

WINTER 2015

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



Tuesday 5:30-8:30 pm
School of Social Work, Rm B 798

Instructor

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-4:00pm and by appointment

Course Description

This foundation course for the Community Action and Social Change Minor is designed to prepare students to be informed and active participants in the process of community building and social change. The course uses a multidisciplinary framework to develop competencies that will help students envision what community action and social change look like, identify and implement steps towards social change, build on positive sources of power, indigenous knowledge and experiences of individuals, groups, and communities who are engaged in social change efforts. The course is co-taught by a team representing different disciplinary perspectives who will work with student to integrate different ways of thinking based on the various disciplinary perspectives to achieve social change.

Supporting Statement for Social Science Distribution

This course meets the requirements for LS&A social science distribution in the following ways. The course material covers theories and practices of community action and social change through an interdisciplinary examination of examples in research and practice. The course focuses on individuals, groups and institutions and how they interact. The course examines empirical quantitative and qualitative studies that test social change methods and provides exposure to and experience with qualitative research methods such as ethnographic observation and interviewing and qualitative data-gathering. Students are engaged in a critical and contrasting assessment of community organizing and other social change methods.

Core Competencies

Praxis: Reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it

-Paulo Freire, The Pedagogy of the Oppressed

1. Students will examine their own identity development (race, class, gender, sexual/relational orientation, religion, nationality, ability, other), recognize multiple social identities, and engage in critical analysis of power, privilege and oppression.
2. Students will explore the meaning of community and social change.
3. Students will develop skills in interviewing, relationship-building, and group facilitation.
4. Students will gain awareness of historical framework and theory regarding community action and social change.
5. Students will engage in policy and structural analysis with regard to community action and social change.
6. Students will develop an understanding of community-building and organizing skills.

Readings/Class Texts

All readings will be posted to CTools/Canvas.

All students will be required to attend a performance, we will subsidize tickets.

Grading and Assignments

The class requires a set of assignments aimed at:

- 1) gaining critical awareness about one's self as a community change agent both inside and outside the classroom
- 2) building knowledge about historical frameworks, theory and key people,
- 3) developing and engaging with peers in critical discussion of key ideas and issues, and
- 4) applying the lessons and learning to one's current interest or work.

There are 4 main assignments:

1. Participation (out-of-class worksheets and in-class activities)
2. Reading questions and Social Justice Blog Reflections
3. History Paper
4. Semester-Long Project

An outline of the assignment and due dates is listed in the assignment section of the syllabus for your reference.

Attendance Expectations

I expect that students will be in class on time, engaged and ready to start at 5:40. We use computers from time to time in class, so you may choose to bring them to class. But I expect that you will not be using computers/social media/phones, and so forth, for things outside of class.

I retain the right to lower an overall final grade by a minimum of ½ grade for any student who has excessive absences/tardiness or is highly disengaged in class (including ongoing/regular use social media during class time).

Assignment Expectations

Due dates are firm. I expect that assignments will be turned in on the day they are due unless there are extenuating circumstances. I reserve the right to mark down papers ½ a grade for each day late in fairness to classmates who turn papers in on-time.

Plagiarism

I take plagiarism seriously. Plagiarism is when you attribute others' ideas and/or exact words as your own. This includes ideas and/or passages from the readings, class activities, peers, and from the Internet, among others. I expect that all sources used will be cited or referenced. If I suspect plagiarism, I will follow the University's protocol for disciplinary action. This could mean a loss of points, failure of a grade, and/or other consequences. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Learning Environment

This class is based on a collaborative learning model—one in which students are both “teachers and learners” in the classroom. During the class, we will have regular opportunities for peer-based learning and teaching activities. This model requires that students be prepared to participate, to take risks and share ideas, to respect diverse opinions, and be open to challenging yourself each class.

Personal Issues and Special Accommodations

Please see me if you have any concerns about the class, your participation in the class, or have personal issues that relate to the class. I am more than happy to meet with you at any point to discuss your situation or to address any special accommodations. I am also available to assist you with accessing school or university-based resources you may need during the semester.

