Course Description

This seminar provides an intensive integrative and continuous learning experience for students who concentrate in Community Organization (CO), in order to strengthen social justice and social change at the community level. It examines core concepts of practice, major models and methods, and practical steps in the process. It is designed to build upon and prepare for more advanced courses in the CO curriculum.

Course Objectives

The course will enable students to:

1. Describe core concepts of community organization for a diverse society
2. Identify major models, methods, and steps of practice.
3. Establish relationships with students and faculty members.
4. Integrate personal and professional goals.
5. Identify questions of ethics and values.

Course Design

Responsibilities include readings, discussions, and structured learning activities through three mini-courses sequenced over three semesters: Fall ’13, Winter ’14, Fall ’14. Students take the entire seminar, but register for 1 c.u. in each of the semesters.

The first semester will provide an orientation to the core concepts of practice. The second semester will develop a toolkit of strategies and skills for social workers as community organizers and community planners, including an intensive integrative practice simulation. The final semester will examine key learning experiences, integrate knowledge and skills gained in the program, and formulate a philosophy statement that expresses core values and professional goals.

Relationship of Course to Curricular Themes

Multiculturalism and Diversity: Students will identify ways in which community organization can address race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, and other forms of stratification of inequality.
Social Justice and Social Change: Emphasis is placed on how community organization can strengthen social change and social justice through community building in economically disinvested and squirted areas.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation: The course will focus on how to prevent social problems and promote healthier communities rather than to take the frequent common curative model approach.

Behavioral and Social Science Research: Relevant research and best practices from diverse social science disciplines and professional fields will contribute to understanding of empirically-based practice.

Social Work Ethics and Values

The NASW Code of Ethics establishes responsibility for social workers to engage in socially-just political action addressing the needs of diverse and disadvantaged populations.

Class Climate

We want to create a classroom climate in which everyone can experiment with new ideas or skills; explore their own cultural competencies and their implications for social and political action; consult with others on assignments and projects; and identify areas for future learning.

Using Laptops

Using laptops for taking notes is acceptable, but using them for other purposes is distracting to others.

Academic Integrity

We will follow the Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct in the School of Social Work Student Handbook. Web resources on academic integrity developed by the University's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching can be found at their website.

Disabilities Statement

If you have a disability or condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please schedule a private appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 763-3000.

Contacting the Instructor

My e-mail is barrych@umich.edu, my office is 3840 SSWB, and my home telephone is 734.668.0117. I am available through e-mail, telephone, and by appointment. I want to get to know you, and hope that you will arrange a time when we can talk early in the semester.
Course Outline

Day 1

Telling your own story: I, we, now.
Getting acquainted and establishing relationships.
Core concepts of community organization.
Models and methods of practice.
What difference does it make?
What matters most?
Pluralist and multicultural.
What is a socially-just neighborhood?

Day 2

Emergent currents, e.g., intergroup dialogue, social media.
Community organization at Michigan: Is there a school-of-thought?
Crafting your own educational experience.
Secrets for quality learning.
Leadership opportunities.
Who are the change agents? What do they do?
Student Information Form

Name: 
Address: 
E-Mail: 
Telephone: 
UM program: 
Professional goal: 

Community experience: 

Population about which you care or want to learn more, e.g., women, Latino, white, young people, low-income, lesbian, people with disabilities.

Problem or issue about which you care or want to learn more, e.g., diversity, discrimination, health, educational justice, immigration, poverty.

Experience or skill which might be useful to the class: