COURSE DESCRIPTION

MP 781 establishes the value base of community organizing practice; presents the basic philosophy, goals, and methodology of both social action and community development approaches to organizing; considers the use of self in the organizing process, including roles and ethical dilemmas; examines and critiques different organizing models; introduces organizational building skills; and increases students’ abilities for developing effective organizational leadership, conducting action research, engaging in strategic analysis, and implementing direct action tactics.

This course emphasizes empowerment, participation, economic and social justice; and it features collective action strategies for combating racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, adultism, mentalism, ableism and other forms of oppression. It also stresses the importance of involving community members in all aspects of the policies, programs, institutions, and decisions which impact their lives.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

I. To establish the concepts of empowerment, participation, economic and social justice as a value base for community organizing practice and to familiarize students with the underlying philosophical and theoretical principles.

II. To provide a framework and overview of community organizing
approaches for social change.

III. To help students examine the use of self in the organizing process, including roles and ethical dilemmas.

IV. To familiarize students with the basic philosophy, goals, and methodology of both social action and community development approaches to organizing.

V. To examine and critique a range of organizing models utilized in urban communities.

VI. To help students develop organizational building skills, including groundwork, legitimization, organizing committee formation, and recruitment techniques.

VII. To examine a range of recruitment/outreach techniques and to sharpen students' skills for fostering community participation.

VIII. To enable students to learn how to find and develop effective organizational leadership.

IX. To develop students' strategic and tactical abilities, including action research methodology, strategic analysis, and direct action techniques.

X. To increase students' commitment to community empowerment, the elimination of oppression, and the attainment of economic and social justice.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Apply community organizing values, principles, methods, and skills to a variety of macro practice interventions.

2. Examine the appropriate and ethical use of self in an assortment of roles in the organizing process.

3. Understand the basic philosophy, goals, and methodology of both social action and community development approaches to organizing.

4. Critically examine a wide variety of community organizing models.

5. Exercise organizational building skills, including groundwork, legitimization, organizing committee formation, and recruitment.

6. Find and develop indigenous community leadership for grassroots organizations.
7. Work together with organizational members and leaders to carry out action research.

8. Facilitate a planning process for engaging in strategic analysis.

9. Assist organizational leaders and members in implementing appropriate collective action strategies and direct action tactics.

10. Facilitate an evaluation process for assessing the effectiveness of organizational initiatives, campaigns, and events.

TEXT & READINGS

Required:


Reader - available Online Electronic Reserve.

A number of handouts also will be distributed.

COURSE OUTLINE

1. **January 18: Organizing for Collective Empowerment**

   1. To review the course themes, objectives, readings, and assignments.
   
   2. To familiarize students with the basic values, philosophy, and goals of community organizing.
   
   3. To examine four arenas and two approaches for community organizing.

   **Readings**


2. **January 25: Organizing Models and Methods**

1. To become familiar with the major approaches to community organizing in the United States.

2. To introduce a ten-dimensional framework for analyzing GCOs: membership, leadership, staffing, structure, goals, target systems, strategy and tactics, finances, allies, and communications.

3. To examine how community organizing can be a collective empowerment strategy to combat racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, adultism, mentalism and other forms of oppression.

**Readings**


3. **February 1: Staff Goals, Roles, and the Use of Self**

1. To consider the general goals and roles for staff in collective empowerment efforts.

2. To discuss questions and dilemmas about ethics, manipulation, and the use of self as a facilitator of empowerment.
3. To explore roles, barriers and opportunities for organizers who are different (“outsiders”) from the community members they work with as compared to “insiders.”

**Readings**


Chavez, C. “A Union in the Community.” Unpublished. (Reader)

4. **February 8: The Social Action Approach**

1. To familiarize students with the basic philosophy, goals, and methodology of a range of social action organizations.

2. To compare, contrast, and critique the strengths and weaknesses of these social action models, as well as applicability to students’ own macro practice.

3. To develop knowledge, methods, techniques, and skills to plan and conduct effective meetings in a variety of community settings.

**Readings**


City Life/Vida Urbana Reading Packet. (Reader)


**February 15: No Class**

5. **February 22: The Community Development Approach**

1. To examine and critique a range of community development models.

2. To explore the potential, limitations and challenges for the community development approach to organizing, as well as applicability to students’ own macro practice.

3. To develop knowledge, methods, techniques, and skills to resolve common problems which hinder the effectiveness of community groups.

**Readings**


6. **February 29: Building Community Organization  1st Assignment Due**

1. To familiarize students with common steps in any organizing process.

2. To examine a range of recruitment/outreach techniques, to sharpen students' skills through role playing, and to demonstrate the use of various organizing tools.

3. To understand a range of structural elements and relationships which enable organizations to work together productively in coalitions.

**Readings**


7. **March 7: Developing Leaders**

1. To examine the various definitions, functions and styles of leadership.

2. To discuss how leadership is “found” and “developed.”

3. To consider the use of self in the leadership development process and the application of specific group work and community organizing approaches and methods.
Readings


Cortes, E. “Making the Public Leaders.” Unpublished. (Reader)


March 14: No Class

8. March 21: Organizing for Collective Action

1. To introduce a model for framing and analyzing issues, conducting action research, and developing effective strategies.

2. To learn the basic components for developing and implementing an action plan.

3. To familiarize students with a variety of direct action tactics and opposition counter-tactics.

Readings


9. March 28: Changing Public Policy

1. To examine ACORN’s multistage, multilevel campaign against Household Finance.

2. To discuss and critique case studies in which a range of community organizing strategies were employed.

3. To engage in class exercises to sharpen students' public policy organizing skills.

Readings


10. **April 4: Stepping Back, Looking Ahead  2nd Assignment Due**

1. To learn strategies & techniques for conducting successful negotiations.

2. To discuss the potential and challenges for community organizing in the Twenty First Century.

3. To evaluate this course.

**Readings**


Staples, L. “Principles of Negotiations.” Unpublished. *(Reader)*


**ASSIGNMENTS**

There will be two assignments - both take-home exams.
Assignment #1 is due in class on Wednesday, February 29. This assignment provides the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge, values, and skills in the following competencies:

2.1.1 Professional Identity. Students are required to consider the role of community organizer from multiple perspectives.

2.1.3 Critical Thinking. Students analyze how community organizing principles converge and diverge with other social work approaches.

2.1.4 Diversity in Practice. A. Students integrate key principles related to an assessment of how members of urban, low-income communities, and predominantly of color, can take collective action to contend with marginalization by society based on their race/ethnicity, socio-economic class, and location of residence.

B. Students are required to utilize participatory democratic principles to develop approaches that promote effective working relationships with diverse urban communities and organizations in order to achieve social justice goals.

2.1.5 Human Rights and Justice. A. Students examine community organizing values, goals, principles & methodological approaches that support self-advocacy for social and economic justice by disempowered marginalized groups.

B. Students develop strategies and tactics designed to eliminate structural and cultural barriers towards the achievement of social justice goals that increase empowerment among disenfranchised urban groups.

Assignment #2 is due in class on Wednesday, April 4. This assignment provides the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge, values, and skills in the following competencies:

2.1.4 Diversity in Practice. A. Students integrate key principles related to an assessment of how members of urban, low-income communities, and predominantly of color, can take collective action to contend with marginalization by society based on their race/ethnicity, socio-economic class, and location of residence.

B. Students are required to utilize participatory democratic principles to develop approaches that promote effective working relationships with diverse urban communities and organizations in order to achieve social justice goals.

2.1.5 Human Rights and Justice. A. Students develop community organizing strategies and action plans to advance social and economic justice with a variety of disempowered constituencies.
B. Students develop strategies and tactics designed to eliminate structural and cultural barriers towards the achievement of social justice goals that increase empowerment among disenfranchised urban groups.

2.1.7 Human Behavior. Students are expected to formulate a plan for organizational development that takes into account an assessment of group members and group dynamics.

2.1.8 Policy Practice. Students are expected either to analyze the effectiveness of social change campaigns that advance social well-being or to develop organizational strategies to advocate effectively for changed policies at the state, municipal or neighborhood levels.

2.1.10 Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate. A. Students develop approaches to engage diverse constituencies in participatory democratic processes and collective action to achieve shared goals for social change.

B. Students are required to develop a SWOT analysis assessing the ability of client organizations to undertake effective collective action.

C. Students critique the appropriateness of intervention strategies utilized in social action campaigns for hypothetical change efforts.

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

Each of the two written assignments is graded on a 100 points scale and class participation is graded on a 50 point scale.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to inform the instructor in advance of any absences. Failure to attend class sessions is likely to have a negative effect on your course grade.

Academic honesty: Papers and presentations in the School of Social Work must meet standards of academic honesty and integrity, avoiding any possibility of plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct. For specific information about the BUSSW policy regarding academic misconduct, see Student Handbook: Ways & Means (http://www.bu.edu/ssw/current/stud_hb/index.shtml).

Writing style and references: Students are expected to follow the editorial and reference standards set out in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2010). This manual is available at the Mugar Library reference desk. A helpful BUSSW APA...
Style Guide can be found at http://www.bu.edu/ssw/current/academic/index.shtml.

Students with disabilities:
If you have a disability and want to request reasonable accommodation, the University requires that you consult with Boston University’s Office of Disability Services for information regarding this process (http://www.bu.edu/disability/).

Academic writing assistance:
If you would like academic writing assistance, information can be found at http://www.bu.edu/ssw/current/academic/assistance/index.shtml or contact the BUSSW Office of Student Services.

Electronic devices in the classroom:
Computers may be used to support the learning activities in the classroom, with permission of your instructor. These include such activities as taking notes and accessing course readings under discussion. However, non-academic use of laptops and other devices are distracting and seriously disrupt the learning process for everyone. Neither computers nor other electronic devices are to be used in the classroom for non-academic reasons. This includes e-mailing, texting, social networking, and use of the Internet. The use of cell phones during class time is prohibited. Please turn off cell phones and refrain from taking calls unless you are “on call” and have cleared this with the instructor prior to class. Under such circumstances, please put your phone on vibrate, sit close to a door, and step out of the room to take the call.

Religious holidays:
The school, in scheduling classes on religious holiday, intends that students observing those holidays be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for canceled classes to be reschedule.