As a reminder, if you will require special accommodations for class and/or assignments, please see me as soon as possible. Any special needs or accommodations must be documented by the Office of Students with Disabilities and presented to me by the

drop/add deadline to ensure proper accommodations can be made.

Grading Rubric

Scores on the preceding assignments are cumulative and will be converted to a final letter grade at the end of the semester according to the following scale:

94-100 =A

91-93 = A-

87-90 = B+

84-86 = B

81-83 = B-

77-80 = C+

74-76 = C

71-73 = C-

67-70 = D+

64-66 = D

60-63 = D-

Evaluation Component

I plan to evaluate use the lessons learned from class activities to further research on engaged curriculum and learning activities for community change. We will do this periodically throughout class using brief surveys or questionnaires to gain feedback about activities, skills, and lessons learned. I may also ask to use final papers as examples of class learning. You are under no obligation to participate. All responses will be anonymous. Any paper experts will be used without attribution. Participation or non-participation will in NO way impact your class grade. We will use the data gathered from class to generate findings for peer-reviewed papers and conference presentations.

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should be turned in, hard copy in class, with the exceptions of questions which should be posted to the class forum.

Reminder: Due dates are firm. I expect that assignments will be turned in on the day they are due unless there are extenuating circumstances. I reserve the right to mark down papers ½ a grade for each day late in fairness to classmates who turn papers in on-time.

Participation (15%) DUE: throughout semester

Participation will be graded based on overall attendance, effort, engagement throughout semester, and in class/brought to class reflections/worksheets. The worksheets will be non-graded, but will be used in class, and include the following:

- 1) Individual Assessment Worksheet on their experiences in and motivations for community action and social change (Due for January 20th--Students will use this to inform their storytelling during Week 2 of class)
- 2) Participation worksheet assessments (Self- goals)
- 3) Top 5 worksheet (Last class)

Reading Questions & Social Justice Blog Reflections (15 %) DUE: throughout semester

- On every designated reading discussion week (week 4-5, 9-13- a total of 7 weeks of class) students will be expected to contribute ONE discussion question (can be from one reading, or connected to the theme for the week- note one question only, not one per reading) that can be used to inform class/small group discussion. Questions will be posted on Ctools/Canvas under "Forum" by 5pm on Sunday. Questions turned in after that time will not be accepted. Questions will be graded for completion. (7 points)
- Throughout the semester, I will ask you to "follow" a social justice blog/ social justice events in the news. This can be a blog of your own choosing. It could also include following social justice/organizing efforts in the local/national newspapers. Each week, I expect that you will read the blog/newspaper and bring these ideas into class, as appropriate. I will also ask that you take 4 of the blog posts/articles and write a 1 page reflection about the ideas being discussed, the issues, and your connection/reaction to them as they relate to class. While, the content of the reflections will be up to you, the best reflections will also touch on or tie to class topics. Over the course of the semester, you are required to write 4 reflections. Each reflection will be graded on 2 point scale (1=partial credit, 2=full credit) based on level of depth in discussion, critical analysis, reflection to class and your own thinking. Reflections should be turned in along

with a copy of the blog post. Reflections can be turned in any time, but all must be turned in by April 14th. (8 points)

Learning From History (30%) DUE: Feb 24th

Students will select a historical social justice movement or organization from a selected list. Alternative topics options are also possible but must be approved. A list of topics will be provided in class on January 20th.

Students will conduct research and write a 8-10 page double spaced research paper based on your research that covers the areas:

Background

- What is the movement/organization about? What is its history?
- Why did/does the movement occur? What are the social justice issues that it is/was trying to challenge/change?

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

- How did the movement/organization view/define community action and social change?
- What did social justice look like for the organization/movement?
- What were some of the underlying principles/frameworks/core values of driving the work?

Activities and Approaches to Work

- What approaches/methods were used?
- What were some of the examples of their efforts for community action and social change?
- What/how did the movement organization approach its work?

Strengths and Limitations

- What were/are some of the strengths to their efforts? What were their accomplishments?
- What were/are some the challenges and/or limitations to their approaches/efforts? Why?

Learning from History

- What can you learn from this movement for your own work?
- Why and how does this movement matter for CASC?

In addition to the paper, students will prepare a 1-2 page fact-sheet that they will be asked to share with the class. The fact sheet should cover the topics listed above. We'll use the class on Feb 24th for each student to provide a brief overview of their paper and then for small group informal presentations of learnings from the paper and the fact sheet.

Semester-long project of Community Action and Social Change (40%)

- Students will develop a semester-long project based in their passion or interest/desire to learn about or further your own efforts in Community Action & Social Change
- **Step 1: Proposal (2.5% of total):** Students will prepare a short proposal form to discuss the issue they are working on, why this issue is important to CASC, and the project they plan to pursue. Students will be asked to develop a “Root Cause Tree” as part of their proposal. In addition to describing their project, students should include any areas they feel they will need support around. Students will get feedback (either written or in person) to support their project plan.
- **Step 2: Action Project (25% of total):** Students will develop an action project. Examples of projects include:
 - Prepare a resource guide/Tool Kit with curriculum, websites, student organizations around a topic (e.g. educational justice, prison reform, racial justice) or approach to community change work (e.g. community organizing, community facilitation, popular education). In addition to the tool kit, prepare a 5-7 pg. paper that outlines why the resource guide is needed, what the issue that you’re working on, and provide a synthesis of the materials for the reader.
 - Develop an organizational strategy/action plan for an organization, program or a campaign for campus (could be current or proposed). In addition to the strategy chart, write a 5-7 page paper that accompanies the strategy/action to discuss the broader issues, the research done to develop the strategy/action, an overview of the strategy, and the potential for implementing the plan on campus.
 - Engage in a current campaign/action on a current issue. Document your participation in at least 3-4 meetings/events. Develop a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats) “map” to showcase the campaign’s work and approach. Write a 5-7 page paper that analyzes the campaign’s approach to address the issue, including the 1) theory of change for the campaign, 2) the goals, strategies, actions of the campaign, and 3) your analysis of the outcome of the SWOT and the work of the campaign to date.
 - Develop a one-day workshop curriculum on a specific social justice topic that could be implemented in the community/on campus with related

curriculum and resources. Be prepared to pilot the workshop, even if to a group of peers. Write a 5-7 page summary of what you did and why, what you learned from piloting the workshop, and what you would do to take this to the next level.

- Conduct 3 Interviews with current social justice leaders on issues, transcribe the interviews, and write a 5-7 page paper that analyzes your learning and the takeaways across the interviews
- Conduct a research project on a social justice topic that could inform campus or community action. Share your research materials and write a 5-7 pg. paper of that summarizes the findings.
- Read a CASC- Themed Book and (1) prepare a 5-7 pg. paper that discusses the main themes and the application to community change work and (2) provide a resource guide for using the books to discuss social justice issues. Examples of books include:
 - Nicolas Kristof & Sheryl WuDunn “Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide”
 - Michelle Alexander “The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness”
 - Rinku Sen & Fekkak Mamdouh “Accidental American: Immigration and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization”
 - Angus Deaton, “The Great Escape: Health, Wealth and the Origins of Inequality”
 - Lisa Delpit “Other People’s Children” or “The Skin that We Speak”
 - Angela Davis “Are Prisons Obsolete?”
 - You may also suggest your own book.
- **Step 4: Reflection Paper (10% of total):** In addition to the project materials, students will develop 3-5 page paper that discusses the following:
 - Why did you select this project issue?
 - What did you do? Why did you approach your project in this way?
 - What did you learn from your project? What did you learn from your process?
 - Why does/will this matter for CASC work?
 - Based on your project learning and class learning (topics, themes and readings), what are three key takeaways for you for future CASC work?
- **Step 5: Project Sharing (2.5% of total):** Students will be prepared to share projects with class in a 10 minute presentation. Students will be asking to prepare a power point presentation/poster presentation that captures their work, their learnings, and take aways for CASC. A template for sharing posters will be provided.

