



**NYU**

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

# **PADM-GP 2106**

## **Introduction to Community Organizing**

### **Summer 2019**

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead

### **Instructor Information**

- Professor David M. Elcott
- Email: david.elcott@nyu.edu
- Office Address: Puck 3068
- Office Hours: immediately before or after class each day
- Phone: 212-992-9894
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### **Course Information**

- Class Meeting Times:
  - Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>-Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.
  - Sunday June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9:30 A.M. – 1:30 P.M.
  - Students are strongly encouraged to stay late on Thursday to work in small groups.
- Class Location:
  - LC11 bottom floor of the Tisch building at the back of the Stern Business School Quad – across from 25 West 4th Street

### **Course Description**

Introduction to Community Organizing is for those who could imagine running national or local advocacy organizations that make change happen or anyone who wants to understand the art of community organizing. It will provide an overview of and training in contemporary community organizing practice in the United States, with some time spent on international organizing. This

includes defining what community organizing is and identifying its value base; exploring the strategies, tactics, and activities of organizing; and thinking about marketing, language, and evaluation. We also will examine the transformations of civic engagement and voluntary associations in the United States and the impact of these transformations on the ways Americans organize and advocate for change. In today's volatile world, not only in the United States but across the globe, organizing can be an effective vehicle for change – and for the expression of commitment and passion to issues you most care about.

But there is a larger lesson here: the skills of community organizing – listening, finding areas of consensus, and building on that consensus, finding ways to make change happen – are skills that can be applied to all professional and life settings. Through readings, class activities, cases studies, speakers, and reflection, students will examine skills and techniques for effective organizing, including building a membership base, developing ordinary people as community leaders, and running member-led issue campaigns. Students will also have the opportunity to reflect on and strengthen their own skills as community organizers and advocates.

This is an intensive course – we only have four and a half days to cover a semester's worth of work. Please be prepared for a full day's schedule that will include lots of interaction with fellow classmates, guest speakers, frontal presentations, and reflections on what you have read and experienced. You may want to bring snacks to keep your energy going and lots to drink as well.

## **Course and Learning Objectives**

During this week, we will work to:

1. Distinguish community organizing from other approaches to addressing problems in communities.
2. Examine the essential concepts of power – what it is, how it is used, and how groups and communities expand and strengthen their political power through organizing – and consider how to apply this learning.
3. Consider how changes in civic engagement and voluntary associations impact community organizing and grassroots mobilization.
4. Determine how to identify and engage community members who will get involved in organizing campaigns and how to support their participation in decision-making processes.
5. Address the unique leadership skills that make for successful community organizing.
6. Differentiate between the problems that affect communities and the issues around which communities organize, viewing social, economic, and political problems from an organizer's perspective.
7. Learn about and apply principles of communication, marketing, and branding to community organizing in general and specifically to the development and implementation of issue campaigns.

## Learning Assessment Table

Graded Assignment	Course Objective Covered
Reflection #1	#2
Team Presentation	#1, #7
Final Reflection	#3, #4, #5, #6

## Course Requirements

- Careful preparation for and serious involvement in all seminar sessions. This means reading the materials and thinking about the topic before the session. Having said that, because this is an intensive course, we realize you may not be able to handle all the reading. Try your best so that in class you will be citing from the works that we assigned. In your reading, you are asked to:
  - Question the significance of the topic and the analyses you read – is the methodology solid; does the analysis comport with the results?
  - Search for what biases (and there are always biases) affect the choice of subject, data, and analysis.
  - Check yourself out: in what ways do the evidence and analyses conform to your own experience and assessments, and in what ways do they challenge them?
  - Consider what institutional and organizational implications can be drawn from the readings, and what types of leadership responses would be most productive.
  - Think about what you learn as a leader and manager, policy analyst and community builder.
- Class participation is crucial and the quality and thoughtfulness of your involvement will be reflected in your final grade. **If speaking in public is difficult for you, please come to see one of us early on.** At the same time, use NYU Forums to post your thoughts, especially if you are uncomfortable speaking in class. Check out the Forum each day.
- Assume leadership in class activities (alone or as part of a team) – there will be many opportunities for you to experiment with your own organizing skills.
- Each morning, class will begin with small groups of your choosing discussing one of the quotes you have read under Quotes for each day in the Resources section of NYU Classes. Choose one that seems meaningful (you can agree or disagree, like it or hate it) to bring to the small group for discussion. This also is a chance to meet your classmates.
- On Wednesday morning May 23rd, please bring a well-written and thoughtful one paragraph reflection about the first day – it can respond to something you read, one or all of the Tuesday sessions themselves or even conversations with a fellow student. The goal is for you to treat this like a personal journal entry – how am I experiencing this community organizing training? We will break into groups of three and trade papers to read after which you will get and give feedback. Hopefully, this will deepen your experience as you see how others are engaging in the course. You are also welcome to post that personal journal like reflection on NYU Forum as well.

