

SW 674
Community-Based Policy Advocacy

Tammie B. Glenn
Fall 2014

SW 674: Community-Based Policy Advocacy

Subject: Community Organization

Room: 1804

Credits: 3

PreReq: SOCWK 560 or permission of instructor

Applies To & Method Type: Practice Method Concentration, Advanced CO/P&E Methods

Course Description:

Community-based policy advocacy will be presented as an empowering process that helps to strengthen intra-group and inter-group solidarity as it challenges and attempts to change oppressive structures, systems, and institutions. In contrast to viewing advocacy in the traditional sense -- as a means by which experts represent group interests in legislative, judicial, and executive settings -- this course will explore ways through which traditionally excluded groups advocate for themselves and, in so doing, help build organizations and develop communities.

Course Content:

The course will focus on the analytic and interpersonal skills required to mobilize groups and communities in order to effect policy changes through legislative, judicial, and regulatory channels. It will include both contemporary and historical examples of local, state, national, and international advocacy efforts, involving low-income and low power communities inclusive of diverse 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:

- Describe the relationship between contemporary social and political issues and advocacy strategies and tactics;
- Describe the role of intra-group, inter-group, and political dynamics in the policy advocacy process and their relationship to issues of power, privilege, social justice, and resource distribution;
- Analyze alternative models, strategies, tactics, and modes of advocacy in terms of their suitability to achieve specific policy goals;
- Apply skills in planning and conducting advocacy campaigns, mobilizing communities in policy advocacy, and evaluating the results of advocacy efforts;

- Identify and incorporate within advocacy campaigns attention to issues related to a range of diversity dimensions such as race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, and other characteristics associated with privilege, discrimination, domination, and oppression;
- Identify and analyze value and ethical dilemmas that arise in the course of policy advocacy work;
- Describe the process of policy development including the use of key terms;
- Assess policy environments (e.g., bureaucratic, fiscal, legislative, community) and analyze complex systems (e.g., for issue identification and option generation);
- Explain various advocacy roles (e.g., political, scientific, and ideological);
- Prepare policy advocacy documents and demonstrate skill in developing written policies (e.g., drafting legislation, writing guidelines and administrative regulations);
- Apply techniques of education and persuasion, such as media advocacy, lobbying, testifying, popular education and building advocacy coalitions;
- Describe linkages between local, state, national and international advocacy;
- Contribute to the development of a climate in the classroom in which everyone can (a) experiment with new skills; (b) explore their own multicultural competence and the implications of one's own background for developing and implementing social and political action strategies; (c) consult with each other on advocacy projects and assignments; & (d) generate plans and strategies for future learning and development.

Course Design:

The course will revolve around the development, implementation, and evaluation of a group advocacy projects, 50% of the final grade. The specific knowledge and skills required to engage in these projects will be presented through lectures, class discussion/analysis of assigned readings, class exercises and simulations, and group problem-solving activities. An additional handout will be distributed with expectations for the advocacy project and class presentation. Class time will be allocated for development work on this project.

Students will also be expected to interview a Community or Political advocacy organization that you have not had present or previous experience with. An additional handout will be provided detailing the expectations for this assignment. 20% of the final Grade.

Policy Paper 20%

10% of the final grade will be based on ACTIVE class participation.

Speakers and videos will be used to augment other course materials where appropriate and feasible.

Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity: The course will focus on working for policy change in a multicultural society, including the problems and potential of engaging in successful advocacy campaigns with diverse populations. Case examples of successful advocacy efforts within multicultural communities will be used to illustrate strategic and tactical issues. Students will develop the capacity to identify ways in which diversity dimensions such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age, sexual orientation, disability, and other forms of social stratification and disenfranchisement influence and are affected by the policy advocacy process. Issues of privilege, oppression, and diversity will also be addressed through the discussion of the different client populations served by the systems discussed in the course; the means by which policies are designed in order that they will be responsive to the special circumstances of their clients; and the use of social policies that are targeted towards specific racial, ethnic, or cultural groups.

Theme Relation to Social Justice: 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 policy advocacy efforts. The course also includes consideration of the social worker's responsibility to promote the general welfare of society commonly confronted in social policy development and enactment, e.g., through the prevention and elimination of discrimination; the promotion of equal access to resources, services, and opportunities; and through advocacy on behalf of specific social policy changes.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation: Promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation activities are difficult to evaluate and, therefore, raise special challenges in social policy advocacy and implementation. These themes will be addressed by comparing and contrasting prevention theory and theories of advocacy and community participation, considering the promotion and prevention effects of empowerment strategies, and studying how community-based advocacy can be used to help develop treatment and rehabilitation options for underserved populations through policy change. Students will learn that policies in human services are too often implemented in reaction to an issue, not proactively, due to changing social, economic, and political circumstances and influences. The course will also review the particular issues communities face as they pursue policies that will affect their community change and direct service (treatment and rehabilitation) goals.

Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research: This will be incorporated throughout the course in at least three ways: 1) through the study of past and contemporary efforts at community-based advocacy; 2) by studying research strategies for community assessment, action planning, and strategy implementation; and 3) by examining and critiquing relevant theories about policy change, social conflict, power, and social change, as well as research that supports these theories. Since policies in the human services are in a constant state of flux due to changing social, economic, and

political circumstances, any review of existing policy advocacy strategies may be quickly outdated. Therefore, students will be provided with theoretical models theories to enable them to advocate on behalf of any policy issue encountered in the course of their professional activities.

Relationship to SW Ethics and Values: The NASW Code of Ethics 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. This course covers a complex array of ethical dilemmas that arise in the process of developing and enacting social policies. It will examine the ways in which the NASW Code of Ethics may be used to guide and resolve value and ethical issues. It also discusses some of the ethical issues involved in pursuing social justice through policy advocacy work. In particular, the course will review such ethical issues as confidentiality, self-determination, respect for cultural and religious differences, allocation of scarce resources, and the promotion of social justice.

Required Text:

1. **The People Shall Rule: ACORN, Community Organizing and the Struggle for Economic Justice. ISBN-13 978-0-8205. Robert Fisher 2009**
2. **Community Tool Box, 2013 - Work Book to be provided.**

Intensive Focus on PODS

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Course Schedule

9/4/14 Opening and Orientation. Formation of Advocacy Groups

Readings: The People will Rule- Preface and Chapter 1.

Tool Box ,chapter 1.

- Discussion of Core Concepts.

9/11/14 Readings: The People... Chapters 2 and 3. , Tool box chapter 2

Project Discussion cont. Groups Finalized.

- Discussion of Core Concepts.

9/18/14 Readings: The People will Rule.. Chapters 4.

Tool box chapter 3

Video. Core Concepts discussed. Group Project time allocation.

9/25/14 Community or Political organization Site visit. Preparation for presentation.

**10/2/14 Readings: The People will rule... Chapters 5. Tool box chapter 4
Core Concepts discussed. Site presentations. Group Project time
allocation.**

**10/9/14 Readings: The People will Rule.. Chapter 6 and 7. Tool box
chapter 5 . Core Concepts discussed. Group Project time allocation.**

**10/16/14 Readings: The People Will Rule.. Chapters 8 and 9. Tool box
chapter 6 . Core Concepts discussed. Group Project time allocation.**

**10/23/14 Readings: The People Will Rule... Chapters 10 and 11. Tool
box chapter 7. Core Concepts discussed. Group Project time allocation.
Policy Paper Due.**

**10/30/14 Readings: The People Will Rule, Chapters 12, Tool box chapter 8
Core Concepts discussed. Group Project time allocation.**

11/6/14 Tool box chapter, 9. Group Project allocation.

11/13/14 Tool Box chapter , 10. Group Project Allocation.

11/20/14 Tool Box chapter , 10 and 11. Group Project Allocation.

12/4/14 Community Advocacy paper and presentations.

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Spring/Summer 2014**

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Assignments

**Assignment 1. In the News Macro Political Policy issue's. 10% To be
discussed at the beginning of each class.**

**Assignment 2. : Site Visit and interview with a Community or Political
organization. Additional handout to be provided. 20% 9/25/14**

Assignment 2:

**What is a policy issue that concerns you? Who is affected by the
issue and how are they affected? What are the main causes of the
issue? What are some possible solutions? What impact will the**

proposed solution have on social justice? Write a paper in which you discuss these questions.

Please include a supplementary one-page policy fact sheet, prepared as if to share with an influential stakeholder and, in addition, a few talking points you'd want to make to him or her. 20%

Due: 10/23/14

Assignment 3: Community Advocacy Project. Small group project . An additional handout to be provided. 50% of the final grade. Due 12/4/14.

Class Participation

Class participation is good for everyone. It might include involvement in discussions, group leadership, volunteering, or other activities.

Participation requires regular attendance, coming to class on time, preparation and engagement in class discussions, and submission of assignments on scheduled dates unless arranged in advance. "Showing up" is itself not participation in the course. Absence from class might result in lowering your grade.

All papers in the course should be submitted in hard copy.

General Guidelines for Papers

1. Make a specific point. Express what you think.
2. Quality and depth of analysis of information and ideas, and relevance to the topic.
3. Appropriate use of empirical evidence and references, as well as their variety and range.
4. Quality of presentation, e.g., introduction, logical sequencing, conclusion.
5. Use of proper grammar and professional presentation of material.
6. Level of effort expressed in written work.

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 tglenn@umich.edu, my office is 2764 SSWB, and my cell telephone is 810-919-9009. 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.

Faculty Approval: 12/8/2006