SW 658   COURSE TITLE: Women and Community Organizing

Winter, 2013
Thursday, 2 to 5 PM
Room 3752 SSWB

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Sign-up list posted on door

Course Description:
Contemporary feminist thought challenges us to identify and analyze the connections between our day-to-day experiences and social patterns of gender inequality. In this course, we will explore the theory and practice of community organizations using a feminist lens. This lens brings into focus persistent patterns of inequality; it also reveals the persistence of community-based women organizers efforts to create positive change.

This course will examine concepts and techniques for organizing women at the community level. Students will learn about major models and methods of practice, intersectional and analytical skills, and roles of women as organizers and constituents of community organizations. Students will identify forces that facilitate and limit organizing of women in the community and will develop action principles for work with women in the community. Critical value and ethical issues for women and men concerned with women's issues and organizing will be explored, in addition to ways to develop alternative approaches to address these issues.

Course Content:
Course content will encourage students to consider the implications of gender-based community organizing when gender is understood as a multi-dimensional, rather than binary, category. Students will learn ways to critically analyze existing community organization theory and practice from a feminist perspective. Knowledge of the changing context, historical development, dominant theories, research findings, and core concepts of community organization practice in social work and related fields related to women's issues will be covered. Particular attention will focus on past, present, and future potential roles, strengths, problems and contributions of women as community organizers. Culturally competent and intercultural methods of community assessment, monitoring and evaluation will be explored as well as strategies for creating community change in a culturally diverse society, inclusive of a range of diversity dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the changing context, historical development, dominant theories, research findings, and core concepts of community organization practice in social work and related fields related to women's issues.
2. Apply culturally competent and intercultural methods of community assessment practice.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of several strategies for creating community change in a culturally diverse society, inclusive of the following dimensions: ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation, as well community of residence.
4. Implement culturally competent and intercultural methods of community evaluation practice.
5. Design several strategies for organizing women at the community level.
6. Apply social work professional ethics to issues commonly confronted in community organization practice, particularly as related to women's issues and organizing.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of skills to strengthen pluralism and multiculturalism in community organization particularly as related to women's issues and organizing.
8. Describe past, present, and future potential roles, strengths, problems and contributions of women as community organizers.
9. Examine the ways that the previously mentioned diversity dimensions affect processes of community organizing.
10. Compare and contrast key structures and processes of women's community organizations, and the gender-related dynamics of different contexts for organizing.
11. Critically analyze existing community organization theory and practice from a feminist perspective.
12. Identify critical value and ethical issues for women and men concerned with women's issues and organizing, and develop alternative approaches to address these issues.

**Course Design:** Instructors may include readings, participation in discussions, written assignments, and individual and group exercises. Emphasis will be placed on experiential learning to strengthen gender and cultural self-awareness and community practice skills. Guest speakers from the campus and community may be invited to address special topics. Videos may be shown throughout the course to present a national and international perspective.

**Relationship of this course to the curricular themes**

**Multiculturalism and Diversity:** We will examine social problems as a product of simultaneous local and national processes of gender formation, racial formation, class formation, and sexuality formation (as well as other positionalities). A critical premise of this course is that power relations can be read effectively from their margins and that marginalized people deliberate their own conditions and empower themselves through organizing. *The course examines these themes through a series of case studies that trace how actors with marginal status challenge their own conditions and transform society (we will do some of this, but not explicitly through systematic case studies).* We will also consider different meanings and experiences of social problems at the community level and diverse possibilities for intervention.

**Social Justice and Social Change:** Students will envision what social justice could be for women and in relation to gender and its intersections with other social categories, and for particular goal areas and issues. *The course will generate options for moving towards these visions.* We will examine social problems as a product of simultaneous local and national processes of gender formation, racial
formation, class formation, and sexuality formation. *Using a perspective of women's grounded knowledge and practice, we address patterned practices of inequality and injustice and the systems and institutions through which they are maintained.*

**Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation:** Students will link their work in class to community organizing by establishing accountable relationships with local organizers in an area of organizing related to the class and their lives. While working with community-based entities, students will investigate the group's model of movement-building and the everyday work of enacting it. *Students will consider ways to promote justice, prevent social problems and injustice, and create remedies for those impacted already by injustice.*

**Behavioral and Social Science Research:** All community work will be developed as collaboration between students and identified community organizations. As part of each project, teams will produce a piece of public scholarship which speaks accessibly to the organization's work and to scholarly research in each student's chosen area of women and community organizing. Goals and strategies for change will be grounded in available theorizing, knowledge and research.

**Social Work Ethics and Values:** The historical overview in this course includes an analysis of the value base of the profession. Ethical responsibilities of social workers within fields of service will be reviewed. Differences among codes of ethics for several social work professional organizations will also be explored.

Course description approved by faculty in Dec 2006. Language in italics has been added or critiqued by this instructor and not part of the approved course statement. You should use this to determine whether the course as taught meets what was established by the faculty.

In addition to the above, we will both use and critique feminist modes of thinking and working in the classroom, and practice analyzing how organizing processes are gendered, raced, and otherwise shaped by societal categories and assumptions. My assumption is that gender is a multifaceted (not binary) socially constructed basic organizing structure and frame in the world, and relevant in all forms of community work.

Some topics we will cover include: “community” as a complicated concept; the history of women and community organization; the implications of differences among women (economic class, race, ethnicity, sexual identity, age, religion, disability status, citizenship, and so forth); feminist perspectives and critiques of feminism; women, poverty and grassroots organizing; violence, labor, power, conflict, and other critical issues for women. Which ones we will emphasize will depend somewhat on the interests of class members, which will be assessed early in the term.

Additional course objectives:

a) Use a framework for social justice-oriented social work practice that attends to questions of power, meaning, history, context and possiblity to assess case examples of women’s community practice.

b) Engage in empowering and critical dialogue and practices within the classroom, and use the classroom as a vehicle for practicing and examining key skills and approaches to organizing.
Class composition and issues arising from that

A frequent challenge in this course is the diverse backgrounds and goals that students in the course usually bring to it. Some are likely to have a strong Women’s Studies background while others may have none. Some have taken several CO classes and may be CO concentrators, while others have no CO background. Some have identified as feminists for a long time but may have different ideas about what feminism is, while others may not be sure whether they are a feminist or not, or may strongly adhere to a particular version of feminism. Of course, we are all also likely to differ on status dimensions other than gender, like age, ethnicity, economic class, religion, sexual orientation, disability status.

Thus, to develop some common frameworks, we will spend the first component of the course reviewing women’s issues and considering the context of organizing with, for, and by women as well as gendering processes within community practice. We will also review basic models and components of community organizing. Some of this is likely to be review and very basic for someone in the class but new for others, but hopefully will allow us all to have some common frameworks by the end of the first month. Within this, each student will explore their own interests and background and identify key learning and change goals. A common task in organizing is to help diverse participants develop common frames and learn to work together across different backgrounds so we can practice skills in doing this within the classroom.

Course philosophy, responsibilities and assumptions

I teach based on principles of adult learning. In adult learning it is important to identify what you already know and bring to a new learning environment, since old learning and approaches frequently have to be modified to incorporate the new ones, and because you can contribute your life experience to the learning effort as a whole.

This is a practice methods course and thus focuses on the development of knowledge and skills for practice. For learning skills and to demonstrate gender-related principles for practice, we will use the class itself as an arena to practice skills and to learn to observe and evaluate particular types of skills and tactics. Thus, the course will be highly participatory, and we will practice organizing skills (e.g., planning, assessment, analysis/framing, group facilitation, organization building, leadership, resource acquisition and management, taking various kinds of actions, reflection and evaluation) within the classroom. As a result attendance and class participation are important criteria and components of the course. Additional responsibilities included as part of class participation include doing the reading, completing assignments and activities--both in class and out of class--and struggling with the issues and challenges raised by course goals and objectives.

Since a major strength of a practitioner is to know oneself well, and to be able to adapt theory, tactics, and skills to fit ones strengths, and to find ways to compensate for areas in which we are less strong, we will work in class and through assignments to identify who and where each of us is in each area. We will also be scrutinizing ourselves, our assumptions, and the readings for ways in which particular assumptions, goals, strategies, etc. may or may not be sensitive to ethnicity, gender and other aspects of the people and communities of concern. Some assignments will provide opportunities for articulating and applying course concepts and skills to ourselves, and to explore the implications of our own social locations/intersectionalities.
A major part of CO practice includes some degree of group and public education, and group and meeting facilitations of various kinds. Thus, one assignment includes co-planning and facilitating a class session with the instructor and at least one other classmate.

A large component of the class will be focused on implementing an actual change project, collaborating with others including class members on planning, analyzing, implementing and evaluating community practice focused on women’s issues and/or gender-related analyses. We will confront questions of power and differences, and explore strategies to addressing these. Empowering approaches and alliance building will be especially emphasized.

I am open to considering assignments other than those I specify, but expect that any modifications or assumptions will be consistent with the goals of the course, spelled out in advance, and negotiated with me. I would love to collaborate with you in the design and implementation of the course, but do not react well if I feel you are avoiding major components of the course, or not being up front with me.

“Epistemological curiosity”, from Freire, refers to eager exploration of knowledge about our worlds, theorizing about justice issues, and reflecting on ourselves in interaction with others. I hope that everyone will contribute to developing a climate in the classroom in which we can teach each other from our different disciplines, modes of practice, perspectives and experiences. It’s important to have a flexible and empowering classroom if we are to explore social justice issues and approaches to change most productively.

We will spend class time in various ways, including discussing and doing things together in many configurations: pairs, trios, small groups, and large group activities of various kinds. We will practice skills, consult with each other about projects, and learn from each other’s perspectives and projects. Thus, class attendance and participation is very important.

There may be presentations of some concepts and material, but the primary pedagogical method will not be lecture, unless we need to spend some time breaking down particular types of material. Thus, I need you to take responsibility for letting me know what clarification you may find useful when we review the agenda for each class, or what you would like to discuss, challenge, etc. in class, from the readings. I am always happy to add some lecture to overview and review key concepts if you request it.

Any Special Circumstances (that might affect the class and/or your participation)

If there are any special circumstances that I and/or the class should know to allow you to participate fully, please consult with me about them so that we can make appropriate adaptations. These can include religious observations, learning style and/or disability issues, family crises, or other special needs or obligations. Many aspects of the course can be modified, with some notice. We can also take advantage of resources elsewhere—the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the Sweetland Writing Center (1139 Angell Hall, 764-0429).

Academic Honesty and Scholarly Conventions

It is your responsibility to be familiar with and abide by the School of Social Work’s standards regarding intellectual honesty and plagiarism. These can be found in the MSW Student Handbook.
http://www.ssw.umich.edu/studentGuide/ This and other appropriate University publications describe policies and penalties related to academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism.

I ask you to cite explicitly all sources for information you use in papers, resource materials, and presentations to give appropriate credit to their sources. This is partially to

- guard against plagiarism by following appropriate conventions for acknowledging the work of others, including materials drawn from the internet.
- be sure that you can use the terminology from various sources and theories and can only assess this if I am sure the source of concepts you are using.
- help you to make connections between the readings and practice and your assignments, and to help you to learn to cite all your sources professionally.

Also, different authors use similar terms in different ways, and different terms in similar ways, so I am more able to evaluate your understanding and application of material with regular and clear citing of sources.

Guidelines:

1) for sources that you cite that are outside of the text and assigned readings, please use APA format (see below),

2) when citing material that has been assigned, your citations can be abbreviated (author, chapter or page number, from the texts or if there are multiple articles from the same author). 


Electronic Devices and laptops

In consideration of your classmates and your own learning, please turn off all cell phones during class. I prefer that you receive no messages during class time; if you must be on call for an emergency, please let your home or office know that you are only available for emergencies that no one else can handle. If so, please set it to vibrate only.

In terms of use of laptops, I know that some of you prefer to take notes in your laptop, but if I believe you are texting or managing email during class or are distracted from the work we are doing because you are using your laptops for other purposes, we may need to ban the use of laptops.

Course Materials

Texts:


Any of you with any women's studies background have probably read the hooks book but it is an accessible overview of many topics relevant for women and addresses issues of race and other intersectionalities throughout as well. I think most people would put hooks in “wave II” feminism, so we will use this book to discuss the various waves and approaches to study and activism on gender
issues as well as critique them. It was written for a general audience so you should be able to read it quickly. It has been around for awhile and should be readily available used and in most book stores, not just academic one. Also available on line (thanks to Jennifer for this info!)
http://excoradfeminisms.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/bell_hooks-feminism_is_for_everybody.pdf

Supplemental (I may assign some components from these, but primarily on reserve at the library to serve as additional resource materials):

Sen, Rinku (2003) *Stir it Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy*. Jossey-Bass. ISBN 0-7879-6533-2. This was commissioned by the MS Foundation and is a very good supplement to the Pyles text.

Bobo, K., Kendall, J. & Max, A. (2001, or later edition if there is one) *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy for Activists*. Santa Ana CA: Seven Locks Press. This is full of helpful tools (checklists, worksheets, diagrams), generic to community organizing.


Sam Kraner with Lenny Lind, Catherine Toldi, Sarah Fisk, & Duane Berger (2007—maybe a newer edition??). *Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*. New Society Publishers, 4527 Springfield Ave, Philadelphia, PA, 19143. Strong facilitation skills, with constant attention to various forms of power are very important in community practice, especially when concerned about social justice, gender issues, etc. This is full of good frameworks and examples.

Everything not from the two texts will be on a C-Tools site and I will set up a coursepack for those of you who have requested one.

**Overview of Assignments and Evaluative Criteria**

General evaluation criteria:

- Incorporation of theory, knowledge, and skills for organizing women, working on issues that especially affect women, for examining gender issues and gendering processes within one’s own life and within organizing.
- Critique of community organizing approaches for the relevance for women and other social categories, and the ways in which their assumptions and approaches may be gendered
- Inclusion of social justice goals, and implications for particular approaches and projects
- Inclusion of concepts and citations from a range of course readings and activities. Both scope of concepts and readings covered and depth of understanding will be considered.
- Consideration of the intersectionality of other social categories with gender, and the implications of gender if not conceptualized as a binary category,
- Placement of the organizing situation within its historical and cultural context
- Use of knowledge of one’s own positionalities and consider implications for the community organizing practice situation
• Contributing to the learning of others
• Critiquing one’s own and other’s work, in terms of use of relevant theories, strategies and tactics, successes, challenges, and limitations, social justice goals and outcomes, intersectional humility and frameworks.

I will ask you to assess your own work in relation to these criteria and your own goals, and we will incorporate other ways to assess these throughout the course.

**Overview of assignments.** More details about 2 through 4 later in this document.

1. Class attendance and participation. (20%)
The best learning environment is one in which participants are actively engaged in critical thinking and discussion, which can only happen if everyone is prepared to contribute. Thus, participation includes coming to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and other projects and activities, and contributing to the learning of others through providing leadership and comments in the classroom, and taking responsibility for your learning in the classroom. It also will include responses to questions about readings or the topics of the day either distributed in class or on C-Tools. It will be important for you to get to know everyone in the class, beginning with those in groups you are in, but also please make an effort to have one-on-one discussions with everyone in the class during the first half of the course.

2. Several analytic reflections. One about a relevant MLK symposia event, one about yourself and the first month of the course and a final analysis at the end of the course (which could take the form of portfolio components. (20%)

3. Planning and co-facilitation of a class session, with a brief analysis afterwards (25%)
Popular education and planning and co-facilitation of meetings are key practice skills in community organizing and collaborative approaches across differences and sources of power are important principles for feminist approaches. You can practice these through this assignment and learn from how others approach the assignment as well. Each of you will sign up for a session in terms of dates and topics about the third/fourth week of the class. This usually means at least two planning meetings (with the instructor), preparation of a facilitator’s agenda and other relevant resource materials, leadership during the class session, and evaluation by class members, and an analytic reflection about the session.

4. Organizing project, in several stages. (35%)
This can include an interview with an activist in an area of interest to you, analysis of the organizing context and history, development of strategies and tactics to reach desired changes, and a plan for evaluating progress and identifying unintended undesired or unjust consequences. This should involve work with other people and at least one quasi-formal sharing of the project with the class. It should also incorporate some relevant “tools” for community practice and this course.

My preference is for students to engage in team projects, since that is how organizing occurs, but we need to take feasibility issues into account in relation to students’ interests and logistics. You should be thinking about issues and opportunities you will have this term to engage in organizing. In some
cases, I will approve your observing an action already underway that you are not involved in, and/or analyzing/critiquing an action you have been involved with in the past.

**Schema of assignment components and due dates:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Analytic Reflective essays</th>
<th>Co-facilitation and popular education skill session</th>
<th>Organizing Project</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 17</td>
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<td>Choose class session</td>
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<td>Jan 24</td>
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<td>MLK Day event paper due</td>
<td>Project proposals due</td>
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<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>First analytic essay due?</td>
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<td>Feb 7</td>
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<td>Co-facilitation</td>
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<td>Feb 21</td>
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<td>First project paper due</td>
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<td>Feb 28</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
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<td>Spring break</td>
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<td>March 28</td>
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<td>Second project paper due</td>
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<td>April 4</td>
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<td>Share summaries and examples</td>
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<td>April 11—bgr may be away</td>
<td>Work in teams</td>
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<td>April 18</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Review, lessons learned</td>
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<td>April 25</td>
<td>Final essay due</td>
<td>Final artifacts and analyses due</td>
<td>Any revisions of project papers</td>
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<td>(post-class)</td>
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**More Details about Assignments**

