1. Course Statement

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.

For Community Change Pathway participants:
We strongly recommend that this course be taken before or concurrently with the other required pathway class.

Objectives

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)

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.

Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (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.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials


- Additional required out of class learning materials are linking in the Canvas Page/Course Schedule.
- Students should complete text, audio and digital media consumption prior to the class for which they are assigned. Classroom discussion and activities are based on this expectation.
- Students will discuss out of class learning materials in large and small groups. Students will have static discussion groups for Caste and This Land season 2.
- The agenda and materials to complete prior to class are posted in the Canvas Page Course Schedule. These are posted at least one week in advance.
- The out of class learning materials will be adjusted as needed to meet learning objectives. Students are encouraged to share additional learning resources that can be included in our Canvas site.

b. Tentative class schedule

This is a tentative outline of topics and readings. Use the Canvas Page/Course Schedule for the most up to date list and links.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Out of Class Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why Theory Matters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Session Title</td>
<td>Lecture Material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
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<td>------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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| 6/2/15 | Framing and Media | The Arts in Social Change  
Visual literacy  
ACTUP |
| 7/2/22 | Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches | Friere/Popular Education & Alinsky/Rules for Radicals  
Misinformation in social change |
| 8/3/8 | Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches | (cont.) |
| 9/3/15 | Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches | (cont.)  
EZLN (Zapatista Movement), Occupy, Standing Rock |
| 10/3/22 | Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches | Young Lords |
| 12/4/5 | Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches | Climate Change-2021 Glasgow Climate Summit |

Films: All in the Fight for Democracy (amazon), Let the People Decide (vimeo)  
Readings/media for: Friere/Popular Education & Alinsky/Rules for Radicals  
Assignment #2 Analysis of Current Societal Issue  
Discussion groups: This Land podcast Season 2  
Media/reading: EZLN, Occupy, Standing Rock  
Discussion groups: This Land podcast Season 2  
Discussion groups: This Land podcast Season 2  
Media/readings: General Baker/DRUM-LRBW, Grace Lee Boggs, Allied Media Project/AMC  
media for: Glasgow Climate Summit, Threshold Season 4
Assignment #3 Case Study of a Current “Community Change Effort

14 4/19 Presentations and Reflections
Project team assessment
Course Learning Objectives review

**c. Assignments**

Course assignments are due on the date specified in the course syllabus and on Canvas. Occasionally, unforeseen circumstances arise (e.g. illness, personal or family emergency) which may make it difficult for a student to complete the assignment by its designated due date time. Should this happen, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor. At the instructor’s discretion, a student’s request for an extension of an assignment past its due date may be granted, usually for no longer than one week past the due date. The instructor reserves the right to deduct points for late assignments. University policies related to persons with disability (i.e. temporary or permanent accommodations), bereavement, and religious observations supersede this policy (see MSW Handbook).

The assignment description in the syllabus is a general overview. Details, format and rubrics are found in Canvas Assignments. The course uses individual and group project, as consistent with social work practice. In grading these, I seek to balance engagement, understanding concepts, application, accountability, and professional performance expectations. I look for your work to demonstrate concise, yet thoughtful, evidence-based and integrative work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Theory Presentation &amp; Paper</td>
<td>In-class presentation and Canvas, upload 2/8</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Analysis of current societal issue</td>
<td>Canvas upload, 3/8</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Case study of current community change effort</td>
<td>In class presentation, Canvas upload, 4/11</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Engagement</td>
<td>Weekly, in class</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</table>
**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, unless otherwise stated. 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 Presentation and Reflection Paper.** This assignment is designed to provide students with an understanding of several theories relevant to social and community change. It represents a preliminary understanding of its main concepts, critiques, and proposed applications. The learning and resources generated through this assignment will be used and useful for the subsequent two major assignments and in class discussions.

With a partner(s) Complete a 1) 3-page, single spaced paper that specifies the theory (e.g. Freire, Critical Race Theory, Feminist, critical intersectionality, empowerment and liberation, economic, Marxist) they’ve selected, specific premises presented by the theory i.e. assumptions, tenets, expected outcomes, philosophical foundation, associated major thinkers/writers, etc., critiques and limitations of the theory, relevance to social movement and socio-economic problems and a reflection on their learning and selection, 2) an Annotated Reading List for the theory with a minimum of 7 sources used to understand the theory, 2 of which are critiques. This serves as your citations and as a guide for other students who want to engage in further study and 3) in class give a 10-minute presentation of what you’ve learned, what questions you have, and preliminary examples of social movements or socio-economic circumstances/problems where you see this applied.

**Assignment 2: Analysis of Current Societal Issue.** In this assignment students examine a critical social issue or problem of relevance to social work practice. Each student selects a current and critical issue impacting society that has been/is covered widely in mass media (articles, online postings, podcasts, etc.), analyze how it is assessed by the media and different segments of society, and uses this analysis to identify underlying social theory and a potential frameworks of response to the issue. Students write a 3-4 page, single spaced paper that includes 1) a self assessment about the issue selected and the students values/motivation for this, 2) analysis of the media sources and content of how the issue is framed and framing changes with the source or audience, 3) connect theories and frameworks reviewed in the course to the issue and its potential solutions.

