



NYU

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

**PADM-GP 2106 (1): Organizing for Change: An Introduction
to Community Organizing Summer 2022**

Last Updated: July 31, 2022

“The history of our struggle is deliberately withheld from our young people, because they are the most likely agents of radical change.” - Gloria Richardson Dandrige, SNCC

“The more that people feel outraged about an unjust situation, the more possibilities exist that material conditions will be generated to make life as it should be. Few people dare to show their faces and tell it like it is, but we hope that all the injustices we live and will continue to live will in some way make the next generations indignant and lead them someday to transform our society.” - Veronica Ferrari, Homosexual Movement of Lima Peru.

“I dare say, after the life I have lived, that there is nothing quixotic or romantic in wanting to change the world. It is possible. It is the age-old vocation of all of humanity. I can’t think of a better life than one dedicated to passion, to dreams, to the stubbornness that defies chaos and disillusionment. Our world, filled with possibilities, is and will be the result of the efforts offered by us, its inhabitants.” - Gioconda Belli, former Sandinista in Nicaragua.

Instructor Information	Course Logistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professor: Susanna Blankley ● Email: susanna.blankley@nyu.edu ● Cell: 917-691-0544 ● Office hours: By Appointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monday, August 1, 9-5 ● Tuesday, August 2, 9-5 ● Wednesday, August 3, 9-6 ● Thursday, August 4, 9am-5pm <p><i>*All sessions are virtual</i></p>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The premise of organizing is that the world is not as it should be--and we have to and can change it. Who are we? What kind of change are we talking about? Who are we changing it

for? And how do we change it? What is organizing exactly and how is it different from activism and advocacy? This course will introduce students to the theory and practice of community organizing through readings, class discussions, interactive class activities, a final project and other tools. It will explore different historical contexts, models, and examples of organizing, with a focus on the guiding principles, strategies, and tactics of each case. It will also examine key concepts and practices of organizing, including the concept of power, issue identification, political economic analysis, leadership development, base building, popular education, and campaign development and implementation.

Note: This syllabus should be viewed as a living document that is subject to change. My approach to teaching is to ground us in key principles and theory and also leave space for peer learning and reflections, which means making adjustments as needed. In addition, given the virtual and intensive nature of the course, adjustments should be expected. Please make sure to share your thoughts directly with me about what is working and what should be adjusted during reflections, in evals or reach out to me directly.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To define community organizing and distinguish it from other approaches to change.
- To differentiate between the problems that affect communities and the issues around which communities organize; and to view social, economic and political problems from a community organizing perspective.
- To examine the essential concept of power – what it is, how it is used, and how communities build and mobilize their power through organizing.
- To explore the concepts of knowledge and leadership from a community organizing perspective - why knowledge from experience and community leadership are important; the different forms of knowledge and leadership, and skills for developing community knowledge and leadership.
- To learn what it means to be a community organizer and to gain experience with some of the key activities involved in base-building, and in developing and implementing organizing campaigns.

Course Requirements:

Organizing is about creating space for people to know and claim their own power. That will be true of this class and our expectations of you all. Everything you say reflects what you think. Our job is to expand and challenge your thinking. That means you have to study, reflect and practice what you learn. Be present, be engaged, be curious, be honest, be excited and be ready.

Specifically this means:

- **Careful preparation for and serious involvement in all class sessions.**
 - This means reading the materials and thinking about the topic before the session. *In your reading, you are asked to:*
 - Question the significance of the topic and the articles and books you read as it relates to your own experience and work and the current moment.
 - Consider what implications can be drawn from the readings and how these readings relate to current power dynamics in your work and overall society.
 - Think about how you would apply the learnings from the readings to your work
- **Full engagement and 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, let me know. The course will be designed in a way to allow different ways to engage in the classroom, beyond large class discussion, including small group work and 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 no later than 9:00 AM the day of the class. You will be expected to attend some part of the day's sessions.

