



SW 652 Section 001

Organizing for Social & Political Action Fall 2014

Thursdays, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Room B770

Instructor: Larry M. Gant

Prerequisites: SW 560 or instructor's permission

Office: 3780 SSWB Phone: 734-763-5990

E-mail: lmgant@umich.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10-12pm or contact instructor

Class Runs 9/5/14-12/5/14, break: 10/14/14-10/15/14

Course Description : Updated September 14, 2014

This course focuses on various methods of organizing people to engage in social and political action on their own behalf or on behalf of others. Students will analyze different approaches to mobilizing people for collective action, challenging oppressive structures and processes, building organizational capacity, implementing action plans, and generating power in the community. The course includes content on the analysis of power structures; the formulation of action strategies; the use of tactics involving persuasion, consensus, and conflict; the organization, implementation and evaluation of community campaigns; the use of political and media advocacy; and the relationship of social and political action to contemporary issues which affect oppressed and disadvantaged communities. Case examples will be drawn from the U.S. and other nations and special emphasis will be placed on organizing communities of color, women, LGBTQ populations, and other under-represented groups in U.S. society.

Course Content

Social and political action encompasses various means to create change at the community and societal level. This course takes the perspective that such organizing can win improvements in people's lives, make people aware of their own power, alter the relations of power in the community, and create a more socially just society.

The history of organizing for social and political action – inside and outside the social work field – and its underlying theoretical assumptions about power, conflict, and change will be covered. This course will also examine the sociopolitical and political-economic arenas in which organizing operates; the roles and responsibilities of practitioners; several major strategies and tactics of organizing; environmental forces that facilitate or limit organizing; the ethical and value dilemmas of social action organizing; and lessons learned from research on social and political action and change. In addition, different schools of thought about organizing and their approaches to the formulation of goals, issues, constituencies, targets, and tactics will be compared.

The course will also analyze strategies and tactics that employ conflict as a vehicle for

generating power and creating change. Students will assess theories of conflict and power and ways of analyzing power structures at the community and societal level. Political advocacy will be examined as a means to strengthen group and community solidarity and challenge oppressive structures, systems, and institutions. In contrast to viewing advocacy as a narrow approach to representing group interests in legislatures and established institutions, this course will consider advocacy as an empowering process by which traditionally excluded groups advocate for themselves in ways which build organizations and develop communities.

Definition of Social Work: Consistent with the August 2014 global definition of social work generated by the two international bodies representing social work - the International Federation of Social Workers and the International Association of Schools of Social Work – this class defines "Social work [a]s a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing."

Course Objectives and Assignment Alignment

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1 Understand and analyze the changing context of social and political action;
- 2 Understand the relationship of contemporary social, economic and political issues to social and political action strategies and tactics;
- 3 Understand and apply social and political dynamics as they relate to issues of power, privilege, social justice, and resource distribution;
- 4 Analyze alternative models, strategies, tactics, and modes of social and political action directed towards these goals;
- 5 Demonstrate skills in community assessment, leadership and organizational development, planning and conducting campaigns, and the evaluation of their results;
- 6 Formulate strategies and create tactics which engage constituencies in social and political action;
- 7 Identify and incorporate attention to issues related to 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, as well as community of residence and other dimensions which are associated with privilege, discrimination, domination, and oppression;
- 8 Identify and analyze the major value and ethical dilemmas that arise in the course of organizing for social and political action.

Course Design

4. Course Design and Instructor Teaching Approach

The course will use a project-based integrative learning approach.

I will use pedagogical methods such as mini-lectures, in-class interviews with guests, discussions, editing sessions, instructor consultations and role plays. The Gleaners directors and administrators will be invited to sessions at the beginning and end of the course to discuss process and deliverables. Students are expected to access C-tools course folders for additional course-relevant articles, resources and to submit assignments.

Principles of Instruction: Adapted from Rosenshine, B., Research-based Strategies that All Teachers Should Know, American Educator (Spring 2012).

- I will begin each session with a review of what was covered the previous lecture. Students will be asked to provide the review of key concepts and “take-aways.”
- I will present material in small steps and provide class time for students to practice after each step. I will give clear instructions.
- I will provide models, templates and numerous examples of problem-solving, including rehearsal time. I will think aloud as I demonstrate.
- I will provide scaffolds for difficult tasks and notify students of possible errors.
- I will guide student practice through additional explanations, live review of drafts, and small group consultations.
- I will monitor students for understanding by asking specific questions and checking student responses.
- I will reteach material when necessary. I will teach material needed by students even when the students were expected to have mastered the material prior to the course.
- I will note student successes and give students ample opportunity to practice independently.
- I will provide feedback as students begin to practice independently.

Housekeeping Details (Conduct of the Course)

Religious Observances

Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Electronic Devices (Cellphones, Smart Phones, iPads, Computers and other devices).

In consideration of your classmates and your own learning please mute or set to vibrate all devices 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. I prefer no texting during class; during the breaks, indulge yourself.

I encourage in class computer use that supports the mission of the course (e.g. taking notes, finding relevant information, etc.). I do *not* support or endorse generic web browsing, email, texting, IM'ing, etc. during class (break time is fine for these activities). There will be some times when I ask for “screens down or screens blank” during some parts of the class and I'll expect ready compliance with that request.

Students with Special Needs/Universal Design Issues, or who are just nervous or anxious about the course.

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 specific 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. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Services for Students with Disability office at 734-763-3000 in room G-664 Haven Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Beyond this, if you have any anxieties, concerns, or panic attacks with the course content or instruction style, see me right away. Some things can be fixed, and others cannot, but we certainly can discuss matters before they lead to serious problems.

Sometimes, crises lead students to unwise decisions. In classes, panic or other issues causes some students to take short cuts or plagiarize work. That's an incredibly bad idea; see the next paragraph below.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: We adhere to the LS&A statement on academic integrity: "The LSA undergraduate academic community, like all communities, functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. The College holds all members of its community to high standards of scholarship and integrity. To accomplish its mission of providing an optimal educational environment and developing leaders of society, the College promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct. Academic dishonesty may be understood as any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. Conduct, without regard to motive, that violates the academic integrity and ethical standards of the College community cannot be tolerated. The College seeks vigorously to achieve compliance with its community standards of academic integrity. Violations of the standards will not be tolerated and will result in serious consequences and disciplinary action."

Plagiarism is cheating. Any student caught plagiarizing or cheating in any way will earn a failing grade in this course and may be expelled from The University of Michigan. There are no exceptions. Please make sure that you understand what constitutes plagiarism or cheating.

Relationship of the Course to Curricular Themes

- ***Multiculturalism and Diversity:*** The course will focus on the issues involved in working for social and political change in a multicultural society and in engaging in social and political action in and with multicultural communities. It will also address the problems and potential of engaging in successful social and political action with diverse populations inclusive of diversity dimensions previously listed. Case examples of social and political action within multicultural communities in the U.S. and other nations will be used to illustrate strategic and tactical issues.
- ***Social Justice and Social Change:*** An underlying assumption of the course is that the goals of social and political action are to promote social justice and produce positive social change. The course will explore the different meanings of social justice and social change, and their implications for the development of strategies and tactics of social and political

- action. Historical and contemporary illustrations will be used to analyze these concepts.
- ***Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation:*** Although the course will focus on change at the macro level of intervention, it assumes that the creation of socially just and responsive policies and organizations through social and political action is a pre-condition for the development of effective programs that emphasize prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. In fact, the underlying principles of social and political action complement rather than contradict the objectives of promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation in social service programs.
 - ***Behavioral and Social Science Research:*** The course includes the analysis of contemporary and historical research on the application of theoretical models of social action and social change. Case examples of social and political action efforts will be evaluated in terms of the validity of their theoretical premises and their effectiveness in achieving stated ends. Issues for further research will also be identified.

Relationship of the Course to PODS (Privilege-Oppression-Diversity-Social Justice)

Privilege: A critical, if often unacknowledged manifestation of social injustice is the difference in the degree of privilege experienced among individuals and groups in the U.S. – on the basis of race, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, and physical ability – in their efforts to create social and political change. One goal of social and political action is to eliminate or reduce these disparities – through both ends and means. This course will explore how privilege, or its absence, influences the nature of social change at the community and societal levels and what can be done to overcome it.

Oppression: Social workers have an ethical obligation to work to overcome oppression in society in all its forms. This course will examine how social and political action can contribute to this goal by altering societal institutions, structures, policies, and processes, and by empowering oppressed communities to work on their own behalf.

Diversity: The course will focus on the issues involved in working for social and political change in a multicultural society and in engaging in social and political action in and with multicultural communities. It will also address the problems and potential of engaging in successful social and political action with diverse populations. Case examples of social and political action within multicultural communities in the U.S. and other nations will be used to illustrate strategic and tactical issues.

Social Justice: An underlying assumption of the course is that the goals of social and political action are to promote social justice and produce progressive social and political change. The course will explore the different meanings of social justice and social change, and their implications for the development of strategies and tactics of social and political action. Historical and contemporary illustrations will be used to analyze these concepts.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Values and Ethics

The NASW *Code of Ethics* (revised 1996) establishes an ethical imperative for social workers to engage in social and political action on behalf of social justice and in support of the needs of diverse and disadvantaged populations. Since the emergence of the social work profession in the U.S., the pursuit of social justice through a variety of social and political strategies has been

one of its fundamental tenets. This course reflects that heritage and applies those values in the analysis of contemporary social and political action efforts. It also discusses some of the ethical issues involved in pursuing social justice through social and political action.

Required Texts (bobo and smock - Available at Common Language Bookstore)

[All texts will be on University Library Reserve by September 20th, 2014]

Kim Bobo, Jackie Kendall, Steve Max (2009) Organizing for social change : Midwest Academy manual for activists, Publisher: Seven Locks Press 4th ed.

Kristina Smock (2004) Democracy in action: Community Organizing and Urban Change, New York, Columbia University Press.

Evidence based frame: As overarching case frame for the course, evidence based skills and tactics will be derived from the decade long (and continuing work of the SSW Technical Assistance Center – Good Neighborhoods Initiative), where the instructors serves as PI.

Grades and Assignments

Grading Elements: For all assignments, please keep a hard/digital copies for yourself, and remember to back up your computer files so you don't lose your papers, resources, and drafts! (No more “the dog ate my flash drive” stories!!)

I grade assignments using rubrics. Following the rubrics generally leads to much stronger scores on assignments than not following them. Rubrics for all assignments will be available on the CTools site no later than the second class meeting.

Please anticipate your responsibilities and start your assignments well in advance of the due date. Be sure to have a back up copy and in hard copy of everything you submit. Similarly, be sure to back up your files regularly so that you do not lose your materials before submission; use a combination of hard drive and cloud resources such as Dropbox, iCloud, etc. All course work must be completed by the end of the term; incompletes will only be given for exceptional reasons, and will require documentation.

My policy on drafts of assignments. Students are strongly encouraged to submit **up to two drafts** of the assignment before the due date. I will provide ungraded feedback using the rubrics for each assignment. The last revision must be submitted to me no later than four days before the due date.

My policy on assignments submitted by due date and by “grace period”. I typically provide a ‘grace’ period of seven days after the formal due date for the assignments. *While students may submit final assignments (no drafts) during this grace period, the maximum letter grade equivalent earned will be reduced by one –half grade. The grace period begins immediately after the established due date and time.*

Example: Student A submits assignment 1 by the due date and receives 28/28 (Letter Grade of A). However, if Student A submits assignment 1 during the grace period and receives

28/28, the highest letter grade earned/posted will be A-). This scoring reduction is in effect from 5:00:01 PM after the due date through the end of the grace period. Assignments turned in after the grace period date and time will be reduced by one letter grade for each day (by calendar date) late, regardless of quality of the submission. Exceptions to this policy will only be made for extreme circumstances that may require documentation. Typically, these exceptions reflect very unusual or extraordinary situations including natural disasters, accidents, flareups of chronic diseases, inclement weather, etc.

Table 1: Revision Dates, Due Dates, Grace Periods (All submissions due that date at 5:00pm EST); UPDATED 9/4/13

	Last Revision Date	Due Date	Grace Period
Design consultation (small groups)	Ass. 1: 10/7/14	Ass. 1: 10/10/14	Ass. 1: 10/17/14
	Ass. 2: 11/4/14	Ass. 2: 11/7/14	Ass. 2: 11/14/14
	Ass. 3: 11/18/14	Ass. 3: 11/21/14	Ass. 3: 11/28/14**
	Ass. 4: 12/2/14	Ass. 4: 12/4/14	NA

My policy on resubmissions. Near the end of the term, students may choose to resubmit any **one** assignment (if they would like to improve their course grade). Students will be provided one ungraded review of the revised assignment no later than three days before the last day of class. Revisions must be clearly highlighted in the revised manuscript (e.g. revisions in red). **The revised assignment is due no later than 5:00pm EST December 12, 2014. The maximum grade possible on any revised assignment, regardless of quality and responsiveness to instructor comments, will be B+.** Late revised assignments (submitted after 5:00 pm that day) will be neither reviewed nor accepted.

Submission format: You may submit hard copies of documents; electronic copies are preferred. It is preferred that students submit assignments in CTools using the “Assignment” tab/button. Revisions and resubmits may be submitted via hard copy, email to the instructor or using your CTool drop box. Please inform the instructor of your method for submitting revisions and resubmits. Students using the drop box are responsible for informing the instructor of this option.

You may use a traditional written paper format for submission or any assignment, or you may use a media based presentation (brochure format, web-based, new media, mixed media). The same grading rubric will be used for either format; all formats should be responsive to Universal Design Issues. (Most traditional form documents prepared electronically are already Universal Design ready).

I require all written assignments to be double-spaced, using 12-point font, with no less than 1-inch margins on all sides of the paper. A portion of your grade for written assignments is based on your clarity and thoroughness. All written assignments should be carefully proofread for typos and clarity of content. A paper with lots of errors or one that is difficult to read is unacceptable in a professional masters degree program, and will be marked down (see grading rubrics).

Page length is the page length! In my courses, page length refers to the narrative content in the document. Page length does not include cover page, references, or appendix (note: appendix

may have up to 5 pages of material. This does not count against the page length!). Please remember that for my assignments, the appendix must only have information that supplements or supports the narrative. The appendix is **not** a continuation of the narrative! If you have any questions about whether your appendix is supplemental or continuation, please ask me for clarification.

Grading and Course Activities, Attendance and Assignments (Further details will be discussed in class).

- 1. 35% Exams (Two): October 16 and November 13 in class.**
- 2. 60% SW 652 Design Project (Warrendale Communities/ SW Detroit Vistas Neuvas)**
- 3. 5% Discretionary weight used to optimize student grade.**

Details:

2 Exams on history of Social Action in the United States, Social Action Approaches and Biological Underpinnings of Social Determinants of Health [includes biology and epigenetics] (35% of grade): October 16 and November 13, 2014.

The exams assess student knowledge on the history of community organization in the United States, models of social action, e.g. Smock's models of social action (community building, power-based, civic, women-centered, transformative), approaches to community work, e.g. Gamaliel, PICO, Highlander, NWRO, Midwest Academy, comparative welfare states, structural determinants of health, and epigenetics.

652 Design Project: 60% of course grade (requires completion of assignments 1-4 below).

Design Project consultation and deliverables: Creating and completing a Strategy for Social/Political Action: (point totals for each assignment will be completed and online by 9/16/14):

Consistent with consultation/design approaches to education, students will make formal presentations of the work to clients for the 652 projects. These presentations will occur in Late November 2014.

