We aren't going to ask the government to give us freedom, nor are we going to ask you male fools. We are going to ensure our freedom, our respect, and our dignity as women and as human beings.” Quote from the women of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN).

Course Description
Contemporary feminist thought challenges us to identify and analyze the connections between our day-to-day experiences and gender inequality -- large-scale social, political and economic patterns. In this course, we will explore the theory and practice of community organizations using a feminist lens. This lens brings into focus persistent patterns of inequality; it also reveals the persistence of community-based women organizers efforts to create positive change.

This course is divided into three sections. Section I introduces the course, defines a broad feminist approach, and the engaged learning model that is at the center of this class. During this section of the course, students will also choose one of three options related to the "community" focus of this course. Section II focuses more intensively on the models of community organizing, with a specific emphasis on issues of inequality and challenges to inequality in our everyday lives and experiences. Section III continues and expands the exploration initiated in Section II. In this final section of the course, we will apply a feminist lens to analyses of community organizations, with a particular emphasis on understanding the interactions between community organizations and the larger-scale structures and processes in which they are embedded.

Learning Methods in this Course: Engaged Learning and Community
This class includes the option for you to work directly with communities and community-based organizations as part of the course. The assumption behind this option is that classrooms are not the only spaces where learning may take place -- nor are books and articles the only means through which we can gain knowledge. At the same time, experience alone does not automatically encourage learning or increase wisdom. For this reason, this course includes the option of combining hands-on community work with classroom learning.

As a student in this class, you will have a lot of responsibility. Your choices about how deeply you engage with the material and, with the community will determine the depth
and usefulness of your own and others' learning. With this responsibility comes the opportunity to engage in a dynamic and vibrant learning experience in which a community focus and feminist ideologies intersect.

Course Objectives

When you complete this course, you will have:

- Learned how to use a feminist lens to understand organizing in communities;
- Increased your knowledge of the ways in which power, meaning, and context affect community engagement and action in regards to community concerns;
- Deepened your understanding of your own and others' assumptions about and motivations for community work.

Relationship to Social Work Themes: This course has direct bearing on social work’s four curricular themes

Social Change and Social Justice

In this course, using a women's grounded knowledge and practice perspective we address patterned practices of inequality and injustice and the systems and institutions through which they are maintained. Students use a organizing praxis to learn to map power and interests, develop leadership, build relationships, motivate participation, devise strategy, mobilize resources, identify barriers to justice-oriented community change and how to act to resolve them.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation.

Students will link their work in class to community organizing by establishing an accountable relationship with local organizers in an area of organizing related to the class and their lives. While working with the organization, students will investigate the group’s model of movement-building and the everyday work of enacting it.

Multicultural and Diversity Issues

We will examine social problems as a product of simultaneous local and national processes, including gender formation, racial formation, and class formation. A critical premise of this course is that power relations can be read effectively from their margins, and that marginalized people deliberate their own conditions and empower themselves through organizing.
The course pursues these themes through a series of case studies that trace how actors with marginal status challenge their condition and transform society. We will also consider differing meanings and experiences of social problems at the community level and diverse possibilities for intervention.

**Behavioral and Social Science Research**

All community work will be developed explicitly as collaboration between students and identified community organizations. All work will combine at the end of term in producing a piece of public scholarship, which speaks accessibly to the organization’s work and to scholarly research in each student’s chosen area of women and community organizing.

**Community Options**

There are three options for the "community" component of this course. I will hand out detailed information on all three of these options as an unattached addendum to the syllabus. **Option 1** students (in teams) will engage with community organizations to be identified by students. Please note that there is a limit to the number of students each organization can take, and they are only looking for students who are truly interested in community work, rather than seeing it only as a one-dimensional option in a class. **Option 2** students (in teams) will use their own existing community work for this component of the course; if you are already engaged in community-focused work of some sort, this is an opportunity to link that part of your experience with your academic learning. Students who want to use this course as a reason to re-connect with organizations they used to work with but haven't had time for recently, can also consider this option. **Option 3** does not require work with a community organization. Instead, Option 3 students will work in organizing teams to plan an event related to women and community organization in conjunction with the course.

**Assignments and grading: Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Papers</td>
<td>48 points (12 points each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meta-reflection #1: Mid-Quarter</td>
<td>28 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Participation :</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Action project worksheet</td>
<td>5pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community evaluation</td>
<td>10pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team evaluation</td>
<td>20pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>and eval. of team</td>
<td>80 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project portfolio</td>
<td>10pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final report and project display</td>
<td>30pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation (includes attendance)</td>
<td>22 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-reflection #2: End of Quarter</td>
<td>22 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>200 points</td>
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Please note: In order to pass this class, you must have a passing grade in each of the components of the course listed above.

Written Assignments
Details on the reflection papers and the two meta-reflections are included on the class ctools website (in “Assignments”). All written work due on class days is officially due at the BEGINNING of class on the specified date. I may choose to collect it later in the period, but it is officially due at the beginning of class.

All written assignments submitted by students should be double spaced in 12 pt. font. Students should use the Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program or other style manuals to assist them in writing their papers. Students are strongly encouraged to make and keep a copy of their papers.

Grading Criteria for Written Assignments
Reaction and research papers will be graded on the basis of:
a) The quality of the analysis and depth of understanding of the concepts, ideas, and information presented. I will be looking for objective documentation in support of stated opinions or conclusions.
b) The clarity of expression and organization of the paper - is there a logical order to the presentation of your thoughts.
c) The appropriate use of references and resources, and the variety of resources referenced.
d) The use of proper grammar and the over-all professional presentation of the paper.

Community Participation (Options 1 and 2)
Your community supervisor will be asked to verify in writing that you have done a minimum of 20 hours of community work. Additionally, s/he and or the community members with whom you are working will provide me with an evaluation of the quality of your work. If you are working as part of a team, your evaluation may be for the whole team rather than each individual. Together, completion of hours and community evaluation will comprise this section of your grade.

My community evaluation guide will include suggested evaluation questions; community evaluators might choose to answer these questions or they might prefer to address others. If you have pressing questions about what evaluation standards your community supervisor or other evaluators will use, feel free to ask them (and suggest that they read over the questions below and/or contact me if they have any questions). The questions I will suggest include: What contributions did the student make to your organization and to the communities it serves? How well did the student apply her/his skills, knowledge and experience in your organization? How well did the student learn about the organization, the communities with which the organization works, etc.? How well did the student interact with the people with whom s/he worked (community members, staff, board, etc.)?
(Option 1, 2, & 3)
Each team will keep a portfolio documenting their organizing activities, including: agenda and minutes of team meetings; plan and timeline; notes on activities carried out outside of the class meeting time; phone logs, notes from interviews, etc. The portfolio will be turned in at the end of the semester along with an assessment of the effort.

Final Report--For Options 1, 2 and 3
Each team prepares a final report, documenting their organizing efforts and assessing the process and outcome. Each member of the team contributes a personal assessment of the process and his or her role. The group also prepares a collective assessment of the process, lessons learned, and suggestions for strengthening both the process and outcome of the organizing effort.

Class participation
This course requires a high level of engagement and participation from each student. Class participation involves always coming to class prepared. "Coming to class prepared" means completing reading and writing assignments, of course, but it also means coming to class ready to participate actively in high-quality, thoughtful discussion and interactions. Active engagement includes providing good feedback to your peers, sharing your work and your ideas, being fully present in discussions, and staying thoughtful about class discussions. This is your class and your education. Your participation will affect what you and others get from this course.

On a more mundane note: I expect you to arrive on time for class; late arrivals detract from the quality of everyone's experience and won't be tolerated. If you have extenuating circumstances in this regard, please talk with me. Regular attendance is also a requirement. Promptness and attendance will be factors in my evaluation of your performance.

Notes on Student Responsibilities (Deadlines and Assignments):
It is your responsibility to know about and meet deadlines; know about assignments and requirements, and bring to my attention any questions that are not answered in the syllabus or the assignment guidelines.

Deadlines for all assignments apply to all students, for reasons of fairness and classroom dynamics. I do not accept late work unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances; if you do find yourself in an emergency situation that unavoidably interferes with on-time completion of an assignment; it is your responsibility to contact me ASAP to discuss the situation. I expect all students to stay on top of deadlines and assignment requirements and to plan ahead.

Final Note
I reserve the right to change the syllabus, assignments and/or schedule if necessary.
Required texts for everyone
All reading is available in the Course reader which is available at Accucopy, 518 E. William, 769-8338. A copy of the course reader will also be available for you at the School of Social Work Library Reserve Desk.

Schedule of Classes and Readings

September 9th
Introduction

Readings for week two


September 16th
Can Theory Matter: What Do Gender and Feminism Have To Do With Community Organizing?

Readings for week three


September 23rd
Guest Speaker
Success," "Failure," & Change

Readings for week four


**September 30th**

**Feminist Models and Organizing Principles: Frameworks for Thinking about Community Organizing**

**Readings for week five**


**October 7th**

**Guest Speaker**

**Getting Organized**

**Readings for week six**


October 14th —Meta-reflection due 9am
Leadership, Power, & Organizational Structure

Readings for week seven

Rogers, M. (1990) The first revolution is internal. Chapter 7 in M. Rogers *Cold Anger.* (pp.55–65), University of North Texas Press


October 21st
Mobilization & Participation

Readings for week eight


October 28th
Reconceiving History: Reproductive Rights in US Communities

Readings for week nine


November 4th
Practicing Politics: Organizing Against Pornography/ The New Politics of Pornography and Sex Work

Readings for week ten


November 11th
Guest speaker
Final Meta Reflection due 9am
Identity-Centered Movements and Labor Reform Strategies

Readings for week eleven


December 2nd
Creating Coalitions: Thinking About Working Together or, Can't We All Just Get Along?
Put up project displays

Readings for week twelve


December 9th FINAL REPORT DUE 9am
Discussion of Community Projects and Course wrap-up
TURN-IN ALL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PAPERWORK