



Course title:	Theories and Practices of Community Action and Social Change
Course #/term:	SW 305, Section 003, Fall, 2021
Time and place:	Tuesdays 2-5pm -- Room SSW 3816
Credit hours:	3
Instructor:	Danny Alvarez
Pronouns:	They/Them/Theirs
Contact info:	alvardi@umich.edu Expect response within 24 – 48 Hours
Office hours:	By Appointment

“I think we have to own the fears that we have of each other, and then, in some practical way, some daily way, figure out how to see people differently than the way we were brought up to”
Alice Walker

“the classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy”
bell hooks

1. Course Statement

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.

CASC Minor Mission Statement

The CASC minor is for students interested in developing knowledge, skills, and experiences in community action and social change. The multidisciplinary 16 credit minor will prepare students to: 1. examine community action and social change using a multidisciplinary framework; 2. address community action and social change in multilingual and multicultural communities; 3. integrate social justice values into the community action and social change processes; and 4. engage in service learning to promote community action and social change.

Guiding Principles

1. The core values of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence) frames our interactions with students inside and outside the classroom.
2. PODS: Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice are taught to similar degrees in every class.
3. We represent Social Work – both the School and the profession – in our interactions with students, including academic and career advice.
4. We strive to respond appropriately to student inquiries in a timely and personally engaging manner.
5. We structure courses with student participation in mind throughout the term, notably by some conversation about ground rules at the start of the term and some identifiable closure activity at the end.
6. We see curricular and co-curricular opportunities as intersecting and complementary. We seek to find opportunities for high touch, high impact work with students

Course Goals

- 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 structural analysis with regard to community action and social change.
- Students will develop an understanding of community-building and organizing skills.

Four Curricular Themes

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity issues** will be explored as students identify self-knowledge and skills for regularly monitoring their practice within the context of their work. The PODS (Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice) lens will be applied to practice situations and students will have an opportunity to discuss relevant field issues related to the diversity dimensions (ability, age, culture, economic class, ethnicity, family structure, gender, gender identity and expression, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation).
- **Social Justice and Social Change issues** will be addressed by helping students to critically assess their commitment to and skills for enacting change towards social justice goals. The role of the social worker will be discussed as reflected by their individual experiences and reflection.
- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** approaches will be addressed within the context of the student's orientation to practice. Small group discussions will allow the student to discuss, review, compare, and contrast alternative approaches and frameworks while reflecting on their individual work and experiences.
- **Behavioral and Social Science research approaches** will be addressed within the context of the student's orientation and method. Small group discussions will allow the student to discuss, review, compare, and contrast alternative approaches and frameworks while reflecting on their individual work and experiences.

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. I will make every effort to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. 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.

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://ssw.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.

Teaching Style and Course Structure

In this course we are all teachers and we are all learners. My responsibility as an instructor is to help build and maintain a container for our group to engage in this work together. I will bring in activities, stories, and personal narratives to try and create an environment that is open, engaging, fun, challenging, safe, and honest. Each of you brings your own knowledge, experiences, and histories to this class which will enhance the learning of the entire group and deepen the theoretic conversations that we will have.

As adult learners it is assumed that students will be committed to their own learning and the learning of others. This commitment shows up in each of us being present (physically and cognitively) and being prepared (physically and cognitively). This includes doing your best to create a physical learning space that is conducive to focusing for the length of class, reading materials and taking time to reflect on them so you are ready to share thoughts and reactions with each other, being on time, voluntarily sharing, asking questions, and engaging in class and monitoring the participation of others to encourage their engagement. My hope is that you all commit to each other in ways that encourage you to challenge each other, to disagree, to affirm each other, to hold each other accountable for doing readings and assignments, to trusting each other enough to be honest, and to asking for support or help from each other when you need it.

Proper use of names and pronouns

All students will be referred to by the names and pronouns they use (e.g. she, they, ze, he). If you have a name that differs from the one that appears on the roster, please inform me before the second class period so that we can use your correct name and pronouns. Students can

designate their personal pronouns on the class roster via Wolverine Access: Student Business > Campus Personal Information > Gender Identity.

<https://spectrumcenter.umich.edu/article/gender-inclusive-restrooms>

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

All readings and other class materials will be posted in Canvas. You will not need to purchase any books for this class, although I may put a list of recommended readings up on canvas for folks who would like to engage further and you can access those or purchase those on your own if you are interested. If you ever have trouble accessing the readings reach out to me and I can send them to you in a different format or help troubleshoot. Because this course will be responsive to what is happening in the world while we are in class together, the readings will probably change over the semester. I may remove some and will certainly add a few here and there. I will always do my best to post new required readings a week ahead. There may be times when I post other readings that are relevant and would be great to read and I am not able to give you a whole week ahead. Those will be suggested but not required. When there are changes to readings or potentially even assignments you will receive an announcement from me on Canvas.

Please come to class each week prepared to engage in discussions about the resources and readings posted for that week's class session. It will make the class much richer and more interesting.

b. Class schedule

"Reimagining our notions of what can and should happen in time...how expectations of 'how long things take' are based on very particular minds and bodies"

Alison Kafer, on crip time and disability justice

This map of the semester is a draft. I expect that this will shift and change over the course of the semester and invite you to expect the same. I do not know you all yet and do not know what unique conversations will emerge because of who we all are and what we bring when we come together. With roots in popular education, I need to have the flexibility to go in the direction that we need to go collectively, even when it is not what was "planned". That being

said, I also want to provide those of you who need it with the comfort of structure and dates. I did my best to map out our course for the semester and am committed to giving you all new information, changes, etc. as early as I can so that you can plan for it and know what to expect. If at any point in the semester you feel like you need more information do not hesitate to reach out.

COURSE SCHEDULE	TOPIC AREA
August 31—in person	Introduction to Community Action and Social Change (live session)
September 7—in person	Who are you? Who are we?
September 14—in person	Understanding Our Stories: Being aware of who we are as change agents
September 21—zoom class	Understanding CASC Terms and Perspectives
September 28—in person	Community Change as a Process: Systems, Power & Impacts
October 5—zoom class	Exploring Approaches: CASC in Action
October 12—in person	Key Frameworks and Theory for CASC Part I
October 19— no class	Study Break—NO CLASS
October 26—in person	Key Frameworks and Theory for CASC Part II
November 2—zoom class	Learning from Social Movements & Key Figures
November 9—in person	What Makes a Good CASC Change Agent
November 16—in person	Visioning and Collective Liberation
November 23— TBD	TBD
November 30—in person	Action Project Presentation & Feedback
December 7—in person	Action Project Presentation & Feedback and Class Closure

c. Assignments

Assignments, evaluation criteria or rubrics for each assignment as well its point or percentage value for the overall course grade can be found on canvas website. Below is an abbreviated overview of what to expect for assignment requirements for the term.

Assignment	Due date	Percent of grade
Participation <i>Community Building activity facilitation, Mid semester evaluation, reaction sheets</i>		30%
Core Concept Mixed Tape	September 28 th by 1pm	10%
Learning from History Paper	November 2 nd by 1pm	30%
Action Project Assignment <i>Proposal, Project, Presentation, and Paper</i>	Proposal: October 12 th 1pm Paper: December 10 th 5pm	30%

d. Attendance and class participation

Attendance and participation in all class sessions is critical for the learning process in this course. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Active participation is essential to the small group learning community we will create. Please plan to show up each week on time, having done the readings, and ready to engage. I do, however, understand that life happens. If you must miss class please let me know with as much notice as possible. If you miss more than one class without notice it may be reflected in your participation grade.

You won't be graded for *what* you say in this class—there are no clear rights and wrongs in the kind of inquiry we'll be doing together. But you will be graded for the effort you invest in developing your skills at listening, engaging, communicating (verbally and non-verbally), and critically interrogating. "Considerate" participation necessitates respectful and engaged comments *and* body language. Please remember to silence your cell phones and other distracting electronic devices while we are together.

I recognize that there are different learning styles. If you are having a difficult time learning and engaging because of how the material is presented or what type of participation is being encouraged please let me know via email. We can always talk through your ideas during office hours and discuss strategies that may help you with participation during class.

If for whatever reason you need further accommodations in regard to attendance and participation reach out—I am committed to each of you getting as much as possible out of this course and also committed to your health and wellbeing and I am confident we can come up with a plan together.

e. Grading

The content of this course can be awkward to “grade” in traditional ways. I will not be grading you based on what you say or how you say it, what you believe or don’t believe, or your grammar and punctuation. I am looking to see that you are engaging in the content. That you are reading the things that I have assignment and spending the time needed to critique, react, reflect, etc. and that you are engaging with the other students in the class around the content and encouraging the same from them. The assignments for this class are not supposed to trick or quiz you, they are tools to help you integrate the things we are discussing into your life and your social work practice.

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-

Incompletes (“I”):

Students must finish incomplete coursework within two semesters of enrollment in the class in which they received their initial incomplete. Please see the current Student Guide.

I: (Incomplete) is used when illness or other compelling reasons prevent completion of work, and there is a definite plan and date for completion of course or field work approved by the instructor/liaison. Any “I” grade remaining on a student's record more than two terms after the conclusion of the term in which the grade was awarded reverts to a permanent incomplete, and credit can be earned only by retaking the course. This limit includes the Spring/Summer term and applies regardless of the student's subsequent enrollment. However, if at the time the instructor agreed to the “I”, an earlier date of submission and/or completion of final work was agreed upon, and then this date takes precedent over the two-term policy. A change in grade will not be accepted after two terms for any reason other than clerical error. The Associate Dean for Educational Programs must approve any exceptions to this policy.

Note: A grade of "I" stays on a student's academic record permanently. Even if the student makes up the course or field work according to the guidelines stated above, the grade for the course will appear on the academic record as, for example, IB+ or IS. If the "I" is not made up in the approved time frame the grade is changed to an IPL (Incomplete Permanent Lapse) and is final.

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*
- *Military deployment*
- *Writing skills and expectations*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*