

Fall 2018
Social Work 305: Theories and Practices for
Community Action and Social Change

Tues 5-8pm
School of Social Work



Instructor

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-4:00pm and by appointment

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

Class Materials

Required book (read throughout semester, but due by end of class):

- brown, a. m. (2017) *Emergent strategy: Shaping change, changing worlds*. Chico, CA: AK Press
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All other readings/resources will be posted to Canvas.

Grading and Assignments

The class requires a set of assignments aimed at:

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

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

Attendance Expectations

I expect that students will be in class on time, engaged and ready to start at 5:40. 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 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 loss of points, failure of a grade, and/or other consequences. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

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.

Class Policies

This is a Social Work course and therefore we follow the policies and practices of the School of Social Work. For more information, please see:

<https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources>.

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	74-76 = C
91-93 = A-	71-73 = C-
87-90 = B+	67-70 = D+
84-86 = B	64-66 = D
81-83 = B-	60-63 = D-
77-80 = C+	

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.