Course Description: This course provides a critical examination of strategies of change within human service organizations and in networks of organizations in terms of their effects on effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness to the needs of vulnerable populations. Theories and research on organizations, specifically organization-environment relations, organization-client relations, structure, organizational change and innovation, and inter-organizational analysis and change will be applied to the formulation of intervention and change strategies. The effects of current structuring of service delivery systems on accessibility, comprehensiveness, continuity, fairness, quality, and effectiveness of care, with special emphasis on populations vulnerable through their gender or ethnicity, will be detailed. Models and empirical studies of change within organizations and in networks of organizations aimed at improving the delivery of services will be analyzed and research issues and knowledge gaps will be identified. Relevant ethical and value issues will be examined.

Course Structure: This is an interactive seminar in which we jointly explore the literature and discuss its content and implications to the study of organizational change. To do so, we’ll use memos and discussion questions.

Course Requirements
Memos: For each class session, students will choose two readings on which she will write memos. Memos are one to two pages long and provide an opportunity for the student to concisely discuss an interesting implication of the reading and to develop theory further. I suggest the following format for a memo. 1) Begin by stating a theoretical proposition from the article/chapter. A proposition is a statement about a causal relationship between two concepts. A very specific proposition is a hypothesis. 2) Discuss how that proposition might be extended or applied to human service organizations. You might talk about how a theory might not apply to certain situations. You might also talk about how a different theoretical perspective makes us question the original proposition. 3) Talk about the implications of extending the proposition. Does a different human service context challenge the premises of the theory? Can you build on the proposition and make it more general/more specific? What interesting implications does this have for a different theory? In an excellent memo you will come up with a new proposition/hypothesis to test.
The point of doing memos is to force you to think creatively. Rather than learning theories and spitting them out in summaries, this class will challenge you to think beyond what you read and try to create something new. Ideally, you will use the memos as sounding boards for ideas that you might explore further in a research project. You should not treat memos as summaries of the readings.

In addition to writing the memos, you will present and discuss them in class. The class is invited to comment on your ideas. I hope that students will feel free to openly question and make suggestions to the memo writer. In other words, ideas presented in a memo are open to challenge. The discussion part of the memo writing is intended to give you feedback and help you to sharpen your analytical and theory-building skills.

**Discussion Questions:** For each reading think of a question you would like to discuss in class. You will then post them to the course’s forum the night before class. A good discussion question is thought-provoking. Try to avoid questions that would simply require someone in the class to summarize something from the reading. “Why” or “how” questions are good. You might also try to make connections between the current reading and something we’ve discussed in an earlier class. I think you’ll get the idea as we go along. For each class session, every student is expected to post at least 3 questions.

**Research proposal:** At the end of the seminar each student should finish an eight to ten page research proposal. The research proposal should pose a research question or hypothesis about change in human service organizations. It should then select two competing theoretical frameworks as guides to the study. You should not use the research proposal to summarize the material covered in class. Lay out your competing theoretical argument in the first 4-5 pages of the proposal, and then show how each would guide the conduct of the research project. We will use the last couple of sessions of the seminar to talk about your research proposals. Each student will have time to present their proposal and field questions from the class.

**Session 1: Introduction**


**Session 2: Social Policy and Organizational Change**


**Sessions 3-4: An Ecological Perspective**


**Session 5: An Institutional Logics Perspective**


**Session 6: Institutional Entrepreneurship**


**Session 7: A Political Economy Perspective**


**Session 8: Agency and Structure**


**Session 9: An Organizational Field Perspective**


**Session 10-11: Power and Organizational Change - A critique**


**Session 12: A Feminist Perspective**


**Session 13: Social Movement Organizations**


**Session 14-15: Students Presentations**