

**Social Work 305: Theories and Practices for
Community Action and Social Change**

**Community Action and Social Change Minor
Foundation Course**



WINTER 2021:

Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

ONLINE

Instructor

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Office Hours: 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.

Class Recordings

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published, or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.

COVID-19 Statement

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the Wolverine Culture of Care and the University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19. Your ability to participate in this course in-person/hybrid may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Office for Institutional Equity. If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. I also encourage you to review the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. Students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a Doctor's note) for medical excuses is *not* required.

Core Competencies

- 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.
- Students will explore the meaning of community and social change.
- Students will develop skills in interviewing, relationship-building, and group facilitation.
- Students will gain awareness of historical framework and theory regarding community action and social change.
- Students will engage in policy and structural analysis regarding community action and social change.
- Students will develop an understanding of community-building and organizing skills.

Background Context:

Praxis: Reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it

-Paulo Freire, The Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Readings

All readings 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
- 2) building knowledge about historical frameworks, theory and key people, and
- 3) applying the lessons and learning to one's current interest or work.

A. Learning From History (25%) DUE: Feb. 23rd

Students will select a historical social justice movement, key social change leader, or organization. Students will conduct research and write a 5-7 page double spaced paper based on your research that addresses the following questions:

- What is the movement/organization about? What is its history?
- Why did/does the movement occur? What are the social justice issues that it is/was trying to challenge/change?
- Underlying perspectives/frameworks/core values of the work?
- What approaches used?
- What can you learn from this movement for your own work?
- Why and how does this movement matter?

B. Semester-long Community Action and Social Change Group Project (30%)

DUE: Apr. 15th

- The goal of the CASC project is to recommend ways in which an organization can effectively engage the community and deliver programming during a global pandemic.
- Students will develop an individual or group project based on their shared passions or interests/desires to learn about or further their efforts in Community Action & Social Change
- **Proposal: DUE February 2nd**
- Each individual or group will prepare a one-page (double spaced) written document to discuss their overall topic and project action. In addition to describing their project, students should include any areas they feel they will need support around. Students will get feedback (either written or in person) to support their project plan. Students will develop an action project. Examples of projects include:

- Resource guide/Tool Kit with curriculum, websites, student organizations 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)
 - Facilitate a one-day workshop on a specific social justice topic
 - Conduct 4 Interviews with current social justice leaders on issues, transcribe the interviews, and analyze the takeaways across the interviews
 - Develop a set of media materials around a specific social justice topic (e.g. communications materials, website, messaging in campaigns)
 - Conduct a research project on a social justice topic that could inform campus or community action.
- Students will develop a PowerPoint Presentation for their project. The PowerPoint should include: 1) an overview of the project, 2) description of the activities/project work, 3) skills gained from completing the project, 4) core lessons learned and reflections from the project.
 - Students will be prepared to share their work with the class via an oral presentation. Presentation days are April 15th and 20th.
 - Your PowerPoint presentation must be submitted by April 15, 2021.

E. Lecture Reflection Papers (15%)

Students will submit 3 reflection papers over the course of the semester. These reflection papers will present the student's reactions and thoughts regarding the lecture for the week and will address the following questions.

- Did you learn anything that might be helpful as you work through your CASC project? Please explain.
- Did the lecture or assigned readings raise any questions for you? If so, please explain.

Each paper is worth 5 points and should be no longer than 2 pages double spaced. Please submit your papers on the following dates;

- March 2nd
- March 11th
- March 18th

F. Class Participation (15%) DUE: throughout semester

Active participation will enhance the class discussion and make possible the exploration and exchange of ideas that are critical in this course. Class participation involves thoughtful engagement with the material, contributions that are pertinent to the topic

being discussed and all forms of respectful verbal and non-verbal behavior, such as being attentive, asking questions of the professor and other students, sharing reasons why one agrees or disagrees with different ideas, and practicing supportive listening. Respectful behavior also includes being willing to meet individually with the professor upon request. **Failure to exhibit respectful behavior can result in the loss of all 15 points.**

Also, please note that ringers on cell phones should be turned off when class begins. Texting is not allowed in class but laptops are permissible for note taking and in-class research. If you have an urgent phone call or text message, please leave class to deal with this.

Finally, students are expected to attend the class zoom meetings with their cameras on and keep their cameras on throughout the class session. Students will lose points if their camera remains off during class.

