Course Description

This laboratory course will focus on practical skills for community organization, management, and policy/evaluation for a diverse democratic society.

These fields are distinct and also interrelated. All sections of the course will provide practical skills and real-world content which touches on all of them, although some sections are organized around specific areas of expertise and emphasize one of these fields, in this case community organization.

These fields share social work values to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty, and to understand social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.

The course assumes that each student is starting the course with a different level of experience, and the learning activities will be designed to move each one further along from his or her starting point.

Course Objectives

• Understand the changing context and core concepts of practice for a diverse democratic society.
• Develop knowledge of major models and methods of practice.
• Critically assess research findings, case studies, and best practices.
• Understand how to adapt practice skills for particular populations.
• Identify approaches that strengthen socially just and culturally sensitive practice.
• Employ practice skills for effective organizational and community initiatives.
• Examine questions of ethics and values arising in the field.

Course Design

Responsibilities include readings, discussions, problem solving, project planning, written assignments, individual and group exercises, studio-based learning, and a class project addressing real-world situations. Community collaborators will address specific topics in areas of expertise.
**Competencies and Behaviors**

The Office of Field Instruction provides information on competencies and behaviors, and students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with their materials. Social workers are expected to:

Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

- Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.

- Social workers distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom; analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

- Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.

- Social workers advocate for human rights and engage in practices that advance social justice.

Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

- Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to inform practice.

Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

- Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.
Understand and utilize culturally competent and intercultural methods of practice, emphasizing methods to:

- Assess and diagnose community needs and assets in ways which gather information, increase participation, and strengthen social diversity;
- Build organizational capacity and institutional structures that regularize roles and relationships, strengthen representation and dialogue of diverse social and cultural groups, and increase influence by building coalitions with other organizations;
- Formulate plans and strategies that involve individuals and groups in efforts to set goals, generate program ideas, make organizational decisions, respect differences in communications and conflict styles, and take steps for collective action;
- Implement plans, programs, actions or tactics conducive to organizational or community situations, build constituency support, and collaborate and negotiate with diverse groups relevant to implementation.
- Monitor and evaluate activities through techniques that assess activities and outcomes, raise critical consciousness, motivate participation, and contribute to improvement and change.

**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, through organizations, communities, societies, and in conducting policy focused research in these areas. Social workers promote the general welfare through working toward the elimination of discrimination, expand choices for all persons, encourage respect for diversity, advocate for progressive changes in social policies, and encourage informed public participation.

**Relationship of Course to Curricular Themes**

Multiculturalism and Diversity: Students will identify ways to 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 to strengthen social change and social justice through organizational and community capacity-building in economically disinvested and squinted 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.
Class Participation

Class participation is instrumental to the learning process. 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. (10 percent).

Course Readings

Course readings and class preparation are central to our learning process. You might be asked to open a session, or called upon to share your thoughts on a reading. Most course readings are available on CTools. Please check CTools to confirm their availability and contact the instructor if anything is awry. Books for purchase are available at Common Language Bookstore 317 Braun Court, Kerrytown, Ann Arbor.

Generative Interviewing

Generative interviewing is a small-group activity that employs structured interviewing techniques to help participants to discuss knowledge, make connections, share ideas, etc. In threes, one person asks questions, another responds, and the other observes and gives feedback.

Reading Circles

Reading circles are small, peer-led groups whose members discuss the same materials. Each group is limited to six members, including:

- Facilitator, who asks good questions, listens intently, keeps on task, and make sure that members participate.
- Illustrator, who relates the discussion to course readings.
- Critic, who comes prepared to discuss significant or provocative issues.
- Summarizer, who summarizes the discussion.

On-Line Resources

There are various on-line resources which are relevant for your work in the course, including Community Tool Kit.

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 personal or social 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.
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<td>Engaging Community Residents</td>
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Class Assignments

Each assignment enables you to employ and refer to the course materials and weekly readings, organize your thoughts, and make specific points about the topic.

1. Prepare a rough draft for an annotated bibliography, including five books, articles, or documents, and two websites related to an educational justice issue. An annotated bibliography is a list of citations, each of which is followed by a few sentences which summarize the information, as a way to get started on an issue of initial (but not necessarily final) interest. Please upload your bibliography to SW 512 Sections 001 & 002 - Draft Annotated Bibliographies and bring a hard copy to class. (Due September 21, 5 percent).

2. Prepare a two-page paper in which you define “educational justice,” discuss an example, and assess the example from a social justice lens. (Due September 28, 10 percent).

3. Prepare a three-page paper in which you describe a social identity group and a few of its distinct characteristics, elaborate on at least 10 steps for a participatory process for involving them in an educational justice issue at the community level, and conclude with a statement of how your steps are appropriate for the group. The social group might be distinguished by age, class, cause, culture, ethnicity, geography, gender, ideology, race, religion, sexual orientation, or another identity. (October 12, 15 percent).

4. Using a social justice lens, write a two-page analysis of a public meeting that you observe during the semester. Public meetings are everywhere, e.g., city councils, school boards, disability rights commissions. We will discuss content you might consider, e.g., participation, representation, communications, decision-making. (Due November 9, 10 percent).

5. Write a fact sheet on the issue that you are addressing during the semester. A fact sheet is a written summary of the issue and arguments in a clear layout and simple language that busy people can easily grasp. What is the issue? What are the key facts? What is the solution? What should be done? (Due November 23, 10 percent).

Group Assignment

Working in groups of 3-4 persons, prepare and present a report and professional poster in which you propose a process for involving young people in addressing an educational justice problem or issue at the school or community level in metropolitan Detroit or another metropolitan area of your choice. (12-15 typewritten pages, draft due November 30, final report due December 14).
Educational justice is a process of strengthening equality of opportunities and outcomes for all persons in schools or communities. It includes efforts to address inequalities and injustices; challenge prejudice and discrimination; promote active participation of young people, and promote and protect their rights.

Here is an illustrative list of topics, only to stimulate thinking:

1. Responding to prejudice and discrimination at various levels.
2. Engaging adult allies - e.g., teachers, parents, community members - for educational reform.
3. Making universities more accessible and supportive for underserved groups.
4. Safe schools for learning, e.g., bullying.
5. Immigrant educational justice.
7. Restorative justice as an alternative to zero tolerance.
8. Youth leadership development academy.
10. Increasing intergroup dialogue among diverse groups.
11. Youth participation in public policy, e.g., McKinney-Vento Act, civil rights education.
12. Social justice in suburban communities that are changing.

Using studio-based learning, we will work in teams around specific issues. Each team will define the problem, gather empirically-based information, analyze the findings, and prepare the written report and poster presentation.

Studio-based learning is an approach often associated with architecture education. To the extent possible, we will relate the course readings and assignments to the topic. You will have time to meet in class sessions, share your work, and receive feedback from others in the class.

The report and poster will be presented to a panel of people who share your commitment. Reports are expected to provide solutions, and refer to course materials, research studies, and best practices in the field. The panelists are highly passionate, eager to learn from your work, and might incorporate your findings in their programs.

Posters will require advance planning and small costs by team members. Information on campus poster printing is available at www.itcs.umich.edu/sites/printing/poster.php
Course Readings

Educational Justice


Community Organization I


Community Organization II

- Warren & Mapp, Chapter 5.
- "Jane Addams," *Wikipedia*
Entering Communities


Gathering Information

- McKnight, J. & Kreitzmann, J. Mapping community capacity. In M. Minkler, Chapter 10.
- Metropolitan Youth Policy Fellows, *Youth in Metropolitan Detroit Speak Out*, report plus video.

Participatory Planning


Increasing Intergroup Dialogue


Socially-Just Management


**Community-Based Policy Advocacy**

• Advocating for change, plus examples. Community Tool Box. Chapter 10, at http://ctb.ku.edu/en/advocating-change


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Student Information Form

Name:

Address:

E-Mail: Telephone:

UM program:

Professional goal:

Primary social identity group(s) at present, e.g., place, race, ethnicity, social class, age, gender, sexual orientation, faith, (dis)ability, nation of origin, tribal or indigenous affiliation, other:

Community experience that stands out in your mind:

Interest in course topic:

An experience or talent which might be useful to the class – e.g., teaching, facilitation, dialogue.

Something that will help us get to know you better: