Community Action and Social Change Minor
Foundation Course

Tuesday/Thursday 12:10-1:30
ECC, School of 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 following texts are required:


Additional readings will be posted to CTools.
Grading and Assignments

1. “My CASC Story”: Introductory Chart & Slide (5%)
All students will complete a chart (given in class) on their experiences in and motivations for community action and social change. Students will use this chart to develop ONE PowerPoint slide with highlights to share with the class.

Participants will be asked to share their own story with emphasis on the following questions: 1) Why do I care about community action and social change? 2) What are some of my experiences engaging in activities of community action and social change? 3) What are some of my influences (people, experiences, communities, ideology, etc) that shape my motivations? 4) What do I think I can contribute to the class? 5) What do I hope to learn?

Chart and slide will be due on September 6th. The slides will be shown in-class.

2. Learning From History: Creating a CASC Primer of People, Theories, and Events (10%)
Students will work in small groups to explore more intensively a historical aspect of community action and social change. The students will select (1) a topic and (2) prepare a 5-minute video and a one page overview sheet (“a Wikipedia type article”) that covers the content listed below.

Video will be due: October 2nd. Presentations will be in class on October 2nd or October 4th.

OVERVIEW: Provide a descriptive overview about the example. Assume that people will have little background information about the case/person/theory. For example:
- What was/is the case study?
- What was/is the historical context?
- What was/is the community?
- Who were/are the key people?

HALLMARK ELEMENTS: What are the defining elements of the case? What are the key ideas? What are the main components? How would you describe the core values, principles, and major activities? Why has this been important to understanding CASC?

ISSUES/ACTIONS/ACTIVITIES: Describe some of the issues and activities that connect to the case. Provide an example, if possible.

CURRENT ASPECTS: Are there current examples of this aspect?

TAKE AWAYS FOR CASC: What are the take-aways/lessons learned? How does it inform our understanding of CASC and CASC 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. We 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).

Topics will be determined during the Sept 13th class. Examples of potential topics include:

- Settlement House Movement
- Labor Movement (Flint Sit Down Strike)
- Cesar Chavez and the Grapes Boycott
- Student Non-Violence Coordinating Committee
- Highlander/Myles Horton
- Freire/Liberation Theory
- Feminist Movement (Feminist organizing examples, third wave feminist organizing examples)
- Saul Alinsky & Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council

3. Take Home Midterm (25%) – The mid-term will be posted at the end of class on October 11th. It will be DUE on October 14th at 5pm EST. Students will be expected to cite readings and in-class discussions/notes in their answers. Students are allowed to consult their class notes and materials BUT not other students. Violations or suspected violations will be treated seriously and may result in failing grade.

4. Learning from the Community: Understanding CASC In Action (20%) - Students will be required to work in a pair to research strategies and lessons learned from community action and social change efforts on specific policy issues.

All work for this project will be due December 4th. Presentations will be in class either December 2nd or 4th.

As a team, students will be asked to complete the following tasks for this assignment:

- Identify a policy issue and prepare a short 2 page background briefing paper that analyzes the issue from a structural analysis
- Identify and conduct 2 in-depth interviews with key CASC leaders working on the issue. Interviews should cover the following:
  - Overview and history of organization
  - Background of their work
  - Understanding their ideology and approach
  - Exploring strategies and tactics used
  - Discussing skills needed
  - Lessons learned
  - Advice for students
- For each interview, prepare a detailed report on your findings.
- Develop a web-based presentation that (1) details your topic and learning and (2) how you might apply this learning for your own CASC work. This presentation will be shared in-class.
• Prepare a short handout that outlines the topic, strategies, and advice from the community. The handouts will be compiled and shared with the class.

More information about this assignment will be given in class.

5. Final Paper (30%) - Drawing from the class assignments and readings, we will ask you to write a 10-12 page paper reflecting on the class, with specific attention to the lessons learned/takeaways regarding core concepts and practices for CASC. More specifics about this assignment will be given in class. The final paper will be due on the last class: December 11th.

6. Class Participation (10%) - Students are expected to (1) attend all classes, (2) be on-time and prepared for class, (3) participate in activities and discussions, and (4) be engaged during class time. Participation points will be given based on engagement, preparedness, level of participation, and class attendance. We will ask students to sign in to ensure accuracy in attendance.

