

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE
SW 552, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION**

**Summer 2007 (First Term, 3 Credit Hours)
Tuesday/Thursday, 9:15-12:15, 306 Henson Hall**

**Instructor: Dr. S. L. Bowie, Associate professor
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Summer office hours: Thursday, 12:30 - 1:30**

INTRODUCTION:

The University of Tennessee College of Social Work (UTCSW) is a humane community of proactive, engaged learners and teachers who are prepared to embrace the idea of change with receptive intellectual curiosity. We aspire to be an institution that recognizes change and its implications for social work practice and change that fosters leadership in social change and creativity to address human needs for social and economic justice, while remaining focused on the values, ethics, and history of the social work profession. The College aspires to excellence in classroom and field instruction that supports critical thinking, life-long learning, and appropriate responsiveness to the needs of a diverse body of students, macro and clinical practitioners, and local, national, and international communities. We also strive for excellence in knowledge-building through the meticulous and responsible use of the best available research methods, interdisciplinary collaboration, and programs of research that are designed to address questions critical to social work concerns.

In striving for these standards of excellence, the UTCSW emphasizes the need to (1) address social problems that negatively impact the quality of life for oppressed and vulnerable populations, especially high-risk children and families living in urban and rural poverty, and (2) develop practitioners who are culturally competent, committed to taking a stand against oppressive, inhumane, and unfair societal propensities and political trends, and sensitive to the personal, social, economic, and political circumstances of high-risk, downtrodden, impoverished, and disenfranchised segments of America and world society.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an advanced macro practice elective that builds on and integrates UTCSW foundation content that examines issues and methods for organizing change in communities, particularly those in low-income, urban settings. It operates on the premise that skills and knowledge related to advocacy, organizing, planning, and managing change with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities are essential for social work practice.

This course is designed to heighten student awareness in relation to the role of social workers in community practice settings. The course places emphasis on the changing role of social workers whereby community members are encouraged and assisted to participate and assume leadership roles in different phases of community capacity development. In some respects, the idea of community organizing is undergoing a deliberate metamorphosis to “community building” with priorities and direction being “consumer-driven,” i.e., being established primarily by community members themselves with social workers acting as facilitators of their will, desires, and priorities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, students will have acquired the following knowledge:

- Knowledge of the comparative characteristics of different models for organizing in communities, especially the potential for these models to empower communities and promote participatory and resource equity.
- Understanding the use and value of diversity (class, gender, racial/cultural, and sexual preference) when facilitating the development of community groups.
- Understanding the need for critical thinking and diverse sources of knowledge necessary for exploring and responding to social and economic problems.
- Knowledge of the range of fact-finding and assessment tools and methods available to map assets and barriers to social and economic functioning.
- Understanding the role that political environments, economic conditions, and cultural/racial/gender intolerance play in manipulating human services planning, evaluation, and research activities.
- Understanding the need for critical thinking and diverse sources of knowledge necessary for exploring and responding to social and economic problems.
- Understanding the value of “expert knowledge” that community members bring to the assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation processes.
- Knowledge of the concept of empowerment as a value base for macro social work practice.
- Knowledge of the linkages between effective family functioning and strong, integrated communities for improving general social and economic well-being in any community.
- A working and integrative knowledge of the importance of a non-deficit perspective in

social work practice at the macro or micro level.

TEACHING METHOD AND FORMAT:

The instructional emphasis will be placed on class discussion and interaction, participatory group exercises, and community assessment protocols. The course will be taught with a framework that stresses self-help and self-determination, empowerment, change, economic and social justice, and the use of non-deficit perspectives in social work practice. Students are expected to actively participate in class exercises and discussions, and to challenge themselves, their fellow students, and the instructor. The integration of theory and practice will be emphasized.

The course will be enriched through sessions that will be conducted on-site at various local agencies that engage in community organization or community empowering activities. This will enable the class to visit different communities, interface with, and obtain insight from active agency leaders regarding their roles in local community organization efforts and the different dynamics and challenges involved in those efforts.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS:

Students will be evaluated as follows for the class assignments:

Simulated Community Organization Paper (SCOP)	50%
SCOP Presentation	25%
Attendance	25%

Required Readings: There will be no required textbook for the class. Students will be provided with a set of readings for class discussion and for the major course tasks.

Simulated Community Organization Paper (SCOP)

The Simulated Community Organization Paper (**SCOP**) is an exercise in critical thinking. The objective to develop a comprehensive, well-written, and well thought-out term paper that involves a hypothetical community organization (C/O) scenario and episode. The C/O episode can occur in an urban or rural context, and students have “creative freedom” on the details, in terms of six questions: Who, what, where, how, when, and why.

The **SCOP** should reflect an integration of literature and pragmatic thinking. This will be accomplished by using specific material from class readings as a guide to your **SCOP** ideas and discussion. For each element of the assignment, a recommended segment is provided. (**in bold print**) by the instructor.

The SCOP presentations will be held on June 26th and June 28th, 2007. It is estimated that each SCOP presentation will be 35-40 minutes in length.