**Analytic Reflections**

a) **MLK symposium participation.** Select and attend an event/activity occurring during celebrations of the MLK symposia on campus or in the community (you may want to clear with me what types of activities will be most useful and appropriate for this course). Describe and critique the event and its implications for this course in several pages, posting these into the folder created for this purpose on C-Tools, and be prepared to share some key learnings from the event with your classmates. Prepare and post these within a week of your attendance. Summarize the event, analyze in relation to definitions of community, social justice goals and processes, feminist and intersectionality issues, elements relevant for community organizing. Include a critique of its implications and effectiveness in relation to this class and its goals. 5%

b) **Course introduction and themes, social locations and self-reflection/reflexivity.** (10%) Read bell hooks and other readings from the first several weeks of the course. The topics include an overview of approaches to community organizing, feminism and the study of gender and issues
facing women, intersectionality and critical consciousness (including your own social locations and development), and theorizing for progressive and feminist CO. Write a four to five page analysis of yourself and topics in the course so far. Be sure you address all topics in the course so far in terms of your knowledge, skills, goals and critique, as steps towards critical consciousness and praxis. Remember to use and appropriately cite ideas and concepts from our readings to support and illustrate your points. Both scope and depth in use of concepts is important. Some questions and topics to consider.

1) As a self-reflective organizer, identify your positionalities/social locations, where you are in relation to privilege and oppression and your knowledge and awareness of each social location and towards critical consciousness and praxis in general.

2) How do your social locations and approaches influence your interest areas, assumptions about organizing, theories and approaches to feminism, and strategies and tactics you might use? Examples might be useful.

3) Consider what concepts, topics and issues are of particular interest to you? Identify and describe these briefly and how they have been addressed by activists concerned about gender and girls/women. Why do they interest you and what is your assessment of how the readings and class discussions and activities have approached these?

4) What was new or interesting to you in these readings? What did these topics raise for you?

5) Identify key concepts, ideas, and questions that arise for you.

6) What bothers, concerns, angers you, or otherwise “stirs you up”? Why?

7) Convey something about your goals and interests in this course, in relation to these first readings, and how you hope to pursue them, and evaluate critique your work and progress to date.

c) Final analyses and generative reflections—this should be focused on your learning, not on your evaluation of the quality of the course. We will handle that in a different way. This will count for at least 5%, and can earn extra credit if you want to expand to develop more portfolio elements.

The main goal in these assignments is to reflect on major areas of your learning and development and how you will use/apply and expand this in the future—of knowledge, skills, approaches. Should be between 4 to 5 pages, with linkages to relevant readings and course handouts/activities. Do not need to answer each question, but can integrate into a single essay.

1) Revisit what topics and issues are of particular interest to you. Discuss how these may have changed, evolved, or deepened over the term. May want to refer to the list of class topics and issues. Should include content related to gender/women and working for change, and community organizing strategies, tactics and tools.

2) What has bothered, concerned, angered or excited you throughout the course—readings, class activities and resource materials, in your projects? What was familiar and unfamiliar to you in the readings and the course? What did these topics raise for you?

3) Identify key concepts, ideas, and questions that arise for you going into the future.

4) Develop some key principles for organizing, emphasizing gender…

5) What about you, your positionalities/social locations and your skills and knowledge and background helps to influence these reactions? How has your knowledge of these evolved, and what do these raise in terms of your practice and future learning?

6) What do you believe has been the most important learning—knowledge, theories, skills, about organizing and various forms of practice, yourself, other? Why?
7) How have you contributed to the learning of others in the course? Be specific? What have you learned while doing this?
8) Convey something about your goals and interests leaving this course? How will you keep learning and developing your knowledge and skills?

We will spend class time in the last sessions sharing key learnings and tools from project work, reviewing class topics and discussing future goals. This should make it much easier for you to complete this assignment, which is due one week after our last class.

Specific criteria for this assignment include 1) incorporation of some knowledge, theory, topics and skills from throughout the course; 2) inclusion of yourself, your goals, positionalities, and skills and knowledge; 3) formulation of future social justice goals and arenas for working for change and how you will use approaches learned in this class; 4) any critique of your own work and contributions in the class. General evaluative criteria are described in course description.

**Education, Planning and Co-Facilitation Assignment**

(25% total) Much community organizing occurs in meetings and group planning sessions, and some strategies require/benefit from some educational components. This is especially the case for those that build on feminist principles and incorporate regular consciousness-raising components. These are also important for critical consciousness, praxis, and working for social justice. Attention to power, authority and leadership are also important in all forms of feminism. Thus, good meeting planning, group facilitation, and educational design and implementation skills are important components of any community organizing focused on women and gender (and other intersecting social locations). The goals for this assignment component are:

- To develop and practice planning and facilitation skills
- To provide a positive educational experience for the classroom
- To model feminist approaches to shared leadership and power

You and at least one partner will select a week within the syllabus, with topics and readings that interest you, and will be responsible with the instructor for planning and implementing the class that week. This will require at least two planning meetings, preparation of a facilitator’s agenda and other relevant resource materials, leadership during the class session and an evaluation of the session. You may stress one or more of the readings in the syllabus, and can add one additional reading. If you assign an additional reading, the class must know about this and it should be posted on C-Tools the week before the class.

**Facilitators agenda:** A facilitators’ agenda is a detailed “map” of the session, with estimated times for each component, instructions for each activity, indication of who will do what (sometimes with narratives or notes included), and indications of what resources are needed for each components. This is especially useful when you are working with other people to be sure that coordination happens smoothly and that you all understand what is planned and who is responsible for what. It can also help you to think through all the components of the session, and be sure that you have all the resource materials you need. It can help you to stay on task and organized. Of course, things don’t always go as planned, so it is useful to consider some alternatives, and how you can handle unexpected events.
Usually what is distributed to participants is only part of a facilitators’ agenda—goals, main topics, instructions for different segments.

Each agenda will look different depending on the session, but there are some common elements:

- A statement of overall goals (main points to cover, desired goals, objectives, outcomes)
- Step by step guide to the activities you and your co-facilitators plan to do. Indicate relevant subparts, usually in 10-20 minute intervals, but can be longer or shorter, depending on the activity and its parts. Each part may have its own goals, and purposes. Should include:
  - Amount of time likely
  - Who will be providing leadership, facilitating. Who will be doing other tasks
  - Specific instructions, verbal directions
  - How you will handle recording, reflecting on the activity
  - Resource materials needed and who will make sure they are available
- An evaluation component—some written component, but you may also want verbal feedback and reflection, as part of the educational process. We do have an evaluation for every class, but this can be modified or augmented.

Final components

1. Prepare an at least one artifact reflection/analysis/summary on the experience (see portfolio components handout for possibilities for types of artifacts and artifact reflection component/worksheet for outline and categories)
2. Write a short reflective essay (2 to 4 pages) including the following components considering all elements of the experience—
   - Learning about the topic area(s); the goals and activities planned; materials and approaches you planned and/or created
     What topics, skills, etc. did your group focus on and what did you learn about them? Progress and struggles? Importance of all this for women and community organizing (may be in artifact summary, not essay) What else would you like to learn or develop in these area(s); ideas about how to do this?
   - meetings and relationships among you and your co-planners, including the instructor; contributions of different group members, including yourself
     How did your group work together (before, during and after the class session? Your role and specific contributions of group members? What do you see as the strengths, struggles and limitations of how you approached the assignment as a group?
   - how you thought the class session went; what you would do differently; a summary of your classmates assessments and your reactions to these
     Describe what you thought your classmates learned in relation to your facilitation/the class session? Evidence for this? In terms of the class session, what do you think went well, what might you have done differently? Why? (when relevant, differentiate your contributions & those of team members).
   - Anything else you want to say about your strengths, learning, contributions, assessments, future goals…

Evaluation of this assignment: Reflection paper/analysis and artifact summary/analysis (60%); feedback from classmates/instructor (20%), materials and formats you produced for the session (20%)
Organizing Assignment

First part due Feb 21; second installment due March 28. Both can be revised with feedback. For those of you doing group projects, we should be clear about division of labor and how that will be handled in evaluation before you produce the first paper. Each paper should include your individual “voices” in terms of goals, roles/contributions, and learnings.

Goals and specific structures, processes and steps of what you do are likely to need to vary depending on the focus, stage, and type of project you are undertaking.

Both papers should include explicit attention to the knowledge and skills you are using, how you are working with others and how you and others are contributing (if you are working with a team).

General evaluation criteria are included earlier in the Course Description. Each of the components below should be grounded in relevant course concepts and readings, and they should be named and cited—in other words, your work should be analytic and not just descriptive, and should demonstrate your knowledge of and ability to apply what we are reading and discussing in the course. Each of the papers below should be from 8 to 10 pages, plus relevant “tools”, but may be more for group projects, since each of you may want to add some self-assessments. A list of some possibilities begins on p 16. I am happy to work with you to help you to select and learn to use particular tools.

By no later than early February, you should complete and submit a project planning form.

General guidelines follow, but may need to be modified depending on what is going on in your project.

This should be a real organizing project in which you can practice skills in organizing—with women, on women’s issues, and/or with a strong gender- and/or feminist analysis.

- My preference is that at least some components of the project you select be conducted during the term, with other people (preferably also from the class), so that you can plan and apply course learning, and practice relevant skills while you are in this class.
- Some of you may want to analyze an organizing project you were a part of in the past, especially if you have not had a chance to analyze it and determine why and how progress was/ was not made, and how you might have proceeded differently.
- In rare situations (if goals are compelling), I may approve a project in which you will primarily observe, or investigate.

Paper One: Initial assessment and analysis. Should include

- a description and rationale of what you are doing (history, why important in relation to women, gender, feminist or gender-informed approaches, and ways in which other social locations and categories are important in addition to gender).
- project goals
- an initial assessment of the community components, key actors/ relevant participants and their roles. Discuss how you are gathering information that will inform your project and learning about its history and contexts.
- description of work to date, facilitators and barriers to meeting the goals,
- relevant conceptual frameworks, theories will be useful and why,
- description of model(s)/strategies/tactics used to date,
• struggles encountered and how you have handled them,
• what stage you are in at the time you complete this paper and plans for next steps.
• Attach diagrams and/or assessment or planning tools to clarify and schematize.

Describe why you are interested in the project, and how participating in it will help you to meet your learning goals. Indicate what your role(s) will be, how you expect your positionalities to impact the organizing and what else you need to learn and how you propose to do this. These can include yourself in relation to relevant knowledge and skills important for the project.

**Paper Two.** The second paper should include a description and analysis of the “intervention”/activities and steps, any evidence you have about progress, challenges, effectiveness, and what you expect will/should happen next. Specifically include a summary of work accomplished, strategies and tactics employed, and proposed next steps. Should include an additional “tool” relevant for some component of the project. Assess and critique work-to-date, applying course concepts and materials. Describe what you learned—about yourself, about women/gender, about women and CO, organizing tasks, knowledge and skills, and other topics included in the course.

**Sharing in class.** At various times in the second half of the course, we will be asking everyone to contribute knowledge and experience, struggles, etc. gained through your projects. You may want to think about some element of your case to share with the class that will add to other’s learning. This could illustrate some topic of importance in the class, and some element of community organizing and women—ideally including some very practical examples of organizing activities. A goal is for everyone in the class to have a more in-depth experience with one project, but to be exposed to other types of women’s issues, organizing, different stages of organizing, and applications of course concepts in different settings and populations by sharing across projects.

**Project “Proposal”**

Name _____________________ Telephone(s) ___________________ Date:

E-mail _____________________ Box # _______

1. Describe own learning goals, priorities and objectives. Please tell me why these are important to you; how they are relevant for women and community organizing, and how you have identified them as a priority?

2. Briefly describe the Women and CO Project you propose
   a) Title and rationale for the project
   b) Organizing goals and desired outcomes for the project
   c) Contexts for the project
   d) Describe the project site(s)
   e) Collaborators—with whom will you work, key actors, how you will enter the community
f) What strategies, tactics, actions, skills, stages of organizing are likely to be included if you undertake this project and how are they related to women and gender (and other group memberships)?

g) Group process goals and how you will accomplish these

3. Why are you interested in this particular project? How does it incorporate your goals? What do you want to learn and demonstrate?

4. What course concepts, components, theories, etc are likely to be relevant for this project?

5. Who are you considering as a potential interviewee? What will your goals be for this interview?

6. What sorts of resources do you think you will need to accomplish the project? How will you acquire these?

7. What assistance might you want from the instructor? Others?

8. What might you want to share with the class (key aspects, “tools”, steps, learnings) from the project? When would you guess that you’d be ready to do this?

9. What evaluative criteria do you believe are important--
   • In relation to your own goals (e.g., how will you know/be able to demonstrate that you have met your goals?)
   • That may be especially important for this project?

10. Anything else? (Questions, additional information?)

Instructor’s comments/next steps. Date ________________
Some ways to link course readings and concepts to class projects

Consider different topics, principles, skills of community organizing, and this course. The process of making linkages can go in at least two directions and is likely to be iterative.

1. From class readings and activities to application in organizing project. Systematically ask, in what ways are each of these relevant in my project? How could they be relevant?
   - To frame assessments, to identify potential questions, intervention options
   - To guide practices, develop principles for understanding
   - To inform evaluation and monitoring

2. Identify elements from organizing project and explore how readings and class activities can help you to understand and consider next steps.
   - What are the critical elements of my project? What phase is it in?
   - How are gender, community organizing, other practice elements, principles, & skills relevant?

Relevant topics, questions
1. Gender and women’s issues and intersections with other aspects of identity and group memberships. [can include knowledge of the history of organizing re: particular issues, use of various theories and frameworks for understanding/analyzing issues; choosing intervention goals and targets]

2. Models, elements, stages, etc of community organizing. Types of communities relevent.

3. Assessment of circumstances. Our readings have included case studies of various types, that provide rich contextual descriptions of how all sorts of elements interact and need to be considered. They can include types of settings and interveners, history of the issue and that setting, cultural and ethnic compositions, how issues were selected and framed, ways learning and involvement were promoted, networks and mobilizing strategies, goals, and many more.

