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. All written papers must be submitted by the due date, but you can revise and resubmit any paper until the last session.

**Course Readings**

Course readings have been carefully chosen for their relevance to the topic of the week, and to each of the assignments. Most of them are available on the web, but please let me know as soon as possible if you cannot find anything.

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. You probably will be asked to lead off the discussion with a few thoughts.

**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.

**Class Participation**

Class participation is instrumental to the learning process. Participation requires regular attendance, coming to class on time, preparation and engagement in small-group and whole-group class discussions, and submission of assignments on due dates unless arranged in advance. Absence from class might result in lowering your grade. However, “showing up” is itself not participation in the course.

Speaking is integral to class participation. It can be a half-baked idea, observation, suggestion, or criticism. Not speaking says something, that you are not fully there. (20 percent).

**On-Line Resources**

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

**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.

**Using Laptops**

Using laptops for taking notes is acceptable, but there is empirical evidence that the use of laptops by students affects engagement in class activities, understanding of course contents, and feeling distracted when others seated nearby are 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.

**Safety and Emergency Preparedness**

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

Please familiarize yourself with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom, with the emergency card next to the phone in every room, and with the emergency evacuation sign near the door and emergency exits. In the event of possible building closures - e.g., weather conditions - 764-7793 will have up-to-date information.

If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building, contact the Office of Student Services at ssw-ADAcompliance@umich.edu Office of Student Services in Room 1748, and at 936-0961.


**Contacting the Instructor**

My e-mail is barrych@umich.edu and I am available through e-mail, telephone, and by appointment.
## Course Schedule

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Reading List

Case Studies

- Harlem Children’s Zone
- LA Youth Justice Coalition
- Logan Square Neighborhood Association
- Boston Mayor’s Youth Council


Core Concepts


Young People as Change Agents


**Adults as Allies**


**Techniques for Engaging Young People**


**Bridging Differences through Youth Dialogues**


**Organizing Against Hate**


**Youth Civil Rights Leadership**

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

Youth Empowerment through the Arts


Sports for Social Justice


Youth-Led Evaluation Research


Social Media for Social Justice


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)

For each of the groups on the reading list, complete one of the attached forms and bring them to class. (Due January 12).

Assignment 2

Write a paper in which you define youth empowerment, select a community or community group, describe its distinct characteristics and concerns, and identify at least five culturally-responsive methods for engaging and empowering its members in a youth empowerment process. (4-5 typewritten pages, due February 2, 20 percent).

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

“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 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. Your analysis should include their (1) purpose (2) population (3) programs or activities (4) outcomes (5) factors which affect outcomes, and (6) conclusions or lessons learned. (4-5 typewritten pages, due March 2, 20 percent).

Assignment 4

Working in groups of 3 persons, prepare a written proposal, presentation, and display poster for the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, in which you propose a strategy for engaging and empowering young people to address an issue. (12-15 typewritten pages, draft due March 30, final due April 13).
To stimulate your thinking:

- Grassroots youth organizing
- Youth participation in municipal agencies
- Increasing access to higher education
- Engaging first generation college students
- Responding to police brutality
- Organizing against hate
- Sports for social justice
- Youth empowerment through the arts
- Engaging adult allies for youth empowerment
- LGBT youth organizing
- Empowering young immigrants
- Restorative justice alternatives to zero tolerance.
- Youth leadership development academy
- Increasing youth intergroup dialogues
- Social media for social change


We will invite foundation officials to come to a session in which you make the case to them.

Our pedagogy will include studio-based learning, 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
CASE STUDY FORM

1. Name of group:

2. Purpose

3. Target population

4. Programs or activities

5. Outcomes

6. Lessons Learned
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: