



SW 674
Community-Based Policy Advocacy

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Spring/Summer 2016

SW 674: Community-Based Policy Advocacy

Subject: Community Organization

Mondays: 1:00 PM-5:00 PM

Classroom: B770

Office: 2764 SSW

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.

10% of the final grade will be based on **ACTIVE** class participation reporting on Macro News articles, practice exercises and ability to discuss assigned readings.

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. **Progressive Community Organizing: Reflective Practice in a Globalizing World, 2nd edition. Loretta Pyles, 2013
ISBN 978-0415538084**
2. **Community Tool Box, 2013 - Work Book selections to be provided.**

Intensive Focus on PODS

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Course Schedule

May 9th

Opening and Orientation

- **Introductions and overview of the course**
- **Discussion of core concepts**
- **Formation of Advocacy Groups**

Readings:

- **Text Chapter 1.**
- **Tool Box , Module1.**

May 16th

- Discussion of Core Concepts. Practice in relationship to Final Project.

Readings:

- **Text chapter 2 and 3 Discussion**
- **Tool box Module 2 Project Practice and Discussion**
- **Groups Finalized. Begin Research**

May 23rd

Readings:

- **Text Chapter 4 and 5**
- **Tool box Module 3 - Practice and discussion in relationship to the final project.**
- **Core Concepts discussed. Group Project time allocation.**

June 6th

Community or Political Organization Site visit. Preparation for presentation.

June 13th

Readings:

- **Present site visits interviews in class**
- **Text chapters 6**
- **Tool box chapter 4 and 5 Core Concepts discussed as it relates to final project. Group Project time allocation.**

June 20th

Readings:

- **Text chapter 7 and 8**
- **Tool box module 6. Core Concepts discussed as it relates to final project. Group Project time allocation.**

June 27th

Readings:

- **Text 9 and 10**
- **Tool box Module 9, Core Concepts discussed as it relates to final project. Group Project time allocation.**
- **Community Advocacy policy paper due.**

July 11th

- **Text Chapter 11**
- **Tool box chapter, 10 Discuss and practice skills.**
- **Group Project Allocation. Group project time allocation.**

July 18th

Readings:

- **Text chapter 12**
- **Tool Box 11 Discuss and practice skills as they relate to final project. Engagement skills with Stakeholders. Practice skills.**

July 25th

Reading:

- **Tool Box Chapter 12 Discuss and practice skills as they relate to final project. Preparation for final Project.**

August 1st

Readings:

- **Community Policy Advocacy Presentations**

Wrap up.

Assignments

Assignment 1: In the News Macro Political Policy issues. 10% to be discussed at the beginning of each class. Each student will present a minimum of 3 news articles throughout the semester with a focus on Macro community policy issues. A copy of the article will be turned in. When presenting the article the student is to discuss the problem presented, the community effected, and possible solutions.

**Assignment 2: Site Visit and interview with a Community focused or Political organization. An additional handout to be provided. 20%
Due: June 13th See attached for specific instruction.**

**Assignment 3:Community Advocacy Policy Paper. 30% Due June 27th
See attached.**

Assignment 4: Community Advocacy Project. Small group project that you will work on throughout the semester. 40% Due August 1st See attached.

Class Participation

Class participation is expected 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. Absence from class might result in lowering your grade.

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

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. **PLEASE ONLY USE LAPTOPS FOR CLASS WORK.**

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.