



Course title:	Multicultural, Multilingual and Global Organizing
Course #/term:	SW 657, Spring/Summer 2022
Time and place:	Mondays 8-12 SSWB B770
Credit hours:	3
Prerequisites:	n/a
Instructor:	Danny Alvarez
Pronouns:	they/them
Contact info:	Email: alvardi@umich.edu You may expect a response within 24 hours
Office hours:	By appointment—let me know when you want to meet!

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

Land Theft Acknowledgment

The University of Michigan is located in the Huron River watershed, on land stewarded by Niswi Ishkodewan Anishinaabeg: The Three Fires People who are the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodewadmi. It is critical to name this theft as the act of settler-colonial genocide that it was and to continue finding ways to honor and pay respects to the land on which we live and work and to its traditional stewards, the majority of whom were violently removed. These acts were necessary in building the United States as we know it and our recognition of these histories is the first step in breaking free of the settler-colonial mentality that has trapped many of us. As we strive to learn about and deepen our practice of anti-racism, multicultural organizing, and/or anti-oppressive practice, we must sit with the tension of knowing we are on stolen land, and knowing that some of the people from whom it was stolen are our colleagues and neighbors, and we must take action to dismantle and repair the harms of settler-colonialist expansion.

Labor Acknowledgment

We must acknowledge the people of African descent who were forcibly removed from their land and separated from their families through kidnapping and enslavement, and pay reverence and respect to them for building this country’s infrastructure and economy with no compensation or reparations to date. This history impacts our relationships with people of different races every day and needs to be a part of our conversations about our work and our organizing.

1. Course Statement

a. Course description

This course will examine organizing in multicultural, multilingual and global contexts. The course will examine the process of promoting intergroup relations and social development and the skills needed to facilitate change across settings. In particular, students will explore the roles of power, privilege, oppression, and social identities in organizing for change in diverse communities and coalitions, and across cultural and global contexts. Students will also examine contemporary and historic efforts to engage in multicultural, multilingual coalitions and multi-national and global change efforts, including climate justice and racial justice.

b. Course content

This course will examine concepts and techniques of multicultural, multilingual organizing. The changing context of practice, major strategies of intervention, and innovative efforts by groups to maintain their identities while also cooperating across cultural boundaries will be analyzed. Perspectives on core practice concepts will be reviewed (e.g., oppression, racism, empowerment, pluralism, and multiple meanings of “community”). Students will be enabled to become more aware of their own cultural identity and recognize differences within and among people as strategies of practice will be analyzed, such as social action, community planning, and neighborhood development. Existing community organization theory and practice from a multicultural perspective will be analyzed, and theory and social science knowledge will be applied to issues of particular population groups.

c. Course objectives and competencies

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be better able to:

- Identify the forces that facilitate and limit multicultural, multilingual organizing in a pluralist society.
- Define key practice concepts that affect relevant organizing strategies and tactics (e.g., oppression, racism, empowerment, pluralism, sensitivity, tolerance, and mutual respect).
- Critically analyze existing community organization theory and practice from a multicultural perspective.
- Apply practice theory and social science concepts to the analysis of problems and issues directly affecting specific population groups.
- Design community intervention strategies that specify tactics and roles to address problems and issues affecting diverse population groups (e.g., ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender including gender identity and gender expression, marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation).
- Assess community-based needs in ways that strengthen social diversity and builds organizational capacity that strengthens the representation of diverse groups.

- Contrast existing community organization practice with emergent multicultural strategies, tactics, and roles.
- Recognize and address issues of ethics and values arising in practice situations.

d. Course design

This course will likely include readings, participation in discussions, written assignments, and individual and group exercises. Emphasis will be placed on experiential learning to strengthen cultural self-awareness and community practice skills. There will also likely be films and documentaries which focus on organizing within the multicultural, multilingual context. Lastly, guest speakers from the campus and various communities will also likely be invited to address special topics, and there may also be visits to community organizations to speak with multicultural/multilingual organizers and learn from their experiences.

e. Curricular themes

Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity

Multiculturalism and Diversity will be fundamental to this course. Special emphasis will be placed on strategies and tactics that promote positive intergroup relations and pluralism at the community level relevant to the range of diverse dimensions previously mentioned.

Theme Relation to Social Justice

Social Justice and Social Change will be central themes in the study of how social workers can serve in building a racially, ethnically, and religiously heterogeneous society. Several core concepts will be emphasized in this course, including oppression, racism, empowerment, pluralism, and multiple meanings of “community”.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be inherent to practice at the community level. Students will learn how to design community intervention strategies that address problems and issues affecting specific population groups.

Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research

Behavioral and Social Science Research will comprise many of the course readings and will provide a foundation for practice in this area. Students will learn to apply theory and social science concepts to the analysis of problems and issues affecting specific population groups.

f. Relationship to social work ethics and values

This course will address ethical and value issues related to the practice of multilingual, Multicultural and global organizing. The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to inform practice in this area. Special emphasis will be placed on the social worker’s responsibility to promote

the general welfare of society by preventing and eliminating discrimination, ensuring equal access to resources, expanding choices and opportunities for all persons and especially the disenfranchised, encouraging public respect for diversity, advocating for changes in social policies, and encouraging informed participation by the public. In particular, this course will review the ethical and value implications related to intergroup conflict and the imposition of values on communities.

g. Intensive focus on PODS

How could we talk about multicultural organizing without a focus on PODS! We will spend time diving into our own relationship to power, privilege, and oppression and using that as a lens for how our organizing work will be approached. This will be central to the entire course.

h. Teaching Style and Course Structure

"in the context of social injustice, education can never be politically neutral: if it does not side with the poorest and marginalized sectors- the 'oppressed' – in an attempt to transform society, then it necessarily sides with the 'oppressors' in maintaining the existing structures of oppression, even if by default."

Liam Kane

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.

This work is personal for me! I am so excited to engage in conversations with you all, share readings with you that have sparked my imagination, passion, anger, and activism. I have spent over a decade collecting tools, processes, skills, and ways to engage in this work that lead to important conversations in ways that are responsible, that center the folks most marginalized in

this work, and that move us all towards liberation. I take this opportunity to be in the role of teacher/instructor/facilitator seriously and feel grateful to embark on this with each of you.

Let's get to work!

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. 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.

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
May 9—In person	Introduction to Multicultural Organizing
May 16—In person	Understanding Power and Rooting in History
May 23—Asynchronous	TBD
May 30—No class	Memorial Day—NO CLASS
June 6—In person	Core Concepts: Allyship, Solidarity, Intersectionality
June 13—TBD	Tools and Tactics: Popular Education and Dialogue
June 20—TBD	Tools and Tactics: Resource Redistribution
June 27—In person	Tools and Tactics: Direct Action
July 4—No class	July 4—NO CLASS Happy Philippine Independence Day from the US!
July 11—In person	TBD
July 18—TBD	Making sure our Organizing is Accessible
July 25—In person	Multicultural Organizing Project Presentations
August 1—In person	Learning Gallery, Wrap up and Closure

c. 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.

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.

d. Assignments

Below is a summary of the assignments that you will do this semester. As we approach each of them, you will get a more thorough explanation of the assignment, what I am looking for, and a grading rubric. Try not to focus too much on the grades—these assignments are supposed to supplement and enhance the learning that you are doing in class and should build on what we have been talking about.

Self-assessment (2-4 pages)

Due May 23

15 Points

Part 1: Philosophy Statement: A clear statement of your learning goals for the course and how it relates to your career goals. Be sure to include both substantive learning as well as personal learning goals that you have that will enrich your experience in this class. (< 1 page)

Part 2: A list of your skills, including those related to this course and your career goals (e.g., "I communicate well with people", "I take responsibility for my own actions"), as well as personal skills and talents (art, music, poetry, cooking, sports, etc.). What do you consider your strengths? How would these skills be useful in multicultural/multilingual organizing efforts? What skills do you hope to gain from this course? (~ 1 page)

Part 3: Conduct a self-assessment of your preparedness for participating in multicultural/multilingual/global organizing efforts you may have an interest working within. Consider the following questions: (1) What did I learn about other social identity groups when I was growing up and what differences and similarities do I see between myself and individuals in these communities? (2) Identify a least two values shared by members of these group and explore your feelings about them and to what degree do you share or have difficulties with these values? (3) How do my own personal and social identities affect my work with these groups? How would this affect my ability to engage in an organizing effort with this group? What more would I like to learn about this group? (1-2 pages)

Outside Event (2-3 pages)

Reflection Paper due July 11

20 points

Attend an event which has multicultural/ multilingual attributes within a social justice or

e. Grading

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-

f. Expected Time Commitment

A 3-credit class amounts to 112 hours of total expected engagement – including all synchronous and asynchronous work, such as Zoom meetings, in person meetings, reading/watching content outside of class, and assignments. For a 13-week class like ours, this averages to about 8-9 hours per week. Build in time throughout the week to tend to the readings, engage in the materials, and be ready to participate in class.

g. Zoom Etiquette

1. Please use cameras whenever you can, as it makes connection easier
2. Please remember your participation is voluntary. Please don't log in and then mute yourself and tune out, pretending to be there. If you are experiencing barriers to your attendance, please just let me know ahead of time. I want to keep this space as authentic as possible and will expect communication from you as things come up. Plus, logistically it could be awkward if you're put into a pair or small group breakout room and don't show up!
3. If you are comfortable, please provide your pronouns either by "renaming" yourself in Zoom or by changing your "preferred last name" in Wolverine Access. See this google doc (prepared by a current MSW student) for instructions on how to do this.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NEH7zibwZwCoAmngc4VZfswmUrPTWS6IBhn7zS94xZQ/edit?usp=sharing>

h. Class Recording Policy

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.

i. 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 the instructor before the second class period so that they 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.

When you are on campus, there are two all gender restrooms in the SSW building: room 1784 (1st floor, near Registrar's Office) and B833T (Lower Level). [Click here for the Spectrum Center's map of gender inclusive restrooms on campus.](#)

j. 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.

k. 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*
- *Accommodations for students with disabilities*
- *Religious/spiritual observances*
- *Military deployment*
- *Writing skills and expectations*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*