

**Social Work 305.003: Theories and Practices for Community Action and Social Change**

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**Office Hours: Fridays, 12-1**

**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.

**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
2. Students will explore the meaning of community and social
3. Students will develop skills in interviewing, relationship--building, and group
4. Students will gain awareness of historical framework and theory regarding community action and social
5. Students will engage in policy and structural analysis with regard to community action and social
6. Students will develop an understanding of community--building and organizing

**Readings/Class Texts** - All readings will be posted to Canvas.

**Grading and Assignments**

The class requires a set of assignments aimed at:

- gaining critical awareness about one's self as a community change agent both inside and outside the classroom
- building knowledge about core concepts, historical frameworks, and key people,
- developing and engaging with peers in critical discussion of key ideas and issues, and
- applying the lessons and learning to one's current interest and future work

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

### **Participation (15%)**

Students are expected to participate in class. Generally, students are expected to come to class, having read the materials, and prepared with examples to share-- own experience, from current events, and historical knowledge. Class will include discussion, and small group and engaged activities.

Participation will be graded based on overall attendance, effort, engagement throughout semester, and completion of small outside of class activities (e.g. worksheets, current events, developing reading questions) meant to enhance in class discussion and engagement.

**Extra Credit** (each worth points up to 5 points total - 2.5points/per) - note these cannot be used to complete other course requirements

- 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 1 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 11 Dec.

### **Attendance Expectations**

I expect that students will be in class on time, engaged and ready to start at 9:10. I will expect that people come to class having read the materials and bringing examples from the readings and from one's experience to share.

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. Unless we are actively using the computers, computers must stay closed and away during class time.

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 of 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 lost of points, failure of a grade, and/or other consequences. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

### **Safety & Emergency Preparedness**

In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

All University of Michigan students, faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom. In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734)764-SSWB(7793) for up-to-date School closure information.

Be Prepared. Familiarize yourself with the emergency card posted next to the phone in every classroom/meeting room. Review the information on the emergency evacuation sign (located nearest the door) and locate at least (2) emergency exits nearest the classroom.

If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services and/or email [ssw-ADAcpliance@umich.edu](mailto:ssw-ADAcpliance@umich.edu). Office of Student Services, School of Social Work | Room 1748, 734-936-0961

For more information view the annual Campus Safety Statement at [http://www.dpss.umich.edu/ \(Links to an external site.\)](http://www.dpss.umich.edu/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site.).

Register for UM Emergency Alerts at [http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergency-management/alert/ \(Links to an external site.\)](http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergency-management/alert/).

**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.

### **Calendar and Assignments**

9 Sep: Introductions to Social Work, CASC & Amazing Grace!

- [Reardon](#) , "Case & Cause in Social Work Education" (2012)
- [NASW](#) , "Code of Ethics" (2008)
- [Hadi & Sepler](#) , "Forward Space Guidelines" (2014)
- [Boggs, Ch 1](#) , "These are the Times to Grow our Souls" (2012)

Before our next class, please watch:

<http://billmoyers.com/segment/marshall-ganz-on-making-social-movements-matter/> (Links to an external site.)

What are your three most important takeaways from Marshall Ganz's interview with Bill Moyers? If you could pose one question for Ganz to answer, what would it be? Jot down your responses to these questions and be prepared to discuss them.

16 Sep: Storytelling - Where are You in Your Journey as an Agent of Community Action and Social Change?

- [Burghart](#) , "Know Yourself: A Key to Better Organizing" (1995)
- [Pyles, Ch 2](#) , "The Self-Aware Organizer" (2014)
- [Tatum](#) , "The Complexity of Identity: Who am I?" (2000)

Before the next class, please watch:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en) (Links to an external site.)

What are your three most important takeaways from “The Danger of a Single Story”? What ONE connection can you make between this TED Talk and the David reading?

Sep 23: Community-building within a PODS Framework

- [David, Ch 1](#), “What is Internalized Oppression, and So What?” (2014)
- [Fisher, A Case for Humility](#) ( Social Justice Educators Blog)
- [Kaur, Leaving the savior mentality behind](#) (Michigan Daily, February 25, 2014)
- [Response to Leaving the savior mentality behind](#) (Letter to Editor, Michigan Daily, March 17, 2014)
- [Toliver, et. al](#), “Police killings of unarmed Black people: Centering race and racism in human behavior and the social environment content” (2016)

**Individual Reflection Paper (10%)** - This paper is your reflection on the first three classes. Which communities are most important to you? What meaningful actions have you taken as a member of those communities? How would you describe the change(s), if any, related to those actions (individual, small group, programmatic, institutional, social, other)? How are these past experiences related to your interest in and your goals for this class? Please reference at least 3 assigned readings in your response, attach your notes on the Ganz interview, and upload prior to class on 30 Sep.

30 Sep: Bentley I – The Bentley Historical Library staff has graciously agreed to partner with our class. Please note that we are meeting at the Bentley during this session for an orientation to the policies, procedures and uses regarding archival research, the basis of Learning from History, your Semester-long Project.

### **Learning from History: Semester-long Project (45%)**

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 16 Sep. The purpose is to explore historical examples and to apply history to current CASC efforts.

