Course Description
This is a course on theory and research on social change. The motivating questions for this course are complex, and include the following: What is social change and how viable is it to propose purposeful change in a culture centered on the pursuit of self-interest? How is social change described and can it be anticipated? What do we think we know about the causes of social change and of the processes associated with its development and diffusion in modern societies? What are the implications of this knowledge for creating social change and for assessing where and how social change makes a difference, and the nature of that difference, if any?

Our purpose in examining these questions is threefold: (1) to advance student knowledge and understanding of major theories of social change and to promote a critical consideration of what these theories can teach us about the relationship between social change and prospects for improving the quality of the lives of members of vulnerable groups and populations in society; (2) to advance a critical understanding of the nature, causes, processes and diffusion of social change at different levels of analysis; and (3) to consider the implications of this knowledge and analyses for anticipating, creating and assessing social change, as well as for defining and understanding social work's place and role in contributing to improvements and change the lives of members of vulnerable populations by supporting and/or engaging in the creation of social change. Minimum competencies students are expected to demonstrate at the end of the course include:

a) an understanding of major theories of social change and the development of an ability to judge critically their value, as well as their weakness, and to consider their use in organizing and interpreting research findings, and in considering strategies for action;
b) a descriptive and analytic understanding of the forms and causes of social change, and of the mechanisms and processes associated with its development and diffusion;
c) the capacity to pose analytic questions about the implications social change has for vulnerable groups and populations in society, and for social work's role in promoting social improvements in society through the creation of social change; and
d) increased ability to critically consider, and develop, proposals for achieving social change in light of what we think we know about how social change happens and its association with the realization of positive benefits for vulnerable groups and populations.

Required Texts
There is one required text. Additional readings on various themes and topics will be distributed or assigned on a week by week basis by the instructor. The text is:

Supplementary readings

Design
The format is lecture, with questions and discussion, as well as organized class discussion.

Grading And Requirements
The overall grade for the course will be based on two written assignments, seven written discussion papers and class attendance and participation. The respective weightings are 30% for each written assignment, a total of 28% for the discussion papers, and 12% for attendance and participation. Discussion papers will be posted on the website for submission starting May 15 by no later than 3:00 p.m. on the day prior to class; they will be not longer than one page, typed, single-spaced in 12-point font with one inch margins; they will report content of the week’s reading in summary form, and will always contain at least one question that you have derived from the readings. The question will be based on, and connected to, the substance of that week’s readings. Each discussion paper will be graded on a four-point scale. Failure to post by 3:00 p.m. on the day prior to class will result in a loss of four of the 28 points. Note that we have 10 classes; excluding the first and last weeks, which do not carry the expectation of the submission of a discussion paper, means that you can choose to skip one week. The week you skip is at your discretion.

The first written assignment is due by 11:30 p.m. on June 19. The focus of this assignment will be one of the weekly topics covered to that point in the course, including the June 19 topic. The paper will provide a brief discussion of the nature of the topic and why you chose to address it, along with a critical evaluation of all the readings assigned on the topic, as well as other references you consider to be relevant, possibly including readings assigned on the topics. Taking account of what you have learned as a result of addressing this topic, the paper will conclude with a discussion of the implications for how social work deals with, or should deal with, questions of change for improving the quality of life for vulnerable groups and populations in society.

The second written assignment is due by 11:30 p.m. on July 25. The topic for this paper will be circulated by no later than June 26. In general, it will focus on using knowledge to create change. Although the emphasis in this assignment will be on readings assigned in the second half of the semester, you nonetheless should anticipate that invoking and using theoretical and empirical knowledge of social change and strategies of change obtained over the class as a whole.

Written assignments will be no longer than 12 double-spaced, type-written pages using a twelve point font and one inch margins; the 12 pages includes diagrams, charts, etc, but excludes references. Additional specifications on the focus, structure, and content of the each written assignment will be discusses in class. Note that a general rule for each written assignment demonstrating a clear understanding, and on the application of concepts and research covered in class and in the readings. It is not on problem-solving and prescription.

Submitting discussion papers and written assignments -- All discussion papers and written assignments are to be submitted as attachments through the Ctools web site under the Assignment Folder on the dates and by the time specified. Subfolders will be created in the Assignment Folder for this purpose. Discussion papers not submitted in this matter will not be graded, resulting (as noted) in a loss of four points; as noted, written assignments will be treated as late. Note that the web site is set up not to accept submissions after the dates and times specified here. Also, note that assignments are not to be submitted using the Drop Box feature.
Evaluation Criteria -- Following are the main criteria applied in the assessment of class presentations and written assignments:

1. Definition and maintenance of a clear focus.
2. Systematic and logical presentation of arguments
3. Appropriate use of evidence.
4. Development of relevant and interesting insights.
5. Familiarity with, and appropriate use of, relevant literature.
6. Clarity of presentation.
7. Conformity with the requirements of the assignment.

Grading scale -- The grades for all assignments, and the final grade, are based on the grading scale described below. Grades for each assignment will be reported on scale that is relevant to the total value for that assignment, e.g., grades for discussion papers will be reported on a four-point scale. These values can easily be converted to numeric and letter values for the 100 point scale described below by dividing the score you receive by the value of that assignment, and multiplying by 100, e.g., \((2.5/4) = .625\) \(\times 100 = 62.5 = C-\).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Point Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td><strong>Outstanding</strong>: focused; well-written; well-organized; strongly analytic; strong grasp of subject matter; interesting and creative insights</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong>: focused; well-written; well-organized; analytic; good grasp of subject matter; interesting insights</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>Average to Strong: focused; writing acceptable; organization OK; analytic in orientation with some insights; acceptable grasp of subject matter</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Acceptable to Marginally Average: diffuse focus; some problems with writing and organization; more descriptive that analytic though with potential for insights; limited grasp of subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>74-76</td>
<td>Marginally Acceptable: poorly focused; poorly organized and poorly written; mainly descriptive with little or no analytic orientation; poor grasp of subject matter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>64-66</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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CLASS SCHEDULE

   Harper & Leicht, ch. 1.

2. May 15. Starting with a Dilemma: Self-interest, Cooperative Action andPossibilities of Change 

3. May 22. Social Change in the United States 
   Harper & Leicht, chapter 2, 3 & 4

4. May 29. Memorial Day

5. June 5. Anticipating Change 

6. June 12. Explaining Change 
   Harper & Leicht, chapters 5 & 6

   Harper & Leicht, chapters 7 & 8
Harper & Leichtm, chapters 10
Sociology, 25, 597-622.


Harper & Leichtm, chapter 11

Weick, K. E., & Quinn, R. E. (1999). Organizational Change and Development. Annual Review
of Psychology, 50, 361-386.

Harper & Leichtm, chapters 12 & 14

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. Submission times/dates for written assignments/reaction papers are firm, with exception
without penalty being granted only for medical reasons established by a physician's
statement. The penalty for reaction papers has been noted. For the two written
assignments, papers turned in after the submission date will be penalized 1% per day
from the 30 percent value to a maximum of 5% per week up to a total of 15%. Papers
submitted more than 3 weeks after the submission date will be awarded an "E" i.e.
failure, unless conditions for an incomplete, i.e. "I," have been satisfied (see "Student
Guide to the Master's in Social Work Degree Program" The University of Michigan,
School of Social Work).

2. As noted, all written submissions should be typed in twelve point font, double-spaced
with one inch margins. They must follow an established academic convention for
organization, pagination, footnoting, table and figure presentation and bibliographic
references. Papers not complying with an established convention will be returned, with
penalties for late submission applied.

3. Students are expected to attend all classes. Absences will be noted resulting in a loss of
points for class attendance and participation. Arriving in class after 8:20 a.m. will be
counted as an absence.