SW 651.001 Planning for Organizational and Community Change

Thursday, 9am-12pm.                       Fall 2005
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Course Description:
This course will examine social planning as a systematic process of developing and implementing plans and programs that promote social justice and well-being at the community level. A range of analytic and interactional tools will be reviewed, including those which assess community strengths and needs, set goals and priorities, formulate action plans, develop organizational structures, build support for implementation, and monitor and evaluate results.

This course will also analyze major models of planning practice, the sociopolitical context within which practice takes place, and strategies for expanding institutional relationships and collaborative partnerships aimed at a more equitable distribution of goods, services, and resources.

Course Content:
This course will focus on social planning with regard to problems affecting the most disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups, as well as the interests of potential resource suppliers, legitimators, and competitors for both resources and legitimacy. Emphasis will be placed on the design of interventions leading to the improvement of social services. Areas to be examined will include:

• service availability and accessibility at the community level in addition to accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency;
• service provision in a manner that is both comprehensive and continuous; and
• service appropriateness to various populations.

Students will study the range of analytic and interactional tasks performed by planners at all stages of the planning process (i.e., problem definition and needs assessment, structure building, strategy and goal formulation, plan-making and implementation, monitoring and evaluation). Several analytic and interactional tools will be reviewed.

Since social planners are not free agents who create their own agendas, students will examine the various community structures through which, or under whose auspices,
planning is conducted. These community structures include: 1) community-based organizations, 2) public bodies like, 3) voluntary federations (e.g., women’s funds, sectarian and ethnic federations), 4) direct service agencies (e.g., health funds, family service agencies, Y’s and settlement houses), 5) coalitions, and 6) complex social and economic partnerships.

Emphasis will be placed on planning within the context of Social Work’s commitment to serving the disadvantaged and with a focus on the diversity and plurality of interests in society. The ethical and moral implications of various planning related action strategies and probable outcomes will be examined using the NASW Code of Ethics as well as other relevant documents.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish between major approaches to social planning.
2. Apply interactive assessment tools to planning problems.
3. Describe the opportunities and constraints under which social planners work in one or more occupational settings.
4. Describe comprehensively the activities in engaging a constituency organized for a change effort.
5. Identify the ethical and moral implications of alternative courses of action.
6. Design a plan for creating, expanding, or improving a service program that is shared with or dependent on a number of institutions at the community level.
7. Articulate how community practice contributes to the overall mission of social work.

**Course Design:**

Class sessions will include lectures and presentations, small group discussions, and experiential exercises. Students will have opportunities to work on planning projects aimed at expanding or improving services in or around the Ann Arbor community.

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:**

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity.** Students will learn that inter-ethnic communication and other forms of intergroup relationships are central to the success of planning efforts, which often must accommodate to the interests of an increasingly diverse public. In addition, planning is often dependent on the ability to secure the commitments of populations that may differ on demographic, geographic, and psychographic characteristics, and on the ability to balance these against larger institutional and organizational interests.

- **Social Justice and Social Change.** Equity is a major theme in contemporary social planning, and this course will focus on how planner’s can assure that the interests of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are represented.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation.** Students will learn that planning methods can be used to correct social problems, the conditions that lead to them, and their consequences.
Behavioral and Social Science Research. This course will emphasize research since planning is anchored in research and scientific knowledge, and many of the assessment and evaluative tools are derived from research methodology. For example, Delphi method was originally designed as an interactive survey method for predictive purposes, but is currently more likely to be used to examine the implications of alternative strategies. Likewise, the selection of intervention strategies is often informed by empirical analysis or the systematic application of social theory. For instance, force field analysis is derived from field theory and draws on existing and emerging knowledge of which forces are likely to promote or restrain change.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:
The ethical and moral implications of various planning related action strategies and probable outcomes will be examined. Relevant insights will be drawn from the NASW Code of Ethics and contrasted with those of other occupational groups (e.g., Association of Black Social Workers, American Institute of Certified Planners, American Institute of Planners, American Society for Public Administration, and others). Since planning is an attempt to influence who, gets what, where, when, and how, this course will focus on the ethical implications of planning decisions. In particular, concerns related to gender equality, discrimination, censorship, and economic justice will be covered.

Assignments and grading: Overview
Planning worksheets 30 points (10 points each)
Planning project:
  Defining the issue and literature review 20pts
  Analyzing the larger social system 20pts
  Developing an action plan 10pts
  Team evaluation 20pts
  Personal assessment and eval. of team 10pts
  Project portfolio 10pts
  Project display 10pts
  Final report & class presentation 50pts
  150 points
Class Participation (includes attendance) 20 points
Total: 200 points

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 all assignments 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.

**Written Assignments and Projects**: This course is designed to develop skills for planning and implementing community change.

1. **Planning Project (Total: 150 points)**: The project will be done in groups of 4-5 people and will include the following assignments:

   A. **Defining the Issue and Literature Review (20 points)**: Planning practice requires the ability to work toward set goals and objectives. This process is dependent on identifying issues and possible outcomes. This paper should be a maximum of 5 pages and have two parts:

      1. Identify and describe the problem, issue or situation which is the focus of your project. This will include a review of relevant literature about the problem in general and current efforts to address it.
      
      2. Based on this discussion, present a vision that reflects change at the community or organizational level.

      **Due: September 29th**

   B. **Analyzing the Larger Social System (20 points)**: Effective planning practice requires skills in analyzing and assessing large social systems. This paper should identify and describe a particular community or organization which will be the focus of your intervention. In writing this paper, use the tools for organizational and community analysis which we have covered in class and in the text. The description should answer the following questions:

      1. Briefly describe the community or organization: its composition, goals, formal and informal structures, norms or rules, resource base, sources of power.
      
      2. What different formal and informal roles do members of groups based on gender, race, ethnicity or sexual preference play in the organization?
3. What do you now see as the major strengths and weaknesses of the community or organization. What is working? What could be improved?
4. To what extent does the community or organization help or hinder the interests and needs of different groups within it?
5. Review your first paper, use this information to identify activities that could achieve your vision.

**Due: October 20th**

C. **Developing an Action Plan (20 points):** Engaging in planning practice requires using existing knowledge to select appropriate strategies and to evaluate them. In this paper, use the material covered in class and in the two previous papers to develop a plan for meeting the goals and objectives with a community or organizational intervention. This paper should consist of two parts:
1. Follow a strategic planning process and present a summary of your plan in narrative form.
2. Specifically identify ways in which the effectiveness of the plan will be evaluated. Both the intervention and evaluation plan must indicate ways in which the needs and strengths of relevant community members will be addressed.

**Due: November 6th**

3. **Final Report**
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.

**December 1st**

4. **Class Presentations (15 points)**
The class presentations are intended to create a “toolbox” of sorts for each of you. In groups of 3 – 4 students, you will have approximately 30 minutes to describe and demonstrate an organizing tool that you think will be useful to the class in the future. This may be a team building exercise, a different kind of leadership evaluation tool, a new way of conducting assessments, a logic model format, a decision tree diagram or the like. You will also have to prepare a handout for each member of the class.

Students will form groups during the 2nd class period and choose their presentation slot and topic. I will try to set aside some class time every couple of weeks for the groups to meet and plan. The class presentations will be peer evaluated.

**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.

September 8th
• Introductions, course overview
Readings for week two:


http://www.haworthpress.com/web/JTSW

September 15th

*Overview of community practice*

- *Models for promoting community practice*

*Readings for week three:*


September 22nd

- *Models for promoting community practice*

*Readings for week four:*


September 29th

- *Social work practice and community change*

- *Models for promoting community change*

- *The skills of community practice*

*Readings for week five:*


October 6th
• Planning for social action
• Community needs & asset assessment

Readings for week six:

Homan Chapter 6, Sparking the action with issues.

October 13th
• Tactics and strategies for social action campaigns

Readings for week seven:
Homan Chapter 12, Taking action-strategies and tactics.

Rubin and Rubin (2001). Chapter 11, An overview of action campaigns

October 20th
• Understanding organizations

Readings for week eight:


October 27th
• Planning change efforts

Readings for week nine:
Homen Chapter 7, Powerful Planning
Homen Chapter 11, Building the organized effort

November 3rd
• Working with community
• Indigenous leadership

Readings for week ten:
Homen Chapter 8, People--The Most Valuable Resource

November 17th
• Funding and grant writing
• Budget control and fiscal responsibility

Readings for week ten:
Homan Chapter 10, Raising Other Resources

December 1st
• Review course
• Evaluate course

Submit final reports - Due 9am
Put up project displays

December 8th
Class presentations and course wrap-up