Assignments

1. Assignment 1: Bio + Reflection

Your bio should include a little bit about you, why you are taking this course and at least two things you hope to learn from the course. Drawing from your personal experience, please also answer the following questions:

- What does *community* mean to you?
- What does *organizing* mean to you and why is it important?

This should be suitable for sharing with the class using the Discussion Forum tab on Bright Space. This bio should be 1 page single space 12 Pt Arial. Please read your classmates' bios/reflections! *Please make sure to also post to the assignments tab in addition to posting to the Discussions Forum tab.*

2. Assignment 2: Reflections

For the Tuesday and Thursday class, please write a 2 page reflection piece (12 pt Arial font single spaced) based on the previous class teachings and discussion (an assigned reading, something said by a classmate or speaker, a lingering doubt, or meaningful interaction from class following each session that seems powerful and/or problematic). This reflection should focus on the top line learnings from the class, any questions you have, and any thoughts on how you would apply it, if at all. Please reference at least 2 readings in these reflection papers.

3. Assignment 3: Group Project, Creating a Base-Building Plan.

On Tuesday you will be assigned a team project to be completed by Thursday at 10am, to create a base-building and community engagement/input plan. On Thursday your team will present this plan 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, developing leaders, and recruiting members. This plan will include identifying points of entry for how you will recruit people. Your plan should include both off-line/in-person and digital recruitment strategies.

During Session 2, we will break out into groups to begin to work on a base-building plan. You will have an hour and a half of class time on day 2 and two hours on day 3, to identify an issue you want to work on, and to ID target constituencies you want to target for your base-building work and get feedback on your issue and targeting, before building out a comprehensive base-building plan.. Your plan will be informed by the issue, constituency, who has the power to deliver on your issue and a basic understanding of who else are stakeholders on the issue. You will need to submit the final base-building plan and present it to the class on Thursday.

4. Assignment 4: Research Project

The research project is due on **Sunday, August 14**, and should be 4-5 pages, 12 pt single space. For this project, you will focus on analyzing and writing a case-study of a recent campaign by a community organization, coalition, or national network or a movement that had specific wins that can be linked to that movement. This can be a local, state, national or international campaign. This case study should be a narrative assessment of the campaign and in addition, have a campaign plan. On the morning of the second class, you should share the names of 2-3 potential organizations/campaigns you would like to use for your case study.

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). To learn more about the campaign and answer questions that you may not be able to find in written materials.
- 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>

5. Assignment 5: Final Reflection

Your final class reflection is due on **Wednesday, August 17**. This reflection should be 2 pages and reflect on the entire class and cite at least 3 of the assigned readings. This reflection should include your major learnings, remaining questions/doubts, your assessment of community organizing as an approach to social change and what impact this has on your own work and future.

Grading

Your grade will reflect your participation in class sessions, your thoughtful planning and facilitation of the activities in the class sessions, your 2 reflections, your group project 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.

- **Individual Class Participation (20%).** You are expected to complete all readings in advance of the class, to attend all classes, and to thoroughly engage in discussions and activities. The use of electronic devices for purposes other than taking notes or viewing powerpoints/videos is not appropriate.
- **Bio + Session Reflections (20%).** These are graded Pass/Fail.

- **Group Project (20%).** This will be graded both on the presentation and the written material supporting the presentation.
- **Research Project (20%).** This will be graded on the cogency of the overall presentation of the analysis of the campaign
- **Final Reflection (20%).** Concision and insight are more important than length.

Grading Rubric for All Papers:

Area	1	2 Passable	3 Good	4 Excellent
Synopsis	No synopsis of argument (s)	Partially accurate or incomplete synopsis of argument (s)	Good synopsis of argument(s)	Concise, clear synopsis of argument(s)
Critical engagement with quote, reading, speaker's arguments: interesting, banal, counterintuitive, confusing? Quality of data? How would we	No real engagement with argument(s)	Partial engagement with argument(s) but reasoning faulty or incomplete	Good engagement with argument(s) with clear and sound reasoning and evidence (highlights strengths, flaws, gaps, limits or weaknesses in arguments)	Excellent Clear, systematic, engagement with argument. Provides evidence for claims about argument(s) from readings.
know if they were wrong? Evidence for claim(s) about arguments?				
Discusses relevance to broader themes in course	No clear connections made; like a stand-alone book report	Makes some effort at making connections to other readings and/or issues	A good connection made to other readings and/or issues	Makes creative and integrated connections to other readings and/or issues

Area	1	2 Passable	3 Good	4 Excellent
Discusses application in professional area of your interest	No clear application made	Some effort at application; not clear	Clear application is made	Thoughtful and reflective application
Writing Style	Not well-written; Clearly not proofread; multiple grammar and spelling errors	Manageably written	Well-written; 1 or 2 minor errors.	Beautifully written; No errors.

Assignment Due Dates

Assignments will be posted to the “Assignments” tab of the course site on Bright Space and completed assignments should be uploaded there. File names should always include the student’s name (or the team number), the numerical date as well as the assignment name. You should also be sure to put your name on the document itself.

All assignments should be submitted via the assignments tab on Bright Space, with the exception of your Bio which should be submitted via the forums tab.

Given the intensive nature of this course, late assignments will not be permitted. All assignment due dates are final. In the case of an emergency, please reach out.

Due Date	Assignment
Monday, August 1, 9am	Bio
Tuesday, August 2, 9am	Day One Reflection
Wednesday, August 3, 9am	Day Two Reflection
Thursday, August 4, 9am	Group Project: Base Building Plan
Sunday, August 14, 5pm	Research Project
Wednesday, August 17, 5pm	Final Reflection

Required Reading

There are a variety of readings, books, articles, blogs, websites, and papers that you will be required to read for the course. In addition there are a few required films and clips to watch. You

are expected to complete readings before the class session. Classes will not be repetitive of the readings, rather they will use the readings as a basis for discussion and departure.

- Miniery/Getsos (Chardon Press Series), [Tools for Radical Democracy](#). This will be the core text for the course.
- Jaron B. et al. (2005). *Towards Land Work and Power, charting a path of resistance to u.s.-led imperialism*. Unite to Fight Press ([Introduction](#) and [Chapter 1](#), p. 13-77).
- Bobo, K. et al. (2001). *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists*. Seven Locks Press. Chapter 9 + [Chapter 10: Recruiting](#) (p.109-116).
- Engler, M. & Engler, P. (2016). *This is an Uprising, How NonViolent Revolt is Shaping the 21st Century*. Nation Books. [Chapter 6: The Act of Disruption](#) (p.143-169).
- Faith H. et al. (2010). *Hands on the Freedom Plow, Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*. University of Illinois Press. [Part 5, Get on Board: the Mississippi Movement through the Atlantic City Challenge, 1961-1964.](#) (p.211-269).
- Freire, P. (1970). [Pedagogy of the Oppressed](#). Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. Chapters 1 & 2.
- Garza, Alicia (2020). [The Purpose of Power. How to Build Movements for the 21st Century](#). Penguin Random House. Chapters 4, 5, 8, 14 + 15
- [Grassroots Policy Project: Stepping Into the Moment, The Coronavirus Crisis as an Opening for Transformative Change](#)
- Han, McKenna, Oyakawa (2021). [Prisms of the People. Power and Organizing in the 21st Century](#). University of Chicago Press. Chapters 3 + 4.
- Jobin-Leeds, G. (2016). *When We Fight, We Win: Twenty-First-Century Social Movements and the Activists That Are Transforming Our World*. The New Press. [Chapter 4: The Power of Stories: The Dreamers and Immigrant Rights](#) (p.77-101).
- Pawel, M. (2009). *The Union of Their Dreams, Power, Hope and Struggle in Cesar Chavez's Farm Worker Movement*. Bloomsbury Press. [Chapter 1 + Chapter 2; Chapter 7, Chapter 8, + Chapter 9\)](#)
- Poo, Ai-jen. (2011) ["A Twenty-First Century Organizing Model Lessons from the New York Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Campaign."](#) *New Labor Forum*. Vol. 20. No. 1. SAGE Publications.