- **Due Dates:** Project Materials & Reflection Paper will be due on April 14th.

Extra Credit (each worth points/2% each, up to 4points/4% total)

- Attend a movie, rally, meeting, speaker, concert that relates to social justice or an issue you are passionate about.
- Provide some kind of documentation about your participation.
- Write a 2 page summary of your experience and why/how this matters to your own work for CASC.
- Two extra credit summaries can be turned in over the course of the semester. All extra credit must be turned in by April 14th.

305 ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Written assignments	Reading questions/discussion days * DUE ON SUNDAY, 5PM- POST TO FORUM
1	January 13		
2	January 20	Individual Assessment Worksheet	
3	January 27		
4	Feb 3		Reading questions due
5	Feb 10	Project proposal	Reading questions due
6	Feb 17		
7	Feb 24	Learning from History paper due	
8	March 3	<i>Winter Break</i>	
9	March 10		Reading questions due
10	March 17		Reading questions due
11	March 24		Reading questions due
12	March 31		Reading questions due
13	April 7		Reading questions due
14	April 14	All components of Final Project of Community Action and Social Change (action project & reflection paper) Class Presentations	
15	April 21	Class Presentations continued 5 Core Take Aways Worksheet	

CLASS CALENDAR

I. BUILDING COMMUNITY & EXPLORING FOUNDATIONS (Week 1-3)

Week 1: Introduction to Community Action and Social Change (Jan 13)

What is Community Action and Social Change? What is the CASC Minor? What is 305 and where does it fit?

What is social work as a field? How does SW relate to community action and social change? What are the critiques? What are the possibilities?

What should you expect for this class? What goals do you plan to set for yourself? What do you want to learn? What do you want to gain?

What is a participation goal you can set for yourself? What's a critical question you have that you want to learn more about?

Reading:

- NASW Code of Ethics
- Szakos & Szakos, Ch. 1 What is Community Organizing?

Week 2: Understanding our Story: Why are we here? What do we care about? How does social identity shape our understandings? (Jan 20)

Due Today: Worksheet

What are our stories? How do we explore our own ideas, experiences, and interests in the context of community action & social change? How does our own story shape our understanding.

Why do stories matter for community change work? How can and have stories been used to facilitate change? How are our stories tools for change? How has storytelling motivated others to take risks and create change?

Readings:

- Kahn, S., Ch. 7 Strengthen the Story, Creative Community Organizing
- Szakos & Szakos, Ch. 5 What Motivates Community Organizers
- Pyles, Ch. 2- Self-Aware Organizer, Progressive Community Organizing
- Ganz, M. Telling your Public Story & Making Social Movements Happen (OPTIONAL)

Week 3: Understanding Community Action and Social Change Concepts (Jan 27)

How do we understand the terms/concepts that we use for community action and social change work, such as social justice, power, privilege, discrimination, oppression, empowerment, and equity? How are they defined? How do we develop common understandings?

How does language matter for community change work? How can we critically reflect on language and our own perspectives? How do our social identities shape our understandings? How do these concepts relate to our own practice, such as entering communities, working with others, and avoiding “savior complexes”?

What are the norms/guidelines through which our class should operate?

Readings:

- Iris Marion Young, Five Faces of Oppression
- Roger Fisher- A Case for Humility (Social Justice Educators Blog)
- Pharr, S. Reflections on Liberation, From Readings in Diversity and Social Justice
- Reisch, M. – Ch. 1 Defining Social Justice in a Socially Unjust World, Educating for Social Justice

II. FRAMEWORKS, APPROACHES , AND HISTORY (WEEK 4-7)

Week 4: Community Change as a Process: Systems, Structures, Power (Feb 3)

What is community action and social change? What are core concepts? What are the tensions?

