

**COMMUNITY-BASED POLICY ADVOCACY**

**COURSE SW674, SECTION #21218**

**CREDIT HOURS:** 3  
**LOCATION:** 1804 SSWB  
**TIME:** Wednesdays, 5:00pm to 8:00pm  
**PREREQUISITE:** SW 560 / instructor permission

**INSTRUCTOR:** Terri Friedline, PhD, LCSW  
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**COURSE INTRODUCTION, EXPECTATIONS, & BASIS FOR GRADING**

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**I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

Audre Lorde concludes her 1975 poem *A Litany for Survival*<sup>1</sup> by writing, “And when we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard nor welcomed, but when we are silent we are still afraid. So it is better to speak remembering we were never meant to survive.” One interpretation of Lorde’s words is that the “we” she writes of—people with marginalized social identities (particularly black and brown women with intersecting identities)—can be empowered to speak because survival necessitates it, despite not being guaranteed.

Indeed, as long as there has been power and oppression, traditionally excluded and marginalized groups—who carry the heaviest weight of oppressive structures and institutions—have spoken out and engaged in community-based policy advocacy. There are many historic and contemporary examples. Colin Kaepernick’s peaceful protests during national anthems honor the long history of black athletes condemning racism, including Tommie Smith’s and John Carlos’ protest at the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City.<sup>2</sup> Native and indigenous peoples from around the world gathered at Standing Rock’s Oceti Sakowin Camp in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux water protectors to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline.<sup>3</sup> DREAMers have mobilized and developed policy proposals in response to the presidential plan to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).<sup>4</sup> Teachers in states across the country have gone on strike in response to low wages and cuts to education, with some receiving higher pay as a result of their efforts.<sup>5</sup> Disability rights advocates have convened on Capitol Hill to protest the proposed changes to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).<sup>6</sup> The lived experiences of traditionally excluded and marginalized groups—and their leadership toward changing oppressive structures and institutions—are at the center of historic and contemporary examples of community-based policy advocacy.

While the news media widely publicizes these protests, less observable are the skills and strategies used by groups and communities to mobilize toward change and advocate for policy. What skills and strategies do groups and communities use to mobilize and take action? What legislative, judicial, and regulatory policy channels can be leveraged for change, and how can these channels be navigated? What are the tensions, challenges, opportunities, and successes that groups and communities experience as they confront oppressive structures and institutions? What are the roles of groups with privileged social identities in supporting these efforts? This course explores these critical questions by engaging in readings, discussions, and written assignments that situate traditionally excluded and marginalized groups as experts of their experiences within community-based policy advocacy.

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<sup>1</sup> Lorde’s poem can be found in her book, *The Black Unicorn*, and read here: <https://genius.com/Audre-lorde-a-litany-for-survival-annotated>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/25/sports/national-anthem-protests-black-athletes.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://standwithstandingrock.net/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2017/02/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-burn-their-camp-ahead-of-evacuation/517506/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/storywall/american-dreamers>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.vox.com/2018/4/13/17226654/teacher-strike-west-virginia-oklahoma-arizona-2018>

<sup>6</sup> <http://thehill.com/homenews/house/373721-capitol-police-arrest-disability-rights-protesters-for-disrupting-hearing>

## II. COURSE DESCRIPTION, CONTENT, OBJECTIVES, AND THEMES

**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 Design:** The course will revolve around the development, implementation, and evaluation of students' group advocacy projects. 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. Speakers and videos will be used to augment other course materials where appropriate and feasible.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the relationship between contemporary social and political issues and advocacy strategies and tactics. (Practice Behaviors 9.CO, 9.SPE)
2. 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. (Practice Behavior 5.CO, 5.SPE)
3. Analyze alternative models, strategies, tactics, and modes of advocacy in terms of their suitability to achieve specific policy goals. (Practice Behavior 3.CO, 3.SPE)
4. Apply skills in planning and conducting advocacy campaigns, mobilizing communities in policy advocacy, and evaluating the results of advocacy efforts. (Practice Behaviors 1.CO, 1.SPE, 10.c.CO, 10.c.SPE, 10.d.CO, 10.d.SPE)
5. 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. (Practice Behavior 5.CO, 5.SPE)
6. Identify and analyze value and ethical dilemmas that arise in the course of policy advocacy work. (Practice Behaviors 1.CO, 1.SPE, 2.CO, 2.SPE)
7. Describe the process of policy development including the use of key terms. (Practice Behaviors 6.CO, 6.SPE)
8. Assess policy environments (e.g., bureaucratic, fiscal, legislative, community) and analyze complex systems (e.g., for issue identification and option generation). (Practice Behaviors 9.CO, 9.SPE, 10.b.CO, 10.b.SPE)
9. Explain various advocacy roles (e.g., political, scientific, and ideological). (Practice Behaviors 9.CO, 9.SPE)
10. Prepare policy advocacy documents and demonstrate skill in developing written policies (e.g., drafting legislation, writing guidelines and administrative regulations). (Practice Behavior 10.c.CO, 10.c.SPE)
11. Apply techniques of education and persuasion, such as media advocacy, lobbying, testifying, popular education and building advocacy coalitions. (Practice Behavior 1.CO, 1.SPE, 10.a.CO, 10.a.SPE)
12. Describe linkages between local, state, national and international advocacy (Practice Behaviors 9.CO, 9.SPE)

13. 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. (Practice Behaviors 1.CO, 1.SPE, 4.CO, 4.SPE, 10.a.CO, 10.a.SPE)

**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.

### III. RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS<sup>7</sup>

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Please let the instructor know as soon as possible if you need an accommodation for a disability. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and teaching methods can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. For more information and resources, the University's Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD), located at G664 Haven Hall and available via phone (734) 763-3000 or website <http://www.umich.edu/~sswd/>, provides assistance regarding academic, economic, social, and recreational activities to students who have documented disabilities.

**Student Mental Health and Wellbeing:** The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and <https://caps.umich.edu/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselor physically located in the School of Social Work, (Megan Shaughnessy-Mogill) at (734) 763-7894 or by email [mshaughm@umich.edu](mailto:mshaughm@umich.edu). You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320 and <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs>, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see [www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources](http://www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources). The MSW student Guide to Health and Wellness can be found at [http://www.ssw.umich.edu/current/Health\\_Wellness\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.ssw.umich.edu/current/Health_Wellness_Guide.pdf)

**Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness.** The University of Michigan's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) promotes healthy relationships, teaches non-violence and equality, supports survivor healing, and fosters a respectful and safe environment for all members of the university community. All services are free and confidential. Visit SAPAC's website <https://sapac.umich.edu/> and contact them via their 24-hour crisis line at (734) 936-3333 or office phone at (734) 764-7771.

**Safety & Emergency Preparedness:** 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. For more information view the annual Campus Safety Statement at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/>. Register for UM Emergency Alerts at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergencymanagement/alert/>. In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

**Dependent Care Resources:** For students with child or parenting/elder care responsibilities, please consult the Students with Children website (<http://www.studentswithchildren.umich.edu>). This site is dedicated to the needs of students at UM who juggle parenting/elder care, study, and work. Resources include child care, financial assistance, social support, housing, and health care information. The website was created by the former Committee on Student Parent Issues (COSPI). For additional information on work/life support please also visit the Work/Life Resource Center site (<http://www.hr.umich.edu/worklife/>) and the UM Child Care gateway (<http://www.hr.umich.edu/childcare/>).

**Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct:** All students should be familiar with the Student Code for Academic and Professional Conduct (<http://archive.ssw.umich.edu/studentguide/2014/page.html?section=12&volume=1>) which holds students to the highest standards of academic and professional conduct. Unacceptable academic behavior refers to actions or behaviors that are contrary to maintaining the highest standards in course work and includes such actions as cheating, plagiarism, falsification of data, aiding and abetting dishonesty and impairment. Any suspected situations of academic misconduct will be discussed with the student and then reported to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs.

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<sup>7</sup> Descriptions of these resources are slightly adapted from syllabi developed and publicly posted by University of Michigan School of Social Work faculty, including Drs. Christina Bares, Shanna Katz Kattari, and Michael Spencer.