4. Gender issues in organizing, group and organizational dynamics and leadership:
   - issues among women
   - issues between men and women (there are also issues among men)
   -- intersections with other status dimensions and social locations

5. Particular skills, strategies and tactics. These can include roles, forming organizing groups, making decisions, addressing conflict, working across differences, selecting and framing issues, different elements within organizing, evaluation, other?

6. Methods for working for justice and addressing oppression and privilege
   - Consciousness-raising, identifying marginalizing group dynamics/practices
   - Hegemonic ideologies, cultures
   - Rigid hierarchies (domination, exploitation)
   - Violence, safety issues
   - Greater access to power and influence
   - Diversity important but not sufficient
   - More?

7. Participatory assessment, monitoring, eval, praxis (participatory theorizing, application of theory)—learning from change, developing visions for change, identifying local indicators
   - Catalyzing learning and analyses, promoting skills and relationships
   - Changing institutions (learning organizations)
   - Tracking change and resistances

8. Other?
January 10. Introductions to the course, some key concepts, and each other.
- Women of Hull House
- Overview and issues

January 17. Overview of some key concepts in CO, social movements, and feminist approaches
- Pyle text, Progressive Community Organizing.
  - Chapter one: Introduction (3-16) (some contexts, definitions, overview)
  - Chapter four: Learning from Social Movements (43-58)
- Begin reading bell hooks (2000) Feminism is for Everyone: Passionate Politics. Cambridge, MA.: South End Press. We will discuss the entire text in two weeks.

MLK event write-up due to be posted before Sunday (will check to be sure everyone has already attended something)
- Pyle text, chapter 2, the self-aware organizer, 17-26, and
  - Chapter 10, toward solidarity: understanding oppression and working with identity politics, 141-151.
- Continue reading bell hooks book

Some other (optional) resources for critical consciousness, if you want more background:

January 31: Discuss MLK day and symposia as an organizing strategy and implications for gender, girls/women/(read everyone’s MLK reflections) Initial project proposals due

Discussion of bell hooks and “Wave II” Feminism
Feb 7: First analytic essay due. Feminisms, theorizing, and acting for change—different models and applications [within this we’ll consider roles of men, different ways and reasons for people coming together, implications from wave three and later forms of feminist issues, including global]

- Pyle text, chapter 3, theories and ideas for the progressive organizer, 27-42, and
  - Chapter 11, Religious and spiritual aspects of organizing, 153-163
  - Chapter 5, critical organizing frameworks, 59-77, and
  - Chapter 12, global justice, organization and resistance, 165-173.

An overview of feminist theories and their evolution

Begin organizing strategies, tactics, and tools

Feb 14: Early phases of organizing—bringing people together. Entry, initiation, engagement, information gathering.

- Pyle text, overview of “tools” and chapter 6, organizing people, constituencies and coalitions, 79-96.

Feb 21: Organizations and organizing structures. Creating support for sustained efforts. First project paper due
• Pyle text, chapter 7, toward empowering organizations, 97-112.

Feb 28: Framing, knowledge, education, ideologies. “Marketing” and naming, creating and disseminating knowledge for different purposes.

• Pyle text, chapter 8, language matters: issue framing and communication, 113-124.

March 7—spring break

March 14: Strategies, tactics, techniques and models for change. Phases, matching strategies with goals and contexts. Negotiating conflict and boundaries.

• Pyle text, chapter 9, tactics for change, 125-138.
  - *This reading compares Alinsky’s model with women-centered model.*
March 21: Leadership and power. How are both gendered (and other intersectionality dimensions) and implications for organizing?

- Eagley, A. H. (2007) Female leadership advantage and disadvantage: Resolving the contradictions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 31(1), 1-

March 28: Processes that are feminist and gender and intersectionality sensitive. Also information gathering to monitor progress and problems, evaluation. Second project paper due

- Participatory Action Research and other handouts

Integration, application, reflection

April 4: Organizing across differences (by groupings, linking internal and external). Mechanisms for monitoring, reflecting and learning.


April 11 (Beth likely away, work on artifacts, reflections, consultations). Learning from our projects and work together. Putting it all together.


April 18: Integration, reflection, celebration of accomplishments and next steps.
Final essay due one week after last class, or before

Some other useful resource materials. In a separate folder on C-tools


National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, PA. Transforming Communities: A model for community organizing (Creating Safety and Justice for Women and Girls) ND

Mizrahi, T (project director). Nakleushev, N. References (and resources) for Women Organizers, 1990-2002, Hunter College.