Assignment Expectations

In general, papers should follow standard formatting and be double-spaced using a normal 12 point font. We generally prefer hard copy of papers but will accept assignments electronically through the assignment function of CTools.

Due dates are firm. We expect that assignments will be turned in on the day they are due unless there are extenuating circumstances. We reserve the right to mark down papers ½ grade for each day late in fairness to classmates who turn papers in on-time.

Other

Please see us if you have any concerns about the class, your participation in the class, or have personal issues that relate to the class. We are more than happy to meet with you at any point to discuss your situation or to address any special accommodations. We are also available to assist you with accessing school or university-based resources you may need during the semester.

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

Week 1 (Sept 4 & 6): Introduction to Class and Class Community
- Overview of class
- Who are we as a class?
- What are our communities?
- What are our connections?
- What are our motivations?

Readings:

- What is Community? Action? Social Change?
- What are perspectives on understanding social justice
- What are some of the core values and concepts important to community action and social change?

Readings:
(1) Boggs, G. (2011). “Forward”, “Introduction” and Ch. 1: These are the Times to Grow Our Soul”
(3) Pyles, L (2009). Ch 1 “Introduction to Progressive Community Organizing”

- What are some of the guiding theoretical frameworks for community action and social change?
- What are some of the major social movements and who are some of the key people that have shaped community action and social change?
- What can we learn from them?

Readings:
(2) Pyles, L (2009). Ch. 4 “Learning From Social Movements”

Week 5 & 6 (Oct 2, 4, 9, and 11): Creating a CASC Primer & Developing a Foundation
- What have we learned from our case examples? Videos for sharing
- Discussing Themes
- Moving and Pulling it Together: Developing a Conceptual Map for CASC

Readings:
(3) Pyles, L (2009). Ch. 5 “Critical Organizing Frameworks”
Note: we will hand out the Take Home Exam at the end of Oct 11

Oct 16: FALL BREAK

Week 7 (Oct 18): Overview of Community Action and Social Change Practices
- What does CASC look like in practice?
- What are the steps in the process?
- Review ‘CASC in Action’ project

Readings
1. You Tube Videos: What is Community Organizing (will provide sites)
2. Case Study: Sisters and Brother United
3. Additional materials TBD

Week 8 (Oct 23 & 25): Examining Ourselves: Power, Privilege, Motivation and Roles
- How do we examine our own social identity and its relationship to CASC?
- Uncovering our motivations and personal perspectives for CASC and how those impact our roles and behavior?

Readings

Optional: You-Tube Video on “Cultural Humility” (will provide site)

Week 9 (Oct 30 & Nov 1): Entering the Community and Building Relationships
- Importance of Entering the Community
- Strategies for Entering & Building Relationships in CASC work

Readings:
2. Warren, M. (2011) Ch. 5 “Weaving a Tapestry that Won’t Unravel”: The Transformation of Education in the Mississippi Delta”

Optional: Community Tool Box: “Developing a plan for participation” and “Making personal contact” (see website)

Week 10 (Nov 6 & 8): Exploring Strategies for Community Action and Social Change: What are approaches?

Readings:
1. Gamble & Weil, Ch 5

Week 11 & 12 (Nov 11, 13, 20): Strategies & Tactics for CASC
   - What are various strategies for CASC?
   - How is strategy used in CASC?
   - What are examples of tactics?
   - What can we learn from case examples?

Readings:
   (1) Bobo, Ch. 4 “Developing a Strategy”
   (2) Warren, M (2011). Ch 4 “Our Strengths is the Power of Our Community”- Political Education and the Continuation of the Struggle in Denver”
   (4) Pyles, L. (2009) Ch. 9:“Tactics for Change”

Week 13 (Nov 27 & 29): Specific Skills for CASC
   - What are some of the skills?
   - What are some ways to learn these skills?
   - We’ll have opportunity to practice the skills in class

Readings TBD

Week 14 (Dec 4 & 6); Showcase of Learning
   - In-class presentations about interviews and lessons learned from examples if CASC in action

Week 15 (Dec 11): Last Class- Closing, Take Aways, and Questions for the Future

Readings: