



# NYU

# ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

PADM-GP 2106: Community Organizing

January 23, 2023 - May 8, 2023

Tuesdays, 4:55 PM - 6:35 PM

194 Mercer, Room 306 A

## Instructor Information

- Name: Cea Weaver
- Email: cmw530@nyu.edu
- Phone: 585-315-0826
- *Office Hours by appointment; I will also stay in the classroom until about 7:30 directly after class.*

***Note: The best way to reach me quickly is via text. I will respond to email inquiries within 48 hours. I occasionally travel for work; in those cases class will be on Zoom.***

## Course Information

Welcome to Community Organizing!

This course provides an overview of community organizing as a way for regular people to build lasting political power and win durable reforms to meet their needs. The focus is on various community organizing models and how community organizing fits into a larger theory of social/political change. Throughout the class, students will be expected to engage with active community organizing struggles locally grounded in New York City.

In the first part of the class, we focus on the theories of community organizing in New York City today, particularly in comparison with/as a complement to other forms of organizing (labor, electoral). In Part II of the class we will learn community organizing skills basics – base building, leadership development. In the final section of the class we will develop our theory of community organizing as a method of winning advocacy campaigns. We have an emphasis on strategies and tactics for issue identification, planning, implementing, and evaluating community organizing projects and campaigns.

Organizing requires a structural analysis (an understanding of the big-picture power dynamics that organize society) and is also deeply relational (it relies on individual relationships, FOLLOW UP, and personal connection.) Throughout the class students will be expected to engage with the materials as well as reflect on their personal experiences and societal positioning.

Key themes we will grapple with in this course:

- Power and what drives social change
- Political education and popular pedagogy
- Participatory democracy and governance
- Mass out-reach, base-building and membership engagement
- Sustainable leadership development in marginalized and oppressed communities
- Coalition building and components of successful community organizing campaigns

Note: New York City is a laboratory of organizing, with a robust labor movement and dynamic history of radical tenant and community activism. Throughout the course, students will be expected to engage with the live organizing that is happening in New York City around us. Additionally, organizing requires reflection, adjustment, and attention to the collective community people create when together – including in this classroom. ***This means that the syllabus should be viewed as a living document that is subject to change throughout the 14 weeks that we are together. Do not do the readings more than 2 weeks in advance as they are subject to change. The instructor will provide the students at least 14 days notice regarding changes to the syllabus content.***

### Required Texts

For both theoretical grounding in organizing as a theory of change and skills development as organizers we will read significant parts of the following two texts:

- McAlevey, Jane. “[No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power in the New Gilded Age.](#)” Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Mineri, Joan & Paul Gestos. “Tools for Radical Democracy.” Jossey-Bass, 2007.

It is up to you if you want to purchase these books (I recommend it!). However, the material is available via PDF and linked in the syllabus below, as well as uploaded to Brightspace.

Throughout there will be additional required resources (articles, films) which are available via link in this syllabus and where possible uploaded to the Brightspace.

### Assignments & Grading

- Class Attendance and Participation: (10%)

Come prepared to class and participate weekly!

- Class Co-Facilitation of Readings: (10%)

Meeting facilitation is a key practice in community organizing. Once during the semester, you (along with two other classmates) will be in charge of co-facilitating a 20 min discussion. Drawing upon your own and your classmates’ reading, note the cross cutting questions/issues and outline a brief number (3-5) of open-ended questions to engage your classmates in common themes discussed. Focus on the themes the assigned readings raise. Please post your discussion questions on the “Discussions” section of the Course Brightspace on Monday evening prior to class.

Note, this is not a “teaching” exercise: do not summarize. Assume that your classmates did the readings. The purpose is to engage your peers in a critical discussion of concepts related to community organizing. Feel free to bring in current events, as is relevant.

Your facilitation date as well as your co-presenters and their contact information is available [here \(Column C\)](#). The expectation is that you will be in communication with your co-facilitator prior to the class to prepare. If you are unable to attend class the day you are assigned it is your responsibility to switch with another student and let the professor know, via email. CC your classmate with whom you are switching days.

For tips and resources on facilitating group discussion, I recommend AORTA's guide, "[Anti-Oppressive Facilitation for Democratic Process](#)."

- **Base-Building Plan (Team Project) (30%)**

**Creating a Base-Building Plan:** At the end of Section II (March 21st) students will present base-building plans in a group to the class. This plan will include identifying an issue your group wants to work on and developing a base-building plan with metric goals for list building, an issue ID survey, developing leaders, recruiting people to be volunteers as well as developing targeting specifics. This plan will include identifying points of entry for how you will recruit people as well as a "ladder of engagement" to move people from uninvolved to organizers to leaders. Your plan should include both off-line/in-person and digital recruitment strategies.

Your team has been assigned randomly and is [available here \(Column D\)](#).

**Deliverables:**

- Class Presentation (10 minutes presentation, 5 Minutes Q&A)
  - Students are encouraged to engage the audience and be interactive in your presentation.  
Two team members
- Fill out this template outreach plan and ***get creative with the attachments!***
  - Design a flyer for your community meeting!
  - Draft a sample rap/script!
- Campaign Assessment (Individual) (50%) - May 2, 2023 (Presentation & Rough Draft); May 9, 2023 (Final)

Based on what we learn throughout the class, draft a case-study of a recent campaign by a community organization, coalition, national network, or labor union. This can be a local, state, national or international campaign with specific wins linked to a specific organizational formation of your choosing. This paper should be 5-6 pages long, 12 point font and single-spaced. In your case study include a narrative assessment of the campaign and answer the following questions:

- What is the basic overview: what was the campaign demanding, and why?
- What is the campaign's theory of change?
- What was the role of members in campaign decision-making? Staff?
- Who were the main targets? Allies?
- What resources (funding) did the organization need to conduct the campaign?

For inspiration, you can review The Forge's "Craft of Campaigns" issue, available [here](#).

Additionally, please employ some of the following research techniques:

- Reviewing campaign materials, reports, and other material associated and/or about the campaign, including campaign plans, messaging documents, etc.
- Scheduling an interview with 1-2 people from the organization to talk about the campaign, preferably a staff person and a member (30-45 minutes should suffice).
- Researching media clips, and other forms of documentation, FB live events, social media posts, videos, etc.

Some good resources to find an organization or campaign to study include the following:

NY Based Organizations:

- <https://nyf.org/grants-awarded-2021/>
- <https://northstarfund.org/c/grantees/>

Outside New York

- <https://peoplesaction.org/member-organizations/>
- <https://uucsr.org/programs/veatch-program/news-and-reports/>
- <https://forgeorganizing.org/article/welcome-forge>
- <https://www.organizingupgrade.com>

Course Calendar

Date	Topic
Part 1: What is Community Organizing?	
1/24/2023	<p>Introduction to the Class  <b><i>Syllabus &amp; Assignment Review</i></b>  <b><i>What Is Community Organizing? Overview of concepts used in this class: building a glossary of terms together</i></b>  <b><i>Facilitation best practices &amp; resources</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None</li> </ul> <p>Assignments Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● None</li> </ul>
1/31/2023	<p>Theories of Change: Advocacy, Activism, and Organizing  <b><i>Types of Community Organizations in New York City.</i></b>  <b><i>Community Organizing, Electoral Organizing, Labor Organizing.</i></b></p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● McAlevey, Jane. “No Shortcuts.” Introduction. <a href="#">PDF here</a>. (pp. 1-35)</li> <li>● Minieri, Joan. “Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community.” Preface, Intro and The Story of CVH. <a href="#">Available Here</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Class facilitation. See if it is your week <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
2/7/2023	<p><b><i>NOTE: This class will take place on Zoom.</i></b></p> <p>Power &amp; Community  <b><i>What is “Power”?</i></b>  <b><i>How do we build it and wield it?</i></b>  <b><i>What tensions can we identify between community organizing and power building?</i></b></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● McAlevey, Jane. “No Shortcuts.” Chapter 1: The Power to Win is in the Community. (pp. 35 - 70). <a href="#">PDF here</a>.</li> <li>● DeFilippis, James, Robert Fisher and Eric Shragge. “Contesting Community: “The Limits</li> </ul>

	<p>and Potential of Local Organizing.” Chapter 1: “Community and Its Discontents” <a href="#">PDF Here</a>. (pp. 7-34)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Healy, Richard and Sandra Hinson. “The Three Faces Of Power.” Grassroots Policy Project, 2013. <a href="#">PDF Here</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Assignments Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Class facilitation. See if it is your week <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTE: This class will take place on Zoom.</b></p>
2/14/2023	<p>The Context in Which We Organize: <b><i>From Community to Mass Organizations In the Context of Neoliberalism, Racial Capitalism, Coronavirus, Etc</i></b></p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mitchell, Maurice. “<a href="#">Building Resilient Organizations</a>.” (2022)</li> <li>● Andrias, Kate and Benjamin Sachs. “<a href="#">Law and Organizing for Countervailing Power</a>” (2021)</li> <li>● Hertel-Fernandez, Alexander. “<a href="#">How Policymakers Can Craft Measures That Endure and Build Political Power</a>.” (June 2020)</li> <li>● Sen, Rinku. “Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy.” Chapter 1: New Realities, Integrated Strategies. <a href="#">PDF Here</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Assignments Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Class facilitation. See if it is your week <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
Part II: Organizing Skills	
2/21/2023	<p>Organizing Tools: Base-Building <b><i>Meeting people where they are at?</i></b> <b><i>Mass outreach/field programs → Absorption</i></b></p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minieri, J. et al. (2007). Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community. Jossey Bass. <a href="#">Chapter 3: Recruiting Constituents for Collective Action (p.37-60)</a></li> <li>● People’s Action: “<a href="#">Building a Bigger We: Changing Hearts &amp; Minds On Immigration in Rural America</a>.” (2020)</li> </ul> <p>Assignments Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Class facilitation. See if it is your week <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
2/28/2023	<p>Organizing Tools: 1:1s &amp; Leadership Development Plans</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Labor Notes, <a href="#">How to Have and Organizing Conversation</a></li> <li>● Ransby, Barbara. “Ella Baker &amp; the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision.” (2003). The University of North Carolina Press. <a href="#">Chapter 12: A Freirean teacher, a Gramscian intellectual, and a radical humanist: Ella Baker’s Legacy (p.357-374)</a></li> <li>● Ganz, Marshall. “Marshall Ganz’ Leadership Framework: A Primer.” (2018). <a href="#">Available Here</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Assignments Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Class facilitation. See if it is your week <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>

3/7/2023	<p>Organizing Tools: Narrative &amp; Story-Telling</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ganz, Marshall. <a href="#">Why Stories Matter</a> (2009)</li> <li>● Housing Justice for All, "<a href="#">Our Stories, Our Power: A Guide for Strategy Story-Telling.</a>" (2022)</li> </ul> <p>Assignments Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Class facilitation. See if it is your week <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
3/14/2023	Spring Break
3/21/2023	<p><b><i>NOTE: This class will take place on Zoom.</i></b></p> <p>Student Presentations: Base-Building Plans</p> <p>Readings</p> <p>Assignments Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Present your base-building plan to the class. Each group will have 10 minutes to present, followed by 5 minutes of Q&amp;A.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>NOTE: This class will take place on Zoom.</i></b></p>
Part III: Running Campaigns, Building Community Power, Sustaining Organizations	
3/28/2023	<p>Community Organizing Campaigns: Overview</p> <p><b><i>What are campaigns?</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Types of campaigns in community organizing?</i></b></p> <p><b><i>How do community organizations wage campaigns to win social change?</i></b></p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Weaver, Cea. "<a href="#">From University Rent Control to Cancel Rent: The Tenant Movement in New York City.</a>" (2021)</li> <li>● Poo, Ai-jen. "<a href="#">A Twenty-First Century Organizing Model: Lessons from the New York Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Campaign.</a>"</li> <li>● McAleve, Jane. "No Shortcuts." Chapter 5: Smithfield Foods: The Huge Success You've Never Heard About (pp. 143 - 178). <a href="#">PDF here</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Assignments Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Class facilitation. See if it is your week <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>● Students should email Cea their proposed campaign/organization for your final project by April 1, 2023 at <a href="mailto:cmw530@nyu.edu">cmw530@nyu.edu</a></li> </ul>
4/4/2023	<p>Components of a Successful Campaign: Part I</p> <p><b><i>Issue ID, Who can give us what we want? Advocacy/legislative versus corporate campaigns</i></b></p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minieri, J. et al. (2007). <b><i>Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community.</i></b> Jossey Bass. (<a href="#">Chapter 7</a>, <a href="#">Chapter 8</a>, <a href="#">Resource H</a>)</li> </ul> <p>Assignments Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Class facilitation. See if it is your week <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>

4/11/2023	<p>Components of a Successful Campaign: Part II <b><i>Strategies/Tactics (Communications versus Mass Action); Allies, Opponents Power &amp; leverage</i></b></p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Template Campaign Plan, Target Analyses</li> </ul> <p>Assignments Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class facilitation. See if it is your week <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
4/18/2023	<p>Growing our Power/Building Winning Coalitions <b><i>Of organizations Of constituencies</i></b></p> <p>Readings</p> <p>Assignments Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class facilitation. See if it is your week <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
4/25/2023	<p>Member Democracy in Community Organizations <b><i>Power versus Participation; Resourcing Community Organizing</i></b></p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jenkins, Steve. "Organizing, Advocacy, and Member Power: A Critical Reflection." (2002). <a href="#">PDF Here</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Assignments Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class facilitation. See if it is your week <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>
5/2/2023	<p>Organizational "Road-Show"/Speed-Dating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We'll break into two 15-person groups to share our organization projects with one another.</li> </ul> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul> <p>Assignments Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Paper &amp; Presentation</li> </ul>

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

## Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click the "Get Started" button. You can also call or email CSD

(212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

## **NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays**

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

## **NYU's Wellness Exchange**

[NYU's Wellness Exchange](#) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.