What are the systems, structures and power in play in understanding community change? How can we analyze social justice issues to understand community action and social change processes?

How do we unpack an issue looking at multiple systems and structures?

Readings:

Process & Structure

- Warren, M. Ch. 1- How Community Organizing Works, Match on Dry Grass
- Chambers Ch 1- The World as it is and the World as it Should Be, Roots for Radicals
- Checkoway, B. Core Concepts for Community Change

Zero Tolerance Issue

- Student Advocacy Center: Nowhere to Go
- Review: Student Advocacy Center website

Week 5: Exploring Approaches: CASC in Practice (Feb 10)

Due today: Proposal of Project

What does community action and social change look like in practice? What are the approaches? What are some of the activities? What are common threads across work? What are some of the differences?

What's the relationship between "micro approaches" and "Macro approaches" in community action and social change work? What's the differences between the various models (Gamble & Weil) and the critical approaches (Pyles)? How do these various organizations connect to the models and approaches described the readings?

Readings/Materials:

- Gamble & Weil, Ch. 2 Conceptual Frameworks and Models for Community Practice (focus on the 8 models)
- Pyles, L. Ch. 5 Critical Organizing Frameworks, Progressive Community Organizing
- Visit and Review Web Examples of the following organizations:
 - Southern Echo: <http://southernecho.org/>
 - Chicago Freedom Schools: <http://chicagofreedomschool.org/>
 - Neutral Zone: <http://neutral-zone.org/wp/>
 - Center for Story Based Strategy: <http://www.storybasedstrategy.org/>
 - Californians United for Responsible Budget: <http://curbprisonspending.org>
 - Interfaith Coalition for Peace and Justice: <http://www.icpj.net/program-areas/>
 - Allied Media: <https://www.alliedmedia.org/>

Week 6: Learning From Grace (Feb 17)

This class will focus on learning from Grace Lee Boggs, an activist and social change agent with a legacy of social justice, community action, and social change. We'll watch her documentary together, and then discuss the lessons learned from her work and life for us. What are the critical questions for consideration about community action and social change? What are critical issues for practice?

Readings:

- hooks, b. Ch. 5: Theory as Liberatory Practice, Teaching to Transgress
- Film guide: <http://americanrevolutionaryfilm.com/wp-content/themes/boggs/files/pov-americanrevolutionary-discussion-guide-color.pdf>
- Come prepared to think about the important issues facing your own work
- MOVIE (in class): Grace Lee Boggs

Week 7: Learning From History (Feb 17th)

Due today: History Paper & Presentation

What can we learn from history and theory to guide community action and social change work? What are the major movements and organizations that have shaped community practice? What lessons and ideas can we draw from these movements for our own work in community change?

NO READINGS.... History paper share outs

Week 8: NO CLASS - WINTER BREAK

III. SKILLS, PRACTICES & SPECIAL TOPICS (Week 9-12)

Week 9: Building Relationships & Facilitating Participation: Role of Social Media and Technology (Mar 10)

Relationships- building them and facilitating participation from them- are key to CASC efforts. What are the skills required for building relationships? How does this matter for community change work? What are strategies for recruiting and sustaining participation?

How does social media change or impact building relationships and facilitating engagement? In what ways does it help? In what ways does it hurt? What are the implications for our own work? How do we see the future of social media for our own social change efforts?

Readings:

- Chambers, E. Ch. 2. The Relational Meeting, Roots for Radicals: Organizing for Power, Action & Justice
- Hardina, D. Ch. 2. Enter the Community and Using Interviewing Skills to Find Out about People, Interpersonal Practices for Community Organization
- Hardina, Ch. 1- Optional (provides overview and some context)

Social Media:

- Small Change: The Revolution will Not be Tweeted, Gladwell, New Yorker, 2010
- Review article: <http://journalistsresource.org/studies/politics/citizen-action/digital-activism-organizing-theory-research-review-reading-list>- watch related videos within blog

Week 10: Building Community through Innovation: Arts, Social Justice, and Civic Participation (Mar 17)

(NOTE: REQUIRES ATTENDANCE AT MAR 8th NIGHT SCHOOL OR MAR 14th PERFORMANCE, OR RELATED ARTS/SOCIAL JUSTICE EVENT)

What role can the arts have on social justice and civic participation? How can they be an innovative way to examine and explore community change and community empowerment? How can the arts be a vehicle for social justice action and community dialogue?

