



Course title:	Theories and Practices of Community Change: Concepts, History and Approaches
Course #/term:	SW 650 Section 002, [Winter 2021]
Time and place:	Tuesday, 9 to noon, online
Credit hours:	3
Prerequisites:	SW 530
Instructor:	Osvaldo Rivera
Contact info:	Email: orivera@umich.edu Phone 313-689-3011
Office hours:	You may expect a response within 24 hours by appointment

1. Course Statement

a. Course description

This class will focus on the theories and practices for community change, with emphasis on the relationships between theory and practice ('praxis'). It will familiarize students to a range of critical change theories and core concepts and help students to develop their own understanding of frameworks for community change. Students will engage with different theories in examining community change, which may include critical intersectionality, critical race, empowerment and liberation, social movement, and feminist theories, as examples.

It will also look to historical and contemporary examples of community and social change movements to explore theory and practice including US and global community change movements, and the work of organic intellectuals and social change leaders (e.g. Grace Lee Boggs, Ella Baker, Myles Horton, ACT-UP, Black Lives Matter, #metoo, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Zapatistas, #GirlsLikeUs, World Social Forum, Climate Change).

Throughout the class, students will also use these examples to examine and understand the major range of models and practices for engaging in community change, for example: community organizing, community development, community-based policy advocacy, and popular education, and be able to assess the differences, purposes, and theoretical basis for the practices.

b. Course objectives and competencies

1. Describe, compare, and contrast several types of critical theories about social and community change. (EPAS 7)
2. Identify theories relevant to particular goal and problem areas, and critique their strengths and limitations. (EPAS 7)
3. Critique different theories as to their assumptions, origins, relevance for different social problems, and relevance for marginalized and oppressed groups inclusive of a broad range of intersecting diversity dimensions. (EPAS 4, 5)
4. Apply particular theories to different areas of social work practice. (EPAS 7)

c. Course design

This course will use varied format including:

- Small group & whole group engaged learning activities
- Innovative designs- web-based, videos, flipped classrooms
- Discussion and interactive formats, e.g. book clubs, presentations, debates
- Historical case-studies to examine community change
- Praxis- focused, linking theory to practice and action.

d. Intensive focus on PODS

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of community change theories that will help students explore the connections between race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, and psychological and physical functioning, well-being and community change. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will provide students with tools to understand and apply theories to practice with diverse populations.

This course encourages students to develop critical thinking skills to explore theories and practices of community change. Students will gain an understanding of various concepts, history, and approaches that inform community change practices and how those frameworks engage issues of privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice to promote or limit community change. Students will learn a range of classic and contemporary social justice theories and historical practices of community change using a framework of context, history, meaning, and possibility to examine theories and practices of community change.

Above is the course description approved by the faculty last spring. This is a new course, being piloted this fall, so we may have some trial and error, and need to adjust some things

a. 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.

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*

Electronic Devices

In consideration of your classmates and your own learning, please turn off all cell phones during class. I prefer that you receive no messages during class time. If you must be on call for an emergency, please let your home or office know that you are only available for emergencies that no one else can handle. If so, please set it to vibrate only.

Religious Observances

Please let the instructor know of your religious observances that may conflict with class attendance or assignment due dates so that appropriate arrangements can be made. It

would make the instructor(s) (and possibly of your fellow team members') lives easier if you bring this up during the first week of the semester.

2. Class Requirements

Text and class materials

Liberation Sociology. Feagin, Joe R, Vera, Hernan and Ducey, Kimberly. 2015 Paradigm Publishers. Boulder CO

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent. Wilkerson, Isabel. 2020 Random House. New York

Additional required readings will be placed on Canvas. Students are expected to read all assigned readings prior to class.

Discussion of current events will be a regular component of the class so please stay up to date on local, state, and federal issues. Articles, which will be posted in Canvas under "Files" in "Current Events", will periodically be discussed in class. Readings may be added/changed as determined by course development due to ongoing feedback, visits by guest lecturer(s), special circumstances, and student needs. I will strive to announce any changes to readings two weeks in advance.

Class schedule and attendance:

Topics may be modified throughout the course, but ample notice will be provided. Refer to Canvas for any changes in class schedule, usually entered under "Announcements". On days that assignments are due, I would rather you come to class and participate even if the assignment isn't done; you can get it to me later in the day.

Course orientation:

I believe "theory" should not stand in isolation from "practice" or "praxis". Your regular class "attendance" via Zoom and active purposeful participation in class is important. We will strive to enhance our theoretical understanding utilizing a "dialogical" approach. This assumes that knowledge is gained through active discussion and processing of that discussion between students and also between instructors and students in a "circular" or non-linear process.

Assignments: Class time will be provided for students to "dialogue" with each other in small groups so as to process and understand course content, as well as assignment expectations. All assignments are due by 11:59 PM on the dates listed. What follows is a general description for each assignment. **More detailed directions for the assignment and rubrics will be posted on Canvas with ample time ahead of its due date.**

Assignment#1. Theory Reflection Paper. A preliminary reflection on a theory presented in class which you feel most comfortable with. You will detail your understanding of its main concepts and proposed applications.

Assignment Due Date: **February 16th** **25 points** **5 narrative pages**

Assignment #2 Analysis of Current Societal Issue. You will select a “current” and critical “issue” impacting society of your choosing which was/is covered widely by mass media (articles, online postings, etc.) and conduct an analysis of this issue as “assessed” by the “media” and differing segments of society. You will select a primary theoretical framework to frame the issue and how you envision it will be an appropriate way to address the “problem”. You will be expected to compare and contrast with at least two other theoretical perspectives.

Assignment Due Date: **March 9th** **25 points** **7 narrative pages**

Assignment #3 Case Study of a Current “Community Change Effort- You will select a current social justice and/or constituencies based “movement”. **You are expected to get prior approval from the instructor for your selection.** This will provide an opportunity for you to get feedback on your selection, its appropriateness for the final assignment and as necessary individualized guidance. You will detail the selection’s historical antecedents, lessons learned from “past practice”, how community change has been envisioned and implemented, any ideological underpinning by different “players”, an analysis of its current character, how it plays against national culture and politics, and potential for long term duration.

Assignment Due Date: **April 20th** **35 points** **10 narrative pages**

Assignment of points

Preliminary Theory Reflection Paper	25 points
Analysis of Current Societal Issue.	25 points
Case Study of a Current “Community Change Effort- Attendance and Participation	35 points <u>15 points</u>
Total	100 points

Evaluation Criteria and Procedures

General evaluation criteria (special elements will also be delineated for particular assignments):

- Demonstrate understanding of and ability/apply knowledge and theory to illuminate intersectionality and justice goals and barriers;
- Systematic & logical presentation of arguments, with appropriate documentation;
- Appropriate use of evidence, use of relevant literature and concepts, with citations;
- Scope of concepts used; degree of integration across topics, levels, and different readings
- Clarity of presentation;
- Originality & creativity;

- Attention to diversity and social justice issues across different populations and situations.

Grading:

Letter grades will be allocated as follows:

97-100	A+	77-79	C+
93-96	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
		<60	E

There is information on grading in the *Student Guide to the Master's in Social Work Degree Program* and other appropriate University publications for policies and penalties. There are also policies in the student guide about [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#) as well as [Student Grievance procedures](#) and the [policy for grading in special circumstances](#). Here are some resources around [testing and grading from CRLT](#) ties related to academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, and information about procedures for ethnical and correct citations.

Schedule for SW 650: Theories and Practices of Community Change: Concepts, History and Approaches. (Additions/changes which will be shared ahead of time)

