Community Action and Social Change Minor
Foundation Course

Tuesday/Thursday 12:10-1:30
B760/B770 Social Work

Instructors
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Course Description
This foundation course for the Community Action and Social Change Minor is designed to prepare students to be informed and active participants in the process of community building and social change. The course uses a multidisciplinary framework to develop competencies that will help students envision what community action and social change look like, identify and implement steps towards social change, build on positive sources of power, indigenous knowledge and experiences of individuals, groups, and communities who are engaged in social change efforts. The course is co-taught by a team representing different disciplinary perspectives who will work with student to integrate different ways of thinking based on the various disciplinary perspectives to achieve social change.

Supporting Statement for Social Science Distribution
This course meets the requirements for LS&A social science distribution in the following ways. The course material covers theories and practices of community action and social change through an interdisciplinary examination of examples in research and practice. The course focuses on individuals, groups and institutions and how they interact. The course examines empirical quantitative and qualitative studies that test social change methods and provides exposure to and experience with qualitative research methods such as ethnographic observation and interviewing and qualitative data-gathering. Students are engaged in a critical and contrasting assessment of community organizing and other social change methods.
Core Competencies

1. Students will examine their own identity development (race, class, gender, sexual/relational orientation, religion, nationality, ability, other), recognize multiple social identities, and engage in critical analysis of power, privilege and oppression.

2. Students will explore the meaning of community and social change.

3. Students will develop skills in interviewing, relationship-building, and group facilitation.

4. Students will gain awareness of historical framework and theory regarding community action and social change.

5. Students will engage in policy and structural analysis with regard to community action and social change.

6. Students will develop an understanding of community-building and organizing skills.

Readings

The Pyles text is required while Gamble and Weil is recommended.


Additional readings will be posted to CTools.

Grading and Assignments

Class Participation (10%) - Students are expected to be on-time and prepared for class, to participate in activities and discussions, and to be engaged during class time. Participation points will be given based on engagement, preparedness, level of participation, and class attendance. Engagement includes, as a member of the Case Study and Current Issue work groups, selecting a piece of music to play in class and explaining how it relates to CASC. Students are expected to be in class and to notify an instructor if that is not possible. Students will be allowed two unexcused absences for any reasons. After that students will be required to obtain permission from an instructor. More than two unexcused absences or more than two unexcused excessive late comings or early leavings from class will result in loss of participation points. We will ask students to sign in to ensure accuracy in attendance.

Weekly Journals (25%) - Individual journals will be used throughout the semester to help promote discussion in class. We will not collect or grade the journals but will track that students are making journal entries - a minimum of two pages, double-spaced, uploaded to CTools most Thursday mornings before noon. Some specific prompts are written into the Class Calendar: below are a general set of guiding questions that students can use when none are specified.

* What is an “aha” for me this week? (From the readings/from class discussions/activities? From my own class project/assignment work?)
* Why does this matter for me?
* What are my takeaways for CASC?
* How do these takeaways fit with my growing understanding of CASC?
CASC Case Study (15%) - Students will work in small groups to present a case study of a community action and social change effort. The students will select a topic and prepare a 20-minute presentation that discusses the case and the various social change theories, frameworks, and contexts that informed (or informs) the effort. More specifics on this assignment are below. Presentations will be done during class on Feb 2, 7 and 9.

Case Study Presentation
Plan Due: Feb 2 (what are you doing & who will do what for the presentation)

Overview - Students will work in small groups to present a case study of a community action and social change effort. The students will select a topic and prepare a 15-minute presentation that discusses the case and the various social change theories, frameworks, and contexts that informed (or informs) the effort.

Content - Presentations should be roughly 15-minutes long. Each presentation should cover the following information about each case study:

1) BACKGROUND & CONTEXT: Provide background information about the example. Assume that people will have little background information about the case. For example:
   a. What was/is the case study?
   b. What was/is the historical context?
   c. What was/is the community?
   d. Who were/are the key people?

2) IDEOLOGICAL & THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES: Articulate the various theories, frameworks, and perspectives that informed the case example and how they informed the case. For example:
   a. What were/are the social theories, perspectives or frameworks that informed/inform the example? (Make sure to describe the various perspectives and provide a little background for each.)
   b. How did they inform the example (e.g. approach, strategies, activities, and mission)?
   c. What was the underlying ideology for the case example? How would you describe the core values and principles for the example? What are the roots of that ideology?

3) ACTIONS: What are some of the activities, accomplishments? If a campaign, what happened as a result?

4) TAKE AWAYS FOR CASC: What are the take-aways/lessons learned? How does it inform our understanding of CASC theories and concepts? What can we draw from for our own thinking about CASC?

You can draw from a range of sources to assist you with learning about your case example: books, videos, internet, and articles. Tony and Joe are available to meet with your team to discuss sources.

You will be asked to provide a list of sources consulted as part of your presentation. Ideally, you should consult at least 5 sources in preparing your presentation (note that sources should be outside of required class readings).
Presentation Information - Presentations will be graded for content rather than style. You can use a variety of formats for your presentation including: group presentation, PowerPoint, video, or activity. We invite you to be as creative as you wish, so long as the basic information is covered. We will draw for slots for the presentations on the week of Jan 24.

Potential Case Examples - There are many examples of Community Action and Social Change that have occurred throughout history. While they differ in issue and strategy, most examples focus on the following: bringing people together to challenge social injustices and create change.

We have suggested some examples that your group might select from, but we also invite you to select your own example based on your interest, with the caveat that each group selects a unique example. You may choose to focus on a CASC organization or a specific issue/campaign. Some examples to consider:

- Hull House (you can understand Hull House broadly or explore one of its campaigns around housing, sanitation, civic engagement, and so forth)
- Flint Sit Down Strike
- Cesar Chavez and the Grapes Boycott
- Students for a Democratic Society organizing at UM
- Student Non-Violence Coordinating Committee (For example SNCC organizing efforts, voter registration efforts, or SNCC as an organization)
- Black Action Movement at UM
- Landless Workers Movement
- Highlander (you can examine Highlander as an organization or its role in Labor organizing, Civil Rights organizing or other)
- Center for Third World Organizing
- Ethnic Studies creation in university campuses (Select one example, e.g. creation of Chicano Studies Department)
- Stonewall Riots (other examples of LGBTQ organizing)
- World Trade Organization Seattle Protests
- Students for Organizing for Labor and Economic Equality
- Conscioiusness Raising Circles for Women’s Rights Movement (Feminist organizing examples, third wave feminist organizing examples)
- Take Back the Night
- Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
- Books not Bars (Prop. 21 in California- Youth Organizing, Justice Reform, Education Reform, Ella Baker Center)
- Saul Alinsky & Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council
- Other?

In-class Midterm (15%) – Proctored Feb 16, based on questions generated in class on Feb 14, as well as content from Journal 6.

CASC Issue: Presentation and Documentation (20%) - Students will be required to work in a small team to develop a presentation and information packet on a community action social change issue.

As a team, students will be asked to complete the following tasks for this assignment:
• Identify an issue and prepare a short 2 page background briefing paper on the issue and various examples of CASC efforts to work on the issue.

• Identify and conduct 3 interviews with key CASC leaders working on the issue.

• For each interview, prepare a short report on the person(s) you interview, the organization, the approach the organization is taking to work on the issue, the strategies the organization uses to impact change, and the other partners with whom the organization collaborates.

• Develop ideas for action for students who might want to work on the issue/engage in a campaign. Select at least 2 of the following 6 options:
  o Prepare a letter to the Michigan Daily about the issue
  o Create a mini-media campaign to share what you have learned and to advocate ways that students could get more involved in this issue in campus on in the community.
  o Develop an action plan for student campus-based organizing on the issue
  o Prepare a toolkit of resources for working on the issue
  o Participate and document your team’s participation in an event about the issue
  o Other? (Propose an idea to us for consideration).

• Prepare a briefing packet to share that compiles the various information gathered and presents your team’s ideas for action. Packets will be due on Apr 3.

• Prepare a 15 minute presentation to present the campaign that examines: the issue, examples of CASC efforts, the various approaches and strategies that you learned about/engaged in around the issue, and overall tips for CASC practice on this issue. Presentations will be done during class on Apr 3, 5 and 10.

Themes from which the issues/campaigns might emerge include: health care, education reform, criminal justice, LGBTQ issues, environmental justice, economic justice, and civil rights. We will use a class period to formulate additional ideas and form teams for the action project.

We will collect an action plan (who will do what for the project) and group members will submit comments about each others’ performance. The action plan will be Journal 9, due Mar 29 and the comments about group members’ performance will be Journal 10, due Apr 10.

More information about this assignment will be given in class.

Final Paper (15%) - Drawing from your journals, what you’ve learned from the presentations, readings and other course-related activities, what are your top THREE takeaways regarding core concepts and practices for CASC? In your answer, reflect on how:
• Your understanding of these takeaways changed (or didn’t) over the course of the term;
• You will carry these takeaways with you in your future work;
• You would explain these takeaways to someone unfamiliar with CASC?

Grading Rubric
Scores on the preceding assignments are cumulative and will be converted to a final letter grade at the end of the semester according to the following scale:
94-100 = A
90-93 = A-
87-89 = B+
84-86 = B
80-83 = B-
77-79 = C+
74-76 = C
70-73 = C-
67-69 = D+
64-66 = D
60-63 = D-

Class Calendar

Part I – Theories of Community Action and Social Change

5 Jan: Opening to Class, Review Syllabus

10 & 12 Jan: Power, Privilege, Oppression and Social Justice
- Journal 1 (due 12 Jan) – What was your role (spokesperson, scribe, gatekeeper, other?) in the 10 Jan discussion of Spencer and/or Reisch? How did you contribute to the group’s understanding of the content and what factors seemed to help your contribution; what seemed to hinder it? Overall, name one thing you are taking away from this session with regard to Power, Privilege, Oppression and Social Justice.

17 & 19 Jan: Introduction to Progressive Community Organizing
- Chin, Nancy P. Anthropology and the Ethnographic Interview, pages 1-2.
- Journal 2 (due 19 Jan) – If you were to pick one person to interview because s/he appears committed to values you admire, who would that person be – and why?

24 & 26 Jan: Creating a Theoretical Timeline for Community Action and Social Change: From Industrial Revolution to Current Day
- Journal 3 (due 26 Jan) – Interview a parent or grandparent: How have members of our family intersected with these various aspects of community action and social change – the six religious roots, five theories, four movements and/or two frameworks?

31 Jan: No Formal Class: Group Work on Presentations, In-Class Support

2 Feb: CASC Case Study Group Presentations
- Journal 4 – Check in on Presentations: Who is supposed to do what by when?
7 Feb: CASC Case Study Group Presentations

9 Feb: CASC Case Study Group Presentations
  • Journal 5 – Write three sample midterm questions, based on any course material to date. Also include what you consider a satisfactory answer – and why.

14 Feb: What Can We Learn from Theory and Frameworks? (Review for midterm using sample questions, material from presentations)

16 Feb: In-class Midterm

Part II - Practices of Community Action and Social Change

21 Feb: CASC Town Hall Meeting - Organizing for Projects

23 Feb & 6 Mar: Organizing People and Empowering Organizations
  • Journal 6 (due 23 Feb) – Identify and reflect on three experiences you’ve had as either a leader or member of a group.

8 & 13 Mar: Language and Tactics
  • Journal 7 (due 8 Mar) – What is an “aha” for me this week?

15 Mar: Action Project Group Work - No Formal Class

20 & 22 Mar: Issues – Identity Politics, Spirituality and Global Justice
  • Journal 8 (due 20 Mar) – If you could host a panel with any three discussants, who would they be and what would you ask them?

Mar 27: The Challenges for Community Practice Ahead

29 Mar: Action Project Group Work- No Formal Class
  • Journal 9 - Check in on Presentations: Who is supposed to do what by when?

3 Apr: CASC Issue Project Presentations (Issue Documentation Due)

5 Apr: CASC Issue Project Presentations

10 Apr: CASC Issue Project Presentations
  • Journal 10 (due at midnight – feedback form will be given out in class)

12 Apr: Closure and Celebration – Final Paper Due!