**Assignment 3: Case Study of a Current “Community Change Effort**
In small groups, students will select a current social justice and/or constituencies-based movement examine theoretical underpinnings of the problem, historical antecedents
and lessons learned, the theoretical foundation of the movement, its vision and how the movement (seeks to) implement social change. Your theory learning and media analysis work will contribute to and be integrated into this case study. Each group will complete a preliminary plan that identifies the movement, plans for learning and completing the project. This will provide an opportunity for your group to get feedback on your selection, its appropriateness for the final assignment and as necessary individualized guidance on 3/15. Group will deliver presentations the last two weeks of class. Presentations will include an 1-3 page supplemental paper.

Assignment Practices

a. **Outline**: students may submit an outline of their assignment for review in advance of its due date. I will provide feedback on the outline. The latest you may submit an outline to me is two weeks before its due date-this provides me with the time necessary to provide quality feedback and you with time to respond to it.

b. **Peer review**: Be prepared to share assignment drafts portions of drafts with peers when scheduled. Done in a supportive environment, peer review is an intentional learning strategy that aids in critical thinking, further development of thoughts and ideas and feedback skills.

c. **Due dates**: All assignments due dates are in the Canvas assignments. For one assignment, I will grant a grace period of one week in which you can submit your assignment if you request this prior to the day it is due, without a grading penalty. After the first late assignment, I will accept other late assignments, however, the points awarded will be reduced by the equivalent of ½ letter grade. Exceptions to this will need permission of the instructor one week prior to the due date and will only be made in extenuating circumstances.

d. **Resubmission**: Sometimes despite your best effort, the peer review, and/or your submission of a draft to me for review, your assignment misses the mark. You may choose to resubmit one assignment (note: you must have submitted an assignment in the first place). If you would like to resubmit, let me know prior to the last scheduled date of class. To resubmit, you must meet with me or have received significant written feedback about the needed improvements to the assignment. A resubmitted assignment will be accepted up until one week past the last class date.

e. **Submission format**: The final portfolio and presentation will follow professional style guidelines using principles of good design, content and delivery. I do not accept assignment via email. All assignments go into Canvas.

Attendance and class participation

Class time is planned to make the most of being together in a group. We discuss, make plans, reflect, and practice our knowledge and skills and your prior-to-class reading of assigned materials. Your preparation, attendance and participation are essential to learning. Students are expected to fully engage in the course through discussion,
activities, listening and leadership and contribute to a meaningful learning community. If you are unable to attend a session, please communicate with me in advance, if possible, contact a peer to ask about what you missed and review the readings, handouts and materials from that session. Students who are using electronic devices not related to class activities will see the impact in this grade. The SSW Policy on Class Attendance is found in the MSW Student Guide.

Participation is broadly defined and includes preparation for class through out-of-class materials and in-class engagement with discussions, journaling, etc- including showing up on time/posting/submitting assignments on time and returning from breaks on time/responding to questions or comments in a timely manner. Participation includes asking questions, applying course concepts to questions about your own experiences, contributing to the learning of others, providing accurate and respectful feedback to others, identifying any unique learning needs or problems to the professor, and utilizing office hours/email communication when necessary to ask for clarification or assistance in fulfilling course expectations and assignments. Class contributions should focus on relevant course concepts and professional practice experiences.

For more information, please see the Policy on Class Attendance found in the MSW Student Guide.

Grading

Students come to graduate school with a wide range of academic experiences and preparedness. Thinking and writing about complex issues and abstract concepts can be challenging for many students. If you are satisfied with the level of effort you have invested in the course, and you earn a grade of B or better, it is hoped you will feel very good about your performance.

Excellent Work

Students display excellent work in several ways: evidence that additional readings, beyond what is assigned, have been completed and integrated into written or in class presentations/participation; superior written work; evidence of critical thinking; demonstration of advanced practice skills applied to practice; and creativity and innovation in conceptual as well as practice-related thinking are frequently seen in the student’s work. (NOTE: There is no A+ awarded in this class!)
Good Work

Good work is work that meets course expectations. Students display good work in several ways: basic mastery of course material is evident in written or in class presentations/participation; solid development of practice skills fitting with concentration-year expertise is evident; and creativity and innovation are noted but to a lesser degree and less frequently than that in the “excellent” category.

Work Minimally Meets Course Expectations

Marginal work is work that meets minimal course expectations. Students display marginal work in several ways: through evidence that course readings have not been covered, as observed in written or in class presentations/participation; conceptual confusion and difficulty with critical thinking are evident in written and verbal work; and through work that lacks an integration of theory and practice.

Failing Work

Student demonstrates poor or unacceptable work during the course in several ways: inadequate understanding of course content, poor quality written work, plagiarism, and poor or unethical demonstration of practice skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Classification (A+ not available!)</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent Work</td>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91-93</td>
<td>A -</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Work</td>
<td>88-90</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84-87</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81-83</td>
<td>B -</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Work</td>
<td>78-80</td>
<td>C +</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71-73</td>
<td>C -</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing Work</td>
<td>70-0</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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More information on MSW Student Guide policies on 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.
WINTER 2022 SEMESTER NOTE:
This semester will continue to pose many challenges to our physical and emotional wellbeing. We are still living through a pandemic and have a deeply polarized political environment both of which often affects our daily and require additional attention. Considering the stress and distress these factors will contribute to our daily lives throughout the semester, please think about your capacity and strive for trying your best and not for perfection.

d. 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. 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. Your participation in this course is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including properly wearing a face covering in class and compliance with the University COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Other applicable and additional safety measures may be described in the Campus Maize & Blueprint. Your ability to participate in this course 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 and those seeking an exemption related to the vaccination requirement should submit an exemption request through Wolverine Access. 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.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: [https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources](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

**LEO Lecturers’ Employee Organization, Local 6244, AFL-CIO**