as a Tool of Colonialism*

**Unit 8:** What does it mean to understand another culture?

- **Watch:** Wade Davis, *Cultures at the far edge of the world*
- **Read:** Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*
- **Listen:** BBC Minute, *On Cultural Appropriation*

**Unit 9:** What does it mean to engage in a community — whether as an insider, or an outsider — especially during a time of isolation and distancing?

- **Watch:** Scott Carthy, *Litefeet*
- **Read:** Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
- **Listen:** Buffy Sainte-Marie, *We Are Circling*

**Unit 10:** Where will you go from here?

- **Watch:** *How to Survive a Plague*
- **Read:** Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*
- **Listen:** David Foster Wallace, *This is Water*

Thanks for your interest in Omprakash EdGE! Please note that the content listed in this document is only a general overview and is not comprehensive. We are always adapting our classrooms for new audiences, so please feel free to be in touch anytime to share your ideas or request a custom program!



**omprakash**

facilitating relationships, dialogue &  
learning between social change agents  
around the world