Course Description

This course examines strategies for engaging and empowering young people, with emphasis on approaches in racially segregated and economically disinvested areas. It considers core concepts of youth empowerment at the individual, organizational, and community levels; models and methods of practice; age-appropriate and culturally-responsive approaches; roles of young people and adult allies; and perspectives on practice in a diverse democracy. The course will draw upon best practices from grassroots organizing, civic engagement, youth development, and child welfare.

Course Objectives

1. Understand the core concepts of youth empowerment in a diverse democracy;

2. Analyze major models and methods of age-appropriate and culturally-responsive practice;

3. Develop knowledge from empirically-based efforts by young people to create change; and

4. Identify problems and issues of young people in racially segregated and economically disinvested areas.

Relationship of Course to Curricular Themes

- Multiculturalism and Diversity: Students will identify ways in which youth empowerment can address a range of diversity dimensions, through practice methods that both recognize differences of groups and also build bridges across cultural boundaries.

- Social Justice and Social Change: Emphasis will be placed on how youth empowerment can strengthen social justice and create community change.

- Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation: Students will learn how community residents can affect the quality of services by increasing their involvement through program planning, organizational development, and community change.
• Behavioral and Social Science Research: Critical analysis of relevant research from diverse social science disciplines and professional fields will contribute to understanding of empirically-based practice.

• Ethics and Values: We will address ethical and value issues, including ones that relate to the code of ethics of the social work profession.

**Course Design**

Responsibilities include readings, discussions, experiential exercises, and written assignments.

**Class Climate**

We want to create a classroom climate in which everyone can explore their own interests; identify new areas for present and future learning; and work with others on projects.

**Using Laptops**

Using laptops for taking notes is acceptable if you have a legitimate reason, but there is evidence that use of laptops adversely affects the learning process. I prefer that you do not use laptops in class, understand that this might be difficult, and will make exceptions in special situations. But I believe that this approach will be best for our work during the semester, and ask that you give this a try.

A recent study by the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) has found that the use of laptops by students affects their engagement in class activities, understanding of course content, and perceptions of their own learning. In the study, students reported feeling “somewhat or significantly distracted” when other students seated near them were using laptops.

**Academic Integrity**

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

**Disabilities Statement**

If you have a condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please schedule a confidential appointment with me to discuss accommodations for your needs. 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 and I am available through e-mail, telephone, and by appointment.
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Reading List

Human Rights


Illustrative Examples

- Harlem Children’s Zone
- LA Youth Justice Coalition
- Padres & Jovenes Unidos,
- Logan Square Neighborhood Association
- Boston Mayor’s Youth Council


Core Concepts

Young People as Change Agents

- Checkoway, B. (2013). Education for democracy by young people in community-based organizations. Youth & Society 45, 389-403

Adults as Allies


Techniques for Engaging Young People


Bridging Differences through Youth Dialogues


Social Media for Social Justice


Organizing Against Hate


**Youth Civil Rights Leadership**

• Teaching Tolerance’s Anti-bias Framework, at www.tolerance.org/seminar/teaching-tolerance-s-anti-bias-framework

**Socially-Just Schools: From Zero Tolerance to Restorative Justice**

• StopBullying.gov

**Increasing Access to Higher Education**

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. Students will start each session with some thoughts on the readings.

Assignment 1 (ungraded)

Jot down some notes about each case study and bring them to class for our discussion.

Assignment 2

Write a “white paper” in which you define youth empowerment, select a community or community group, describe its distinct characteristics and concerns, and discuss at least five culturally-responsive methods for engaging and empowering its members in a youth empowerment process. (3-5 typewritten pages, due January 20, 20 percent).

Your paper should include a bibliography that includes three publications about the group, and three about youth empowerment.

White papers enable people to make the case for an issue. Please prepare the paper in an attractive format suitable for community leaders or agency officials who are positioned to do something about it.

“Community” is when people take collective action around a common purpose. It might be expressed by place, race, ethnicity, social class, age, gender, sexual orientation, faith, (dis)ability, nation of origin, tribal or other social identity.

The community or community group should be one in which you want to invest time during the semester, and for which information is available. Please check the feasibility by searching for information about the group.

Assignment 3

Write a white paper in which you analyze an empirically-based example of youth empowerment in terms of its ability to engage and empower young people in an issue. (3-5 typewritten pages, due February 18, 20 percent), for example:

- Organizing against hate
- Increasing access to higher education
- Juvenile Justice: Police brutality against young people
- Black Lives Matter Movement
- Arts for youth empowerment
- Standardized testing and youth disinvestment
- Youth voice in civic and political arenas
• Youth empowerment and economic futures
• Engaging adult allies for educational reform.
• Safe schools for learning, e.g., bullying.
• Immigrant/refugee educational justice.
• Restorative justice as an alternative to zero tolerance.
• Youth leadership development academy.
• Youth involvement in community-based research.
• Increasing intergroup dialogue among diverse groups.

**Assignment 4**

Working in groups of 3 persons, prepare a white paper and poster for the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, in which you propose a strategy for engaging and empowering young people to address an issue. We will invite a few foundation community leaders to come to class to provide feedback and you should bring a poster to assist in your presentation. (12-15 typewritten pages’, draft due March 31, final due April 14).

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.

Posters will require advance planning and small costs by team members. Information is available at [www.itcs.umich.edu/sites/printing/poster](http://www.itcs.umich.edu/sites/printing/poster)
Student Information Form

Name:
E-Mail:
Telephone:
UM program:

Professional goal:

Interest in course topic:

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: