Title: Concepts and Techniques of Community Participation  
Course Number: SW 654  
Term: Fall 2016  
Credit Hours: 3  
Instructor: Bonnie Dockham, LMSW  
Contact Details: bonnie@cancersupportannarbor.org, 734-277-5911 (c)  
Time/Place: Friday, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, Room TBD  
Office Hours: By appointment

Please feel free to make appointments or ask questions via e-mail. Please allow 24 hours for email responses. Emails may not be returned over the weekend. In the subject line please put “SW654.” For brief questions, I will often be available during class breaks and following class.

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 specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. Please also contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G-664 Haven Hall, 734-763-3000 to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

This course utilizes the new M Canvas Pilot as a resource for all course readings outside of the required text as well as for the submission of assignments. Assignment descriptions/postings, readings for each class and grading can be found on the site. Please review the site carefully.

Course Description
The course examines community participation as a process of assessment and involving people in policy formation, organizational development, and program planning. Advanced theoretical frameworks and skills for organizational and community-based social work practice are the foundation of this course. The empowering benefits of participation for personal development, organizational capacity-building and creating community change are highlighted. Special emphasis is placed on models for organizing in diverse communities and with underrepresented groups.

Course Content
This course will present the basic knowledge and skills required for community organizing. The course will include exercises that aid developing the skills to assess, engage and manage a community organizing project from start to finish.

Students will learn to understand the multi-dimensional process of community organizing and how to use oneself to create positive change. The pros and cons of using various types of engagement and assessment techniques will be compared including asset-based and needs based approaches.

The course is organized across the semester to reflect the typical exposure and experience of social work interns. Students will be introduced to the people involved with various aspects of
community organizing ranging from engagement to fundraising.

Ethical issues arising in community participation will be assessed in conjunction with course objectives. In particular, emphasis will be placed on the social worker’s responsibility to clients and to promote the general welfare of society, e.g. primacy of clients’ interests; rights and prerogatives of clients; prevention and elimination of discrimination; equal access to resources, services, and opportunities; respect for the diversity of cultures; and informed participation by the public.

Course Objectives
1. Understand the changing context of community participation in a diverse democracy.
2. Analyze major models and methods of community participation practice, e.g., monocultural, pluralist, multicultural.
3. Apply advanced skills to promote participation e.g., assessing community conditions, making participatory plans, representing diverse interests, understanding politics of participation, increasing intergroup dialogue, building collaborative alliances, and finding common ground.
4. Describe organized efforts at participation, and the forces that facilitate and limit these efforts.
5. Use group skills needed for increasing intercultural interaction and cross-cultural collaboration at the community level.
6. Identify problems and issues of underrepresented groups in economically disinvested, racially segregated, and/or culturally diverse communities.
7. Address issues of ethics and values arising in the field.

Course Design
This course will be conducted mainly in the classroom using lectures, discussions, self-assessment activities, case studies, small group exercises, and guest presenters to convey relevant content. Students will also participate in field visits to community-based organizations. Course assignments will include readings, papers, group work, case studies, and action projects that involve these methods.

Relationship to the School’s Curricular Themes

| Theme Relation to Social Justice and Social Change: | Program examples from social justice and social change organizations and the challenges they often face around organizing are identified and discussed. Strategies that seek to redress past discrimination and oppression through community development are discussed. Organizational policies to promote social justice and social change are discussed. |
| Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science | Current theories and conceptual models of the incorporation of agencies and the resource environment facing human service organizations and their programs are presented. Results of empirical research on effective of human service and related organizations are included. |
| Theme Relation to Multiculturalism and Diversity | Program examples used in class come from organizations serving diverse populations. Challenges with engaging with such organizations are addressed. Students will develop the capacity to identify ways in which dimensions of diversity (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) influence evaluation processes and outcomes. While the course presumes activities in organizations in the United States, selected issues affecting of international or collaborative programs are discussed.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation

Students will develop the capacity to create and evaluate prevention and promotion as well as rehabilitation programs that are designed to reduce the onset risk of problems and promote healthy development.

Learning Philosophy and Environment

Accepting and respecting diversity within the classroom is fundamental in order to set the stage for learning and optimal growth. Attention will be given to how people learn, their interests, and communication styles to facilitate learning. A core concept is valuing each individual experience and encouraging sharing of these perspectives to deepen individual and group learning. Students are expected to share their insights with the class throughout the semester while recognizing the impact of race, religion, gender and other influences in each discussion. As such, students should try to maintain a reflexive stance, carefully considering their thoughts and those of others. Everyone benefits if one thinks of the class as a collaborative effort, and the classroom as a space in which our learning can be enhanced by the contributions of others. Lastly, this course will be guided by the principles of empowerment. This means all participants in an educational endeavor are active, self-directed learners. Each student will receive educational benefit equivalent to his or her effort.

Course Materials


Other readings will be a combination of articles and chapters from selected text. A listing of the weekly readings will be listed on Canvas – the University online course management system. Information and instruction on how to use this site is already provided by the university, therefore no class time will be devoted to instruction on how to use this system.

Readings may be changed by the instructor up to two weeks before they are due. Students are expected to have completed all assigned readings prior to class, as these will serve as the basis for class discussion, activities, and quizzes.

Class Schedule

In effort to meet the unique needs of each group of students, topics may be modified throughout the course, but ample notice will be provided. Refer to Canvas for the most updated class schedule.

Assignments

Assignments for this class involve a strong emphasis on group work and working in teams. Community based participatory work and team/group work are essential to successfully completing assignments. The assignments require you to be open to new ways of learning, strive for cultural humility (not merely cultural competence) and real, concrete action instead of hypothetical strategies. The team assignments in this course build on each other and are tightly interwoven. It would be helpful to you if you approach them as a semester long group project.
The majority of assignments will be done in small groups, so team work is crucial to your successfully completing the course. Coordinating schedules can be difficult, albeit an essential component of group work. These assignments will require flexibility and this will be reflected in your peer evaluation. **Self and peer evaluations are due at the time the assignment is due.** Written assignments should follow APA guidelines. Written assignments should be submitted by both email and hard copy. A listing of assignments is as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracking personal biases (15%)</td>
<td>October 15, 12 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Involvement Project (35%)</td>
<td>November 18, 12 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Participation Presentation (30%)</td>
<td>December 9, in class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quizzes**  
*Quizzes will be based on the assigned readings and given at unannounced times. Five (5) quizzes will be given, the lowest one (1) grade will be dropped. Quizzes cannot be made up. Missed quizzes will be awarded a grade of 0.*

**Assignment #1: Tracking Personal Biases**  
Due: October 15 at 12 pm *(Suggested maximum length: 2 pages)*  
In order to fully understand an organization and/or community, we must truly understand ourselves. That said, we must be aware of our personal biases and how these may influence our work. Organizations, like individuals, often function under a culture or belief system that has been established from within the organization in addition to outside influence. In this assignment you will monitor your own thoughts and feelings while working with others in this class as well as within the school. This may be uncomfortable, but for it to be effective, you must be honest and uncensored of yourself. For four weeks, track your reactions to the academic community by keeping a journal or log that should be turned in along with your summary. Your summary should include:

1. What was surprising about your reflections? How does this impact how you function within the community? What other reactions did you have?  
2. How can this information be helpful to you if you were to consider programmatic implementation or advocacy movement within the school? How might you consider or adjust your reactions to your biases?  
3. How could this information benefit the community or organization?

**Assignment #2: Community Involvement Project**  
Due: November 18 at 12 pm *(Suggested maximum length: 5 pages)*  
This assignment requires each group attend a community based advocacy event, group gathering, meeting, protest, etc. and investigate aspects of the particular cause/organization in relation to community organizing. At minimum students are required to attend with one classmate, but larger groups are strongly encouraged. Although this project is not due until near the end of the semester, it is important that students begin looking for events to attend early on so that they are able to fulfill the requirements of this assignment. Students are to create a report on the event and cause/organization considering the following points as they relate to course objectives.
1. **Description** - Describe the event (date, location, number of participants). Who were the leaders? What was the problem the group was trying to solve or address and how? What was the call to action? What community participation model was used? What community organizing strategies were used?

2. **Community Entry** - Describe how the organization or community accessed or entered the target community. Speak to ethical considerations, whether they are an insider or outsider, who are the gatekeepers, and what roles did they play?

3. **Engagement** – How did the event promote community engagement? Explain your opinion and what improvements can be made. Specifically include what considerations were taken or should have been taken to enhance engagement, including issues surrounding community culture.

4. **Cultural Assessment** - What are the values of the community or organization? How did these values impact processes? Explore what current or historical socio/economic/political tensions or issues were taken into account? What was the nature of privilege and social justice in this community that impacted or may impact further engagement?

5. **Biases** – What, if any, differences in opinion/experience were felt between you and your partner/team member? What may be contributing to this differing perspective?

Please note: While only one group member need turn in assignment #1 for your group, each group member must turn in a self and peer evaluation. This should be turned in the same day as the assignment. A detailed description for this self and peer evaluation can be found below.

**Assignment #3: Community Engagement Presentation**
Due: December 9, in class

This presentation should provide an overview and description of the community event you attended. Each presentation should address the following points with enough detail so that the class understands how your project relates to the course objectives. The presentation should include concise review of the second assignment in addition to your specific recommendations for next steps and goals. You may choose to interview someone from the organization/community movement but this is not required.

Each group should select their target audience and identify this as part of the presentation (e.g. board of directors, organization leaders, or funders). Each group will be allotted 20 minutes for their presentation.

1. **Community Background and Target Population** – Describe the event that you attended. Provide an overview of the target population focusing on history, current levels of participation, demographics, etc. Who are the major players? Describe how you assessed the current level of community participation, what data you relied on, what are the sources for accessing data?
2. **Literature Review** - What does the scholarly and mainstream literature say about this topic? How was it integrated into the event you assessed? Was it integrated at all? If not, how would you suggest it be integrated?
3. **Asset-based Assessment** – Discuss the strengths and successes of the event and organization/community. How has this initiative benefited communities? If focusing on an issue, identify one or two exemplar approaches that have been used to address the issue. How do they relate?
4. **Barriers or Challenges** - What are the major challenges related to this topic, organization, or effort? What are the causes of these challenges? What is being done to address them moving forward?

5. **Community Participation Goal** – What are the organizations/community’s goals? Describe your goals for this project and your rationale. Do they differ? Make sure to indicate how you will ensure that cultural humility and ethical principles of community practice will be upheld.

6. **Community Participation Strategy** – Using what you know of the existing strategy for organizing, what might you add? What models would apply and why?

Please note: While nothing need be turned in for your presentation itself, each group member must turn in a self and peer evaluation. A detailed description for this self and peer evaluation can be found below.

**Self and Peer Evaluation Rubric**

For assignment 2 and 3, you are required to turn in both a self and a peer evaluation, due the same day as each of the two assignments. This rubric will be used for all three self and peer evaluations you are required to complete. Evaluations must be turned in by each group member and will not be shared.

**Part 1. Self-Evaluation** *(Suggested maximum length: 1 page)*

Describe your participation in the assignment. Discuss and evaluate, in specific and concrete detail, the contributions you made to your group’s work. Describe the things you did well, and also describe the areas in which you could have done better. At the conclusion of your self-evaluation, give yourself a grade (1-4) on your participation in this work, using the following guidelines:

1 = Extraordinary; far exceeded the basic requirements for group work
2 = Very good work; generally exceeded the basic requirements
3 = Met the basic requirements for group work
4 = Fell below the basic requirements for group work

**Part 2. Peer Evaluation**

Write the name of each member of your group, and beneath each person’s name, provide 2-3 sentences describing their participation in and contributions to the assignment. Provide each person a grade using the above criteria.

**In-Class Assignments and Class Participation**

Assignments will be given throughout the class. Class time will be given for their completion, although it may be necessary for some time to be spent on these assignments outside of class. It is expected that students participate actively and equally in class discussion (both large and small group), class assignments and group activities. This participation and in-class assignment section represents 20% of the total grade.
Evaluation
The following scale will be used in assessing your final grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>% of Total Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #1: Tracking Personal Biases</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #2: Community Involvement Project</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #3: Community Involvement Presentation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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Final grades will be determined on the basis of performance. Letter grades will be allocated as follows:

- 97-100 = A+
- 87-89 = B+
- 77-79 = C+
- 67-69 = D+
- 93-96 = A
- 83-86 = B
- 73-76 = C
- 63-66 = D
- 90-92 = A-
- 80-82 = B-
- 70-72 = C-
- 60-62 = D-

Extensions
Requests for extensions will be considered for a valid reason (e.g. funerals, illness). These are to be made at least 48 hours in advance of the assignment due date. A rationale for the request is to be provided by email so there is a communication trail.

Attendance Policy
Students are able to miss two classes for any reason (e.g., personal, sick, religious holidays). There is no need to email the instructor with your reason for missing the class(es). Students who miss three classes will receive a 10 point reduction. Four or more missed classes will result in a larger point deduction. Students who will miss more than two classes due to religious holidays must make arrangements with the instructor at the beginning of the course to avoid a grade penalization. Please note that the student is responsible for all of the content missed during your absences. There will be no opportunity for in-class assignments to be made up.