Design Project Assignment 1 (30% of Design Grade) is an initial strategy chart that outlines a social action. This proposed social action incorporates a (1) multi-media campaign to address an issue of concern to the clients or constituents with which it works, (2) project management features that demonstrates strategy components, responsibility for completion of components, and a way to insure communication within your working group, (3) explicit identification of the model of social justice reflected in the strategy chart, (4) model/theory of community work used in the strategy chart. **Part 1 is maximum 4 pages (1000 words) in length. Due: October 10, 2014 (Grace Period 10/17/14), 5pm.**

Design Project Assignment 2 (40% of Design Grade) is the development of offline¹ and social media components for the social action. The offline component could be in the form of with visuals, artifacts (brochures, zines, postcards), storyboards, digital media images along with a 750 - 1000 word written (or audio) narrative. Please provide two examples of offline PR strategy artifacts (e.g. brochures, zines, postcards, billboard copy/mockups, etc.) Provide detail on the communication efforts for the social action (that is, how will you insure you get the word out to people and that people come to the event?)

You will also **design and create** a simple, low cost easy to maintain social media technique as a support or supplement for broadcasting, empowering, branding, mobilizing, and fostering your social political action plan. *There must be an accessible link between the offline and online components of the social action plan.* In a written (or audio) narrative of 750-1000 words, (1) detail the outcomes of the technique, (2) explain how you think the technique will generate the outcome (3) explain the rationale of your online technique by discussing the connection between your identified audiences and technique(s) used, and (4) generate an evaluation protocol to document use and impact of the social media approach(es). [Examples of techniques include but are not limited to websites, blogs, instgram, twitter, social bookmarks, Wikis, Facebook, Google Docs, Audio/Video Hosting (e.g. You Tube Channels), digitally created PSAs, etc.] **Part 2 is maximum 6 narrative pages (3000 words) in length. Due: November 7, 2014 (Grace Period, 11/14/14) 5pm.**

Design Project Assignment 3 (30% of Design project) is a revised and updated strategy chart (compared to the initial strategy chart draft) that outlines the strategy. This proposed social action incorporates a (1) multi-media campaign to address an issue of concern to the clients or constituents with which it works, and (2) project management features that demonstrates strategy components, responsibility for completion of components, and a way to insure communication within your working group. Also include a sustainability plan for the social organization and/or social function. Sustainability includes volunteers, staff, budget and fund development strategies. **Assignment 3 is maximum 5 narrative pages (1500 words) in length. Due: November 21, 2014 (Grace Period, 11/28/14) 5pm.**

Client Presentations: Poster Sessions – 12/4/2014 (Assignment 4) 10% of Design Project.

Course Outline and Readings

Date	Bobo	Smock	Activities /Other Readings
September 4			The Context of Social Action “Schools of Social Action” (Part I) “How to plan a campaign” [thechangeagency.org] Project/Campaign Management: Introduction to Strategy Charts
September 11	Local Case Studies: (1) Good Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Center and Detroit Neighborhoods Possible Action Work:	Ch 1. Popular Democracy and Urban Change; Ch. 2 Models of Community Organizing: An overview (Part1)	“Schools of Social Action” (Part II) Project/Campaign Management: Fundamentals “How to plan a campaign” “Cutting the issues” [thechangeagency.org]

¹ It is important that the offline component be able to stand alone (in case the online component...crashes....)

		Ch. 2 Models of Community Organizing: An overview (Part 2)	
September 18	Ch. 27. The breakdown of the Real Economy	Ch. 3. Building individual Capital	Models of Welfare States
September 25	Ch. 3. (Choosing an Issue), Ch 4 (Developing a Strategy), Ch. 5, (A Guide to Tactics)	Ch. 4 Building Community Capital	
October 2			Structural Determinants of Health
October 9	Social Media Design Issues and Strategies (AMC/ SXSW/gangway, ev)	Ch.5 Community Governance	
October 16	Social Media Design Issues and Strategies		Exam 1
October 23	Social Media Design Issues and Strategies		Epigenetics 1
October 30			Epigenetics 2
November 6:	Ch 11. Developing Leadership	Chapter 3 review	Review of Epigenetics, Welfare States
November 13:	Chs. 9 (Building and Joining Coalitions), 20 (Working with Religious Organizations)		Exam 2
November 20:	21 (Local Unions), 22 (Building Labor Community Partnerships)		
December 5:			