

Organizing for Social Change 01:790:356
Crosslisted with 37:575:359:01
Spring 2021

Thursdays 3:55-6:55 pm

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Office hours: Wednesdays 10-1 pm or by appointment

Course Overview

Organizing is how people come together to pursue their collective interests. Organizing is moving people into Relationship, Reflection, Story-telling, Leadership, and Action in order to:

- Build their collective power
- Take greater control over their own lives
- Achieve shared goals

It is a life skill that students will need no matter the field they end up pursuing or the community in which they end up settling.

How do people come together and take action to win on the issues they care about? How do organizations build power and develop winning strategies?

The curriculum and examples are drawn from my twenty-plus years working as an organizer and trainer before entering academia and from the fields of organizing, political science, sociology, urban studies, economics, public policy and anthropology that shed light on key ideas.

The course will cover the building blocks of organizing including:

- Recruitment and Building the Organization
- Forms of Power
- Strategic Research and Power Analysis
- Strategy
- Effective Actions and Turnout

We will read both practical and scholarly work on these topics and explore them through class discussions, exercises, and roleplays.

The Learning Objectives of this course are to:

- 1) Examine critically the theory and practice of organizing
- 2) Learn a set of concrete organizing skills

- 3) Analyze the role of direct action organizing as an empowerment strategy in disadvantaged and marginalized communities and think about its relationship to broader movements for social change.
- 4) Engage in dialogue and debate around issues of power, inequality, organizing, and politics
- 5) Understand theoretical perspectives on concepts related to organizing drawn from political science, sociology, history, anthropology, urban planning, and political theory
- 6) Write an essay that puts forward an argument

Course Requirements:

Weekly Reaction Papers:

In order to help prepare for discussions during class, students must submit one page written reactions to the readings and class discussions each week through the Canvas assignment list.

- Homework cannot be handwritten.
- You have the option to skip TWO weeks of your choice.
- These papers must be handed in on the day they are due (**AKA the day prior to that week's class**).
- More than a day late, ten points off
- More than two weeks late will not be accepted

Organizing Practicum:

In order to receive full credit for this course (4 credits), you must choose a *campus organizing organization* or *off-campus organizing organization* and actively participate in it over the course of the semester. We are available to help with matching students to organizations. Students must choose an organization and notify me of their choice by February 4th and begin working with the group from that week on. You are asked to submit a minimum of one paragraph every other week along with your homework, beginning February 11th, about your organizational experiences.

If you plan to sign up for the 4th credit, you must get approval from me and then e-mail Amy Marchitto, amarchitto@work.rutgers.edu at the LSER Credit Office to register for it.

*Please note: I strongly support doing community service but for the purposes of the class, the practicum **must** be with an organization engaged in organizing. Specific groups that are partnering with the class include SHILOH*, Ridgewood for Black Liberation, Coalition to Save Lincoln Annex, The Refuge Center* and the Newark Water Coalition.*

Other examples include: AFT/AAUP, URA, USAS, Rutgers One Coalition, Cosecha, Take Back the Tap, Food and Water Watch, Planned Parenthood, New Labor, Work Environment Council, Unity Square, Black Lives Matter, New Jersey Communities

United, New Jersey Organizing Project, Wind of the Spirit, Make the Road, New Jersey Working Families, New Jersey Citizen Action, CWA, NJ AFL-CIO, other gender, racial, environmental and social justice organizations.

**Please reach out to Nika and me to discuss working with these organizations as they work with highly vulnerable groups and want assurances that students know how to treat unhoused people with the dignity they deserve.*

Essays: Students will write two 6-8 page essays based upon their reflections on the main issues and themes that emerged in the readings, lectures, role plays and class discussions. Please remember that you **MUST** substantively refer to **several** different class readings pertaining to the question (this means you cannot just mention the article, you must engage with it).

Essay #1: What is power? Where does it come from? What is the relationship between power and social change?

DUE: March 25, 2021

Essay #2: What is organizing? What are the most essential elements of building an organization? What is the difference between organizing and mobilizing? What is the relationship between organizing and social change?

DUE: April 29, 2021

Group Assignment

Strategy Chart: Over the course of the second half of the semester, student groups of 5 students per group will collectively choose an issue and then meet weekly to work on each column of the strategy chart. Students will need to work on the chart and **conduct research on the issue and the components of the chart outside of class** and during finals week **must present a power point of a full strategy chart, along with a timeline and written 6-12 page campaign plan** in lieu of a final exam. To ensure that all group participants are contributing, students will be asked to grade their peers.

DUE: Draft: Goals, Organizational Considerations, Preliminary Research List: March 11th

DUE: Draft: Allies, Constituents and Opponents and Actual Research: April 1st

DUE: Draft: Targets, Tactics and Message: April 22nd

FINAL FULL ASSIGNMENT DUE: May 6th

Attendance: Class meets only once a week and attendance is mandatory. You should have no unexcused absences. **After the second unexcused absence, you will be marked down one letter grade per unexcused absence.** This means that if you are at a B+ you would receive a B. **You must also arrive to class on time.** Students arriving more than ten minutes late will be penalized.

One-on-Ones and Class Discussions:

- The richness of our larger conversations about the reading will be totally dependent upon having done the reading ahead of time and bringing thoughts and ideas to the larger discussion. I will be keeping track of who is participating.
- Each week at the start of class, students will engage in a one-on-one conversation with each other.
- Most weeks students will also meet in small groups to plan role plays and exercises, discuss the reading assignments or work on strategy development. You must pull your weight in the group.

Readings

1. All of the required articles are available on the web through Canvas. Go to <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/>
2. Enter your Rutgers ID and password in the upper right corner
3. Click on the tab that says Courses, then 2021SP- ORGANZ FOR SOC CHNG 37:575:359:01
4. Click on “modules” at the left
5. Scroll down to this week’s module and click “Week X: To Do” for links to that modules readings

Click on the folder for the week you want, then the file you want to download. Many of the readings are in Adobe Acrobat format. If your computer doesn’t have it, you can download the reader for free at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

Grading

Reaction Papers	40%
Essay One	20%
Essay Two	20%
Group Assignment	20%

Week 1: January 21, 2021

*****See if you can download and read prior to the first class:**

- Barack Obama. 1990. "[Why organize? Problems and promise in the inner city.](#)" In Peg Knoepfle (ed.). *After Alinsky: Community Organizing in Illinois*. Springfield, IL: Illinois Issues, University of Illinois at Springfield.
- Isabel Wilkerson, “When Will the North Face its Racism?” NY Times, Jan. 10, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/11/opinion/sunday/when-will-the-north-face-its-racism.html>

- Ben Austen “The Death and Life of Chicago” NYTimes, May 29, 2013
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/02/magazine/how-chicagos-housing-crisis-ignited-a-new-form-of-activism.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&

Introduction to Organizing: This class will begin by asking students to think about their own beliefs and passions. It will go on to provide students with an understanding of what organizing is.

Week 2: January 27, 2021

Relations of Power: What is power? The next two classes will provide students with an understanding of the nature of power and the use and sources of power in organizing for social change.

Readings for Week 2:

- Saul Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals*, Chapter One: What is a Radical? 3-23
- Michael Gecan, *Going Public*: Preface: Why Organize? xi-xix Introduction: 1-16
- Kim Bobo, Kendall and Max *Organizing for Social Change*: 6-13
- Rinku Sen, *Stirring it Up* Introduction: Community Organizing-Yesterday and Today
- Keanga Yamahatta-Taylor, How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective, pp. 9-14,61-64
- Yvonne Bynoe, Still We Rise: Student Activism on a Global Scale, in *Stand and Deliver: Political Activism, Leadership, and Hip Hop Culture*, 133-144
- Jelani Cobb, The Matter of Black Lives: A New Kind of Movement Found Its Moment, What Will It’s Future Be? March 14, 2016 *New Yorker*
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/03/14/where-is-black-lives-matter-headed>

Optional additional reading on these topics:

- Gary Delgado, *Organizing the Movement* Chapter Two: The Sixties Movements: Roots of Community Organization 13-38

Week 3: February 4, 2021

Organizing Practicum Choice due February 4th

Relations of Power, continued

Readings for Week 3:

- John Gaventa: *Power and Powerlessness*, Power and Participation 1-32
- Cultural Hegemony, Beautiful Trouble, 222-223
- Ed Chambers, Roots for Radicals: Organizing for Power, Action and Justice pp. 27-31
- Jennifer Jihye Chun, *Organizing at the Margins: the Symbolic Politics of Labor in South Korea and the United States*, pp. 13-19

- Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, Signaling Power and Signaling to Power, 189-222

Optional additional readings on power:

- Richard Healey and Sandra Hinson:
http://www.strategicpractice.org/system/files/power_and_social_change.pdf
- Lawrence Goodwyn *The Populist Moment*, Introduction
<https://ratical.org/corporations/PMSHAGAintro.html>
- E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People*, Chapter One.
- Bernard Loomer “Two Conceptions of Power” *Process Studies*, pp. 5-32, Vol. 6, Number 1, Spring 1976.
- Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens” *Perspectives on Politics*, September, 2014, Vol 12/No. 3.
- Peter Dreier (2003) The Future of Community Reinvestment: Challenges and Opportunities in a Changing Environment, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 69:4, 341-353, DOI: 10.1080/01944360308976323
- Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, “Rulemaking, Rulebreaking and Power” 1-44.

Week 4: February 11, 2021

Strategy and Designing Campaigns: The essence of effective organizing is strategy and planning campaigns that accurately identify and concentrate power on specific targets for the achievement of specific goals. This class will lay out a key tool from the Midwest Academy called the Strategy Chart which will form the basis for the semester-long group assignment.

Brief training and Role Play on How to Run A Meeting

Readings for week 4:

- Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years: 1954-1963*, Chapter Five: The Montgomery Bus Boycott 120-196
- Mark Engler and Paul Engler, *The Strategic Turn*, pp 1-27
- Dara T. Mathis, King’s Message of Nonviolence has been distorted
- Zaynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, A Networked Public, 3-27

Additional reading:

- Doug McAdam *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, pp. 125-142.
- Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*, chapters 3, 6 and 7

- Rachel Meyer and Janice Fine “Grassroots Citizenship at Multiple Scales: Rethinking Immigrant Civic Participation” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, December 2017, Volume 30, Issue 4, pp 323–348.
- Nell Irvin Painter, “Mother of the Movement” *NYT Book Review*, March 31, 2013.
- November 30, 2012 “Young Immigrants Say It’s Obama’s Time to Act”
Julia Preston,
http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/p/julia_preston/index.html

Handouts:

- Bobo, Kendall and Max, *Organizing for Social Change* “Developing a Strategy” 20-34, Fine Revised Strategy Chart and Blank strategy charts
- Bobo, Kendall and Max, “Planning and Running Meetings” 95-102

Week 5 February 18, 2021

More on Campaign Strategy Development: In this class we will further explore strategy. Students will also choose the issue they will develop into a full-blown strategy chart.

Movements and Organizations: What is the difference between movements and organizations and how should we think about the relationships between them?

Special guests: TBD

Readings for Week Five:

- Rinku Sen, Picking the Good Fight, in *Stirring It Up*, 48-78
- Rinku Sen “Movement Moments” <http://www.colorlines.com/articles/occupying-organizing-and-movements-demand-both>
- Engler and Engler, Structure and Movement in *This is an Uprising*, 31-56
- Marshall Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins*, Chapter One, Introduction: How David Beat Goliath 3-21
- Andrew Boyd and Joshua Kahn Russell, “Action Logic” pp 208-209 *Beautiful Trouble*
- John Harwood, “A Sea Change in Less Than 50 Years As Gay Rights Gained Momentum” *NYT* March 26, 2013, A16.

Handout: Campaign Strategy Exercise: Sludge Incinerators in Providence, Rhode Island

Week 6: February 25, 2021

Organizer’s Math, Tactics, Actions and Accountability Sessions

This session will instruct students in the basics of preparing for (including doing systematic turnout), executing and evaluating actions.

Action Role Play

Group Work on Goals, Organizational Considerations and Research Needs column of the strategy chart

Reading for week 6:

- Michal Gecan, *Going Public*, The Habit of Action, 49-99
- Jane McAlevey, *No Shortcuts*, Introduction, 1-22
- Bobo, Kendall and Max: Designing Actions, 34-40, 48-54, 56-69
- Show, Don't Tell, *Beautiful Trouble*, 174-175
- Put Your Target in a Decision Dilemma, *Beautiful Trouble*, 166-167

Week 7: March 4, 2021

FIRST ESSAY DUE

Actions continued

Speaker: Amanda Devecka-Rinear, New Jersey Organizing Project

Readings for week 7:

Choose 2:

- Cristina Jimenez and Peter Dreier, "How Undocumented Youth Moved the Immigrant Rights Movement" Gettysburg Case Study, Spring 2015
- Janice Fine, *Community Unions: Beyond the Politics of Particularism*, "Climbing Jacob's Ladder: Solidarity and Baltimore" pp. 201-247
- David Karpf, *Analytic Activism: Digital Listening and the New Political Strategy*, "The Organizational Logic of Petition Platforms" 59-92

Additional Reading:

- Douglas Rushkoff, "Removing Humans from the Equation", *Throwing Rocks at the Google Bus*, pp. 13-44

Week 8: March 11, 2021

Emotional and Psychological Dimensions of Organizing
Self-Care for Organizers

On Self-Care, "The World as it Is and the World As It Should Be" and Collective Liberation:


- *Organizing for the Long Haul: Wellness and Burnout*
- *Feminist Forms of Leadership*
- *The University Administrator's Playbook: The Art of Negotiation*
- *Collective Liberation*
- *Learning from Our Losses*

DUE: Group Work on Goals, Organizational Considerations and Research Needs column of the strategy chart

Readings for Week 8 (choose two):

- JM Smucker, “Life of the Oppositional Group”, *Hegemony How-To*, 46-62
- Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, Movement Cultures. 83-112
- Adrienne Maree Brown, *Emergent Strategy*, pp. 41-42 and 103-150
- Sanford F. Schram, “Middle-Class Melancholia” *The Return of Ordinary Capitalism: Neoliberalism, Precarity, Occupy*, 32-44
- Francesca Polletta and James M. Jasper “Collective Identity and Social Movements” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 27 (2001), pp. 283-305.
- Jane McAlevey, “What #MeToo Can Teach the Labor Movement”
- <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2017/12/28/what-metoo-can-teach-labor-movement>
- Ed Chambers, *Roots for Radicals*, “The World As It Is and the World As It Should Be” 21-43
- Coaching Skills and Grow Model Worksheet
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/13wpS20LW-0Wo-3TFS7BukolnSHYFISq-9VTH6tOBqro/edit#slide=id.g5d25b18c2_00

Self-care:

- “Pace Yourself”, in Beautiful Trouble, 158-159
- Sustainability Documents from Selah/Jewish Funds for Justice including: 
 - Monthly Tool: Personal Ecology
 - Energy and Wellness Index Parts 1 and 2
 - Time Management Matrix
 - Urgency Index

NO CLASS MARCH 18, 2021

Week 9: March 25, 2021

Building the Organization: The essence of all effective organizing is recruitment and leadership development. Drawing upon ideas and exercises from Northeast Action, the IAF, Marshall Gans and others, the next two classes will focus on the analyses, strategic approaches and concrete skills necessary to recruiting participants to an organization and involving them in building and leading it.

Guest presenter: Mike Gecan, Co-Director of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) and author, *Going Public*

Handout: “Effective Organizing for Congregational Renewal” Mike Gecan, Industrial Areas Foundation

Group Work on: Constituents, Allies and Opponents and Actual Research

Readings for Week 9

- Michael Gecan, *Going Public*: Part I. The Habit of Relating: 19-32, 33-46 and
- Hahrie Han, Chapter 3: “Choosing Strategies for Building Power” *How Organizations Develop Activists*, 62-88
- Robert Cialdini, *Harnessing the Science of Persuasion*, 2-9
- Ziad Munson, "How People Become Pro-Life Activists"
<https://scholars.org/contribution/how-people-become-pro-life-activists>
- Climate Advocacy Lab: 9 Evidence-Based Insights for Action-taking

Week 10: April 1st, 2021

Due: Constituents, Allies and Opponents and Actual Research April 1
Building the Organization continued

Readings for Week 10:

- Mike Gecan, *Going Public* Part III. The Habit of Organization 129-166
- Janice Fine, Jill Hurst and Allison Porter “Solving for Growth” 1-15
- McKenna and Han, *Groundbreakers*, Creating a Structure to Share Responsibility: Neighborhood Teams, 130-152
- Gordon Whitman, *Stand Up! Team, Finding a Home Base in a Movement for Change* pp. 83-108
- Han, Chapter Five: Mobilizing, 123-151

Additional Optional Reading:

- James M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, Biography and Creativity in Social Movements*, University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp. 69-99.
- Debra C. Minkoff, “Bending with the Wind: Strategic Change and Adaptation by Women’s and Racial Minority Organizations, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 104, No. 6 (May 1999) pp. 1666-1703.
- Mark Leach and Laurie Mazur, “Creating Culture: The Promising Practices of Successful Movement Networks” *The Nonprofit Quarterly*, Fall/Winter 2013.

Week 11: April 8, 2021

Building the Organization continued

Relational Organizing: Telling our stories

Matt Cordeiro: “the story of me, the story of us and the story of now”

Group Work on: Targets, Tactics and Message

Readings for Week 11:

- Malcolm Gladwell “Six Degrees of Lois Weisberg” *the New Yorker* Jan. 11, 1999 52-63
- Marshall Ganz, “The Power of Story in Social Movements”, *American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, 2001, 16 pp.

- Marshall Ganz and the New Organizing Institute, “Creating Shared Story: Story of Self,” “Story of Us” and “Story of Now”.
- Charles M. Payne “Give Light and the People Will Find a Way: The Roots of an Organizing Tradition” 67-102 in *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*, University of California Press.