#### IV. EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

As students, you are expected to participate in this course in the following ways<sup>8</sup>:

- Acknowledge that your comments and opinions in class may impact those around you, and take ownership of and responsibility for discrepancies between your intent and its impact on others.
- We will spend time in class discussion learning about lived experiences that you may not be familiar with or do not understand. Please take responsibility for your learning and practice cultural humility by continuing your education on these experiences outside of class. Google is a wonderful tool.
- Be generous and considerate with each other. Share your materials and knowledge and insights with each other and be patient as others do the same.
- Actively participate in learning by coming to class having read the assigned readings, and by contributing to discussion through speaking and/or active listening.
- Stay current and up-to-date with materials, readings, and assignments by following the course schedule and being aware of important dates.
- Speak up and ask for clarification whenever necessary, both in class and in individual communication with me as needed.
- Attend class regularly, arrive on time, and turn off cell phones before class begins.
- If you miss class, check with your colleagues to see what you missed and to receive notes.

As the instructor for this course, I commit to supporting your learning and providing the following:

- Encourage and solicit your participation in a classroom environment that welcomes critical dialogue and judgments about *ideas* (not judgments about people—including you).
- Be generous and considerate with you.
- Take responsibility for my own learning and practice cultural humility by continuing my education on classroom discussions and others' lived experiences outside of class.
- Actively facilitate and participate in learning by coming to class having prepared lectures, handouts, and/or activities for discussion based on assigned readings.
- Provide thoughtful, critical, and timely feedback on your assignments.
- Start and end class on time, as scheduled.

If you are looking to take responsibility for your learning and practice cultural humility by continuing your education outside of class, please consider asking yourself the following questions for engagement:

- What resources exist so I can better educate myself?
- Who's already doing work around this issue or injustice?
- Do I have the capacity to offer concrete support and help to those already doing this work?
- How can I be constructive?

#### V. CLASS POLICIES

**Staying in Touch.** Please feel free to keep in touch with the instructor via email or by scheduling an in-person meeting. For example, if you have a question about a reading or assignment, please contact the instructor to discuss your question. If you miss class due to an emergency, it is recommended practice to email the instructor to clarify any content that was missed or to let them know that you will follow up with classmates to get notes.

**Missing Class.** Students who miss more than 2 classes will receive a full letter grade deduction at the end of the semester. If you miss class as a result of an emergency, please make arrangements with a classmate to get the notes, handouts, or other materials. The readings, quizzes, and assignment instructions are available on the Canvas website for this class.

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<sup>8</sup> These expectations are slightly adapted from a syllabus developed and publicly posted by Dr. Tressie McMillan Cottom, Assistant Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University: <https://tressiemc.com/uncategorized/my-syllabus-for-class-status-power/>. Special thanks to Dr. Cottom for sharing her words and wisdom through her syllabus.

**Use of Devices.** Please turn off or silence your cell phones before class begins. Using devices (e.g., smart phones, tablets, laptop computers, etc.) for purposes other than to take notes during class is discouraged. Texting and other non-academic uses of your personal devices are distractions to the instructor and to your classmates. The instructor will ask students to put away their devices if classroom use of electronic devices has an apparent negative effect on the learning community.

**Late Assignments.** Assignments will be reduced by 10% of the total available points for each calendar day that the assignment is late. Assignments submitted later than 1 week from the original due date will not be graded. For example, if Assignment #2 is worth 25 points, then the assignment would be reduced by 2.5 points for each day that it is late.

**Extra Credit or Bonus Points.** Not offered. Students are encouraged to submit assignments that represent their best work.

## VI. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

This course has two required books:

1. INCITE! (2007). *The revolution will not be funded: Beyond the non-profit industrial complex*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
  - o In lieu of purchasing, this book is available online from the UM library system: <https://proxy.lib.umich.edu/login?url=http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/9780822373001>
2. Sen, R. (2003). *Stir it up: Lessons in community organizing and advocacy*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Before purchasing, consider these following FREE options. INCITE!'s book is available online for free from the UM library system, and print copies of both books are on reserve at the Shapiro Undergraduate Library. The instructor also has copies of these books that are available for loan during the semester.