6. Students will choose from the readings, quotes, something said by the speakers and from your lingering doubts and/or meaningful interactions from class that seem powerful and/or problematic and then write a **two-page, single-space analysis**. This will be due no later than 9 P.M. on Thursday night. While you may use a range of sources from the readings and the sessions, at least some aspect of your reflection must **focus on the topic of “power”** specifically; please see Assignments tab in NYU Classes for more info. This analysis, while reflecting rigorous and careful reading, allows you to explore what excites you intellectually and how you imagine applying what you have learned so far to being a community organizer (this could mean the ways you would find it difficult or even how you could never imagine being a community organizer). Each paper must also reference at least three different readings for the course as a back-up or a critique of the topic you chose. You are encouraged to not wait until 8 P.M Thursday to begin writing.
7. For the **last session on Sunday**, you will prepare a plan for a grassroots organizing and advocacy campaign or project as part of a team on an issue you consider to be significant for which community organizing could be effective. This means locating the challenge that must be faced, imagining the stakeholders and the conflicting issues, researching the topic, analyzing models that have succeeded or failed, and developing one aspect of a community or organizational campaign or advocacy effort. Because the course is so intensive, do not try to accomplish too much in this design – let it be focused and smaller in scope. The design will be presented as a group to the entire class the last day, accompanied by a portfolio which will include your logic model and theory of change as well as a campaign description and any materials you use for the class presentation. The design can (and will most likely by necessity, given the shortness of the timeframe) be low-fidelity: you obviously do not have the time to develop a project the way you would if you were in the field, so provide only enough to efficiently and clearly present your issue and provide pathways to address the questions that arise on the subject. **You will receive the organizing case from me – you are not asked to invent your own campaign. I will try to find a case the is closest to your interests.**
8. You will have until **Sunday June 3rd at 11:55 pm EST**, to offer a final reflection on the course and your experience – what you learned and what you wished you would have learned, how you think the experience will affect you if at all, and what readings or experiences had a particular impact. This should be no more than eight double-space pages maximum; additional pages for the sake of volume are not of value here. You must also reference **at least citations from the readings** for each page.
9. Please submit all written assignments electronically via NYU Classes **WITH YOUR NAME ON EACH SUBMISSION TO NYU CLASSES**. Title your submission with your name as well.
10. Your grade will reflect your participation in class sessions, your thoughtful planning and facilitation of the activities in the class sessions, your three one-page analyses, your final group design and presentation, and your final reflection. The combination thus reflects your analytic skills, your ability to cogently present and also participate in discussions, and your ability to link your study to anticipate future community building.

## NYU Classes

1. Much of the reading, many announcements, class-related documents, and other useful class information will be posted to the NYU Classes site so make sure to check that regularly.
2. Also, check your NYU e-mail regularly for any other announcements.
3. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader in order to view some of the materials. Make sure that you have it installed.

## Required Readings

The reading list is somewhat like a bibliography, giving you a range of thinking, skills and approaches that may inspire, frustrate or even anger you. There is no way that you can read everything, but if I star a few readings, you may not even glance at the others. Alinsky is a must because everyone else is in some fashion responding to him. Minieri is very important because she operationalizes Alinsky's thinking. Also, both Smock and Sen have descriptions of specific approaches and you will need to know that for the course. Try skimming other readings and keep them around for later – there is some great stuff there for you.

1. Please get Saul Alinsky's **Rules for Radicals** (Vintage Books, 1989) because it is the Bible on the subject, used by radicals on the left and right and everyone in between. You can get it used on line very cheap if you order in advance.
2. Also, invest in Joan Minieri's **Tools for Radical Democracy (Chardon Press Series)**. While purchase isn't required, you'll note that it does contain many of the mandatory readings listed throughout the syllabus. To be sure, this is a solid addition to any organizer's collection.
3. Check out [The Community Toolbox](#), Univ. of Kansas, 2010, (use as a general resource on advocacy)
4. Everything else will be available on NYU Classes or on the Internet as noted. Otherwise, books will be placed on reserve in the library.

**The reading is intense. As soon as you can, try to read as much as you can. You will be able to engage more and feel less pressured during the week of class.**

## Academic Integrity

As a professional, you will need to use many resources that have been developed, authored, and/or organized by others. Making great use of the work of others is a valuable professional tool – originality is not axiomatically a virtue. Honoring the hard work of those who prepared what you borrow and use is an issue of integrity. That lesson begins in your academic work.

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 Students with Disabilities at NYU**

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (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.

## **Course Sessions**

Day I Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### **UNIT I Morning Session 1 (9 – 10:15am): Introduction, Overview, and Getting Organized**

Students will refresh or acquire the basic vocabulary that is critical to community organizer training such as: deep listening and collaborative skills, standing on the balcony and turning up the heat, dialogue and debate, SWOT, and other strategic-change models, and identifying techniques and “killer phrases” people use to block change.

We also will explore the ways that Americans organize, the web of relationships and a network of associations that provide significant benefits of social capital, personal meaning, and tribal affiliation well beyond the confines of any particular institution. What roles do voluntary associations and social capital derived from participation in voluntary associations play in fostering civic engagement in the context of American democracy? Of particular interest is whether voluntary associations, the core of American public service commitment, demand participatory behavior in a world moving from a place in time to virtual associations no longer dependent on geography. The core questions:

- What impact will the shifts in the ways Americans participate as active citizens have on grassroots mobilization and community organizing?
- What is community organizing and how it is different from other approaches to addressing community problems?
- **EXERCISE: The Christian Coalition Manual**

**In anticipation of this session, list all of your voluntary associations and bring the list to class to share in small groups.**

**Readings:**

- Skocpol, T., **Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life** (Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2003), chapter 6 “What We Have Lost”
- Sen, R., **Stir it Up**, Introduction: Community Organizing: Yesterday and Today [first seven pages: pp. xliii–xlix]
- Alinsky, S. **Rules for Radicals**, The Purpose; A Word About Words
- Schutz and Miller, **People Power** (Vanderbilt U Press, 2015) pgs. 311-38
- **Christian Coalition** handout

**UNIT II Morning Session 2 (10:15 am – 11:15 pm): Diversity and Privilege in Community Organizing**

Our goal is to give you the tools, insights, and strength to be excellent community organizers. That said, we need to think about the issues of “otherness” in America and the impact prejudices have on the American political process and on communities. A lot of community organizing takes place among those most disenfranchised and race, national origin, and ethnicity, sexual identity and gender, religion and class all are inextricably mixed up in community organizing. And even more, these identities are intermingled and compounded, and organizing activity takes place at the intersections. We will ground our work with these issues in mind and spend the hour at least bringing some of the issues to the foreground and then allow them to remain as background to all that we learn.

**Reading:**

- Mason, Nicole C., **Leading at the Intersections**, Women of Color Policy Network, RCLA Wagner
- McIntosh, Peggy, **White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack**, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women
- Dara Strolovitch, **Affirmative Advocacy: Race, Class and Gender in Interest Group Politics** (U of Chicago, 2007), Introduction and Chapter 2, pgs. 1-28)
- [10 Commandments](#) [Imani Henry](#)

**EXERCISE: Complicated identities**

**11:15 am – 11:30 pm TEAM BUILDING**

**11:30 am – 12:00 pm Lunch**

### **UNIT III Afternoon Session (12:00 pm – 1:30 pm): Power and the Community Organizer**

We will focus on a definition of power and the ways that power is used in the world of community organizing. In this context, we will begin to explore the role of an organizer and begin to assemble the qualities and skills that are crucial for a successful organizer. What allows an organizer the right to intervene in the lives of a community? How does one go about organizing? More important, we will take the issues of power head-on: What is power all about – for whom, over whom, with whom?

#### **Readings:**

- Alinsky, **Rules for Radicals**, chapter on Tactics, pg. 125
- Minieri, J., **Tools for Radical Democracy**. Introduction - Chapter 2
- Popovic, Srdja, **Blueprint for Revolution** (Spiegel and Grau, NY 2015), “Afterword” pgs 163-166
- Gecan, **Going Public: An Organizer’s Guide to Citizen Action** (Anchor Books, 2005)
- Schutz and Miller, **People Power** (Vanderbilt U Press, 2015), pgs 43-48

#### **EXERCISE: Stakeholder analysis**

### **UNIT IV Afternoon Session (1:30-2:40): Framing & Branding: Marketing a Campaign**

What if you call for a grassroots community advocacy campaign and nobody comes? The reasons may not be apathy but a failure to move effectively from vision to implementation. At the core of an effective implementation strategy is branding and marketing. While corporations may have millions to invest in marketing and branding, community organizers and grassroots organizations generally have to work with less. Yet we have many cases of successful grassroots campaigns that were smart in their use of networking, media presence, and on-line activity. Here is our chance to learn techniques and skills that can be applied in a wide range of professional settings in the context of radically expanded ways to communicate.

#### **Guest Speaker: Jamila Brown**

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Public Service of NYU’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. She is also an experienced digital strategist and social entrepreneur who specializes in domestic and international advocacy campaigns. As The Opportunity Agenda’s Digital Communications Strategist, Jamila leads the development and implementation of all online platforms and social media outreach and engagement strategies. Jamila is a Center for American Progress Leadership Institute alumna, a former Echoing Green semi-finalist for her consultancy HUE, and a graduate of the New Organizing Institute’s Digital Bootcamp. Jamila



holds a B.A. in International Studies from Emory University and an M.A. in International Service from American University.

### Readings:

- Koleva, Spassena P., Jesse Graham, Ravi Iyer, Peter H. Ditto, and Jonathan Haidt, **Tracing the threads: How five moral concerns (especially Purity) help explain culture war attitudes**, *Journal of Research in Personality* 46 (2012), pp. 184–194.
- Lakoff, George, **Don't Think of an Elephant**, preface and Chapter 1
- Westen, Drew, [What Created the Populist Explosion and How Democrats Can Avoid the Shrapnel in November](#), 31 August 2010, Huffington Post
- Podcast **The Deep Roots of Our Political Divide**
- Jennifer Earl **Slackivism for everyone: How keyboard activism is affecting social movements**
- Christopher Mele, **Online Petitions Take Citizen Participation to New Levels. But Do They Work?**

### Team Organizing Topics: 2:40-3:00 pm

**For Wednesday:** Choose a quote that speaks powerfully to you (download from **Quotes** on NYU Classes, listed under Tuesday)

**Also For Wednesday:** Bring your one page reflection to be shared with fellow students.

Fill out self-assessment survey (download from NYU Classes, Day 1)

Day II Wednesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### Reflection Morning Session (9:00 am – 9:45 am)

#### UNIT V Morning Session (9:45 am – 11:30 am): Theories of Change: How to Make Change in the World

There is an additional skill to acquire, for constant self-evaluation (personal and institutional) demands are ubiquitous and come in a variety of ways – 360 degree personal/professional evaluations, group assessments, responses to funding proposals, donor and government-driven evaluations, media scrutiny, successful or failed elections, and advocacy campaigns. Community organizers and their organizations often feel that providing proposals and delivering evaluation assessments negatively affect their capacity to do the work that needs to be done. Yet evaluation is a crucial tool, allowing organizations and individuals to know where they are going and whether they are on track or, if not, to change course as needed. We will consider a range of theories of change as well as use the logic model to help your team prepare your

campaign by providing feedback loops and analytic techniques that allow for serious but not debilitating methods of evaluation.

**Readings:**

- Logic Model handout
- Pathways for Change, Center for Evaluation Innovation
- [Real Clout Tool Box](#) (general model to be used as support for a campaign)
- [Campaign Research](#)

**Exercise: Build Out your Campaign**

**Campaign Planning Working Lunch: 11:30 am-12:45 pm**

**UNIT VI Afternoon Session (12:45 – 2:45 pm): Developing Community Leaders**

We have covered a great deal. We have not dealt directly with leadership and, specifically, what leadership will look like in the next decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While organizing means grass roots and engagement in a community, ultimately, there need to be leaders to run a successful campaign, to be passionate, articulate and commanding advocates for the cause. So the first task is to imagine what type of leadership is necessary and then to identify potential leaders. The second is for them to see themselves as leaders, and take on responsibilities. We will examine the types of training models you can use to support leaders to run their own campaigns and organizations.

**Readings:**

- Minieri, J., “**Conversation on Leadership,**” presented in France (2012)
- Marshall Ganz [Cultural Organizing article](#)
- Minieri, J., **Tools for Radical Democracy**, chapter 5
- Alinsky, **Rules for Radicals**, Chapter on Communication, pg. 81
- Sen, R., **Stir it Up**, chapter 5
- Leadership Compass Self-Assessment
- Marshall Ganz **Building Community Cultural Leadership**
- [The Community Toolbox](#), Univ. of Kansas, 2010, Chapters 13-15: Leadership, Management and Group Facilitation
- RCLA Leadership for a Changing World Program publications:
  - From Constituents to Stakeholders
  - A Dance That Creates Equals
  - Quantum Leadership

**GUEST SPEAKER: Juanita Lewis**

Juanita Lewis, adjunct professor at NYU Wagner, began her work as a community organizer with the Minnesota chapter of ACORN. Since 2004, she has worked on 10 campaigns in various roles, ranging from field organizer, campaign manager to fund-raiser. Juanita was highly

involved in the Democratic-Farmer-Labor party, serving as Saint Paul Senate District 66 chair, and secretary of the African American Caucus. She has also been a board member and chair of three non-profit boards, and is currently a fund-raising trainer for the White House Project. Juanita was born and raised in Saint Paul, MN. She graduated from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities with a B.A. in History and Political Science and holds a Masters of Advocacy and Political Leadership from the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

**For Thursday:** Choose a quote that speaks powerfully to you (download from **Quotes** on NYU Classes, listed under Wednesday)

Day III Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### **UNIT VII Morning Session 1 (9:15 – 11 am): Engaging A Community**

Who are the stakeholders, where do we find them, and how do we engage communities and work with new constituencies? We will look at various recruitment techniques and methods to get people involved, as well as how to build coalitions. As part of this session, we will deepen our analysis of the challenges of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual identity, and nationality – basically recognizing the reality that people are really different – as we focus on the processes of community organizing. We will consider the assumptions people make when they meet others and pose the question: “How does a community organizer create community and organizing out of the diversity of needs, personalities and identities?”

#### **Readings:**

- Elcott and Rosenthal, **Engaging America**, Unit 4
- Minieri, J., **Tools for Radical Democracy**, chapters 3-4
- Alinsky, **Rules for Radicals. The Education Of An Organizer**, In the Beginning
- Smock, K., **Democracy in Action**, Introduction, pp. 3-34
- RCLA Leadership for a Changing World Program publications:
  - Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities
  - Don't Just Do Something, Sit There

#### **EXERCISE: Dyadic Role Play in 3 Acts**

### **UNIT VIII Morning Session 2 (11 am – 12:30 pm): Community Organizing Internationally**

Although our focus is mainly on domestic community organizing and we certainly recognize that the practices and theory that work in the United States are culture specific, when we examine another culture (in this case, in Latin America), we will see the ways what you have learned can translate into effective action in other settings.

#### **GUEST SPEAKER: Ben Cokelet**

After 12 years as a global trade union organizer and researcher in the U.S. and Latin America, Benjamin founded the Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research (PODER) in 2008 and incorporated the organization, of which he is now Executive Director, in 2010. In

2009, PODER was awarded the Satter Grand Prize by the Stern School of Business at New York University (NYU). In 2010, Benjamin won fellowships from the foundations Ashoka and Echoing Green. He holds a B.A. in Political Science and African American Studies from Washington University in St. Louis and an M.A. in International Business and Politics from NYU. As a graduate student, Benjamin was awarded the Catherine B. Reynolds Fellowship for Social Entrepreneurship. He is an Adjunct Professor in Public Administration at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at NYU. Benjamin and his family live in Mexico City.

#### Readings:

- Rathke, Wade, (2012). [Roots and Branches of Community Organization](#). ACORN International, prepared for Japanese Institute for Labor Policy.
- Popovic, Srdja, **Blueprint for Revolution**, pgs. 215-261
- Engler and Engler, **This Is An Uprising** (Nation Books, NY 2016), Chapter 10 and Conclusion, pgs 251-287

**12:30 – 1:15 pm      Working lunch: Each group working on team organizing case study for Sunday.**

#### **UNIT IX Afternoon Session (1:15–3 pm): Identifying Issues and Strategies for Organizing**

How do we distinguish between problems and issues, something that often gets in the way of effective organizing and successful change? We will develop techniques on how to do effective research and power analysis with community members toward establishing communal and/or organizational goals. We will learn effective narrative skills on “how to tell the story.” Based on a clarified mission, we will work on the skills of choosing target, strategy, and implementation options.

#### Readings:

- Smock, K., **Democracy in Action**, chapter 7
- Popovic, Srdja, **Blueprint for Revolution** (Spiegel and Grau, NY 2015) ch. 5 “Laugh Your Way To Victory” pgs 97-123
- Sen, R., **Stir it Up**, chapter 5
- Minieri, J., **Tools for Radical Democracy**, chapters 7-9
- Barry Rubin, **A Citizen’s Guide to Politics in America**, Case Study: Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, M.E. Sharpe, 2000, Chapter 2
- RCLA: **Social Change Leadership from the Inside** (Overview: pp. 7-8; Integrating Culture and Values to Support Collective Action: pp. 24-37)

**Students are strongly encouraged to stay late on Thursday to work in small groups in preparation for Sunday's final presentation.**

**For Friday:** Choose a quote that speaks powerfully to you (download from **Quotes** on NYU Classes, listed under Thursday)

**PLEASE ALSO PREPARE FOR FRIDAY BY READING THE COALITION CASE STUDY MATERIALS YOU WILL FIND IN SESSION X UNDER CASE STUDY: BAN THE BOX. YOU WILL NEED THIS INFORMATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CASE STUDY.**

Day IV Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019

**Reflections on what we have learned: Q and A and other thoughts (9-10 am)**

**Exercise: Small group reflection**

### **UNIT X Afternoon Session (1 – 3 pm): Reach Out: The Art of Building Partnerships and Coalitions**

Leading “without easy answers” often requires eliciting the collaboration of groups, organizations, and constituencies that speak different languages (literally and figuratively) and that have never cooperated in the past. This includes ethnic and immigrant communities, religious communities, groups divided by class, race, or geography, particularly significant in urban areas. We almost always need partners to be effective and partnership is hard work. How can we partner with other groups using a model of shared power and equitable decision-making and problem solving? Are we prepared to address dynamic tensions that will be inherent in our partnerships? Joint initiatives often are great ways to deepen partnerships. We therefore need to be mindful of structures and processes that can minimize conflict and maximize our individual contributions. Thinking win/win, we can create programs that advance our advocacy agenda while deepening relationships with important allies.

**GUEST SPEAKER: Noelle Damico**, Adjunct Professor, NYU Wagner and Senior Fellow National Social and Economic Rights Initiative. Noelle helped coordinate the Coalition of Immokalee Worker’s Campaign for Fair Food and is a leader in developing a human rights-based approach to addressing human trafficking by the faith community. She has keynoted at the US Department of Justice’s National Human Trafficking Conference, and at the [Freedom Network USA’s](#) National Conference on Human Trafficking. Noelle was a keynote speaker at the NGO Working Group on Food and Hunger Policy at the UN is contributing editor and advisory board member to Unbound, an online social justice journal. Previously Noelle directed the United Church of Christ’s legislative network on Capitol Hill, coordinated the University of the Poor, School of Theology, and has worked with grassroots groups nationwide organizing for economic human rights. Noelle holds a M.Div and Th.M from Princeton Theological Seminary and a B.A., with high honors from Swarthmore College.

#### **Readings and Viewings:**

- Sen, R., **Stir it Up**, chapter 5
- Minieri, J., **Tools for Radical Democracy**, chapter 14
- RCLA Leadership for a Changing World Program publications

- Lynn Stephen, et al, **Building Alliances, A Leadership for a Changing World** collaborative ethnography
- In preparation for Noelle's session, please view the following, short videos **ahead** of this class:
  - [Lakeland: the Final Day of the March for Rights, Respect and Fair Food](#)
  - ["We Are Marching Against Injustice" - The March Arrives in Tampa](#)
  - ["One of the great human rights success stories of our day": The Fair Food Program](#)
  - [The Coalition of Immokalee Workers vs. Taco Bell](#)

**12:30 – 1:30 pm      Working Lunch Work in small groups to prepare for Sunday**

### **UNIT XI Afternoon Session (1:30 pm – 3 pm) Organizing Made Hard**

Community Organizing is about winning, fundamental – sustainable and durable – change. Yet often, it is hard to see the change, the entire forest for the trees, especially when the trees seem as if they are being consumed in a forest fire of adversity. Organizing is not for the faint hearted. We will view two scenes from movies that depict dramatic moments of organizing and wonder about ourselves in these situations. And then, in small groups, think about the issues dearest to each of us and imagine the roles we could each play in moving forward these issues as organizers.

Day V Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, 9:30am – 12:30pm

### **Final presentations: Running a Community Organizing Effort**

Each group will develop a community member-led grassroots organizing campaign and/or advocacy plan of their choosing that will offer a clear mission, a narrative, methods of assessment, potential stakeholders, a strategy to achieve their objectives and ultimate goal, and examples of implementation. These will be presented in class and provide the resource for assessing what has been learned during the week.

As you prepare, you may want to consider some of the following questions:

- What is the problem experienced by members of the community?
- What is the issue in the campaign (the solution to the problem)?
- Who are the stakeholders: the constituents affected by the issue, the leaders of the campaign (describe some of their characteristics and/or positions), the potential opposition, and the allies?
- What are the roles of any professional organizers or staff? How is their role different from that of other stakeholders and how will they carry out their roles?
- Who is the specific person or people, organization or governmental body target of the campaign?
- How will you brand and market this campaign?

- What strategies does the campaign use? What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats?
- What are the specific demands that would fulfill the mission and meet the goals?
- Describe in as much detail as possible some key action or actions of the campaign, such as a mass accountability session with a public official, a public demonstration, a media or email campaign, or whatever actions flow from the strategy.
- What kinds of choices has the organization faced in developing, planning and implementing this campaign? How can members, leaders, and staff address these choices?
- How would you assess the effectiveness of this campaign, according to the goals of community organizing (such as building a base of power, winning concrete demands)?

## A Limited Bibliography

Alinsky, S. **Reveille for Radicals**. New York: Vintage, 1946 (reissued 1989).

Bai, M. **The Argument: Billionaires, Bloggers, and the Battle to Remake Democratic Politics**. New York: The Penguin Press, 2007.

Bobo, K., Kendall, J. and Max, S. **Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists**. Santa Ana: Seven Locks Press, 2001.

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## Annotated Bibliographies

Additional extensive, annotated bibliographies about community organizing are available as library reserves on NYU Classes. See the following:

Smock, Kristina. Bibliography

Szakos, Kristen. What Organizers Read And Watch; Where Organizers Work

Welton, Nina. Resources

Brown, Michael. Bibliography and Other Resources

## Online Resources

[City Limits](#) (Under-the-radar news items; event announcements; listings for social change jobs, primarily in New York City)

[Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing](#) (see Resources: Occasional Papers Series. A series of reports about youth organizing – origins; connections with youth development; regional applications)

[The Midwest Academy](#) and [Center for Third World Organizing](#)(The Midwest Academy in Chicago and the Center for Third World Organizing in Oakland – National listings for organizer trainings and social change jobs)



[Real Clout Tool Box](#) (general model to be used as support for a campaign)

[The Community Toolbox](#), Univ. of Kansas, 2010, Chapters 13-15: Leadership, Management and Group Facilitation