SCOP Assignment Specifications and Integrative Readings

1. An overview of the community organization episode should be provided to start the assignment. The overview should provide details on the SCOP neighborhood or community, its unmet needs, community resources or assets in place, and so forth. All **SCOPs** must have scenarios that involve multi-ethnic communities and associated dynamics between them. **(Homan, 115-123, Rivera & Erlich, 254-269).**
2. What is the general focus of the community organization effort? **(Weil & Gamble, 525-534)**
3. What is the specific target for community change, or specific system(s) in the community targeted for social change? **(Weil & Gamble, 525-534)**
4. What was the “trigger event” that caused community mobilization in the **SCOP**, and what is the broader problem that the event now makes visible? **(Rubin & Rubin, 145-146)**
5. How did you determine that there was, indeed, a problem in need of intervention with C/O protocols? **(Mizrahi, 519-520).**
6. Describe the general community mobilization that occurred for collective action, including “bootstrapping” that took place in the **SCOEOP**. **(Rubin & Rubin, 141)**
7. Describe the political participation patterns in the **SCOEOP**, including “political apathetics, spectators, foot soldiers, and gladiators.” **Rubin & Rubin, 142-145.**
8. What type of specific mobilization tactics are used in the **SCOP**? What mobilization models are they consistent with and why? **(Mondross, 536-539; Rubin & Rubin, 148-159).**
9. Describe the role of coalitions. What kind of common characteristics or common oppression can be identified to promote different ethnic groups being part of collective action, and how is it facilitated? **(Homan, 13-19; Rivera & Erlich, 254-269); Rubin & Rubin, 67-70; 146-147)**
10. What types of incentives are offered to encourage individual participation in the **SCOP**? **(Rubin & Rubin, 159-163).**

READING LIST FOR SCOP ASSIGNMENT

- Homan, M.S. (1999). *Promoting community change: Making it happen in the real world* (2nd ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Mizrahi, T. (2002). Community organizing principles and practice guidelines. In A.R. Roberts, & G.J. Greene (Eds.), *Social workers' desk reference* (pp. 517-524). New York: Oxford.
- Mondros, J.B. (2002). Principles and practice guidelines for social action. In A.R. Roberts, & G.J. Greene (Eds.), *Social workers' desk reference* (pp. 534-539). New York: Oxford.
- Rivera, F.G., & Erlich, J.L. (2001). Organizing with people of color: A perspective. In J.E. Tropman, J.L. Erlich, & J. Rothman (Eds.), *Tactics and techniques of community intervention* (pp. 254-269).
- Rubin, H.J., & Rubin, I.S. (*Community organizing and development* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Weil, M.O., & Gamble, D.N. (2002). Community practice models for the 21st century. In A.R. Roberts, & G.J. Greene (Eds.), *Social workers' desk reference* (pp. 525-534). New York: Oxford.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1 (June 5/7) Course Introduction, semester plan
Historical perspectives on community organization
Introduction to community organization concepts
Contemporary community practice models and theoretical perspectives

Week 2 (June 12/14) Basic community organization issues
Targets for community change
Neighborhoods and neighborhood organizations
Discovering and documenting the life of a community

Week 3 (June 19/21) Direct Action Organizing

- 11. Fundamentals
- 12. Issue and strategy selection
- 13. A guide to tactics
- 14. Designing actions

Week 4 (June 26/26) *** SCOP Class Presentations ***

Week 5 (July 3/5)

** Term Papers Due By Tuesday,

July 3, 2007

** Course Evaluation

- 15. Grassroots fund raising
- 16. Development of administrative systems
- 17. Supervision
- 18. Financial and legal matters
- 19. Developing a long-term perspective

SUMMER 2007, Community Organization (SW 552)
Agency Visitation Schedule

Date Agency/Contact Person

June 7 United Way of Greater Knoxville
1301 Hannah Avenue
Knoxville, Tennessee
Ben Landers, President/CEO
865-523-9131

- June 12 Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM), Inc.
Lake City, TN 37769
Address To Be Announced
Amy Anderson, Community Organizer
865-426-9455
Amy@socm.org
- June 14 Knoxville Area Urban League
1514 East 5th Avenue 37917
Knoxville, TN
Aaron Kyle, Program Director
865-524-5511
- June 19 Race Relations Center of East Tennessee
1545 Western Avenue
Knoxville, Tennessee
Saadia Williams, Executive Director
856-522-3004
rrc@racrelationscenter.org
- June 21 Cherokee Health Systems
2018 Western Avenue
Knoxville, Tennessee 37921
Abe Brown, Regional Vice President
865-544-0541

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- issues of fit to consider. *Journal of Community Practice*, 9, 1-20.
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- Beck, E.L. & Eichler, M. (2000). Consensus organizing: A practice model for community-building. *Journal of Community Practice*, 8, 87-103.
- Bobo, K., Kendall, J. & Max, S. (1995). Cleaning up in the nineties. In J. Rothman, J.L. Erlich, & J.E. Tropman (Eds.), *Strategies of community intervention* (pp. 99-113). Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc.
- Castelloe, P., Watson, T., & White, C. (2002). Participatory change: An integrative approach to community practice. *Journal of Community Practice*, 10, 7-31.
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- Cousins, L.H. (1998). Partnerships for vitalizing communities and neighborhoods: Celebrating a "return"! *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, xxv (1): 61-69.
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- practice: putting social change and public life back into social work practice. In Fisher, R. & Karger, H.J. (1997). Social Work and Community in a Private World. New York: Longman.
- Fisher, R., & Shragge, E. (2000). Challenging community organizing: Facing the 21st Century. *Journal of Community Practice*, 8, 1-19.
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- Gray, K.A., & Maas, C. The decision case method: Teaching and training for grassroots organizing. *Journal of Community Practice*, 13, 105-120.
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- strategies, struggles, and solutions. *Social Work*, 46, 63-78.
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