Students will conduct research and write a 6-8 page double spaced research paper based on your research. Product must include the following information:

1. Why did you choose this topic? What drew you to this topic?
2. Discuss an overview of the movement/person and activities:
  - Why did/does the movement occur? What are the social justice issues that it is/was trying to challenge/change? Provide the background and history needed.
  - What were some of the underlying principles/frameworks/core values of driving the work?
  - What were some of the examples of their efforts for community action and social change? What/how did the movement organization approach its work?
3. Provide a critical assessment of the work’s strengths and limitations based on your analysis:

- 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? What is your analysis of their efforts?
4. Learning from History/Applying Ideas
- What can you learn from this movement for your own work?
  - Why and how does this movement matter for CASC?
  - What are the takeaways for you?

In addition to the paper, students will prepare a short Power Point or Prezi to share with the class. The Prezi or slides should cover an overview of the movement and the Learning from History takeaways. We'll use the class on 2 Dec for each student to provide a brief, final and public overview of their Semester-long Project.

7 Oct: Strategies and Roles

- [Checkoway](#) , "Six Strategies of Community Change" (1995)
- [Gamble and Weil](#) , "Conceptual Frameworks and Models for Community Practice" (2010)

14 Oct: Case Study

- [MLK](#) , "Letter from the Birmingham Jail" (1963)
- [Boggs, "Catching Up with Martin"](#)  (2012)
- Documentary - "Mighty Times: The Children's March" (2004)

21 Oct: Bentley II – This will be a working session, again hosted at the Bentley, and dedicated to your Learning from History project. At this point, in addition to identifying a topic for your archival research, please schedule at least ONE interview with a social justice leader of relevance to your topic.

### **Learning from History: Contextualizing Interviews (15%)**

Conduct at least 3 Interviews with a social justice leaders on an issue/topic that you are interested in, as it relates to your Learning from History topic. Transcribe the interviews.

Students will be asked to write a 1-2 page cover letter (plus additional attachments) that reflects on the project work and includes the following:

- What did you learn specifically from this work? How did this match what you hoped to learn?
- Why does your project this matter for CASC work, generally? How does it relate to core themes/concepts/ideas that we have talked about in class?
- Based on your project learning and class learning (topics, themes and readings), what are three key takeaways for you for future CASC work?

28 Oct: Panel – Past and present social justice leaders, related to selected Learning from History topics, will be invited to speak with our class.

- [Wernick, Woolford & Kulick](#), “LGBTQQ Youth Using Participatory Action Research and Theater to Effect Change: Moving Adult Decision-Makers to Create Youth-Centered Change” (2014)
- [Young, Richards-Schuster, Davis & Pellegrine](#), “Creating Spaces for the Next Generation of Civil Rights in Mississippi: Youth Participation in the Mississippi Safe Schools Coalition” (2013)
- [Metropolitan Youth Council](#), “YOUth Voices: Youth in Metropolitan Detroit Speak Out” (nd)
- Trillin, Jackson, 1964: And Other Dispatches from Fifty Years of Reporting about Race in America (2016).
- ["Introduction, Jackson, 1964"](#)
- ["Remembrances of Moderates Past"](#)
- [Moses & Cobb, Ch 1](#). Radical Equations: Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project (2001).

#### 4 Nov: A Progressive Organizing Spectrum?

- [Wink](#), “Jesus and Alinsky” (2004)
- [Werner & Bower](#), “Helping Health Workers Learn: A book of methods, aids, and ideas for instructors at the village level” (2005)
- [Pyles, Ch 5](#), “Critical Organizing Frameworks” (2014)

11 Nov: Bentley III – This will be a third working session, again graciously hosted by the Bentley staff. A portion of the class time will be allocated to updates on course material, including individual student progress on their respective projects.

#### 18 Nov: Interpersonal Social Work Skills for Community Practice

- Hardina, Chs 1-2 (2013)
- [“Introduction: The Application of Interpersonal Skills in Community Practice”](#)
- [“Entering the Community and Using Interviewing Skills to Find Out About People”](#)

2 Dec: Presentations – Each student to provide a brief, final and public overview of their Semester-long Project, using Prezi or Power Point.

#### 9 Dec: Future Selves – Takeaways and Reflections

In our final class together, we will reflect on the learning from the semester and discuss our takeaways. We’ll discuss ways to sustain our efforts as community change makers as well as to think about what we want to remember to tell our future selves. If needed, we’ll also finish the presentations from the week before.

- [Blog: The Disease of “Busyness”](#)

- [Letters to Ourselves as Future Activists](#)  -- Michelle Kuo, 215--219 (From Letters From Young Activists, Ed. Berger, Boudin, & Farrow, 2005)
- [Szakos & Szakos](#)  "Advice to Organizers"

**Final Paper: Letter to Our Future Selves (15%)** - This final paper is meant to be a way to apply class concepts and learning in meaningful ways. For this assignment you will write a letter (range of 3-5 pages, could be longer) to your future self. In the letter, please think about what you want to remind yourself about community action and social change. Be prepared to synthesize across the class learning, readings, activities, and assignments. Be as creative as you want, but the letter should reflect your learning from the class and your ability to apply the ideas and concepts to your own life. Due 11 Dec.