Week 12: April 15 2021

Movement Research: This class will introduce students to the art and science of “tactical investigations” for organizing campaigns and why it is different than academic research.

We will hear from Erica Smiley, Campaigns Director of Jobs with Justice as well as Ahmer Qadeer, Strategic Researcher

GROUP WORK ON TARGETS, TACTICS AND MESSAGE

Readings for Week 12

- Bobo, Kendall and Max: *Organizing for Social Change*, Chapter 20 “Tactical Investigations” 162-192 (read the first ten pages and skim the rest)
- Peter Dreier, unpublished article, “When Is Business Bluffing? Progressives’ Dilemma Over Capital Mobility”
- Arnie Graf, "Cops vs. EDF" Lessons Learned: Stories from a Lifetime of Organizing, 40-76
- Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, "Business Power and Social Policy: Employers and the Formation of the American Welfare State" pp 277-28
- Naomi Klein, “The Right is Right” *This Changes Everything*, pp 32-63
- Narrative Power Analysis, *Beautiful Trouble*, 244-245

Additional optional reading:

- David Vogel, “Why Businessmen Distrust Their State: The Political Consciousness of American Corporate Executives” *British Journal of Political Science*, 1978 pp. 45-78.
- Colin Gordon “Why No Corporatism in the United States? Business Disorganization and its Consequences” *Business and Economic History*, Volume 27, no. 1, Fall 1998.
- Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, “Who Passes Business’s ‘Model Bills’? Policy Capacity and Corporate Influence in US State Politics” *Perspectives on Politics*, September 2014, Vol. 12, No. 3.

Week 13: April 22, 2021

Due: Group Work on Targets, Tactics and Message

Media Relations 101, Messaging/Framing: We will hear from David Donnelly, Of By For Consulting, brilliant media and political strategist.

Making Beautiful Trouble: We will hear from Andrew Boyd, agit-pop.com, culture-jammer and meme generator extraordinaire.

Readings for Week 13:

- Hashtag Politics, *Beautiful Trouble*, 238-239
- Memes, *Beautiful Trouble*, 242-243
- Alicia Garza, A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement
<https://thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/>
- Think Narratively, *Beautiful Trouble* and the “Battle of the Story” Worksheet from the *Center for Story-Based Strategy*
- Play to the Audience that Isn’t There, *Beautiful Trouble*, 160-161
- Albert O. Hirschman *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy*, pp. 1-10
- Charlotte Ryan, *Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing*, Chapter Three, Getting Framed: The Media Shape Reality: 53-92

Additional Reading:

- David Karpf, *Analytic Activism*, “Analytic Audiences”, 93-122
- Bobo, Kendall, Max *Organizing for Social Change*, 14-19, 117-122
- Andrew Boyd, TRUTH IS A VIRUS: Meme Warfare and the Billionaires for Bush (or Gore)
- Anat Shenker-Orsorio, Preface and Chapter 1: Once Upon Our Economy, in *Don’t Buy It: The Trouble with Talking Nonsense about the Economy*, ix-xxv, and 1-25.
- Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, Chapter Seven: Framing Contention, 106-122, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- “We are the 99% Creators Revealed” Mother Jones
<http://motherjones.com/politics/2011/10/we-are-the-99-percent-creators>”Pre-Occupied: The origins and future of Occupy Wall Street) November 28, 2011, Mattathias Schwartz
- Malcolm Gladwell, “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted” *The New Yorker*, October 4, 2010.
- Charles Heckscher and John McCarthy, “Transient Solidarities” *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 52:4, December 2014, pp. 627-657.

Week 14: April 25

Due April 29th: Essay 2

Fundraising: If you ain’t got the dough-re-me boys, you can’t support your organization! This week we will look at strategies for funding organizations. Marjorie Fine, veteran fundraiser, foundation executive and trainer extraordinaire will lead the training session.

Readings for week 14:

- Cesar Chavez, “On Money and Organizing”
- Rose Fernandez, Fundraising Lessons from the United Farm Workers Movement
- Wade Rathke, “Money Matters” in *Nuts & Bolts: The ACORN Fundamentals of Organizing*, 39-55

- Michael Brown, “Mobilizing Resources: Raising Money” 243-261 in *Building Powerful Community Organizations: A Personal Guide to Creating Groups that Can Solve Problems and Change the World*
- Kim Klein, “The Ten Most Important Things You Can Know About Fundraising” and “Getting Over the Fear of Asking”
- Janice Fine “What’s Happened to Membership-Based Organizations?”

FINAL: May 6th Final Strategy Chart Presentations and Evaluation