



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

# COMMUNITY ACTION & SOCIAL CHANGE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

## SW 300: Understanding Community Action and Social Change (DECLARE)

### Develop, Engage, Challenge, Learn, Act, Reflect and Empower

- Faculty: Amber Williams [ambnicol@umich.edu](mailto:ambnicol@umich.edu)
- Office: SSWB 3640 | 734.763.5733
- Office Hours: By Appointment

**Course Summary:** This course is an intensive learning experience designed to support students in beginning the deep work of reflection that will be built on throughout all CASC coursework. The specific goals of the retreat are to: (1) Develop student understanding of social identity to lead to deeper, more intensified classroom and out-of-classroom learning, (2) Help students explore and articulate individual passions and their role in broader movements towards community action and social change, (3) Challenge ideas and provide space for students to learn how to engage across differences, (4) Reflect on individual's experiences and skill sets, and the power individuals bring into a community, and (5) Empower students to build a toolbox of skills, learning and experiences that will help them throughout their lives.

### Retreat Curriculum: Course Background

The SALT Leadership mini-course is modeled after previous iterations of social justice program developed by the CASC minor, namely the Declare Social Justice Retreat. The course is a structured two-day retreat that applies experiential learning, critical reflection, discussion, and lecture through a social justice education model. Participating students will critically engage SALT model elements of capacity for empathy, critical consciousness, commitment to justice, equity in purpose, the value of collective action, controversy with courage, and coalescence, to promote leadership skills and knowledge. Opportunity for additional co-curricular opportunities will be offered following course completion, with the Trotter Multicultural Center

### Course Objectives

- **Develop a Social Justice Vision.** understanding how to create a participatory and equitable vision of social justice rooted in the voices, experiences, and leadership of historically marginalized communities.
- **Examine Systems of Social Inequality.** unpacking and analyzing systemic oppression, power and privilege in context, as well as fostering shared language of social justice concepts.
- **Promote Identity and Critical Consciousness Raising.** building identity awareness in relation to social systems; developing skills to contextualize social identity and positionality in changing environments.
- **Understand Transformative Justice and Collection Action.** engaging transformational leadership (guided by seven capacities), unpacking root causes of harm and conflict,

and practicing skills toward collective action.

**Core Competencies:**

Students will gain exposure, knowledge and practice in each of the following competencies

- Capacity for Empathy: the ability to empathize gives leaders the ability to understand other peoples' experiences, perspective, and life situations
- Critical Consciousness: an understanding historical and contemporary forms of oppression that negatively affect marginalized communities
- Commitment to Justice: a motivation to advance the well being of historically oppressed communities, and the prioritization of efforts to achieve a more just society, where all groups are equally valued, validated, and empowered
- Equity in Purpose: when groups develop "commons" purposes, they often inherently privilege the voices of those in power and marginalize other interests
- Value of Collective Action: working with diverse communities to collectively resist multiple forms of oppression and advance justice for all historically underserved and marginalized communities
- Controversy with Courage: engaging controversy courageously by embracing discomfort, acknowledging privilege and oppression, and contributing to conversations about significant social problems
- Coalescence: individual and groups develop a shared understanding that systematic equity or justice is beneficial for all groups

**Course Expectations & Assignments:** Students are expected to attend the retreat in full, complete a pre/post survey, complete reflection and final paper assignments, and attend a one on one appointment with a Declare peer facilitator.

- Pre Survey Completion (5 points) 9.25.21
- Attendance and Active Participation: (50 points) 9.26.21 (includes TMC program)
- Day 1: Reflection Paper (10 points) 9.25.21
- Day 2: Reflection Paper (10 points) 9.26.21
- Post Survey Completion (5 points) 9.30.21
- Final Paper (20 points) 10.4.21

**Incompletes:** Incompletes are given only when it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the stated time limits of the course. The Student Guide, Vol. 1, Sec. 8.01 states that an "I" grade is used when illness or other compelling reasons prevent completion of work, and there is a definite plan and date for completion of course work approved by the instructor. The student must formally request an incomplete from the instructor prior to the final week of classes.

**Students in Need of Accommodations:** If you have a documented disability or condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please notify the instructor as soon as

possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources.

**Class Requirements:** There are no required texts to purchase for this course. Any needed materials will be provided by on canvas.

**Class Schedule:** This course is held the weekend of September 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> from 9AM – 5PM. The breakdown of the course schedule and agenda can be found on canvas.

