1. Course Description:
Welcome: This course examines methods of organizing people for social and political action on their own behalf or on behalf of others. Students will analyze methods of bringing people together for collective action, building organizational capacity, and generating power in the community. The course includes the study of skills in analyzing power structures, formulating action strategies, using conflict and persuasive tactics, challenging oppressive structures, conducting community campaigns, political advocacy as a form of mobilization and the understanding of contemporary social issues and traditionally oppressed population groups.

2. Course Content:
Students will learn that organizing for social and political action aims to create change by building powerful organizations at the community level. This course will take the perspective that organizing can win improvements in people’s lives, make people aware of their own power, and alter the relations of power in the community.

The history of organizing for social and political action and its underlying theoretical assumptions about power, conflict, and change will be covered. This course will also examine the sociopolitical arena in which organizing operates, roles and responsibilities of practitioners, several strategies and tactics, forces that facilitate or limit organizing, and lessons learned from empirically based practice. In addition, several schools of organizing thought and how each approaches the formulation of goals, issues, constituencies, targets, and tactics will be compared.

This course will analyze strategies and tactics that employ conflict as a vehicle for generating power and creating change. Students will assess theories of conflict and power and ways of assessing power structures at the community level.

Political advocacy will be examined as an empowering process of strengthening solidarity and challenging oppressive structures. In contrast to advocacy as a narrow approach to representing group interests in legislatures and established institutions, this course will consider advocacy as an empowering process by which traditionally excluded people advocate for themselves in ways which build organizations and develop communities.
The course content has two dimensions: 1) the theoretical and skills frameworks and 2) their application to pertinent social issues as discussed in class. The format and schedule of the course is designed to allow review or study of the application of theory to actual social or political issues.

The course design suggests a methodological progression of skills and techniques used in effective organizing for social change. A number of guest speakers and video presentations will add dimension to the reading and experiential materials.

3. Course Objectives:
Students are expected to develop an understanding of social dynamics as they relate to power structures; understand current social issues and relate them to social and political action as well as the roots or origins of said conditions in a broader social and political context.

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

1. Describe the changing context in which social and political action operates.
2. Compare and contrast various strategies, steps, and styles of practice.
3. Demonstrate skills to analyze power structures, formulate action strategies, use conflict tactics, conduct community campaigns, find and develop leaders, and other organizing steps.
4. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of ways in which oppressed people can stimulate collective action and generate power in the community.
5. Identify issues related to ethnicity, gender, social class, and other dimensions associated with discrimination, domination, and oppression.
6. Recognize issues of ethics and values arising in the field.

4. Course Design:
Students are required to write two short thematic papers and to contribute to one longer paper for a Social Action Model.

The first assignment is a short (3-5 pages) research paper for the purpose of profiling a social issue or oppressed population group stating the need for social or political action.

The second assignment is a paper explaining how the student’s practicum site or any other organization could be part of a social action project. The paper (3 to 5 pages long), should describe the organization, the need and opportunities for social action organizing and the necessary elements conducive to networking, strategy, community organizing or lobbying.

The third assignment is a collective paper to propose a Social Action Model chosen or designed by the students as a group project. The model will consist of a defined community-organizing and strategy approach as it applies to a given social issue. In addition, students are to participate in a final group presentation explaining the project utilizing an interdisciplinary format. This presentation will incorporate skills and methods as well as issues related to a Social Action Model.

All papers should be typed, double-spaced and written in APA style. The papers and group presentations must reflect materials covered in written, oral, videotaped or experiential data collected during the semester. Students may use course materials or develop new theories of their own based on the data covered in order to strengthen their theses and presentations.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Community Organizing in a Diverse Society, by Felix G. Rivera and John L. Erlich; published in 1995 by Allyn and Bacon. And a coursepak that is available at Accu-Copy.
5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed throughout this course by considering how particular approaches have been implemented in different ethnic, cultural, age, and gender-based groups, and the ways in which particular theories and strategies are and are not compatible with cultural norms and styles.

- **Social Justice and Social Change** will be central concepts in this course. The main objectives for students will be to develop skills for social change. Social action strategies are designed to illuminate injustices and challenge and change power differences that create and sustain inequities.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be addressed by comparing and contrasting prevention theory and social change theories, considering the promotion and prevention effects of empowerment strategies, and studying how social action can be used to help develop treatment and rehabilitation options for underserved populations. This course will also review the particular issues that face community organizations with both social action and direct service (treatment and rehabilitation) goals.

- **Behavioral and Social Sciences Research** will be incorporated throughout the course in at least three ways: 1) through the study of past social movements and social actions; 2) by studying research strategies for community assessment, action planning, and strategy implementation; and 3) by examining and critiquing relevant theories about social conflict, power, and social change and research that supports these theories.