## VII. COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	BRIEF TOPIC	READINGS DUE	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
1	09/05	Welcome and Introductions		
2	09/12	Theories for Organizing Change	1. Baptist, Bricker-Jenkins, & Dillon (1999) 2. Maya Mazelis (2018) 3. Sen (2003) Intro & Chapter 1 4. Spencer (2015)	1. Quiz
3	09/19	Leaders and Movements, Past and Present	1. Burrowes, Cousins, Rojas, & Ude (2007) 2. Garza, Cullors, Tometi, & Birdsong (2016) <sup>v</sup> 3. Taylor (2017) 4. Sen (2003) Chapter 5	1. Quiz 2. Individual Paper: Identifying a Policy Issue
4	09/26	Building Coalitions	1. Cole (2008) 2. Enriquez (2014) 3. Reséndiz (2014) 4. Sen (2003) Chapter 7	1. Quiz
5	10/03	Crafting the Issues	1. ADAPT. (2018) 2. LaDuke (2012) <sup>v</sup> 3. Sen (2003) Chapter 3 4. Silliman, Fried, Ross, & Gutiérrez (2004) 5. Simpson (2018)	1. Quiz
6	10/10	Leveraging the Media	1. Sankin (2016) 2. Schilt (2004) 3. Sen (2003) Chapter 8 4. Stephen (2015)	1. Quiz 2. Individual Paper: Writing and Pitching an Op-Ed

WEEK	DATE	BRIEF TOPIC	READINGS DUE	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
7	10/17	Leveraging Social Media	1. Engler & Engler (2016) 2. Mock (2018) 3. Tufekci (2017)	1. Quiz
8	10/24	Growing Political Power	1. C-SPAN (2015) <sup>v</sup> 2. NoiseCat (2018) 3. Sen (2003) Chapters 2 and 3 4. Xaykaothao (2016)	1. Quiz
9	10/31	Funding the Movement	1. INCITE! (2007) Preface, forward, introduction and selected chapters (details on Canvas)	1. Quiz
10	11/07	The Roles of Intermediaries and Allies	1. Ahn (2007) 2. Cahill (2004) 3. Sen (2003) Chapter 6	1. Quiz 2. Group Paper: Developing a Coalition, Writing a Brief
11	11/14	Special Topic on Labor Movements	1. Benítez (2014) 2. Pulido & Peña (1998) 3. Sen (2018) 4. Tamayo (2000)	1. Quiz
12	11/21	NO CLASS	1. OPTIONAL Readings	
13	11/28	Special Topic on Welfare Rights Movements	1. Eubanks (2018) 2. Price (2018) 3. Shulevitz (2018) 4. Tillman (1972)	1. Presentations: Communicating the Message
14	12/05	Wrap-Up and Conclusion		1. Presentations: Communicating the Message

## VIII. GRADING

The total number of points earned based on your completion of the below assignments and the number of total available points will be used to determine your letter grade at the end of the semester. There are no extra credit or bonus points offered in this class.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS	DUE DATE	POINTS	
		Total Possible	B- Threshold
1. Engaging with Content via Quizzes (10 quizzes @ 5 points each)	Varies	50	40
2. Identifying a Policy Issue (4-5 page typed, double-spaced paper)	09/19/2018	25	20
3. Writing and Pitching an Op-Ed (1,000-word op-ed, 200-word pitch, both typed)	10/10/2018	25	20
4. Developing a Coalition (1-2 page policy brief)	11/07/2018	25	20
5. Communicating the Message (5-minute presentation of chosen medium, strategy)	11/28/2018 or 12/05/2018	25	20
<b>TOTAL POINTS FOR SEMESTER</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>120</b>

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## GRADING SCALE

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A	94-100	C	74-78
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-68
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	F	< 60

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## IX. ASSIGNMENTS

This course has five assignments. Combined, these assignments are intended to facilitate your critical understandings and analyses of community-based policy advocacy and to develop your skills in advocating for change.

### **Assignment #1 (Individual): Engaging with Content via Quizzes (10 quizzes @ 5 points each = 50 points total)**

Most weeks, there is a short quiz on Canvas with questions based on the readings and other assigned materials. Quizzes have multiple choice and open-ended questions that are developed based on the materials' key themes, and are a maximum of 5 points each. Complete the quiz before class each week to help you prepare for in-class discussion.

### **Assignment #2 (Individual): Identifying a Policy Issue (25 points)**

**Background:** Choose an historic or contemporary policy issue at the local, state, national, or global level. If selecting a global or international policy issue that is situated within another country (non-US), identify the level within that country as appropriate (e.g., local, state, national).

Some general examples of policy issues include (but are not limited to) separations of families at the US-Mexico border, state sanctioned violence and policing, voting rights and identification laws, consumer financial protections, mass incarceration, environmental protections, land rights, labor market standards and protections, and affordable housing. Students will need to narrow down general policy issues with more definition and specificity—in terms of level or scope and geography (for example, San Francisco's elimination of burdensome criminal justice fines and fees, the decision by the Kansas Secretary for Children and Families to hire non-social workers as child welfare caseworkers, the Fight for \$15 in Detroit and Michigan, or India's Supreme Court ruling affirming LGBTQ+ rights).

**Instructions:** Describe your chosen policy issue in 4-5 typed, double-spaced pages, including a separate page for references. Title page is optional. Drawing upon a combination of literature (textbooks, journal articles, books, memoirs, blogs, etc.) and your own reflections, include the following information in your concise description:

- What is the policy issue and why it is important?
- Who is affected?
- Who is engaged in advancing change and in what ways (e.g., policymakers proposing specific pieces of legislation, affected community members engaging in direct action, etc.)?
- What are the proposed solutions?
- How do your social identities relate to and/or intersect with your chosen policy issue (e.g., are you positioned as an insider/outsider to the issue and in what ways? based on your social identities, what powers, privileges, and oppressions do you need to critically interrogate)?



*Notes:* To respond to the final bullet point regarding social identities, you may review Spencer’s article in the assigned readings from Week 2.

The assignment rubric can be viewed on Canvas.

### **Assignment #3 (Individual): Writing and Pitching an Op-Ed (25 points)**

**Background:** Sen describes the importance of leveraging the media to advance change in strong terms, writing “We have a *responsibility* to try to influence the coverage of our issues” (2003, p. 149, emphasis added). Along these lines, groups and communities must develop outreach and advocacy through the media—broadly defined—to influence the coverage of their issues. Write an opinion editorial, or op-ed, of 800 to 1,000 words and an accompanying 200 word pitch to a news editor as a way to influence coverage of your chosen policy issue.

Opinion editorials are brief, written communications that share authors’ opinions and are published online and/or in newspaper. The NY Times provides a useful summary and description of op-eds here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/01/opinion/01SHIP.html> and here <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/03/insider/opinion-op-ed-explainer.html>). Op-eds that are published in mainstream news media often address timely issues and are written with compelling, relatable prose. These op-eds are also exclusive, meaning that they can’t be published elsewhere. Op-eds take on different styles and present information in different ways. Some op-eds have a factual style, whereas others are more personal (e.g., differences in the author’s “voice” and its relationship to the information that is being shared).

**Instructions for Op-Ed:** Regardless of students’ style and chosen use of “voice,” generally, your op-ed should contain the following information in 1,000 words (maximum) or less and include references embedded into the text as hyperlinks:

- What is the policy topic, issue, concern, or “problem”?
- Why should people care about it?
- What is being done to address the issue, or what can be done?

**Instructions for “The Pitch”:** The “pitch” for an op-ed is developed to share your idea with editors to help them make decisions about publishing. The pitch should be very concise and briefly explain the most compelling points of your op-ed. Your pitch should be written in paragraph form and address the following questions in 200 words (maximum) or less:

- What is the policy issue, concern, or “problem”?
- Why should people care about it?

*Notes:* Please talk with the instructor if you would like to work on publishing your op-ed. After writing your op-ed, you will send the pitch to editors via email and await their response if you choose to pursue publishing. Editors can be located within mainstream news media such as the NY Times, popular blog sites such as Talk Poverty, or blogs from nonprofits, centers, or think tanks that work on your chosen policy issue. You can also consider self-publishing, such as on a personal blog like Medium. Bring names or ideas of potential publishing venues with you to the conversation with your instructor.

Examples of op-eds and the assignment rubric can be viewed on Canvas.

### **Assignment #4 (Group): Developing a Coalition (25 points)**

**Background:** In order to advance change on common social issues, coalitions bring together organizations and individuals that have diverse experiences, interests, positionalities, and politics. In other words, groups and communities that are often defined by their differences can be convened based on their similarities to address shared concerns.

**Instructions for Coalition Building:** Students will be placed into groups based on their chosen policy issues from Assignment 2 and tasked with forming a coalition. As individual members of the group, each student represents the interests of the groups and/or communities affected by their policy issue. As a group, students must work together to identify overlapping interests and to collectively address an issue that affects each individual member. As a group-based assignment, every student in the group receives the same grade. In-class time will be provided for developing coalitions.

After identifying a collective issue to be addressed, the newly formed coalition should discuss how to work toward change and at what level(s), identify key stakeholders, and select the framing of the issue. Review Sen's Chapter 7 (pp. 135-147) for guidance on developing the coalition.

**Instructions for Written Brief:** Together, write a 1-2 typed page policy, issue, or informational brief that summarizes your coalition and its mission or purpose(s), and describes the collective concern to be addressed. Write this brief as if it would be shared with key stakeholders (e.g., community members, organizations and networks, protestors, policymakers, etc.). This means the brief can use images, bullet points, and/or footnotes in order to convey information clearly and concisely. By including their name or organizational logo on the brief, each individual coalition member affirms that the content satisfactorily represents their group's and/or communities' interests.

Your brief should include the following in 1-2 pages:

- Name and/or identity(ies) of the coalition
- Coalition mission and/or purpose(s)
- Information about the issue being addressed by the coalition
- Ways that key stakeholders can support and/or engage with the coalition
- Names or organizational logos of individual coalition members (e.g., participating student names or logo representations)

*Notes.* A natural outcome of this work is that some groups and/or communities ultimately choose not to participate in coalitions given insufficient alignment of individuals' various goals and values. This may occur in your groups' attempts to form a coalition. If overlapping interests and opportunities to collaborate cannot be identified after lengthy debate or an extended period of time, please talk with the instructor.

Examples of briefs and the assignment rubric can be viewed on Canvas.

### **Assignment #5 (Individual or Group): Communicating the Message (25 points)**

**Background:** Leaders, coalitions, and movements need to communicate their message to stakeholders and target audiences when advocating for change. Sometimes the message and opportunities to deliver it are planned and expected: a conference presentation, purchased radio segment, or pre-recorded podcast. Other times, the opportunities are unexpected: five minutes in an elevator with a congressional staffer, phone call with an important stakeholder, water cooler conversation with a coworker, or on-air broadcast interview. Regardless of the circumstances, it is important for the message to be ready for delivery. The purpose of this assignment is to prepare and deliver a message to stakeholders and target audience members on a policy issue.

**Individual or Group:** This assignment can be completed either individually or in a group. If choosing to present their message as an individual, students will develop their presentation based on the policy issue identified in Assignment 2. If choosing to present as a group, students will collaborate with other members of their coalition from Assignment 4, and every student in the group will receive the same grade.

**Instructions:** Students will develop a 5-minute "elevator speech" message of their individual policy issue or their coalition's work and present that message in verbal and/or visual form. This is somewhat similar to a PechaKucha, TED Talk, or red hot style of presentation, where presentations are brief, clear, and

compelling and designed to advance change. Students can choose to present and deliver their message through many mediums or strategies, such as via pre-recorded podcast or radio interview, powerpoint presentation, speech, spoken word poem or other artistic expression, or video or multimedia.

Your presentation, delivered in 5 minutes or less, should include and consider the following:

- Include a brief written description that summarizes the message's goal(s), stakeholders and target audience members, and reason for choosing the medium or strategy
  - This brief description can be in bullet point or short answer response format (short paragraph form).
- If choosing the group option, include a brief description of how each individual member contributed to the work of the group and presentation (e.g., 1-2 sentences for each member's contribution)
- The medium or strategy (e.g., pre-recorded podcast, video, etc.) aligns with the goal(s) of the message and stakeholders and target audience members

Your presentation should cover similar information as in Assignments 2, 3, and/or Assignment 4, using the following questions as prompts to guide your message:

- What is the policy topic, issue, concern, or "problem"?
- Why should people care about it?
- What is being done to address the issue, what can be done, how can others be involved, etc.?

*Notes.* If choosing the group option, it is not required that all members of the coalition participate. In other words, 3 of the 5 coalition members may choose to work in a group while the other 2 members choose to present individually. Presentations are for class purposes only and will not be published more widely, unless students choose to do so, such as by posting their presentation online.

The assignment rubric can be viewed on Canvas.