

Winter 2013 (Sections 001 and 002)

**Social Work 305: Theories and Practices for
Community Action and Social Change
Community Action and Social Change Minor
Foundation Course**

Tuesday/Thursday 12:10-1:30
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:

- Pyles, L. (2009). *Progressive Community Organizing: A Critical Approach for a Globalizing World*. Taylor and Francis Group: New York.
- Boggs, G. (2011) *The Next American Revolution* (Updated & Expanded Edition, with Scott Kurashige; ISBN 978-0-520-27259-0; U California Press

Additional readings will be posted to CTools.

Grading and Assignments

The class requires:

- Two short paper/assignments based on class content/readings:
 - Understanding Community (10%)- DUE 1/29
 - Concepts of Community Action Social Change (20%)- DUE 3/14
- History video project-DUE 2/19
 - Group Video & Wiki page (10%)
 - Individual Learning (10%)
- Learning From Community: Interview project (20%)-DUE 4/16
- Final paper (20%)-DUE 4/23
- CASC experience/event paper (5%)-DUE 4/9
- Active participation (5%)

All assignments are due on their due date at 11am, unless otherwise specified.

Assignment Specifics (By Due Date):

1. Short Paper #1: Understanding Community (10%) –Paper Due 1/29

Understanding community is critical to Community Action and Social Change. Write a short (roughly 3 page double spaced) paper that answers the questions: What does the concept “community” mean? What are characteristics of community? How is the concept important for community action and social change? Your paper should draw on class readings and discussions. (10 points)

2. Learning From History: Creating a CASC Primer of People, Theories, and Events- Due 2/19

PART 1: GROUP PROJECT (10%)

Students will work in small groups to explore more intensively a historical aspect of community action and social change by researching and creating a video about the topic.

As a group you will:

- (1) Select a topic (done during class)
- (2) Prepare a 5-minute video and a one page overview sheet (“a Wikipedia type article”) that covers the content listed below.

Presentations will be in class on February 19 & 21st (all work due 2/19 regardless of presentation date).

VIDEO and OVERVIEW Content Required

- 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 6-8 sources in preparing your presentation (note that sources should be outside of required class readings).

Topics will be determined in mid-January. Examples of potential topics include:

- Settlement House Movement/Hull House
- Labor Movement (Flint Sit Down Strike)
- Cesar Chavez and the Grapes Boycott
- Student Non-Violence Coordinating Committee
- Highlander/Myles Horton
- Feminist Movement (Feminist organizing examples, third wave feminist organizing examples)
- Saul Alinsky & Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council
- LGBTQ/Stonewall
- Bertha Reynolds
- Young Lords (South Bronx)
- Native American Student Movement/UofM

Points will be given for effort, fulfillment of the required content, and quality of the content, not for video quality.

PART 2: Learning From History: Individual Learning (10%)

You will be asked to write a short (roughly 3 page double spaced) paper based on your own learning from the project. In the paper you should (1) detail your contributions to the project, (2) discuss your own learnings from your research, (3) discuss your learning from working in a group, and (4) discuss your own personal take-aways from the project. Paper should reference readings, in-class discussions, and project references, as appropriate.

3. Short Paper #2: Community Action and Social Change Paper (20%)

Understanding community is critical to Community Action and Social Change. This assignment requires students to do two things:

- (a) Write a short (roughly 3 page double spaced) paper that answers the following questions: What does the concept “Community Action and Social Change” mean? How do you define it? What are its core concepts? Your paper should draw on class readings and discussions. (10)
- (b) Create your own “Raining Rocks” activity (note: we will discuss this activity and do our own version in class) that could be used to teach students about community action and social change. Students can be as creative as they wish in creating the activity. Your activity should not only give all the details needed but should also provide insight into what you hope students should/would gain from the activity. (10)

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 using interviews with individuals in the community. As a team, students will be asked to complete the following tasks for this assignment:

- A. Identify and conduct 2 in-depth interviews with key CASC leaders working on the issue (see below).
- B. Prepare a written report on your work (see below)
- C. Develop a presentation (poster board or PowerPoint, etc.) 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.
- D. Prepare a short handout that outlines: the topic, strategies, and advice from the community. The handouts will be compiled and shared with the class.

All work for this project will be due **4/16**. Presentations will be in class either **4/16 or 4/18**.

INTERVIEWS

You should select two people (preferably not students) who are using CASC strategies to address a social justice issue and interview them about their work. Interviews should, at a minimum, cover the following:

- Provide an overview and history of organization & background of their work
- Provide an understanding of their ideology and approach
- Explore the strategies and tactics they use in their work
- Discuss the skills needed
- What are their lessons learned?
- What advice do they have for students?

REPORT DETAILS

Prepare a report (roughly 8-10pages) that includes the following:

(1) Introduction:

- Identifies a CASC issue
- Provides background on the issue from a structural perspective and why it is important to society

(2) Summarize Interviews

- Who did you interview and why?
- Provide an overview and history of organization & background of their work
- Provide an understanding of their ideology and approach
- Explore the strategies and tactics they use in their work
- Discuss the skills needed & advice they'd give

(3) Closing: What are your group's take aways? What did you learn? How does these interviews help you to think about how to approach your CASC issue?

Optional Readings:

- Gubrium, J. & Holstein, J. (2001). *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Ch 1: From the individual interview to the interview society, 3-33.
- Atkinson, R. (2001). The life story interview. In Gubrium, J. & Holstein, J. (2001). *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA, 121-141.

5. Final Paper (20%)

Drawing from the class assignments and readings, we will ask you to write a 5 page paper reflecting on the class, with specific attention to the lessons learned/takeaways regarding core concepts and practices for CASC. The final paper will be due on the last class: **4/23**.

6. CASC Experience (5%)

Students will be asked to attend ONE CASC related presentation, panel, speaker, during the semester and write a short 1-2 page reflection report on the experience for sharing with others in the class. Students can choose any event to attend but it must occur by March.

7. Class Attendance & Participation (5%)

Class attendance and participation are crucial. 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. *We retain the right to lower an overall final grade by a minimum of ½ grade for any student who has excessive absences/tardiness or is highly disengaged in class.*

Assignment Expectations

In general, papers should follow standard formatting and be double-spaced using a normal 12 point font. Assignments will be accepted through the assignment function of CTools, not drop box. In addition, we like students to turn in a hard copy version of papers.

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

Please note that we reserve the right to make changes in readings/resources as needed

Week 1 (1/10): Introduction to Class and Class Community

- Overview of class
- Who are we as a class?

Week 2 (1/15 & 1/17): What is Community: What is Community? Who are we as a community?

- What are our communities?
- What are our connections?
- What are our motivations?

Readings:

Tues & Thurs: Boggs, G. (2011). Forward, Introduction, and Ch. 1: These are the Times to Grow Our Soul" & Szakos, K. & Szakos, J. (2007). *We Make Change: Community Organizers Talk About What They Do- and Why, Ch 1, pp 1-27*

Week 3 (1/22 & 1/24): Assessing Community: Strengths & Assets for Community Change

- Why is community important for CASC?
- Learning about strengths and assets

Readings:

Tues & Thurs: Pyles, L (2009). Ch 1: Introduction to Progressive Community Organizing
Gamble, D. & Weil, M. (2010). *Community Practice Skills: Local to Global Perspectives*. Columbia University Press: New York, Ch 2: Conceptual frameworks and models for community practice, 24-46

Week 4 (1/29 & 1/31): What is "Community Action and Social Change"? Understanding Social Justice and Core Concepts around Community 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:

Tues: Reisch, M. (2010) Defining Social Justice in a Socially Unjust World. In *Educating for Social Justice: Transformative Experiential Learning*, 11-28.

Checkoway, B. Core Concepts for Community Change Article

Thurs: Raining Rocks Activity

Week 5 (2/5 & 2/7): Theoretical Frameworks for CASC: What? Who?

- What are some of the guiding theoretical frameworks for community action and social change?
- What can we learn from them?

Readings:

Tues: Pyles, L (2009). Ch 3: Theories and Ideas for the Progressive Organizer

Thurs: Boggs, G (2011). Ch 2: A New Revolution

Week 6 (2/12 & 2/14): Learning from History Cafés

- What are some of the guiding efforts/people that have shaped community action and social change?
- What can we learn from them?

Readings:

Tues: Schultz, A & Sandy, M. (2011) Ch 3: Collective Action in Twentieth-Century America: A Brief History & Pyles, L. (2009): Ch. 4: Learning From Social Movements

Thurs: Boggs, G (2011). Ch 3: Thinking About Martin & Malcolm

**Week 7 (2/19 & 2/21) Historical Video Class Projects
Video Project DUE**

Week 8 (2/26 & 2/28): Pulling it Together: Theories and Frameworks for CASC

- What have we learned from our case examples?
- Discussing Themes
- Moving and Pulling it Together: Developing Lessons Learned

Readings:

Tues: Read all class wiki-pages

Thurs: Finish remaining reading

SPRING BREAK

Week 9 (3/12 & 3/14): Community Action and Social Change in Practice I

- What are some of the approaches to CASC in practice?
- Review & prepare for 'CASC in Action' project

Readings:

Tues: Sen, R (2003). Introduction. *Stir it up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass & Pyles, L (2009). Ch. 5: Critical Organizing Frameworks

Thurs: Boggs Ch. 4 Detroit: Place and Space to Begin Anew

Week 10 (3/19 & 3/21): Community Action and Social Change in Practice II

- Continue to review & prepare for 'CASC in Action' project
- What are some of the approaches to CASC in practice that you learned about from your event/experience?
- What is a basic framework for practice?

Tues: Group Project Work

Thurs: Bring CASC Event Reflection, Warren, Ch. 1: Introduction

Week 11 (3/26 & 3/28): Entering and Engaging in CASC

- What does it mean to enter the community?
- How do we think about our own role in the process?
- What are some of the specific steps in working for CASC?
- We'll do two experiential activities aimed at helping us explore this.

Readings:

Tues: Spencer, M (2008). *A Social Worker's Reflections on Power, Privilege, and Oppression*. In Social Work, 99-101, Burghardt, S. , Ch.4 Know Yourself

Thurs: Pyles, L. (2009) Ch 6: Organizing People: Constituencies and Coalitions, Review Gamble & Weil Chart (in ctools)

Week 12 (4/2 & 4/4): Building Relationships & Developing Strategies I

- Strategies for Entering & Building Relationships in CASC work
- What can we learn from communities working for change? What are their strategies and approaches?

Readings:

Tues: Warren, M. (2011) Ch. 5: Weaving a Tapestry that Won't Unravel: The Transformation of Education in the Mississippi Delta or Ch 4: Our Strengths is the Power of Our Community- Political Education and the Continuation of the Struggle in Denver (TBD), Bobo, Kendall & Max- Ch. 4

Thurs: Watch Children's March Video

Week 13 (4/9 & 4/11): Working With Communities

- How do we apply CASC learnings to community change?
- Will focus specifically on education reform?

Tues: Boggs, Ch. 5 & 6

Thurs: Boggsville Case Study: Read and come prepare with ideas

Week 14 (4/16 & 4/18): Showcase of Learning

- In-class presentations about interviews and lessons learned from examples of CASC in action

Readings:

- Classmate hand-outs/materials

Week 15 (4/23): Last Class- Closing, Take Aways, and Questions for the Future