SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Course title:	Essentials of Community and Organizational Practice
Course #/term:	SW509-009, Fall 2022
Time and place:	Monday, 9:00am -12:00pm, ONLINE
Credit hours:	3
Prerequisites:	None. Required essential course
Instructor:	Rhonda Fields
Pronouns:	She, her, hers
Contact info:	**Email:** rhondaro@umich.edu
	You may expect a response within 48 hours
Office hours:	By appointment

1. Course Statement

This course is partly survey in nature, touching on a range of methods, strategies, and skills in macro practice, specifically community organization, management, and advocacy. It provides an appreciation of the historical and contemporary importance of these social work methods as well as opportunities for students to develop practical skills. With opportunities for hands-on experience and training using tangible tools that are critical for success in macro practice, the course places special emphasis on approaches that strengthen socially just and culturally sensitive practice.

Students focus on: (1) understanding the context of macro practice; (2) identifying community and organizational interventions to address social needs and problems; (3) organizing and building relationships within communities and organizations; and (4) organization-based and community-based policymaking, planning, and program development. Course content addresses concepts and practice skills involving assessment, engagement, and intervention planning at the macro level, and strategies to work effectively with communities, organizations and groups. Content also includes reflective practice and utilizing interpersonal skills in macro practice. The course will offer skill-building in some tasks that are important to beginning social work practice, such as understanding and developing spreadsheets, meeting facilitation, teamwork, collecting and presenting basic data, and communicating effectively.

a. Course objectives and competencies

- Use anti-oppressive and anti-racist frameworks to describe examples of systemic and structural root causes of contemporary social welfare issues (Essential 22, 33, 39, 45; EPAS* 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9).
- • Apply inclusive engagement strategies based on an intersectional analysis of systems of power, privilege, and oppression both within and outside organizational and community contexts (Essential 1, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 45; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8).
- • Articulate social work values and ethics in all organizational and community strategies to address contemporary social work and social welfare problems (Essential 26, 44; EPAS 1, 5).
- Practice engaging with teams, partnerships, collaborations, coalitions, and other alliances to build intraorganizational and interorganizational power and influence (Essential 8, 10, 40; EPAS 1, 6).
- • Assess community needs and issues and identify community assets, indigenous solutions, capacities, and allies in partnership with organizational and/or community stakeholders (Essential 3, 7, 15, 20, 24; EPAS 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9).
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- Develop intervention plans (goals and objectives) toward addressing community and/or organizational needs and issues (Essential 18, 19, 21, 27; EPAS 4, 7, 8).
- Investigate how to engage with community partners to build community capacity to mobilize on issues and needs, develop services and strategies that enhance community well-being, and dismantle oppressive structures and systems (Essential 25, 29, 34, 45; EPAS 2, 3, 4, 5, 9).

* EPAS = Council of Social Work Education's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

b. Course design

This course will use multiple methods including but not limited to: lectures, demonstrations, case studies, readings, guest speakers, discussions, written assignments, and individual and group exercises. The primary pedagogy will be experiential, involving problem-solving, project planning and implementation, in-person and online simulations and hands-on applications of real-world situations that arise in the field.

c. Intensive focus on PODS

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning. Consistent with social work core values, the

primary goals of Community and Organizational Practice are to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people. This course will devote resources and attention to the needs and empowerment of people and groups who traditionally have experienced oppression and marginalization. Course content and processes are designed to help students gain understanding of intersectional diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religious/spiritual practice, immigration status, and cognitive, mental or physical disability. In addition, students will be exposed to strategies for increasing social and racial equity and inclusion across settings.

d. Accommodations (*adopted from the Reflection activity by Dr. Stephanie Rosen and U-M Center for Research on Learning and Teaching*) You have a right to inclusive and accessible education. I want to foster the academic success of all students. Let us work together to make sure that happens. This course is intended for all U-M students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other such condition that tends to affect one's equal access to education negatively. If you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course at any point in the term, you are welcome (and not required) to contact me by email or during office hours to discuss your specific needs. I also encourage you to contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office (734-763-3000; http://ssd.umich.edu). If you have a diagnosis, SSD can help you document your needs and create an accommodation plan. By making a plan through SSD, you can ensure appropriate accommodations without disclosing your condition or diagnosis to course instructors. SSD typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

2. Class Requirements

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a. Text and class materials

All reading materials will be made available online via Canvas, no later than 2 weeks prior to the class session. In-class PowerPoint's will be posted following class. To fully engage in the course topic and become a competent and skilled social work practitioner, it is expected that students will complete all required readings as readings will be discussed and/or debriefed in class.

b. Class schedule: This course runs virtually, live from Monday at 9 am EST through Monday at 12pm EST. For full credit of the course, additional assignments, research and readings are required in addition to the virtual, live class sessions.

c. Assignments

Assignments There are 14 separate assignments for this course plus a culminating assignment which consists of 3 portions for a total of 17 assignments and expectations of engaged reading and regular attendance that contribute to a learning environment. Additionally, each student will be assigned a week to present on a topic of inclusion and diversity to the class. These items are summarized (Note: Order may change) below along with a grading scale.

Week 1
Workbook: Social Work Practice
Opening Activity: Introduce Yourself
Culminating Assignment 1– POINTS

Week 2
Discuss

Week 3
Create Ethical Dilemma Vignette
Discuss

Week 4
Discussions: What is an organization?
Case Study: Black Cap

Week 5
Workbook: Assessment
Workbook: SWOT Analysis
Culminating Assignment Part 2 - due October 14

Week 6
Discussion: Promoting Participation Among Diverse Groups
Workbook: Oath for Compassionate Helpers

Week 7
Discuss

Week 8
Discussion: Make the Ask

Culminating Assignment Part 3

Week 9
Week 9 Activity

A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 %	to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 %	to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0 %	to 61.0%
F	< 61.0 %	to 0.0%

d. Culminating assignment
Purpose and description: The purpose of this assignment is to integrate and apply the concepts of this course. This assignment has three sub-assignments:

1. **Community and organizational issue essay (individual; due September 9)** This piece of the assignment is designed to identify and understand a problem or opportunity within a community or an organization. To identify and analyze one specific issue of a community or an organization, you may have the easiest time looking at the issues related to your field placement, or an organization for which you have worked or volunteered. The following are some examples of issues you might consider. There are, of course, numerous other issues not listed that you could pursue.

• Community Issues: High crime in a specific area, lack of certain human services, high cost of living, limited access to fresh produce.
• Organizational Issues: High staff turnover, lack of diversity within a board of directors, funding issues, program expansion.

If you have a difficulty in identifying a community or an organizational issue, feel free to browse an idea from the Connect2Community website (https://connect2community.umich.edu/) managed by the Ginsberg Center at the University of Michigan. The website host dozens of the local volunteer opportunities (or projects) that you can engage in rightaway. In other words, the Ginsberg Center can provide extra supports (e.g., connections with local stakeholders) – a very helpful feature for anyone with limited community or organizational practice experiences.

Write a brief essay (up to 1-page in length, single-spaced) on an issue you believe to be addressed. Students submitting the essay on time will receive full grade. During Week 2, students will be asked to share their essay ideas in front of the small group within five (5) minutes. This informal presentation will not be graded. This component of the assignment has several purposes:
• To learn the skills necessary for understanding and analyzing a community or organization;
• To gain experience in reflective practice at the community or organizational level; and
• To learn and practice skills important to working in a team

2. **Development of a change effort for the identified issue (group; due October 14)**
A change effort should be designed and implemented in a clear and thoughtful way. Change plans focus on changing behavior by intervening in the environment. This can vary greatly. A change plan may be a new policy, a modification in programming, an introduction of new practices, or a combination. Groups will (1) write a change plan (up to 5-pages in length, singlespaced) and (2) deliver a 15-minute presentation summarizing their plan. Groups will deliver an expanded and updated plan and presentation at the end of the semester.

In the change plan, the groups need to (1) identify the audience, (2) clearly define and describe the issue, (3) analyze possible causes, (4) propose an intervention plan, and (5) identify potential resources and anticipated obstacles to execute the plan. Please make sure that your plan matches or connects clearly to assessment findings, demonstrates an understanding of the problem and how the problem is situated within the specific organization or community. Your plan also should demonstrate that the needs and voices of those most impacted have been considered/integrated in the plan. Assume your reader is a busy professional (e.g., community and organizational leaders). Because the task is to write a professional plan—not an academic paper, letter, or editorial—the plan should be firmly grounded in practical concerns. It should be to-the-point and assume a formal (professional) tone rather than an overly familiar one in terms of writing.

The 15-minute presentation should describe the issue as well as the intervention plan or proposed solution. Each group will decide who the audience will be. Groups should deliver a presentation that can educate your audience about an issue. Therefore it should be engaging and easy to understand. Groups may (or may not) use whatever visual aids you think will enhance your presentation. Please be prepared for questions from the audience. Small group discussions will follow question and answer time to re-cap the group's issue analysis and solution formulation processes and identify missing/under-discussed dimensions.

This component of the assignment has several purposes:
• To explore what an intervention plan may look like for an organization or community;
• To learn when and why to use an intervention plan;
• To practice the creation and development of a realistic intervention plan.
• To learn and practice skills important to working in a team.

3. **Letter of Intent (group; due November 11th)** This assignment is the culmination of the work done throughout the semester. This assignment involves (1) the development of a Letter of Intent (LOI, or proposal) that can be submitted to a foundation or funding organization to support the change plan that your group come up with and (2) a 15-minute presentation.

The LOI may not exceed 3 pages (all single-spaced). The page limit exclude budget, budget narrative, and timeline but does include cover letter. Groups should write the LOI as though they were senior managers or development team members of a community-based agency. Groups should their organization a name and provide a brief description of the agency. You may use a real agency or create your own. A proposed effort should be 1-2 years in length and have a budget of $100,000 or less. The assignment's central goal is to learn skills associated with proposal development. Thus, you should identify a real foundation or funding organization that provides grants in group's core issue area. Groups will conceptualize and draft a LOI addressing all of the essential elements required by the funder. Here is a general description of a typical LOI elements with suggested lengths:
• COVER LETTER (i.e., a transmittal letter; a full 1-page): This letter should highlight the main points of the proposal and indicate to the potential funding source why this project is important for them to fund. You will need to explain why the proposal may be of interest to the funder. Letter head is optional.
• AGENCY DESCRIPTION (a paragraph): A brief description of the agency, including mission, target population(s), and primary services. You can also include any key collaborators or partners related to the proposed services as well as agency personnel and strengths in relation to the project.
• BACKGROUND (1-2 pages): A brief description of the issue/problem you propose to address and why it is significantly important
• GOALS & OBJECTIVES (few sentences): State the project's goals and major objective (link the goals and the objectives to your description of the project)

• PROJECT NARRATIVE (< 3 pages): Propose an intervention plan in detail and identify potential resources and anticipated obstacles to execute the plan.
• BUDGET and BUDGET NARRATIVE: Estimate how much money will you need to carry out the project based upon its objectives in a table and explain how each budget item relates to the project.
• TIMELINE: Provide a general timeline to give the funding source an idea of the project steps and activities.
Groups should develop a 15-minute presentation summarizing the LOI. Each group will decide who the audience (classmates) will be (e.g., foundation boards, community groups). It should be engaging and easy to understand. Groups may (or may not) use whatever visual aids you think will enhance your presentation. Please be prepared for questions from the audience. Small group discussions will follow question and answer time to re-cap the group's issue analysis and solution formulation processes and identify missing/under-discussed dimensions.

Develop a "leave behind" item. You must include some leave behind item. This can be a handout, brochure, brief summary, PowerPoint presentation or some other item of your choosing. This written item should support and/or further explain the points made in your presentation. If your visual aid is in the form of a handout or pamphlet please provide hard copies for the class.

> Any supplemental materials need to include appropriate attribution of authorship for paraphrases or ideas acquired from another source or appropriate citations. Please review the Student Guide section on "Ethical Conduct in the University Environment." This section specifically addresses plagiarism and the possible consequences for engaging in this behavior. The University of Michigan Library system has an online resource that can assist you in preparing proper citations for assignments using APA format available here: http://www.lib.mich.edu/ug/research/citation guide/AP5thed/pdf.

This part of the assignment has several purposes:
• To practice the skills necessary for effectively presenting information and material to stakeholders;
• To practice effective public speaking and public presentation skills, time limits, and answering questions.
• To think critically about what information will be compelling to a stakeholder audience.

e. Active and engaged reading (individual; on-going) Active and engaged readings are essential parts of the learning process. Assignments will be part of weekly Canvas lessons and have various due dates assigned - for each week to receive full credits using Canvas (some require commenting on other students work). Comments on each week's reading are due Friday, noon EST before the next class.

f. Attendance and class participation

The School of Social Work policy is that students attend all of their classes. Excessive absences may result in a reduction in grade, and the instructor will notify the student's faculty advisor and MSW program director. Given the nature of course assignments and in-class skill-building activities and discussions, if you fail to attend most sessions, you may not complete assignments, and the instructor may ask you to withdraw from the course. Small group members will grade your degrees of attendance and discussion participation.

g. Grading

Grades are earned by completing the work on the assignments. Please note: Incompletes are not granted unless it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the normal limits of the course. The student must formally request in writing an incomplete with the instructor before the final week of class.

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*