LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY BUILDING

I. Course Description

Community building is the process of developing and sustaining partnerships between citizens and practitioners to bring about social change for the common good in a caring society. Emphasis in the course is given to theories, models, and action principles as well as skill development in community building. Key organizing concepts include leadership, social change, social capital, civil society, democracy, and social justice.

Since social change in a democracy usually “bubbles up” from the bottom, through small groups of people working together to improve quality of life in their community, the course is open to diverse students who want to develop knowledge and skills in community building, especially in behalf of vulnerable or disadvantaged populations.

II. Course Objectives

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Understand the need for community building and social change in civil society from diverse national and global perspectives;

2. Critique key concepts, theories, and models of community building;

3. Compare and contrast leadership roles and responsibilities, as well as strengths and limitations of citizens and practitioners in community building;

4. Apply theory and action principles of community building to a contemporary issue or case involving citizens and practitioners;

5. Demonstrate knowledge and skill in community building through a service learning project or case study;

6. Critique personal skills in community building as well as potential conflicts in ethics, values, or cultural orientations.


III. Teaching Methods

Lectures, in-class activities, guest speakers, service learning, projects

IV. Required & Supplemental Reading Material

Required and supplemental readings are listed under each course unit. The required readings are divided into two types: Required Depth (**) and Required Skim (*). That is, class participants are required to read RD readings in depth but only skim the RS readings in the course packet.

The packet of required readings is available for purchase at Abel’s Copies, University Towers, 715D West 23rd Street, Austin, Texas. (472-5353).

V. Course Requirements

A. Class Participation (Maximum 20 points)

There are three levels of class participation: active, moderately active, and passive:

1. An active participant is involved in the class to the extent that she/he asks pertinent questions relevant to class readings and discussion, shares relevant insights, and contributes to the general learning through active contribution to in-class learning activities. Active participation will earn 20 points.

2. A moderately active participant is involved in the class to the extent that he/she actively listens, reacts to information, asks relevant questions when confused by course content, and contributes to the general learning with moderately active contribution to in-class learning activities. Moderately active participation earns 15 points.

3. A passive participant is involved in the class to the extent that she/he attends, seldom demonstrates active listening behaviors, seldom asks relevant questions, and contributes to the general learning with occasional contribution to in-class learning activities. Passive participation earns 5 points.

B. Community Building Projects (80 points)

Each participant must complete two community-building project papers for the course. The purpose of these papers is to develop knowledge and skills in community building preferably through a service learning project, or alternatively through case study. Each participant must obtain prior approval for the project from the course instructor. Students are encouraged to use their field placements to assess an issue of importance to the population(s) served by the agency.

1. Paper # 1. Collaborative Community Building Issue Analysis (30 pts)
This paper requires each participant to identify a community building issue that is relevant to the needs of vulnerable or disadvantaged populations. Each participant will be paired up with two other class members. The groups of three must work together to collaboratively prepare a summary issue analysis for each of the three participants’ community building issues. At least three key leaders in the community must consider the issue significant. In other words, a “significant constituency” must consider the issue an important one, worthy of and timely for consideration on the community agenda.

The instructor will provide a framework for the community building summary issue analysis. The participant will utilize action research methods to complete various components of the paper: Issue Identification, Issue Analysis, Alternative Solutions, and Strategic Recommendation.

Phase One: Each participant must conduct research and draft a 5 – 7 page double-spaced summary issue analysis. This summary issue analysis will address all components of the instructor’s framework provided in class. The participant must bring two copies of the draft for each team member to review. Each participant then reviews and makes substantive comments on their team members’ drafts during class. Feedback should include suggestions regarding style, format, clarity, readability, content, and specific suggestions regarding information in the issue analysis that could be omitted from the final draft.

Phase Two: Each participant must take the team members suggestions and incorporate feedback that would improve the quality of the final summary issue analysis. The final draft should be 2 – 4 pages, professionally formatted, clear, and concise. Each participant will be graded not only on the quality of the final product, but on how well they incorporate the feedback of their team members.

The paper will be in the form of a memorandum, position statement, or proposal aimed at persuading decision makers to place the issue on the community agenda for active consideration. The length of the final product will usually average 2 – 4 single spaced, typed pages. The product is intended to give decision makers a brief overview of the issue, key analytic findings, alternative solutions, and strategic recommendation.

Extra credit of 5 points will be given to participants who can document during the semester that their community building issue was presented orally and in writing to an “action group” or body of community decision makers (e.g., city council, neighborhood association, community planning council, consumer advocacy organization, planning board, commission, legislative committee, agency board, task force, interagency coordinating board, or administrative team) with the authority to decide and take action on the proposed strategy recommendation.
Criteria for Evaluation

The following criteria will be used to grade this project:

A. COMPLETENESS AND THOROUGHNESS. Have all major components of the assignment been considered, understood, and successfully applied with supporting documentation?
   Maximum points = 10.

B. INCORPORATION OF COLLABORATIVE FEEDBACK. Was the final product substantially improved from the original draft? Was feedback understood and selectively incorporated?
   Maximum points = 10

C. ORGANIZATION AND CLARITY. Does the paper reflect professional-quality work? Is it well organized and written in a logical manner? Are there appropriate transitions headings used between sections? Are sentence structure, syntax, and grammar correct? Are references properly formatted (APA 5th Ed citation style).
   Maximum points = 5.

D. ORIGINALITY AND CREATIVITY. Does the report demonstrate use of analytical skills in a way that indicates critical analysis above and beyond mere description of the components of the assignment?
   Maximum Points = 5.

2. Paper # 2. Community Building Process Analysis (50 pts)
   Proposal due October 12, 2011
   Project due November 30, 2011

The second paper gives each participant the opportunity to develop skills to resolve the community building issue analyzed in the first paper.

The partnership model presented by the instructor will guide the participant through this “process” side of community building, along with readings of the course. In addition to conceptual building blocks of the partnership model (membership, participation, shared responsibility, and leadership), each participant must apply action principles related to Agenda Building, Structure, Analysis, Technology, Ownership, and Stewardship.

The paper will be either a) a retrospective report on community building steps taken to resolve an issue during the semester; b) a prospective plan to resolve the issue in the future; or c) an analysis of a community building case that succeeded or failed in the past. The length of the paper will usually average 15 to 25 double space, typed pages, excluding references and appendices. STUDENT MUST APPLY REQUIRED COURSE READINGS TO THIS PAPER.
Criteria for Evaluation

The following criteria will be used to grade this project:

C. COMPLETENESS AND THROUGHNESS. Have all major components of the assignment been considered, understood, and successfully applied with supporting documentation? Maximum points = 30.

D. ORGANIZATION AND CLARITY. Does the paper reflect professional-quality work? Is it well organized and written in a logical manner? Are there appropriate transition headings used between sections? Are sentence structure, syntax, and grammar correct? Are references properly formatted (APA 5th Ed. Citation style) Maximum points = 10.

C. ORIGINALITY AND CREATIVITY. Does the report demonstrate use of analytical skills in a way that indicates critical analysis above and beyond mere description of the components of the assignment? Maximum Points = 10.

Final Grade

Class Participation 20 points
Issue Analysis Paper (October 19) 30 points
Community Building Process Paper (November 30) 50 points
100 points

Grading Scale
100 - 94 = A
93 - 90 = A-
89 - 87 = B+
86 - 84 = B
83 - 80 = B-
79 - 77 = C+
76 - 74 = C
73 - 70 = C- (Class failed/no credit: 73 and below)
69 - 67 = D+
66 - 64 = D
63 - 60 = D-
59 and below = F

Graduate students must earn a minimum grade of C in the course for credit; also, graduate students must maintain an overall B average.

VI. Class Policies
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Regular class attendance and participation are required. The schedule of due dates for assignments and the examination will be observed. A five-point penalty will be subtracted from the final grade for assignments submitted after the due date. An individual exception will be made only in the event of unavoidable circumstances beyond the student’s control. Should an emergency occur, the student must notify the instructor as soon as possible.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HONOR CODE: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN CLASS: The professor expects students to act like professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another’s opinions. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/).

DOCUMENTED DISABILITY STATEMENT: Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS: Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php.
SAFETY: As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

BEHAVIOR CONCERNS ADVICE LINE (BCAL): If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY: Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor’s instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

IMPORTANT

Please note the following:

1. University policies governing scholastic honesty, as presented in the General Information Bulletin and the brochure prepared by Students for Academic Integrity, apply to this course.

2. All case studies, exercises, and reports are to be word-processed and single-spaced.

3. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) is the style manual to be used by all students for both projects.
VII. Course Outline

Unit 1. Introduction to Community Building

- Overview of course objectives and community building approaches
- Definition of key concepts: community, community building, volunteer citizens, paid professionals, democratic participation, citizenship, professionalism, social capital, social justice, social change, and civil society
- Overview of the partnership model of community building
- Preliminary identification of service learning projects or case studies in community building
- Professional mission of social workers in community building

Required Readings (August 24 & 31)


Supplemental Readings

Unit 2. The Need for Community Building

- Public Trust
- Economics
- Politics
- Diversity
- Social Justice

Required Readings (Sept.7)


Supplemental Readings

Unit 3. Approaches to Community Building

- Community Development
- Community Planning
- Community Organizing
- Community Management

Required Readings (September 14)

**Poole, D. Figure 1. Community Building: The Partnership Model. (1 page)**


Supplemental Readings
Unit 4. The Civic Partnership Model: Theory and Action Principles

- Membership
- Participation
- