



**Course title:** Theories and Practices for Community Action and Social Change

**Course #/term:** SW 305 001, Winter 2019

**Time and place:** Mondays, 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM, Room #1636 SSWB

**Credit hours:** 3

**Prerequisites:** None

**Instructor:** Professor Justin Hodge

**Pronouns:** *He/Him/His*

**Contact info:** **E-mail:** hodjusti@umich.edu **Cell:** 734-325-9136

You may expect a response within 48-72 hours

**Office:** 2663 SSWB

**Office hours:** By appointment

## 1. COURSE STATEMENT

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**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.

**Course objectives and competencies:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. 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. Explore the meaning of community and social change.
3. Develop skills in interviewing, relationship-building, and group facilitation.
4. Gain awareness of historical framework and theory regarding community action and social change.
5. Engage in policy and structural analysis with regard to community action and social change.
6. Develop an understanding of community-building and organizing skills.

**Course design:** This course uses an engaged learning approach and employs a number of pedagogical strategies to promote knowledge and skill development.

Most classes will be structured to include a lecture or presentation, accompanied by a discussion or activity period. We will employ a number of pedagogical strategies such as: small group work, class discussions, PowerPoint, experiential exercises, audiovisuals, writing exercises, case examples, and other activities in order to facilitate understanding of the course content and to promote knowledge development.

## 2. CLASS REQUIREMENTS

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All assignments are due by 11:59 PM on the date listed. *Late assignments will be marked down 5% for every day late.*

Course Assignments	Due Date	Points/Percentage
Core Concepts-Concept Map/Play List	February 17, 2019	20
History Project	March 3, 2019	30
Semester-Long Project	April 7, 2019	30
Final Reflection Paper-Letter to our Future Self	April 21, 2019	10
Attendance & Participation (Reading questions, inclass activities, etc.)	Ongoing	10

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.

My practice is to provide detailed feedback on your papers. As such, it may take me up to three weeks to return them. Papers are graded on:

**Quality of critical thinking:** Papers that rate the highest will show strong analytic skills; evidence strong critical insight; show strong understanding of human behavior; demonstrate a curiosity about what they hear or see; have a level of empathy for others and know when they are struggling to achieve that; and demonstrate an ability to think about what they heard, as well as what they did not hear.

**Integration of materials:** Papers that rate the highest will show superior skill in linking reading and lecture materials to their written work; pull from multiple sources; typically go above the requirements but not excessively so; go beyond "person on the street" thinking.

**Level of Self-reflection:** Papers that rate the highest will show a strong self-awareness or willingness to develop that capacity; they show a willingness to take risks with thinking or note areas where that is difficult; are able to address what is evoked in them response to the work and demonstrate an understanding of social work values and ethics.

**Writing skills:** Papers that rate the highest will have no typographical or grammatical errors. They will be well organized and written, comprehensive and coherent. They will be within the guidelines, neither excessively short nor excessively long. Any citations will be accurate and there will be effective use of quotations.

### **References and Referencing Style**

When using others' work, it is mandatory to cite the original source. Social work publications generally follow the referencing format specified by the American Psychological Association (APA); therefore you are expected to follow this referencing style. Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition) is accessible via internet:

<http://www.apastyle.org/manual/>

Additionally, you may access APA examples at:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> for further help citing references in course assignments.

**Intellectual Honesty and Plagiarism** It is your responsibility to be familiar with and abide by the University of Michigan's Academic Integrity Standards (<https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity/academic-misconduct.html>). 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.

**Class materials:**

All readings will be posted on Canvas.

**Class schedule:**

**COURSE OUTLINE** *\*MAY BE REVISED BY INSTRUCTOR TO FIT NEEDS OF THE COURSE\**

**1/14: Introduction to Community Action and Social Change (CASC)**

Review of course expectations & Syllabus

Integrative Themes and Concepts that link CASC to Social Work Ethics

**Week 1:** This class will be a general introduction to CASC and to SW 305. In particular, we'll look at the relationships between CASC and Social Work values and ethics. We will also get organized for the semester, review the class structure and assignments, discuss expectations, and begin to build our class community. Please be ready to think about a goal for you in the class and a critical question/issue you would like to learn/think about.

**1/21 NO CLASS - Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observance - University Symposia**

**Week 2:** While we will not have class, please plan to watch the keynote speeches for the MLK Symposium: <http://oami.umich.edu/um-mlk-symposium/memorial-keynote-lecture/>

A link to the livestream and then the recording will be posted at the link above in case you cannot attend in person. We will discuss the keynote at our next class.

I also encourage you to explore the other MLK Symposium events:

<http://oami.umich.edu/um-mlk-symposium/>

## **1/28 Understanding our Story: Being aware of who we are as Change Agents. What informs our perspectives?**

**Week 3:** In this class, we will spend time looking inward to discuss what drives our interest in social justice work, to explore our own stories, and how our perspectives are shaped by who we are. We will explore being vulnerable and our understanding about the power and potential of storytelling as a method of community change work. We will also do an activity that examines how we think about ourselves as social justice leaders and how we need to be aware of why, who, and how we engage in social justice work.

Required Reading & Tasks to Prepare for Class Session:

- Pyles, Ch. 2 Self-Aware Organizer, Progressive Community Organizing
- Tatum, Complexity of Identity, From Readings in Diversity and Social Justice
- R (Eds.) Organizing for Survival at the Grassroots, Detroit Lives (at least pick one story to read)
  
- TED Talk In Class
- Task: Worksheet on Story (Will be passed out in class)

## **2/4 Understanding Community Action and Social Change Terms & Perspectives Guest for UMS Coming for Pre-performance workshop**

**Week 4:** This class will help us “unpack” the concept of Community Action and Social Change through exploring key terms and examining fundamental concepts embedded in social justice and social change work, such as social justice, power, privilege, discrimination, oppression, empowerment, and equity. It’s important that we begin the semester with shared understanding. We will also spend time discussing critical questions/challenges that emerge in social justice work here on campus, such as entering communities, working with others, and combatting “savior complexes”.

Required Reading & Tasks to Prepare for Class Session:

*Keys Concepts for Course:*

- Checkoway, B. Core Concepts for Community Change
- Finn, J. (2016) *Imagining social work and social justice. Justice Practice, Oxford Press*, 1-44 [Just Practice - Ch. 1 pp. 1-44\\_ Imagining Social Work.pdf](#)

- [Building Resilient Communities: A Moral Responsibility | Nick Tilsen | TEDxRapidCity](#)
- Harleen Kaur: Leaving the savior mentality behind (Michigan Daily, February 25, 2014)- <https://www.michigandaily.com/opinion/02harleen-kaur-leaving-savior-mentality-behind26>
- Response to Leaving the savior mentality behind (Letter to Editor, Michigan Daily, March 17, 2014)- <https://www.michigandaily.com/opinion/03letter-editor-alternative-spring-break18>

## **2/11 Community Change as a Process: Systems, Power & Impacts**

**Week 5:** This class will look at community change as a system that has impacts on individuals, groups, communities, institutions, and society. We'll explore concepts of power- both power on a system and power that can be created by people- and we'll begin to develop a concept map of the various ideas. Please bring your draft concepts to class.

Required Reading & Tasks to Prepare for Class Session:

- Warren, M. Ch. 1- How community organizing works, Match on Dry Grass
- Chambers Ch 1- The world as it is and the world as it should be, Roots for Radicals  
Chambers- Roots for Radicals
- Readings for Diversity and Social Justice, p. 45-58 "Cycle of socialization" and "Cycle of liberation"
- Pyles, L. Ch. 5 Critical Organizing Frameworks, Progressive Community Organizing

## **2/18: NO CLASS due to Las Cafeteras Performance on Wednesday, February 20, 2019 7:30 PM // Michigan Theater**

**Week 6:** The Los Angeles Times describes Las Cafeteras as a "uniquely Angeleno mishmash of punk, hip-hop, beat music, cumbia, and rock...live, they're magnetic."

Born and raised east of Los Angeles, the six-piece band is remixing roots music and telling modern-day stories. They create a vibrant musical fusion with a unique East LA sound and positive message, a mix-and-match of styles and sources that deliver socially conscious lyrics in both English and Spanish. Their wildly vibrant Afro-Mexican beats, rhythms, and rhymes document stories of a community looking for love and fighting for justice in the concrete jungle of Los Angeles.

You must confirm your attendance to the instructor so that your ticket for the event is purchased.

<https://ums.org/performance/las-cafeteras/>

## **2/25: Learning From Grace (Mid-Semester Feedback Session)**

**Week 7:** This class will focus on learning from Grace Lee Boggs, an incredible activist and

social change agent with a legacy of social justice, community action, and social change. We'll watch her documentary together, and then discuss the lessons learned from her work and life for us. What are the critical questions for consideration about community action and social change? What are critical issues for practice?

Required Reading & Tasks to Prepare for Class Session:

- Film guide: <http://americanrevolutionaryfilm.com/wp-content/themes/boggs/files/pov-americanrevolutionary-discussion-guide-color.pdf>
- NY Times: "Grace Lee Boggs, Human Rights Advocate for 7 Decades, Dies at 100": [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/06/us/grace-lee-boggs-detroit-activist-dies-at-100.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/06/us/grace-lee-boggs-detroit-activist-dies-at-100.html?_r=0)
- Website for James and Grace Lee Boggs Center, <http://boggscenter.org/>
- <http://inthesetimes.com/article/18474/grace-lee-boggs-obituary-detroit>
- Task: MOVIE (in-class): Grace Lee Boggs

### **3/4: Spring Break - Week 8 NO CLASS**

### **3/11: Learning From History**

**Week 9:** In this class we'll focus on our history examples that we have been learning about. We will share the examples from our papers and to think about some of the major movements, organizations, and individuals that have shaped community action and social change work. In particular, through our sharing and learning we will discuss the lessons and ideas that we can draw from these examples for our own work.

Required Reading & Tasks to Prepare for Class Session:

- There is no reading for today.
- Task: Come prepare to share and present your example from your paper.

### **3/18: NO CLASS - Due to Nikkita Oliver Events (More Details To Come)**

**Week 10:** Nikkita Oliver is a Seattle-based creative, community organizer, abolitionist, educator, and attorney. Nikkita was the first political candidate of the Seattle Peoples Party running for Mayor of Seattle in 2017. The Nikkita Oliver for Mayor campaign narrowly missed the general election by approximately 1,100 votes; coming in 3rd of 21 candidates. The campaign was declared 3rd party and accepted no corporate donations. With over 1,000 the volunteers they knocked on 22,000 doors, raised \$130,000 and changed the political landscape of Seattle politics.

### **3/25: Strategy, Planning and Action**

**Week 11:** How do you begin to move forward to making change? This class will focus on the community change process, the steps in the process of change, and the importance of planning and strategy for community change.

In this class, we'll also debrief the Nikkita Oliver events.

Readings:

- Bobo, K, et al. Ch. 4 , Strategy, Organizing for Social Change
- Campus Organizing Toolkit

Case Studies (be prepared to explore and look for strategy, actions, and planning within each case):

- Welton, A. & Freelon, R. (2018) Community organizing as educational leadership: Lessons from Chicago on the politics of racial justice
- Doussard, M. & Lesniewski, J. (2017) Fortune favors the organized: How Chicago activists won equity goals under austerity, Journal of Urban Affairs Fortune favors the organized

#### **4/1 Building Relationships & Facilitating Participation: Engaging in Change**

**Week 12:** Among the most important skills is the ability to build relationships. In this class will look specifically at the idea of how to build relationships and what skills are needed to build relationships and facilitate participation in and with communities.

- Chambers, E. Ch. 2. The Relational Meeting. Roots for Radicals: Organizing for Power, Action & Justice
- Hardina, D. Ch. 2. Enter the Community and Using Interviewing Skills to Find Out about People, Interpersonal Practices for Community Organization
- Finn, J., Ch 5 Just Practice - Ch. 5 pp. 188-236

#### **4/8 Transformative Organizing Practices & Emergent Strategy: Allyhood, Coalitions, & Working Together**

**Week 13:** In this class will look more specifically at the skills needed to work together for change. We know that community action and social change is not an individual activity and that it is strengthened with different ideas and perspectives are brought together. What are the skills needed to work together and facilitate participation across differences? What can we learn from



other coalitions?

Readings:

- Edwards, Allyhood for social justice.
- “Why Coalition Building is Necessary”
- Jobin-Leeds & Agitarde, Chapter 6: Environmental warriors: Getting to the root of the Problem , When We Fight, We Win!

#### **4/15 Class Presentations**

**Week 14:** In our final two classes together, we will focus on our action projects. We will have the opportunity to hear about each others' projects and reflect on the common themes and learning across the projects

#### **4/22 Project Presentations**

**Week 15:** In our final class together, we will focus on our action projects. We will have the opportunity to hear about each others' projects and reflect on the common themes and learning across the projects

We will also reflect on the learning from the semester and discuss our takeaways. We'll also 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.

Reading:

- Letters to Ourselves as Future Activists- Michelle Kuo, Pg. 215-219 (From Letters From Young Activists, Ed. Berger, Boudin, & Farrow, 2005)

#### **Assignments:**

**Attendance & Participation (10 points/10%)** As an advanced practice course, it is important that you attend each class session. The class sessions involve skill development experiences that go beyond course readings/learning tasks. Missing class sessions will lower your grade since your participation as a co-learner is essential to meet the learning goals for this requirement. If you are not able to attend a particular class session, please notify the instructor prior to the class session so that arrangements can be made for you to address the material that you missed.

Your attendance and participation also reflects the basic elements of any social work relationship – you show up and remain present. If, for any reason, I have concerns about your participation or attendance, I will discuss my concerns with you in a timely fashion. Your grade

will be negatively impacted if more than one class is missed as an unexcused absence. Please communicate any classes that you may miss to this Instructor via email (hodjusti@umich.edu) or phone/text (734-325-9136). Any failure to communicate an absence to this Instructor will result in a two-point deduction for that day.

Each class encourages dialogue regarding the readings, lectures, and in-class skills demonstrations. Participation in this course will occur in small and large group discussions. It is essential to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics and maintain the highest level of respect for another as colleagues/peers, as well as for the clients/communities that we will be discussing in class. Please avoid the use of electronics during the course. If you need to take a phone call or respond to a text message or email, then please step out of the class and return when you are done. It is expected that your computer only be used to take notes during lectures. Levels of participation may vary based on comfort and interest in topics discussed. I will do my best to honor each student's participation level in the course. Please communicate any difficulty that you are experiencing related to course materials and discussions and I will do my best to help resolve the matter or identify appropriate support services if requested.

**A Note on the Learning Environment:** The class is designed as a co-learning environment and one where class members are encouraged to try new skills and take risks. Your contribution as a “teacher and a learner” in the class will enhance the learning for all class members.

Quality change agents must be self-aware, self-reflective, and open to exploring our own histories and issues regarding any given concern or population. Be prepared to reflect on and explore your own family history, social systems, experiences, identity, cultural background and assumptions regarding all forms of diversity. There will be a variety of ways that students can do this through critical thinking, assignments and active participation in class discussions and activities.

Being honest, sensitive, and respectful to each other in preparation for quality community action and social action practice is one of the learning environment goals. Please share opinions and feedback with others in discussions and exercises, and when you do so, please try to state them in a respectful and constructive manner.

Also, prepare yourself to hear varying opinions and feedback non-defensively, and to use those data or challenge them constructively. Please practice tolerance, not expecting yourself or your classmates to be polished in discussions about issues that can be challenging and confusing. We can expect to blunder and make mistakes in the classroom so that we are better prepared when we are in the field; please honor this process.

A student is expected to be on time, prepared with questions from readings, DVDs and assignments, respectful of diverse perspectives, open to learning and to complete assignments

on time.

All assignments are expected to be handed in on their due date prior to the end of the day (11:59pm).

**Concept Map/Play List: (20 points/20%)** Students will create a map of the core concepts of community action and social change. The map will help students define key ideas, develop key questions, and showcase their understanding of the basic terms. The goal is to help build critical thinking around CASC.

(1) Map: The maps can be creative and should reflect your best understanding of what community action and social change is as a concept.

(2) Play List: Create a “Spotify” or “Pandora” Playlist of at least 15 songs that reflect core concepts. For each song, be able to discuss what the concept is and why you selected the song.

We’ll generate ideas in class and have an opportunity for students to workshop draft maps in class with peers.

Final Version will be submitted on CANVAS.

**Learning from History Project (30 points/30%)** Students will select a historical social justice movement or organization from a selected list. Alternative topics options are also possible but must be approved. 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:** Why did you choose this topic? What drew you to this topic? (4 points)

Discuss an overview of the movement/person and activities: (12 points)

- 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.
- 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?

Provide a critical assessment of the work’s strengths and limitations based on your analysis: (8 points)

- 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?

#### Learning from History/Applying Ideas (6 points)

- 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 handout to share with the class. The fact sheet should cover an overview of the movement and the learning from history” takeaways.

**Semester-Long Project (30 points/30%)** Students will develop a semester--long project based on their passion or interest/desire to learn about or further your own efforts in Community Action & Social Change. The goal is to learn to plan and implement an idea that relates to your interests.

#### **Examples of projects include:**

- Prepare a resource guide for student groups (like an annotated bibliography) with curriculum, websites around a topic (e.g. educational justice, prison reform, racial justice) or approach to community change work (e.g. community organizing, community facilitation, popular education).
- Develop an organizational strategy/action plan for an organization, program or a campaign for campus (could be current or proposed).
- Engage in a current campaign/action on a current issue. Provide plans and materials from campaign/action.
- Organize an event/activity around a social justice issue that you care about. Provide plans and materials from event/activity.
- Develop a one-day workshop curriculum on a specific social justice topic that could be implemented in the community/on campus with related curriculum and
- Conduct at least 3 Interviews with current social justice leaders on an issue/topic that you are interested in, transcribe/provide a detail summary of the interviews. Be prepared to turn in transcripts/summaries.
- Watch a least 3 social justice movies and develop a guide for how these movies could be used in a student organization/class to raise issues, further social
- Conduct a research project on a social justice topic that could inform campus or community
- Read a CASC- Themed Book and develop a resource guide/thematic analysis for using the books to discuss social justice issues.

Examples of books include:

- Nicolas Kristof & Sheryl WuDunn “Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide”;
- Michelle Alexander “The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness”;
- Ta-Nehisi Coates “Between the World and Me”;
- Rinku Sen & Fekkak Mamdouh “Accidental American: Immigration and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization”; and
- Paolo Freire “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”.
- You may also suggest/find your own book.

**Final Paper/Letter to Our Future Selves (10 points/10%)** 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 (3 to 5 pages) 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.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here:

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

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Mental health and well-being
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns
- Accommodations for students with disabilities
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment
- Writing skills and expectations
- Academic integrity and plagiarism