- Ransby, B. (2003). *Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*. The University of North Carolina Press. [Chapter 12: A Freirian teacher, a Gramscian intellectual, and a radical humanist: Ella Baker's Legacy \(p.357-374\)](#).
- Rogers, Mary Beth (1990). *Cold Anger: A Story of Faith and Power Politics*. University of North Texas Press. [Chapter 1 + Chapter 7](#).
- 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 \(p.1-15\)](#).

Required Films:

- [Fred Hampton on the Importance of Education Prior to Action](#) (circa 1968)
- [Made in L.A.](#) (2007)- 70 min
- [Whose Streets](#) (2018) -90 min

All readings are linked in the syllabus. Readings will require careful study and need to be referred to and referenced throughout; when possible, I recommend you either purchase or borrow as many of the books as you can.

NYU Classes

1. Much of the reading, many announcements, class-related documents, and other useful class information will be posted on Bright Space so make sure to check that regularly.
2. Also, check your NYU email 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.

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. To refresh yourself on the [rules of academic integrity](#), see <https://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies>.

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) 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.

COURSE SESSIONS

Important Note: These are long days. In order to distribute our time together evenly over the day, we will meet from 9am-12:30PM, take a lunch break from 12:30-1:30, and then resume from 1:30-5pm. In addition, we will take two 15 minute breaks at 11 and 3pm. The sessions are designed to be interactive and include small group and pair work. Additional breaks may be added in as needed.

CLASS 1: MONDAY AUGUST 1			
TOPIC	READINGS	ACTIVITIES	Time
Overview, Introductions + Expectations	Read Bios + Syllabus	Class Principles + Agreements Individual Intros	9-10
Community Organizing as an Approach to Change	<p>Minieri, J. et al. (2007). <i>Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community</i>. Jossey Bass. (Preface, Intro + The Story of CVH)</p> <p>Szakos, K. L. & Szakos, J. (2007). <i>We make change: Community Organizers Talk About What They Do and Why</i>. Vanderbilt University Press. Chapter 1.</p> <p>Watch: Fred Hampton on the Importance of Education Prior to Action (4 min)</p> <p>Garza, Alicia (2020). The Purpose of Power. How to Build Movements for the 21st Century. Chapter 4.</p> <p>Rogers, Mary Beth (1990). <i>Cold Anger: A Story of Faith and Power Politics</i>. Chapter 1.</p>	Approaches to Change Exercise	10-11
BREAK			15 min

The Context in Which We Organize	<p>Jaron B. et al. (2005). <i>Towards Land Work and Power, charting a path of resistance to U.S.-led imperialism</i>. Unite to Fight Press.</p> <p>(Introduction and Chapter 1)</p> <p>Grassroots Policy Project: Stepping Into the Moment, The Coronavirus Crisis as an Opening for Transformative Change</p>	Ten Chairs of Inequality Exercise	11:15-12:30
LUNCH			12:30-1:30
POWER: What is Power? How do we get it, and how does it relate to community change?	<p>Faith H. et al. (2010). <i>Hands on the Freedom Plow, Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC</i>. University of Illinois Press: Part 5, Get on Board: the Mississippi Movement through the Atlantic City Challenge, 1961-1964. (p.211-269).</p> <p>Minieri, J. et al. (2007). <i>Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community</i>. Jossey Bass. Part 1: Building Community Power, Taking it On (p.1-22).</p> <p>Garza, Alicia (2020). The Purpose of Power. How to Build Movements for the 21st Century. Chapter 5 and Chapter 8</p> <p>Han, McKenna, Oyakawa (2021). Prisms of the People. Power and Organizing in the 21st Century. Chapters 3 + 4.</p>	<p>Small Group Discussion on Power Definition</p> <p>Power Analysis</p>	1:30–3:30
BREAK			15 min
Guest Speaker + Discussion			3:45-5
CLASS 2: TUESDAY AUGUST 2			
TOPIC	READINGS	ACTIVITIES	Time