**Attendance and Participation:** Class attendance and active participation (large and small group discussion, individual reflection, oral participation, etc) account for a portion of your overall grade. Participation through student-student and instructor-student interactions are important considerations for optimal performance.

Excessive absences, as determined by the instructor, may result in a reduction in grade and will be brought to the attention of the student and the academic advisor by the course instructor. While attendance is not always a part of a course grade, due to the nature of many course assignments, in-class skill building activities and group projects, if a student fails to attend most class sessions, the student may be asked by the course instructor to withdraw from the course.

Please bear in mind the following considerations regarding course policies for attendance and participation

- Be present at the beginning of class when attendance is recorded and remain for the duration of class
- Instructor reserves the right to deduct points from the students' final grade per unexcused absence; excessive unexcused absences will result in grade deduction.
- Inform instructor of absence within 24 hours of unexpected absence resulting from an emergency.
- Students are expected to engage in active course participation (comments and questions directed at instructor and students).

### Grading

a. 97-100 = A+	73-76.9= C
b. 93-96.9= A	70-72.9= C-
c. 90-92.9= A-	67-69.9= D+
d. 87-89.9= B+	63-66.9= D
e. 83-86.9= B	60-62.9= D-
f. 80-82.9= B-	
g. 77-79.9= C+	

"A" grades are given for exceptional individual performance and mastery of the material. The use of "A+", "A", and "A-" distinguishes the degree of superiority.

"B" grades are given to students who demonstrate mastery of the material.

"B+" is used for students who perform just above the mastery level but not in an exceptional manner.

"B-" is used for students just below the mastery level.

"C" grades are given when mastery of the material is minimal. A "C-" is the lowest grade that carries credit.

"D" grades indicate deficiency and carry no credit.

**Class Recording and Course Materials:** *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.]* Additional information on class recordings can be found the [Recording and Privacy Concerns FAQ](#):

**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. School of Social Work 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.

**Inclusivity Policy:** Social and economic justice is one of the key themes of social work practice, research, and education. We must encourage each other to critically examine issues related to power, privilege, and oppression. As a result, there will be class discussions, activities, or assignments that may be difficult or challenging. In order to have the most supportive environment possible, we must all commit ourselves to fostering an inclusive, anti-oppressive space in which each person takes responsibility for their own language, actions and interactions. This class will engage us in a community of learning, through systematic exploration of knowledge about different levels and segments of society, theorizing about justice issues, and reflecting on ourselves in interaction with others. This requires developing a climate in the classroom in which we can learn from each other's different perspectives and experiences.

These are not just intellectual tasks, but often generate emotions, and require us to surface and engage with our values and what may be tacit (not articulated) assumptions. Learning new ways of thinking can be very exciting and empowering, but we may also feel confused, anxious, overwhelmed, and even angry at different points in this process. These emotions usually are markers that you are being challenged and are learning, as long as they do not overwhelm you and we can navigate through them. It is important that we actively listen to each other about how our words and actions are affecting one another and the learning environment, knowing the impact is more important than intent. I recognize that microaggressions happen (by all of us, to all of us); however, overt slurs in relation to race, sex, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion/world view, immigration status, size, nationality, dis/ability status, marital status, political affiliation, or any other identities, will be addressed directly. Throughout the course, we will negotiate other guidelines about class discussions. Please bring your best selves to our classroom space.

**Electronics Policy:** Laptops and phones may be used for legitimate classroom purposes only such as the use of such as taking notes or looking up readings on Canvas. Email, Facebook, instant messaging, online shopping, surfing the Internet, and playing games are not considered legitimate classroom purposes. Such use is distracting to those seated around you, and if I see you using your computer for these purposes, I may ask you to turn off your computer and take notes by hand.

**Accommodations for students with disabilities:** If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. 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. If you chose to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 7633000 or go to <https://ssd.umich.edu/>.

**Health and Wellness Services:** Health and wellness encompasses situations or circumstances that may impede your success within the program. The Office of Student Services offers health and wellness services that are directed to the MSW student body. Feel free to visit the [SSW Health and Wellness website](#) regarding any health, mental health or wellness issue. This could include need for advocacy and referral to University or community resources, financial resources or counseling.

**Dependent Care Resources:** For students with child or parenting/elder care responsibilities, feel free to 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 childcare, 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/>).

**Religious Observances:** **Please notify me** if religious observances conflict with class attendance, community participation or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

### **Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct**

All students should be familiar with the Student Code for Academic and Professional Conduct (<https://sww.umich.edu/msw-student-guide>) which holds our 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. .

**Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here:** <https://sww.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*