6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:

Ethical and value concerns will be considered throughout this course by posing questions in the review of past organizing efforts, considering dilemmas faced by organizers, and identifying and addressing underlying value assumptions within current organizing projects.

7. Grading:

A 100-point system, broken down in the following manner, will be used for this class:

- 2 short individual papers (40 points max.; 20 points each).
- Final group paper (40 points max.); As a group, students will write collectively a Social or Political Action Proposal. This is a conceptual model for the class project that serves as the basis for the final group presentation.
- Final presentation (15 points max.); A group exercise in which students present a thesis on specific methodology or approach on Social or Political Action as it applies to a social issue. This presentation will incorporate the different methods and community socio-political characteristics identified and discussed throughout the course.
- Class participation (5 point max.); will be graded by individual participation on any of the subject matters to be covered during the course. Participation will be credited by materials contribution (newspaper articles, journals, events notices or announcements related to the course objectives) and participation in class, group discussions, or over E-mail.

2 Short papers (40 points max @ 20 pts each) 40
Final paper 40
Group presentation 15
Class participation 5
Total 100

At the end of the term, the sum of the numerical grades earned for each assignment will be translated into letter grades using the following formula:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>97-100</td>
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<tr>
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<td>94-96</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-93</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-90</td>
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<tr>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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# SW 652 ORGANIZING FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTION

## SCHEDULE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Social Action Theory &amp; History</th>
<th>Sept 14 Social Action Models</th>
<th>Sept 21 Power Structure/Racism/Discrimination</th>
<th>Sept 26 Assessment</th>
<th>Latina/os</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>Community Organizing</td>
<td>African-Americans</td>
<td>Assessment Latina/os</td>
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<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Asian-Americans</td>
<td>Assessment Latina/os</td>
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<td>Strategy</td>
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<td>Assessment Latina/os</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Oct 26</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Assessment Latina/os</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Nov 2</td>
<td>Persuasion</td>
<td>Poverty/Labor</td>
<td>Assessment Latina/os</td>
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<td>Nov 9</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>Housing/Education</td>
<td>Assessment Latina/os</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Nov 16</td>
<td>Effective Campaigns</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Assessment Latina/os</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Nov 30</td>
<td>Lobbying</td>
<td>Global Econ/Int'l Policy</td>
<td>Assessment Latina/os</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>Review and Presentations</td>
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<td>Assessment Latina/os</td>
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### First paper due

### Second paper due

### Third paper due
SW 652 ORGANIZING FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTION
READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1  Social Action Theory & History

Week 2  Social Action Models

Week 3  Power Structure  Racism/Discrimination

Week 4  Assessment  Latina/os
An Option Assessment Framework for Organizing in Emerging Minority Communities by Felix G Rivera and John E Erlich
Text Chapter 3: Chicanos, Communities and Change by Miguel Montiel and Felipe Ortego Y Gasca, 43-60.
Text Chapter 10: Organizing with Central American Immigrants in the United States by Carlos B Cordoba, 177-196.

Week 5  Community Organizing  African Americans
Text Chapter 4: Organizing for Violence Prevention: An African-American Community Perspective by Winneta Devore, 61-76.
Week 6 Networking Asian-Americans
Text Chapter 7: Organizing in the Chinese-American Community: Issues, Strategies and Alternatives by Peter Ching-Yung Lee, 113-142.
Text Chapter 8: Organizing in the Japanese-American Community by Kenji Murase, 143-160.
Text Chapter 11: Southeast Asians in the United States: A Strategy for Accelerated and Balanced Integration by Vu-Duc Vuong, 197-216.

Week 7 Strategy Native-Americans
Important Dates in American-Indian History 1500-1989
A Brief History of the American Indian Movement by Laura Waterman Wittsock and Elaine J Salinas (1197)
Text Chapter 2: Community Development with Native Americans by E. Daniel Edwards and Margie Egbert Edwards, 25-42.

Week 9 Conflict Gender
Text Chapter 6: A Feminist Perspective on Organizing with Women of Color by Lorraine M Gutierrez and Edith A Lewis, 95-112.

Week 10 Persuasion Poverty/Labor

Week 11 Negotiation Homeless/Education
Cities, Urban Schools and Current Visions of Educational Reform by Jean Anyon
Street is not a Home: Solving America’s Homeless Dilemma By Judge Robert C Coattes (1990)
Brometheus Books, Buffalo, NY. 59-91

Week 12 Effective Campaigns Environment


Week 14 Review and Presentations