Guest Speaker: Mark Rohd, Discussion with Center for Performance and Civic Engagement

Readings: Visit and Read website:

- <http://howlround.com/the-new-work-of-building-civic-practice>
- <http://www.dancemagazine.com/issues/April-2014/Man-of-the-moment>
(Overview of Kyle Abraham)
- <http://abrahaminmotion.org> (read re: Watershed & When the Wolves Came In)
- <http://www.alliedmedia.org>
- <http://www.heidelberg.org>
- Richards-Schuster, K & O'Doherty, R. (2012) Staying Home: Appalachian Youth Re-envision their Identities, Reconstruct Community and Take Action, In Fisher, S. & Smith, B. (Eds.). The Struggle for Appalachia: Identity, Place and Movement-Building. (Optional- case example of youth media and community activism)

Week 11: Organizing, Strategy, and Action (Mar 24)

What is community organizing as a specific approach? What is critical about organizing as an approach to change?

How and why does strategy matter for creating change? What does developing strategy involve?

Guest Speaker: Nick Allen, SEIU International Organizer

Readings:

- Ganz, M. What is Community Organizing?
- Bobo, K, et al. Ch. 4 , Strategy, Organizing for Social Change
- “Strong Voice in ‘Fight for 15’ fast-Food Wage Campaign”, NY Times-
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/05/business/in-fast-food-workers-fight-for-15-an-hour-a-strong-voice-in-terrance-wise.html>
- Warren, M. Ch. 5 Weaving a Tapestry that Won't Unravel, Match on Dry Grass (OPTIONAL- another case example of community organizing focused on educational reform)

Week 12: Exploring Coalition Building in a Community Context (Mar 31)

What role do coalitions play in community change work? What are strategies for building coalitions across differences? What can we learn from the examples of others? What are the ways we build coalitions in our own work?

***SITE VISIT to Neutral Zone- Meet at Neutral Zone at 4:30 *** Those that can't be there at 4:30 should plan to meet us there at 5:30. Class will likely end by 7:30pm.

Readings:

- Young, S., Richards-Schuster, K., Davis, A., & Pellegrine, I. Ch. 4. Creating Spaces for the Next Generation of Civil Rights in Mississippi: Youth Participation in the Mississippi Safe Schools Coalition. Civic Youth Work
- Sen, R. United We Stand. Stir it Up
- Civic collaboration:
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/accelerating_civic_innovation_through_strategic_doing

Week 13 : Reality of Community Change: Sustainability, Self-Care & Critical Questions for Practice (April 9)

What is the reality of CASC? Given the complexity of systems, how do we think about our work and our potential for change? What are strategies for approaching community action social change work?

How do we work for sustainable social change? What's needed? What is our role/are our roles in working for change? How do we think about the "level of change"- individual, policy, community, system in our own work? Where can/should our impact be? What are the critical things to remember for our own work/practice?

Readings

- Debra E. Meyerson and Maureen A. Scully, Tempered radicalism and the Politics of Ambivalence and Change
- The Disease of "Busyness"
- CASC Paper
- Letters to Ourselves as Future Activists- Michelle Kuo, Pg. 215-219 (From Letters From Young Activists, Ed. Berger, Boudin, & Farrow, 2005)

IV. SHARING OUR WORK AND TAKING CASC FORWARD

Week 14: CLASS PRESENTATIONS (April 14)

Due: Final Project and Reflection Paper

Week 15: CLASS PRESENTATIONS & Take Aways (April 21)

Due: Core Take Aways from Semester Worksheet, and Future Questions

What are the takeaways for you? What will you do with what you have learned? What are questions for the future?