Course title: Youth Empowerment & Youth Organizing  
Course #/term: SW 656 Winter 2021  
Time and place: Online  
Credit hours: 3  
Prerequisites: None  
Instructor: Katie Richards-Schuster, Associate Professor  
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers  
Contact info: kers@umich.edu, 734-730-6572  
Office: 3850 SSW  
Office hours: Before/After Class, or By Appointment

Course Description
This course examines strategies for engaging and empowering young people, with emphasis on approaches in racially segregated and economically disinvested areas. It considers core concepts of youth empowerment at the individual, organizational, and community levels; models and methods of practice; age-appropriate and culturally-responsive approaches; roles of young people and adult allies; and perspectives on practice in a diverse democracy. The course will draw upon best practices from grassroots organizing, civic engagement, youth development, and child welfare.

Competencies:
Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Understand the core concepts of youth empowerment in a diverse democracy;
2. Analyze major models and methods of age-appropriate and culturally-responsive practice;
3. Develop knowledge from empirically-based efforts by young people to create change; and
4. Identify problems and issues of young people in racially segregated and economically disinvested areas.

Class Materials
All materials will be posted to Canvas.

Grading and Assignments
An outline of the assignment and due dates is listed in the assignment section of the canvas or your reference.

**Assignment Expectations**

Due dates are firm. I expect that assignments will be turned in on the day they are due unless there are extenuating circumstances and/or you have talked with me in advance. I reserve the right to mark down papers ½ a grade for each day late in fairness to classmates who turn papers in on-time.

**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.

**My Commitment to You as an Instructor is to:**

- Recognize trauma & compounding, on-going stress (including COVID, Systemic Racism, Social Injustice, & Current Society)
- Value participation & engagement (recognizing multiple forms)
- Focus on process, effort & growth not the outcomes- want you to move forward your own work
- Support your critical thinking- about you as a change agent, about authentic and critical community change
- Acknowledge experience- you each bring knowledge, expertise in your own lives (All teachers & learners)
- Building community where we can work & learn together (on-going)
- Support you- as a person & a student

**General Class Structure**

We will meet synchronously each week for class. Synchronous class meetings will be roughly (1.5-2 hours). Class will begin at 9:30. Weekly meetings will include:

- Whole Group, Small Group Work
- Interactive & Discussion Based
- Home Groups (Discussion & Work Groups)
- Participatory-Led Work
- PODS Intensive Focus- examples, readings, and assignments

In addition to the weekly meetings, students will be expected to engage in additional out of class time work. This includes reviewing preparation materials (readings, websites, toolkits). Completing pre-class work (e.g. questions, short reflections), post-class work (videos/podcasts & reflections) and/or working in small groups to prepare assignments for class (e.g ice-breaker, home group projects, prep for class).

Week-by-week plans can be found in the modules on canvas.
**Recording of Class (Audio & Video)**

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 in advance that a recording will occur and be provided with an option to opt-out. 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.

**Attendance Expectations & Camera**

I expect that students will be engaged in class and ready to start at 9:30. I will expect that people come to class having read the materials and bringing examples from the readings and from one’s experience to share. My commitment is to create an environment where people feel a part of a community. That may be tough in the online space- but to do this- I hope that you will commit to staying focused during our class time. The expectation is that you will keep your camera on during the zoom calls as much as possible.

*If you have a reason why you cannot have your camera on, please talk to me ASAP.*

**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 lost of points, failure of a grade, and/or other consequences. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

**Personal Issues and Special Accommodations**

Please see me if you have any concerns about the class, your participation in the class, or have personal issues that relate to the class. I am more than happy to meet with you at any point to discuss your situation or to address any special accommodations. I am also available to assist you with accessing school or university-based resources you may need during the semester.

As a reminder, if you will require special accommodations for class and/or assignments, please see me as soon as possible.

**Class Policies**

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

https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources (Links to an external site.)

**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
91-93 = A-
87-90 = B+
84-86 = B
81-83 = B-
77-80 = C+
74-76 = C
71-73 = C-
70-0 = No Record COVID (NRC)

**General Grading/Assessment Rubrics**

For Assignments (See Canvas for Assignment Details).

**Exceptional (A):**

- **EXPECTATIONS:** Exceeds expectations for every aspect of the assignment/course. Work goes above and beyond
- **CONTENT UNDERSTANDING:** Shows exceptional command of concepts, ideas, and class materials
- **CRITICAL REFLECTION:** Exceptional level of reflection, critical engagement with materials or assignment ideas
- **CREATIVITY & RISK-TAKING:** Demonstrates creativity, innovation, and risk-taking
- **EFFORT:** Assignments demonstrate exceptional effort (well-crafted, well-thought-through, well-written)

**Good (A-, B+)**

- **EXPECTATIONS:** Meet expectations for every aspect of the assignment/course
- **CONTENT UNDERSTANDING:** Demonstrate a solid understanding of concepts, ideas, and class materials
- **CRITICAL REFLECTION:** Demonstrates a strong level of reflection with materials or assignment ideas, although perhaps lacks a high level of critical thinking
- **CREATIVITY & RISK-TAKING:** Demonstrate some creativity, innovation, and/or risk taking
- **EFFORT:** Assignment demonstrates effort (well-crafted, well-thought-through, well-written)

**Satisfactory (B, B-)**

- **EXPECTATIONS:** Meets most, but not all, expectations for every aspect of the assignment/course (perhaps is missing a question,
• CONTENT UNDERSTANDING: Demonstrate a basic understanding of concepts, ideas, and class materials
• CRITICAL REFLECTION: Demonstrates a basic level of reflection with materials or assignment ideas, although perhaps lacks a high level of critical thinking
• CREATIVITY & RISK-TAKING: Demonstrate limited creativity, innovation, and/or risk taking
• EFFORT: Assignment demonstrates basic effort (some errors/typos, mostly well-crafted/organized, assignment reflects that student put in some effort)

Minimal (C or below)

• EXPECTATIONS: Meets few expectations of the assignment (e.g. missing multiple sections, missing content, lack of understanding)
• CONTENT UNDERSTANDING: Assignment lacks an understanding of key concepts, ideas, and class materials
• CRITICAL REFLECTION: Demonstrates minimal or no reflection or critical thinking
• CREATIVITY & RISK-TAKING: Demonstrates no or minimal creativity, innovation, and/or risk taking
• EFFORT: Assignment demonstrates minimal or no effort (sloppy, late, multiple errors, looks like it was completed the day-of/night before)

Participation

Exceptional:

• Attends every class (unless emergency/issue), has camera on (unless unable to do so) enthusiastic about class discussions, exceptional engagement in discussion (asks questions, offers ideas), takes risks with participation (offers ideas, willing to go first, willing to try an idea), offers appreciation for their colleagues, exceptional participation in whole group and homegroup work, exceptional effort in the individual skill work, willingness to learn and incorporate feedback

Good

• Attends every class (unless emergency/issue), has camera on (unless unable to do so) enthusiastic about class discussions, engages in discussion (asks questions, offers ideas), takes some risks with participation (offers ideas, willing to go first, willing to try an idea), offers appreciation for their colleagues, participates in whole group and homegroup work, effort in the individual skill work, willingness to learn and incorporate feedback

Satisfactory
- Attends most class (unless emergency/issue/communicates ahead of time), has camera on (unless unable to do so), shows limited enthusiasm about class discussions, sometimes engages in discussion but not often, rarely takes risks, offers some appreciation for their colleagues, participates in whole group and homegroup work but not with limited engagement, shows some effort in the individual skill work, willingness to learn and incorporate feedback

Minimal/None

- Misses classes without any communication or leaves class for periods of time (unless emergency/issue), doesn’t have camera on (unless unable to do so), shows no enthusiastic about class discussions, leaves class early/leaves small groups/doesn’t joining groups does not engage in discussion or take risks, does not complete individual work and does not contribute to homegroup

Assignment Summary

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tue Jun 1, 2021</td>
<td>Assignment Proposal for Individual Project</td>
<td>due by 11:59pm</td>
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<td>Assignment Youth Empowerment Core Concepts Individual Essay &amp; Artifact (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue Jun 8, 2021</td>
<td>Assignment Midterm Participation Assessment</td>
<td>due by 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue Jul 27, 2021</td>
<td>Assignment Now What: Reflections &amp; Letter to Future Self (10%)</td>
<td>due by 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri Jul 30, 2021</td>
<td>Assignment Semester Individual Project (30%)</td>
<td>due by 11:59pm</td>
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<td>Assignment Icebreaker &amp; Energizer Facilitation (Information &amp; Google Folder Submission Link)</td>
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<td>Assignment Participation &amp; Individual Effort (10%)</td>
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<td>Assignment Presentation of Youth Empowerment/Youth Organizing Examples</td>
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<td>Assignment TQEAs &amp; Reflections</td>
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