Course title: Theories and Practices for Community Action and Social Change
Course #/term: SW 305 / SOC 326, Section 2, Fall 2023 (In-person)
Time / place: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 12:30pm-2pm in-person, Room B780, SSWB
Credit hours: 3
Prerequisites: None
Instructor: Grace Helms-Kotre, MSW
Pronouns: She/Her
Contact info: Email: grpaige@umich.edu    Phone: 734-255-0090
          You may expect a response within 24 hours
Office: 2764 SSWB
Student hours: Fridays 11am-Noon on Zoom (or by appointment)

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.

Core Competencies

Praxis: Reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.
-Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed

1. 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.
2. Students will explore the meaning of community and social change.
3. Students will develop skills in interviewing, relationship-building, and group facilitation.
4. Students will gain awareness of historical framework and theory regarding community action and social change.
5. Students will engage in policy and structural analysis with regard to community action and social change.
6. Students will develop an understanding of community-building and organizing skills.

**Class Materials**

All materials will be posted to Canvas.

**Centering Equity in our Learning Environment**

We will be co-creating a classroom environment in which “all students are treated equitably, have equal access to learning, and feel valued and supported in their learning. Furthermore, this course is one in which equity is centered in that it attends to social identities and seeks to change the ways systemic inequities shape dynamics in teaching-learning spaces, affect individuals’ experiences of those spaces, and influence course and curriculum design.” (Adapted from UM-CRLT’s Equity-Focused Teaching)

The following equity-centered practices will be incorporated throughout the semester:
- Anonymous student feedback surveys
- Activities to explore our own social identities and positionality
- Various learning modalities and resource types to meet a variety of needs, informed by Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Personal reflection, small and large group discussions, and student leadership opportunities
- Community-building activities
- Self-care focus
- Contemplative practices to foster self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy
- Various opportunities for students to connect with the instructor including weekly student hours and option for one-on-one meetings
- Flexibility with assignments and deadlines
- Highlighting of traditionally marginalized voices in resources and activities
- Rubrics for all assignments to enhance transparency
- “Community Agreements” to guide our classroom interactions
- Make-up opportunities and late assignment policy
- Synchronous and asynchronous components
Assignments

The class requires a set of assignments aimed at:

- gaining critical awareness about one’s self as a community change agent both inside and outside the classroom;
- building knowledge about core concepts, historical frameworks, and key people, developing and engaging with peers in critical discussion of key ideas and issues; and
- applying the lessons and learning to one’s current interest and future work.

Assignments for this course include the following:

1. **Participation & Engagement (15 points):** This course is based on a collaborative learning model in which students are both “teachers and learners” in the classroom. This model requires that you come to class ready to participate, willing to take risks and share ideas, and open to challenging yourself throughout the semester. Participation will be assessed throughout the course. Your point total will be based on your effort. Everyone participates in different ways! Participation includes active listening, speaking, personal reflection, pair-share, peer-based teaching and learning, small group discussion, whole group dialogue, and engagement with interactive exercises. There are many ways to engage, and everyone can be successful here! Feel free to be in touch if you have concerns about your participation at any time in the semester.

2. **Core Concept Mixed Tape (15 points):** Yes, this is exactly what it sounds like - you’re creating a “mixed tape” (a compilation of songs) that reflect core concepts for community change. You will explain why you chose your songs, describe how they demonstrate core concepts, and reference course readings and discussions. A detailed description and rubric are provided in Canvas.

3. **Learning from History – Presentation & Creative Product (30 points):** You will choose a social justice movement or organization from history to research (a list of potential topics will be provided). You’ll demonstrate your learning through two deliverables: a short (5-minute) slideshow presentation with an annotated bibliography and a creative product to share with the class. More information is in Canvas.

4. **Individual Social Action Project (30 points):** This is a multi-week project that will allow you to practice your skills and apply your knowledge around community
action and social change. This project is broken down into four steps, each building on the next: (1) project proposal, (2) project engagement (doing the project), (3) project report, and (4) project sharing (presentation in class). More detail and a rubric are provided in Canvas.

5. **Letters to Our Future Selves (10 points):** In this final in-class assignment, you will write a short letter to your future self about your key takeaways from this course. This is an opportunity to synthesize your learning from the semester and acknowledge your growth!

**Grading Rubric**

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-
- Under 70 = D/D-/E

**Course Schedule**

**Weekly Course Calendar:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TUESDAYS</th>
<th>12:30-2pm In-person class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THURSDAYS</td>
<td>12:30-2pm In-person class</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Next week’s content posted by 5pm</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Assignments due by 11:59pm</em> (specific dates, see below)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRIDAYS</td>
<td>11am-Noon Student Hours (Zoom) or by appointment</td>
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Below is the course schedule by topic, subject to change. It is your responsibility to keep up with changes posted or announced.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Date of Class (Fridays)</th>
<th>Weekly Topic</th>
<th>Content to Complete Prior to Class &amp; Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| WEEK 1  | 8/29 & 8/31            | Introduction to Community Action and Social Change                            | ● Read syllabus in full  
● DUE 8/27: Pre-Course Survey  
● All posted Canvas content                                                                 |
| WEEK 2  | 9/5 & 9/7              | Understanding Our Story: Being Aware of Who We Are As Change Agents           | ● All posted Canvas content                                                                                         |
| WEEK 3  | 9/12 & 9/14            | Understanding Community Action and Social Change                              | ● All posted Canvas content                                                                                         |
| WEEK 4  | 9/19 & 9/21*           | Community Change as a Process: Systems, Power, & Impacts                       | ● All posted Canvas content                                                                                         |
|         |                        | (9/21 - 1st class visit to UMMA)                                              |                                                                                                                   |
| WEEK 5  | 9/26 & 9/28*           | Exploring Approaches: CASC in Action                                         | ● All posted Canvas content  
● DUE 9/28:  
  ○ Core Concept Mixed Tape  
  (11:59pm)                                                                                                       |
|         |                        | (9/28 - 2nd class visit to UMMA)                                              |                                                                                                                   |
| WEEK 6  | 10/3 & 10/5            | Key Frameworks & Theory for CASC Part I                                      | ● All posted Canvas content                                                                                         |
|         |                        | (10/3 - guest speaker visit)                                                  |                                                                                                                   |
| WEEK 7  | 10/10 & 10/12          | Key Frameworks & Theories for CASC Part II                                   | ● All posted Canvas content  
● DUE 10/12:  
  ○ Action Project PROPOSAL  
  (11:59pm)                                                                                                       |
| WEEK 8  | 10/17** & 10/19        | Reflecting on Boggs - Being “Solutionaries”                                  | ● All posted Canvas content  
● Mid-term anonymous course feedback survey                                                                          |
|         |                        | (10/17 no class Fall Break)                                                   |                                                                                                                   |
| WEEK 9  | 10/24 & 10/26          | Learning from Social Movements & Key Figures                                 | ● All posted Canvas content  
● DUE 10/24 & 10/26 in class:  
  ○ History PRES & PRODUCT  
  (submit in Canvas 10/26 11:59pm)                                                                                     |
### Course Theme 3: Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Canvas Content</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 10</td>
<td>10/31 &amp; 11/2</td>
<td>Getting Started - Becoming a CASC Change Agent</td>
<td>• All posted Canvas content</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 11</td>
<td>11/7 &amp; 11/9</td>
<td>Strategy &amp; Relationships</td>
<td>• All posted Canvas content</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 12</td>
<td>11/14 &amp; 11/16</td>
<td>Community Coalitions &amp; Working Together</td>
<td>• All posted Canvas content</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 13</td>
<td>11/21 &amp; 11/23</td>
<td>NOVEMBER BREAK - NO CLASS</td>
<td>• (N/A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 14</td>
<td>11/28 &amp; 11/30</td>
<td>Self-Care, Community Care, &amp; Community Change</td>
<td>• All posted Canvas content</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 15</td>
<td>12/5</td>
<td>Action Project Presentations/Our Future Selves - Takeaways and Reflections</td>
<td>• All posted Canvas content</td>
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<td>• DUE 12/5:</td>
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<td>○ Action Project PRES. (in class)</td>
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<td>○ Action Project REPORT</td>
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<td>(11:59pm)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>○ Letters to Our Future Selves (in class)</td>
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*9/21 & 9/28 - class meets at UMMA; more detail will be provided in class
**10/17 - fall break, no class

### Class Policies

This is a Social Work course and therefore we follow the policies and practices of the School of Social Work. For more information, please see: [https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources](https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources).

**Attendance Expectations & Make-Ups:** Your regular attendance in class is essential. Our collective success is dependent on each person’s commitment to showing up. For our live class time together, please plan to arrive on time and attend the entire period. If you need to leave class early or arrive late, alert the instructor ahead of time. If you are absent from class for any reason, please communicate with me ASAP. Students who miss class and communicate with the instructor will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Regular absences will result in a deduction of participation points. (Communication is key! Let’s work together to make sure everything goes smoothly.)

**Health-Related Class Absences:** Please don’t attend class when you’re sick. If you feel ill, you are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. Contact
me as soon as feasible to let me know you won’t be in class. Please note that
documentation (a doctor’s note) for medical excuses is not required.

**Late Assignments:** Assignments should be submitted in Canvas by the date/time (or
within the date range) specified. Please be in touch with the instructor directly if you are
having any problems completing or submitting the assignment before it is due.
Communication is key! If you’re struggling with a deadline for any reason, let me know
and we’ll work together to support your success.

**Feedback:** Since your active participation is required for a successful learning
experience in this course, it is critical that you share any barriers to your engagement.
You are a co-creator of this course – your feedback will help to shape the course as it is
unfolding. Please share feedback with the instructor directly (via email, during live class
or in student hours) at any point in the semester. Additionally, you will be invited to
submit a mid-term survey to share your feedback more formally and anonymously.

**Student Hours:** Instead of traditional “office hours,” I hold weekly “student hours” (see
above for day/time/location). The idea is the same, but I want to emphasize that this
time is for you! Students are invited to connect with me during the scheduled time to ask
questions, share comments, or simply to chat! You can drop in for 5 minutes, stay the
whole hour, or anything in between. If you would rather set up a one-on-one meeting for
another time, simply contact me directly.

**Personal Issues and Accommodations:** Please see me if you have any concerns
about the class, your participation in the class, or have personal issues that relate to the
class. No need to divulge personal details - just give me a heads-up so we can be on
the same page! I am more than happy to meet with you at any point to discuss your
situation or to address any special accommodations. I am also available to assist you
with accessing school or university-based resources you may need during the semester.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is when you attribute others’ ideas and/or exact words as your
own. This can include ideas and/or passages from the readings, class activities, peers,
from the Internet, and others. Be careful to cite or reference all outside sources in your
work. If needed, I will engage the University’s protocol for disciplinary action related to
plagiarism. This could mean a loss of points, failure in the course, and/or other
consequences. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask!

**Recording of Class (Audio & Video):** 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.

**Student Wellbeing**

Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, mental health, alcohol or other drugs, identities, finances, etc. If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help is a courageous thing to do for yourself and those who care about you. If the source of your stressors is academic, please contact me so that we can find solutions together. For personal concerns, U-M offers many resources, some of which are listed at Resources for Student Well-being on the Well-being for U-M Students website. You can also search for additional resources on that website.

**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.