****

**PADM-GP 2106: Community Organizing**

**Summer 2024**

**181 Mercer St (Paulson Center), Room 233**

# Instructor Information

* **Email:** cmw530@nyu.edu
* **Phone:** 585-315-0826

# Course Overview

Welcome to Community Organizing!

This course provides an overview of community organizing as a way for groups of people to build political power and impact public policy to shape their needs. The focus is on 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 rooted locally in New York City.

The class meets four times for a full day. Because most of the learning happens **in class,** readings will be light and the course is workshop and skills focused. We will take ample breaks and do a significant amount of work in discussion groups.

* Tuesday, May 21, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
* Thursday, May 23, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
* Tuesday, May 28, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
* Thursday, May 30, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Organizing requires a structural analysis (an understanding of the big-picture power dynamics that organize society) and it is also deeply emotional (it relies on individual relationships and personal connections.) Throughout the class students will be expected to both engage with the materials and themes, the larger forces at play, and their own personal experiences and societal positioning.

Themes we will grapple with in the course include:

* Power and social change
* Political education and popular pedagogy
* Participatory democracy and governance
* Mass communication
* Leadership development
* Coalition building
* Capacity building in marginalized and oppressed communities

New York City is a laboratory of organizing: we have a robust labor movement as well as a dynamic history of community activism. Throughout the four days of class, students will be expected to engage with the live organizing fights happening in the city around us. Please bring in relevant examples from the New York City community organizing that is happening around us.

Finally, organizing requires reflection, adjustment, and attention to the collective community that people create when they come together –including in the classroom**.** The course schedule includes frequent and regular breaks to ensure we can show up fully during discussion. I will adjust as needed.

# Reading

For both grounding in community organizing as a method of change and skills development as organizers we will read significant parts of the following workbook:

Mineri, Joan & Paul Gestos. “[Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community.](https://www.amazon.com/Tools-Radical-Democracy-Organize-Community/dp/0787979090)” Jossey-Bass, 2007.  
  
Other excerpts and articles are linked below. Because most of the learning happens **in class,** readings will be light and the course is workshop and skills focused. We will take ample breaks and do a significant amount of work in discussion groups. We will have one guest speaker

Course Calendar

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tuesday, May 21, 2022: What Is Community Organizing? | |
| **9:00 AM - 10:30 AM** | Introduction to the Class & Each Other & Community Organizing in New York City  * Syllabus & Assignment Review * Definitions of Community Organizing * Definitions of terms we will rely on in this class * Why do we organize? |
| *10:30 AM - 10:45 AM* | *Break* |
| **10:45 AM - 12:30 PM** | Theories of Change: Advocacy, Activism, and Organizing. Models of Organizing. *Types of Community Organizations & Community Organizing  How does community organizing relate to other types of social change work? How is it the same? How is it different?* **Readings**   * Minieri, Joan. “Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community.” Preface, Intro and The Story of CVH. [Available Here.](https://communityorganizingccny.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/intro.pdf) * Momentum Model of Community Organizing. [Available Here.](https://www.momentumcommunity.org/momentum-model) * McAlevey, Jane. “No Shortcuts.” Introduction pages 9 - 14 (Advocacy, Mobilizing, Organizing; Structure versus Self-Selecting Groups.). [PDF here](https://perpus.univpancasila.ac.id/repository/EBUPT180669.pdf). |
| *12:30 PM - 1:30 PM* | *Lunch* |
| **1:30 PM - 3:30 PM** | Power, Community, and the Context in Which we Organize *Inequality and community organizing*  *What is “power”?  How do we build it and wield it?  What tensions can we identify between community organizing and power building?*  **Readings:**   * Minieri, Joan. “Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community.” Taking it On, Powering Up. [Available Here.](https://communityorganizingccny.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/tfrd-powering-up-chapters-1-and-2.pdf) * Healy, Richard and Sandra Hinson. “The Three Faces Of Power.” Grassroots Policy Project, 2013. [PDF Here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/10xsMHBumNuiy3T9KIwPjbA0QsSad1vhR/view?usp=share_link). |
| *3:30 PM - 3:45 PM* | *Lunch* |
| **3:45 PM - 5:00 PM** | History of Community Organizing/The Role of the Organizer **Readings**   * Petitjean, Clement. [When Organizers Are Professionals](https://jacobin.com/2017/07/community-organizing-staff-professionals-social-movements)**.** Jacobin Magazine, July 2017 * Szakos, K. L. & Szakos, J. (2007). We make change: Community Organizers Talk About What They Do and Why. Vanderbilt University Press. [Chapter 1: “What is Community Organizing?” and Profile: Brian Johns (p.1-15).](https://communityorganizingccny.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/what-is-organizing.pdf) |
|  | |
| Thursday, May 22, 2024: Community Organizing Skills | |
| **9:00 AM - 9:30 AM** | Reflection & Lessons from Day 1 |
| **9:30 AM - 11:00 AM** | Organizing Tools: Base-Building, 1:1s, & Outreach *Meeting people where they are at*  *Relationship buildings + maintenance versus self–interest: creating space for both?*  *Mass outreach/field programs → absorption*  **Readings**   * Minieri, J. et al. (2007). Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community. Jossey Bass. [Chapter 3: Recruiting Constituents for Collective Action (p.37-60)](https://communityorganizingccny.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/tfrd-chapter-3.pdf) * Sen, Rinku. “Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy.” Chapter 2: Organizing New Constituencies. [PDF Here.](https://chisineu.files.wordpress.com/2014/08/rinku-sen-stir-it-up-lessons-in-community-organizing-and-advocacy-2003.pdf) |
| *11:00 AM - 11:15 AM* | *Break* |
| **11:15 AM - 12:30 PM** | Students work on base-building plans in teams |
| *12:30 PM - 1:30 PM* | *Lunch* |
| **1:30 PM - 2:30 PM** | Organizing Tools: Leadership Identification & Development **Readings**   * Labor Notes, [How to Have an Organizing Conversation](https://www.labornotes.org/sites/default/files/22AnOrganizingConversation_0.pdf). * Ganz, Marshall. “Marshall Ganz’ Leadership Framework: A Primer.” (2018). [Available Here.](https://wcl.nwf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Marshall-Ganz-People-Power-and-Change.pdf) * LA Times: [Black immigrants face more discrimination in the U.S. The source is sometimes surprising](https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2023-09-21/jamaican-immigrant-new-york-struggles-among-black-americans). * NYTimes: [Tenants May Get More Protections in New York City, After Decades of Battles. Here’s Why.](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/17/nyregion/ny-rent-laws-regulation.html) |
| *2:30 PM - 2:40 PM* | *Break* |
| **2:40 PM - 4:00 PM** | **Guest Speaker:** Winsome Pendergrass, New York Communities for Change |
|  | |
| Tuesday, May 28: How Community Organizations Build & Wield Power | |
| **9:00 AM - 9:30 AM** | Reflections from Class 2 |
| **9:30 - 10:30** | **Student Presentations: Base-Building Plans**  **Assignments Due**   * Present your base-building plan to the class (15 Minutes) * Q&A (10 Minutes)   **Reflections** |
| *10:30 AM - 10:45 AM* | *Break* |
| **10:45 AM - 11:30 AM** | Campaigns: How Community Organizations Shape Public Policy *What are campaigns? Why do we run campaigns?*  **Readings**   * Hertel-Fernandez, Alexander. [How Policymakers Can Craft Measures That Endure and Build Political Power](https://rooseveltinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/RI_How-Policymakers-Can-Craft-Measures-that-Endure-and-Build-Political-Power-Working-Paper-2020.pdf) * Poo, Ai-jen. “[A Twenty-First Century Organizing Model: Lessons from the New York Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Campaign.](https://newlaborforum.cuny.edu/2011/01/03/a-twenty-first-century-organizing-model-lessons-from-the-new-york-domestic-workers-bill-of-rights-campaign/)” New Labor Forum. 2011. * Weaver, Cea. “[From Universal Rent Control to Cancel Rent: Tenant Organizing in New York State - New Labor Forum](https://newlaborforum.cuny.edu/2021/01/27/from-universal-rent-control-to-cancel-rent-tenant-organizing-in-new-york-state/).” New Labor Forum, 2021. |
| **11:30 AM - 12:30 PM** | Building a Campaign Plan: Identifying the Right Issue  * Minieri, J. et al. (2007). *Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community.* Jossey Bass. ([Chapter 7-8,](https://communityorganizingccny.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/tfrd-chapters-7-and-8.pdf) [Resource H](https://communityorganizingccny.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/tfrd-resource-h-annotated-campaign-example.pdf)) |
| *12:30 PM - 1:30 PM* | *Lunch* |
| **1:30 PM - 2:30 PM** | **Building a Campaign Plan: Developing the Right Strategy   Readings**   * Alderstein, Serena: [10 Components of Good Strategy](https://forgeorganizing.org/article/ten-components-good-strategy)**.** Forge Organizing. 2023. * Minieri, J. et al. (2007). *Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community.* Jossey Bass. ([Chapters 9 and 10](https://communityorganizingccny.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/tfrd-chapters-9-and-10.pdf)) * Sharp, Gene. [198 Methods of Nonviolent Action](https://www.brandeis.edu/peace-conflict/pdfs/198-methods-non-violent-action.pdf). 1973. * [Midwest Academy Strategy Chart](https://mn.gov/mnddc/pipm/curriculumchangechart.html) |
| *2:30 PM - 2:45 PM* | *Break* |
| **2:45 PM - 3:45 PM** | **Building a Campaign Plan: Power Analysis** |
| **3:45 PM - 5:00 PM** | Building a Campaign Plan.   In your same pair from the base-building plan, develop a campaign plan around your issue.Who are the primary and secondary targets?  * What strategies will you use to win? Tactics? * How will your campaign build your base, leadership, and power for your membership? |
|  | |
| Thursday, May 30: Running Campaigns, Building Community Power, Sustaining Organizations | |
| **9:00 AM - 9:30 AM** | **Reflections on Class 3** |
| **9:30 AM - 12:30 PM** | **SCREENING: How to Survive Plague**  Classroom Discussion on effective inside & outside strategy, coalition building, and direct action. |
| *12:30 PM - 1:30 PM* | *Lunch* |
| 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM | Group Work: Campaign Planning  In your same pair from the base-building plan, develop a campaign plan around your issue.Who are the primary and secondary targets?  * What strategies will you use to win? Tactics? * How will your campaign build your base, leadership, and power for your membership? |
| *3:00 PM - 3:15 PM* | *Break* |
| **3:15 PM- 4:30 PM** | **Student Presentations of Campaign Plans** |
| **4:30 PM - 5:00 PM** | **Final Reflections on Community Organizing as a Model for Change  Readings:**   * Battistoni, Alyssa. [Spadework | Issue 34 | n+1 | Alyssa Battistoni](https://www.nplusonemag.com/issue-34/politics/spadework/). N+1. 2019. * Delgado, Gary. “[The Last Stop Sign, by Gary Delgado Shelterforce](https://shelterforce.org/1998/11/01/the-last-stop-sign/).” Shelterforce Magazine, 1998. * Read your colleagues’ bios + why organizing reflections from Day 1 (Posted on BrightSpace). |

# Assignments & Grading

* **Class Attendance and Participation (25%) - Rolling**Full engagement and class participation is crucial and the quality and thoughtfulness of your involvement will be reflected in your final grade. Our class is small, and we will be learning from each other as much as from the professor. There are many ways to engage in the classroom: full-group discussion, including small group work, in-class exercises, and assignments.  
    
  Since this is an intensive class, where much of the learning will occur during the class, you will be required to attend all classes. If an emergency comes up, please contact me before the class via text at 585-315-0826 no later than 9:00 AM the day of the class. You will be expected to attend some part of the day’s sessions.  
    
  The beginning of each day will start with a short reflection on the previous day’s class. Come prepared to share:
  + Something you learned / something that stuck with you
  + How did you notice the lessons of the class in the “real” world? (A campaign event that showed up in your social media, a news story highlighting a current fight policy change, et cetera.)
* **Bio + Reflection (10%) - Thursday, May 23**Following the first day of class, please write a 1-page biography and reflection on what draws you to community organizing. Your bio should include a little bit about you, why you are taking this course, and 2 things you hope to take away from the next 3 days of learning.   
    
  Think about a moment or a time that felt liberating. What was it about that experience that felt powerful? Did it involve a group of people? People you know? Strangers?
* **Base-Building Plan (25%) - Tuesday, May 28**

On the second day of class, we’ll break up into pairs to create a base-building plan. Using a community issue provided to you by the professor, create a base-building plan with metric goals for list building and volunteer recruitment. Your plan should identify points of entry (how you will recruit people) as well as a follow up plan to move people from uninvolved, to members of your organization to organizers of your campaign. Your plan should include both off-line/in-person and digital recruitment strategies.  
In order to complete the assignment please:

* + [Fill out this base-building template](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lNh5f9TYA8FdejXNporhkbeOij_lqMii4wlWt-2Bs2Y/edit) and submit to the professor
  + Include at least two base building attachments and *get creative with them!* Some examples might be: a flyer for your upcoming community meeting; a walk-sheet for a neighborhood outreach day; draft a sample rap/script; a digital ad; sample petition language; anything else you can think of
  + Present your base-building plan to the class. Be interactive and engaging. This may mean a slide show, a practice rap session, or more.

For support and for common base-building terms and strategies see [this guide.](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1iyBuodfTycGmqWUgSUGPBrUWFaDUEpqPcKMvOIIQGCU/edit#heading=h.u27gw34z3afv).

* **Campaign Plan (Group Project) (25%) - Thursday, May 30**

On the third and fourth days of class, we’ll spend time with your base-building pair making a campaign plan. The professor will assign you a topic based on a current issue / campaign that is active currently in New York City. I will be available in the classroom to answer any questions.   
  
In order to complete the assignment:

* [Fill out this campaign plan template](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_jV4HdTcHCM4gHR7AelWA7JIHbT5iaYmv7NEbXpYToY/edit)
* Draft one tactic that supports your campaign plan (run of show/speaker list for a press conference, a sample pitch to a key reporter, et cetera.)
  + For support identifying tactics and how they flow from strategy, rely on Gene Sharp’s 198 Methods of Nonviolent Direct Action and [Chapter 9, 10](https://communityorganizingccny.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/tfrd-chapters-9-and-10.pdf) and [Chapter 12](https://communityorganizingccny.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/tfrd-chapter-12.pdf) of Tools for Radical Democracy
* **Community Organizing as a Model of Change Reflection (15%) - Friday, June 7**Reflecting on community organizing in New York City today, please write a 750-1000 word reflection on Community Organizing as a model for shaping public policy in 2024. Draw on existing examples of community organizations and reference the material covered in the class. .   
  + How is community organizing an effective strategy for advocacy? Where does it fall short as a theory of change?
  + What are the similarities and differences between labor organizing and community organizing? Strengths and weaknesses of each model?
  + How can community organizations relate to social movements?
  + How do you think the community organizing field needs to change to stay effective and relevant in 2024?