



Course title:	Theories and Practices of Community Change: Concepts History and Approaches	
Course #/term:	SW 650 Section 003, Winter 2022	
Time and place:	Monday , 10am-1pm, <u>MSU Detroit site-</u> 3408 Woodward, Room 230A	
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

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

Text and class materials

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

Additional **required** readings is placed in Canvas in “Files”. **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 as I can in advance.

Course orientation and attendance:

I believe “theory” should not stand in isolation from “practice” or “praxis”. Your regular class attendance and active purposeful participation in class is critical. 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.

Class schedule:

Topics and the order of presentation 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”.

Electronic Devices

In consideration of your classmates and your own learning, please turn off all cell phones during class, unless in the use of active researching pertinent to class discussions, etc. 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.

Class 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	Required readings- (besides text-articles found in Canvas- “FILES” Assignment due dates in red
Jan 10 #1	<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>Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent. Wilkerson, Isabel. 2020 Random House. New York Part 1</p> <p>In-Canvas-“Files” “Articles for Session”</p>
Jan 17	NO CLASS-MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY	View video clip “Conversation with Isabel Wilkerson” in Canvas- “Media Gallery” tab
Jan 24 #2	<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>Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent. Wilkerson, Isabel. 2020 Random House. New York Parts 2 pgs xv-96</p> <p>In-Canvas-“Files” “Articles for Session”</p>
Jan 31 #3	<p>Community Change Approaches & Components</p> <p>A Preliminary Look at Feminist Thought: From Jane Addams to Stacey Abrams Case Study: Black Lives Matter https://blacklivesmatter.com/</p>	<p>In-Canvas-“Files” “Articles for Session”</p>

	<p>Biography of Ella Baker https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkZxfhEQT3w</p> <p>Using the arts: Sweet Honey in The Rock https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoPofPzkJ4U</p> <p>Breakout Sections</p>	
Feb 7 #4	<p>Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Tristan Taylor <u>Case Study:</u> Detroit Will Breathe</p>	<p>Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent. Wilkerson, Isabel. <i>Parts 3 pgs 101-164</i></p> <p>In-Canvas-“Files” “Articles for Session” Preliminary Theory Reflection Due</p>
Feb 14 #5	<p>Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches (cont.)</p> <p><u>Education as an Empowerment Tool:</u> E.g. Paulo Freire</p>	<p>In-Canvas-“Files” “Articles for Session”</p>
Feb 21 #6	<p>Arts as Symbolism/Critical Race Theory efforts</p> <p>Case Study: Detroit Council of the Arts</p> <p>Breakout Sections and group work on assignments</p>	<p>Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent. Wilkerson, Isabel. <u>Chapters</u> 11, 12, and 15</p> <p>In-Canvas-“Files” “Articles for Session”</p>
Feb 28	SPRING BREAK	
March 7 #7	<p>Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches</p> <p><u>Conflict Theory:</u> E.g. Marx, Saul Alinsky The Democratic Promise: Saul Alinsky & His Legacy - Part 3 10 minutes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmcz53VCOKk</p> <p>Group discussion & work on projects</p>	<p>In-Canvas-“Files” “Articles for Session”</p> <p>Assignment #2 Analysis of Current Societal Issue</p>
March 14 #8	<p>Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches (cont.)</p> <p>Breakout Sections and group work on assignments</p>	<p>In-Canvas-“Files” “Articles for Session”</p>

March 21 #9	<p>Critical Justice: Theories & Approaches (cont.)</p> <p>Breakout Sections and group work on assignments</p>	<p>In-Canvas-“Files”</p> <p>“Articles for Session”</p>
March 28 #10	<p>Coalition building</p> <p><u>Guest Speaker: Alicia Diaz: The Power of Storytelling</u></p> <p>Heather Booth. If we organize, we can change the world. (11 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzGrFENp67M</p> <p>Breakout Sections and group work on assignments</p>	<p>Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent. Wilkerson, Isabel. Chapters 16, 17, 19, 25, 28, 29 & Epilogue (Total of 51 pages)</p> <p>In-Canvas-“Files”</p> <p>“Articles for Session”</p>
April 4 #11	<p>The “New Circumstances”</p> <p><u>Guest Speaker: State Senator Stephanie Chang</u></p> <p>Remembering Grace Lee Boggs https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1zzrqkA3U8</p>	<p>In-Canvas-“Files”</p> <p>“Articles for Session”</p>
April 11 #12	<p>What Now?</p> <p>Resurgence of White Supremacy & the Rise of Fascism?</p> <p><i>GROUP PRESENTATIONS</i></p>	<p>In-Canvas-“Files”</p> <p>“Articles for Session”</p> <p>Assignment #3 Case Study of a Current “Community Change Effort</p>
April 18 #13	<p><i>GROUP PRESENTATIONS</i></p>	<p>Assignment #3 Case Study of a Current “Community Change Effort</p>

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.

Assignment #1 Preliminary Theory Reflection Paper

Assignment Due Date: **February 7th** **25 points** **5 narrative pages**

General Description: A preliminary reflection on a theory presented in class which you most identify with. You will detail your understanding of its main concepts and proposed applications.

In writing your paper (5 page minimum-no more than 7 pages) please “label” the specific theory (e.g. Freire, Critical Race Theory, Feminist etc.) you will cover. In an attachment detail your references, citations, etc.

At the minimum answer the following questions in your narrative. Please do not use a “question and answer” format but rather show how your thinking is integrated throughout the paper.

- What is the theory you are presenting on?
- Clearly detail and label as such specific premises presented by the theory i.e. assumptions, tenets, expected outcomes, philosophical foundation etc.
- Why were you personally drawn to this theoretical understanding? Was it tied to any community or volunteer work you have been involved with? If so how does this understanding help you interpret and/or guide that work? If not what attracts its premises to your view of social activism?
- What ways do you envision gaining a deeper understanding of this framework?

Assignment #2 Analysis of Current Societal Issue..

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

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.)

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.

- Why did this topic interest you?
- What motivated you to focus on this issue?
- What values can you identify that moved you to select this topic?
- What importance do you give this issue, in not only impacting society today but in its potential to affect future generations?
- How do you believe the various “media” correctly or incorrectly covered the topic?
- What interests and motivations would you attribute to how the “media” covered the issue?

Conduct an analysis of this issue as “assessed” by the “media” and differing segments of society.

- What are the primary social justice issues you see embodied in media discussion and debate related to the topic?

- What if any perspectives were missing from the analysis?
- If you have not already shared your perspective on this matter, what is it?
- Using what you have learned in class to date how would you assess the role of key “players” i.e. antagonists, protagonists in providing a solution to the problem and/or how some have contributed to the “worsening of the conditions”?
- If not already presented what do you believe is at the heart of the “problem”?
- What do you perceive would be its solution(s)?

You will select a primary framework to analyze the issue and how you envision it will be an appropriate way to address the “problem”.

- What is your framework and perspective for analyzing this problem? Present why you chose this perspective. Is it a perspective/theoretical framework that you have adhered to or preferred over a period of time or is something you are relatively new to?
- Is a specific theoretical perspective? If so please “name” it.
- What key guiding principles are you using when you analyzing this issue? Do provide details of what they are and how they relate to your analysis of this issue?
- Are there any gaps in your macro, policy and theoretical understanding that you wish to study more about when you are analyzing the problems presented by the topic?
- Are you in a position to compare the perspective/framework you selected to other potential perspectives on how to handle the matter? If so please share them. How are they different in the reasons assigned to why conflict occurs and in how they propose to provide a solution(s) to the matter?

Assignment #3 Case Study of a Current “Community Change Effort

Assignment Due Date: Final In-Class Group Presentations last 2 class sessions
30 points 20-25 minute presentations

Assigned groups will select a current social justice and/or constituencies based “movement”. **Your group is expected to get prior approval from the instructor for your selection.** 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. The group will present in class on their topic.

In presenting your case-study please consider the following items.

- Historical antecedents
 - How far back can one trace this movement? Is this current movement built upon a legacy(ies) of past activism and/or movement? If so, give a brief review of how “we got to this point in the movement”.
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- Lessons learned from “past practice”
 - What have previous leaders learned from their activism within this movement? Have they adapted their approach, focus or have they in any way cast away some of their previous perspectives? If so why?
- How has “community change” been envisioned and implemented by leaders within that movement
 - How did they organize others to follow their lead, to accept their vision for change? What successes have they registered? What difficulties and/or defeats have they experienced? Why do you think so?
- Any ideological underpinning by different “players”?
 - Were any leaders within this movement guided by a certain perspective, view(s) and/or theory(ies) of how change needed to come about? Did they experience success or failure in conveying their view point to others involved in their movement? Did it have mixed results? Please provide details.
- What do you perceive is the current state of affairs for this movement? Is it on the rise, in temporary stasis? Or has it floundered? Provide a quick analysis why you think this is so.
- Does the case study you selected have clear national impact on culture and politics? If so, provide some examples.
- What do you believe will be the lasting impact of this work? Do you believe it will have a long duration? Why or why not?

Scores will be given for individual contributions as well as scores for group presentation. A form will be developed to help students show both their individual work towards the completion of the group presentation in addition to how the group will be assessed.

I realize that analyzing a movement can be a major task. So, what I am looking for is your best attempt to present your perspective in a concise manner.

Assignment of points

Preliminary Theory Reflection Paper	25 points
Analysis of Current Societal Issue.	25 points
Case Study of a Current “Community Change Effort-	30 points
Attendance and Participation	<u>20 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 ethical and correct citations.

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.]

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 WolverineAccess. 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>. 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*