Date	Topics	Assigned readings- Assignment due dates in red
Jan 19	<p>Introduction to the course and each other</p> <p>Rationale for studying the history of Social Justice Efforts in the U.S.</p> <p>How do we promote social justice in an anti-democratic environment & growth of mass fascist tendencies?</p> <p>Why use <u>Caste: Origins of our Discontent</u> as our semester “case study”?</p> <p>Breakout Sections</p>	<p>Liberation Sociology. Feagin, Joe R, Vera, Hernan and Ducey, Kimberly. 2015 Paradigm Publishers. Boulder CO Chapters 1 and 2 pgs vii-58</p> <p>Community Practice Skills: Local to Global Perspectives. Gamble, Dorothy and Weil, Marie. 2010 Columbia University Press Chapter 4, pgs 83-117 in Canvas</p>
Jan 26	<p>Theorizing, Theories & Community Change</p> <p>Why use <u>Caste: Origins of our Discontent</u> as our semester “case study”? (cont.)</p> <p>Case Study(Critical Race Theory): Video-Palante, Siempre Palante-Young Lords in New York Symbolic Interactionism</p> <p>Group work in social justice efforts Breakout Sections: Guided questions</p>	<p>Canvas articles: 1.”Roles in Groups” 2. Reed, B. G. (2005) Theorizing in Community Practice.</p> <p>Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent. Wilkerson, Isabel. 2020 Random House. New York Parts 1 & 2 pgs xv-96</p>
Feb 2	<p>Community Change Approaches & Components</p> <p>A Look at Feminist Thought: From Jane Addams to Stacey Abrams Case Study: Black Lives Matter https://blacklivesmatter.com/</p> <p>Biography of Ella Baker https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkZxfhEQT3w</p>	<p>Liberation Sociology Chapters 3 & 4 pgs 59-163</p> <p>Canvas Articles: 1.Critique of Rothman- Bonnie Young Laing 2.Framing for Social Change, Stanford Social Innovation Review 2018</p>

	<p><u>Using the arts: Sweet Honey in The Rock</u> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoPofPzkJ4U</p> <p>Breakout Sections</p>	
Feb 9	<p>Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches <u>Education as an Empowerment Tool: E.g. Paulo Freire</u></p>	<p>Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent. Wilkerson, Isabel. Parts 3 pgs 101-164 <u>Canvas Article</u> Freire 1970 - Pedagogy of the Oppressed - Ch. 1 pp. 43-69</p>
Feb 16	<p>Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches (cont.)</p> <p><u>Conflict Theory: E.g. Marx, Saul Alinsky</u> <u>The Democratic Promise: Saul Alinsky & His Legacy - Part 3 10 minutes</u> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmcz53VCOKk</p>	<p>Canvas Articles: 1. Checkoway, Six Strategies 2. Hardcastle-Theory-Based Model Based Community Practice 2011 cp2 Preliminary Theory Reflection Paper Due</p>
Feb 23	<p>Arts as Symbolism/Critical Race Theory efforts <u>Case Study: Detroit Council of the Arts</u></p> <p>Breakout Sections and group work on assignments</p>	<p>Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent. Wilkerson, Isabel. Chapters 11, 12, and 15</p> <p><u>Canvas Article: Why Stories Matter</u></p>
March 2	<p>Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches <u>Case Study: Black Power Movement in Detroit (60's & 70's)</u></p> <p>Group discussion & work on projects</p>	<p>Canvas Article: Introduction to Community Psychology: Chapter 10</p>
March 9	<p>Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches (cont.) Breakout Sections and group work on assignments</p>	<p><u>Canvas Articles may be assigned:</u> Assignment #2 Analysis of Current Societal Issue</p>
March 16	<p>Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches (cont.) Breakout Sections and group work on assignments</p>	<p><u>Canvas Articles may be assigned:</u></p>

March 23	No Class-<u>Well Being Break</u>	
March 30	Coalition building Heather Booth. If we organize, we can change the world. (11 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzGrFENp67M Breakout Sections and group work on assignments	Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent. Wilkerson, Isabel. Ch. 16, 17, 19, 25, 28, 29 & Epilogue (Total of 51 pages) Canvas Articles: 1.Organizing Guide Midwest Academy Heather Booth 2.Midwest Academy Chart-Training for Change Handout 3. Cole intersectionality and coalitions 2008
April 6	The “New Circumstances” Remembering Grace Lee Boggs https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1zzr-qkA3U8 Breakout Sections and group work on assignments	Liberation Sociology. Chapters 7 pgs 199-241 <u>Canvas Articles may be assigned:</u>
April 13	What Now? Resurgence of White Supremacy & the Rise of Facism? Breakout Sections and group work on assignments	<u>Canvas Articles may be assigned:</u>
April 20	Final class-Sum Up and Reflections	Assignment #3 Case Study of a Current “Community Change Effort