Reflection		Share reflections + ask any clarifying questions	9-9:45
Base Building	<p>Minieri, J. et al. (2007). <i>Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community</i>. Jossey Bass. Chapter 3: Recruiting Constituents for Collective Action (p.37-60)</p> <p>Bobo, K. et al. (2001). <i>Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists</i>. Seven Locks Press. Chapter 10: Recruiting (p.109-116).</p> <p>Garza, Alicia (2020). The Purpose of Power. How to Build Movements for the 21st Century. Chapter 14.</p>	Developing a RAP Base Building Plan	9:45-11
BREAK			15 min
Leadership Development	<p>Ransby, B. (2003). <i>Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision</i>. The University of North Carolina Press: Chapter 12: A Freirean teacher, a Gramscian intellectual, and a radical humanist: Ella Baker's Legacy (p.357-374).</p> <p>Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. Chapters 1 & 2.</p> <p>Garza, Alicia (2020). <i>The Purpose of Power. How to Build Movements for the 21st Century</i>. Chapter 15.</p> <p>Rogers, Mary Beth (1990). <i>Cold Anger: A Story of Faith and Power Politics</i>. University of North Texas Press. Chapter 7.</p>	Leadership Qualities Exercise	11:15-12:30
LUNCH			12:30-1:30

Base Building Plan; Project Intro; LD Continued		Base Building Plans; One to Ones	1:30-3:30
BREAK			15 min
Group Project Work		Break Out for Group Project	3:45-5

		Work	
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CLASS 3: WEDNESDAY AUGUST 3			
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TOPIC	READINGS	ACTIVITIES	Time
Reflection			9-9:45
Campaign Definition	<p>Films to Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made in L.A. (2007)- 70 min • Whose Streets (2018) <p>Readings:</p> <p>Jobin-Leeds, G. (2016). <i>When We Fight, We Win: Twenty-First-Century Social Movements and the Activists That Are Transforming Our World</i>. The New Press. Chapter 4: The Power of Stories: The Dreamers and Immigrant Rights (p.77-101).</p> <p>Poo, Ai-jen. (2011) "A Twenty-First Century Organizing Model Lessons from the New York Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Campaign." <i>New Labor Forum</i>. Vol. 20. No. 1. SAGE Publications.</p>	Problem Tree	9:45-11

BREAK			15 min
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Campaign Definition Continued		Campaign Components Exercise	11:15-12:30
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LUNCH			12:30-1:30
Power Mapping	<p>Minieri, J. et al. (2007). <i>Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community</i>. Jossey Bass.</p> <p>(Chapter 7 + Chapter 8 + Resource H)</p> <p>Pawel, M. (2009). <i>The Union of Their Dreams, Power, Hope and Struggle in Cesar Chavez's Farm Worker Movement</i>. Bloomsbury Press. Chapter 1 + Chapter 2; Chapter 7, Chapter 8, + Chapter 9)</p>	Power Map	1:30-3

BREAK			15 min
Campaign Planning	<p>Minieri, J. et al. (2007). <i>Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community</i>. Jossey Bass.</p> <p>(Chapter 9, 10)</p>	Strategy Chart	3:15-4
Group Work			4-6

CLASS 4: THURSDAY AUGUST 4

TOPIC	READINGS	ACTIVITIES	Time
Reflection			9-9:45
Direct Actions + Coalitions	<p>Minieri, J. et al. (2007). <i>Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community</i>. Jossey Bass.</p> <p>Chapter 12: Running Kick-A** Actions! (p.262-299)</p> <p>Engler, M. & Engler, P. (2016). <i>This is an Uprising, How NonViolent Revolt is Shaping the 21st Century</i>. Nation Books. Chapter 6: The Act of Disruption (p.143-169).</p> <p>Organizing for Social Change: Chapter 9, Building + Joining Coalitions</p>	Guest Speaker	9:45-11

BREAK			15 min
Group Presentations			11:15-12:30
LUNCH			12:30-1:30
Group Presentations			1:30-3
BREAK			15 min
Final Reflection + Discussion			3:15-5