G. Class Attendance (15%) DUE: throughout semester

Attendance will be recorded for each zoom meeting. Students with one or no absences will earn 15 points. After the first absence, 1 point will be deducted for each additional absence. Arriving more than ten minutes late or leaving class early will be counted as half an absence.

Exceptions to the absence and attendance rule will be determined by the professor on a case by case basis but generally include events for which a student has no control. Here are some examples: jury duty, a summons to appear in court, required military service, and being in a car crash on the way to school.

Assignment Expectations

Due dates are firm. I reserve the right to mark down papers 2 points for each day late in fairness to classmates who turn papers in on-time. Please note, I will not accept papers beyond a week after the due date. All written assignments must be submitted electronically via Canvas on the day they are due by **12:30 p.m.** Additionally all assignments must have a cover sheet. The title of your assignment along with your name(s) and date should appear on the cover sheet. Lastly, please use **APA Style Citation Format** on all assignments for this course.

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.

Other

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, 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.

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

The CASC department plans to evaluate and use the lessons learned from class activities to do 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. You are under no obligation to participate. All responses will be anonymous. 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.

CLASS CALENDAR

I. BUILDING COMMUNITY (Week 1-3)

Week 0: Introduction to Community Action and Social Change (January 19)

What is Community Action and Social Change? What is the CASC Minor? What is 305 and where does it fit?

What is social work as a field? How does SW relate to community action and social change? What are the critiques? What are the possibilities?

What should you expect for this class? What goals do you plan to set for yourself? What do you want to learn? What do you want to gain?

Week 1: Understanding our Story: Why are We Here? What do we care about? (January 26)

What are our stories? How do we explore our own ideas, experiences, and interests in the context of community action & social change?

Why do stories matter for community change work? How can and have stories been used to facilitate change? How are our stories tools for change? How has storytelling motivated others to take risks and create change?

How can storytelling help build community?

What does vulnerability have to do with community action and social change?

Readings:

- Szakos & Szakos, We Make Change – Chapter 1
- Pyles, Chapter 2 – Self-Aware Organizer

Week 2: Building Community with a framework of PODS (February 2)

ON THURSDAY (2/4), WE'LL SHARE OUR PROPOSALS WITH THE CLASS!

What is needed to explore community action and social change through a lens of privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice?

What are the dynamics involved? What are the core concepts and skills needed?

How does language matter for community change work? How can we critically reflect on language and our own perspectives? What would a common language include?

Readings:

- Iris Marion Young, Five Faces of Oppression
- Pharr, S. Readings for Diversity and Social Justice
- Johnson, A. Readings for Diversity and Social Justice

Week 3: Community Change as a Process: Systems, Structures, Power (February 9)

What does community change look like in practice? What are the frameworks? What are some examples?

What are the systems structures and power in play in understanding community change? How do we explore root causes and structural forces? Why does this matter?

What are frameworks for exploring power and counter power mapping? What and how can these tools be critical to community change efforts?

What do different frameworks bring to CASC work? What questions does it raise about the continuity of what it means to do CASC work?

Readings:

- Checkoway Core Concepts
- Warren, M. – How CO Works
- Reisch – Defining SJ in an unjust world

Thursday, February 11 – ENGAGE Lecture Series –

Defunding the Police in Our Public Schools

Schools punish Black students — Black boys in particular — more harshly, expel them more often, and isolate them more frequently than they do white students. This affects Black students' academic outcomes and achievement and socioeconomic mobility, and it shapes Black students' senses of self. When teachers, administrators and peers are shaped by implicit bias from living in a racist society, how do we expect our institutions to function impartially and fairly? This virtual discussion focuses on the deployment of police officers in our public schools, especially majority-Black schools, and how their presence and their tactics have helped to create a school-to-prison pathway for Black children.

Special guests include Dr. Charles Bell, native Detroit scholar and expert on criminal justice and assistant professor of criminal justice at Illinois State University. Other panelists include organizers of Detroit's 482Forward, who have led the campaign to defund the police in public schools, including Mohammad Muntakim, president of the Cass Tech Muslim Student Association and member of the 482 Youth Organizing Collective; and Kristian Matthews, member of the 482 Youth Organizing Collective and of Detroit Heals Detroit.

II. FRAMEWORKS AND APPROACHES (WEEK 4-6)

Week 4: Exploring Approaches: CASC in Practice (February 16)

What are the approaches? Single Approaches? Multiple Approaches? How do we understand CASC in Practice?

What's the relationship between direct service and direct action?

Readings/Materials:

- Checkoway: Approaches/Six Strategies
- Wernick, L. & Kulick, A. Youth Participatory Research/Riot Youth: LGBTQQ Activism

CASC Group Check-ins on Thursday Feb. 18th!

Week 5: Learning From History & Theory (February 23)

What can we learn from history and theory to guide community action and social change work?

How can we engage in liberatory theory development in and through community change work?

What are the major movements and organizations that have shaped community practice? What lessons and ideas can we draw from these movements for our own work in community change?

Thursday Feb. 25th - Voices From The Field – Guest Lecturer

Week 6: CASC Group Check-Ins (March 2)

Thursday, March 4 – ENGAGE Lecture Series –

The Movement for Economic Equity in Detroit

From the fight for a fair wage, to business closures during a pandemic, to a historic lack of job opportunities for Black individuals, race-based mechanisms of economic and social suppression have been systemically and strategically created in Detroit. This virtual discussion focuses on the work of Detroit activists and leaders who have dedicated their lives to creating a more economically just and mobile city.

Special guests include Eboni Taylor, Michigan Executive Director of Mothering Justice; DeWayne Wells, Executive Director of the Economic Justice Alliance of Michigan; and Dr. Alicia Farris, Chief Operations Officer of the Restaurant Opportunities Center.

Week 7: Voices From The Field – Guest Lecturer (March 9)

Week 8: Voices From The Field – Guest Lecturer (March 16)

Week 9: NO CLASS - Well-Being Break (March 23)

Thursday, March 25 – ENGAGE Lecture Series –

Poverty Doesn't Pause: Housing Insecurity During a Pandemic

Homelessness and housing insecurity have become an epidemic in our country, especially in communities of color. During a pandemic, these individuals end up being our most vulnerable. Join us for this virtual discussion featuring panelists working on the front lines of Detroit's housing insecurity crisis, who will discuss how the pandemic has exacerbated housing issues. Featured panelists include Amber Elliott, mobility coach of Creating Opportunities to Succeed (COTS), and project manager and community improvement advisor for Built for Zero Nationals; Courtney Smith, executive director of Detroit Phoenix Center; and Candace Montgomery, systems transformation advisor of Detroit's Built for Zero, Community Solutions.

III. SKILLS, PRACTICES & SPECIAL TOPICS

Week 10: Organizing, Strategy, and Action (March 30)

What is community organizing as a specific approach? What is critical about organizing as an approach to change? How and why does strategy matter for creating change?

Readings:

- A Match on Dry Grass, Chapter 5
- Organizing for Social Change, Chapter 4
- Progressive Community Organizing, Chapter 3

Thursday, April 1 – ENGAGE Lecture Series –

Immigrants in Michigan: The Untold Story

Immigrants have made great contributions to this state--economically, politically, and socially. The fabric of American society has been woven by the contributions of diverse immigrants. And yet, as a nation, we continue to suppress and demonize these immigrants. This session explores the story of immigrants in Michigan, a story that we, as social workers, are obligated to know.

Special guests include Fayrouz Saad, executive director of the Office of Global Michigan; Wojciech Zolnowski, executive director of the International Institute; Fatou Seydi-Sarr, executive director and founder of the African Bureau for Immigrant and Social Affairs;

and Laura Sanders, lecturer at the School of Social Work and founder of the Washtenaw Immigration Rights Coalition.

Week 11: FINAL CASC GROUP CHECK-INS (April 6)

Thursday, April 8 – ENGAGE Lecture Series –

Storytelling for Social Justice

Storytelling — listening to the stories of others and sharing one’s own stories — builds a foundation for human interaction. Telling others how we got here and why we care about an issue builds connection, allows us to share our values, and creates meaning. The art of public narrative is used in all aspects of social work practice — from helping our clients rewrite the stories they tell themselves, to helping communities and groups galvanize social change, to helping policy makers and politicians tell a “story of self” while creating a “story of us.” Join us for a discussion featuring Aaron Foley, former chief storyteller for the City of Detroit and current professor of journalism at New York University; Eric Thomas, current chief storyteller for the City of Detroit; and Jessica Care Moore, Detroit poet, activist, and author.

Week 12: Reality of Community Change: Sustainability & Self-Care (April 13)

What is the reality of CASC? Given the complexity of systems, how do we think about our work and our potential for change? What are strategies for approaching community action social change work?

Readings

- Tempered Radicals
- **Thursday, April 15 - CLASS PRESENTATIONS**

Week 13: CLASS PRESENTATIONS CONTINUED (April 20)