

SSW Reads!

Greetings incoming students!

A partnership between the Multi-Cultural and Gender Affairs Committee, Positivity Special Interest Group, Office of Student Services, and SW 504 instructors presents **SSW Reads!** An initiative modeled after the community reads programs of many local libraries.



Throughout the upcoming school year, exploration of late local activist and philosopher Grace Lee Boggs' life and legacy will be infused into a number of programs, co-sponsored events, and many sections of 504, a required first term course. Grace Lee Boggs, who died in 2015 at the age of 100, was one of the nation's oldest human rights activists, who waged a war of inspiration for civil rights, labor, feminism, the environment and other causes for seven

decades with an unflagging faith that revolutionary justice was just around the corner. She was involved with the Civil Rights and Labor Movements, Black Power Movement, and engaged decades of work in Detroit.

Why SSW Reads?

Through this initiative we hope to:

- Foster a sense of community through a common focus
- Learn about an important local social change agent
- Draw from, and critique, a philosophy and framework for analysis and action
- Develop ourselves as social change agents through reflection and dialogue

Why Grace Lee Boggs?

Studying the philosophy and activism of Mrs. Boggs is timely given the University-wide focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, her long history in Detroit and working across race, gender, class, and issue boundaries. It is also relevant given the many tragedies that have recently taken place around the world. As Social Workers, we are aptly positioned to participate in social change both local and global. Indeed, our passion for such change is likely what inspired many of us to pursue this field, whether we are micro- or macro-practice focused!

"These are the times to grow our souls. Each of us is called upon to embrace the conviction that despite the powers and principalities bent on commodifying all our human relationships, we have the power within us to create the world anew."

SSW Reads!

The Next American Revolution by Grace Lee Boggs - Reflection Guide

You may also check out the PBS documentary *The Next American Revolutionary*

Grace's last published book, *The Next American Revolution*, is available for online reading through the University of Michigan ebrary at:

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/umich/detail.action?docID=10563858>.

Why should you spend your summer reading this? Well, reading these chapters prior to the fall semester will be advantageous to participation in your 504 section, as many instructors will assign portions of the text. Whether or not you have taken time away from school, reading and thinking over some of the questions below will help you prepare for academic work, and critical thinking more broadly, that you will be engaging in as a graduate student. *However, we also hope that you will simply enjoy the book or be curious to read more about her work.*

1. What role did philosophy, dialogue, and reflection play in Grace's work? (pp. 58-63)
2. What do you think of her term "solutionary"? Does this fit in your framework of social justice and social change? (p. xvi)
3. In what ways, if at all, did Grace's positionality align with definitions of allyhood?
4. What is the role of the community, and community members, in social change work?
5. What can we draw from Grace's life to inspire our engagement with various populations? How about with each other (other students, staff, faculty)?
6. What does it mean to be a human being in the twenty-first century? (See the Foreword, p. xi)
7. What time is it on the clock of the world? (See the Introduction, p. 18)

You are welcome to explore more on your own if you would like! There are many online articles and blog pieces written about Grace Lee Boggs, as well as information on the PBS and the Boggs Center websites.

Stay tuned for more details and contact Raina LaGrand at rlagrand@umich.edu if you have ideas for theme-related events or if your student organization would like to host an event with support from our sponsors.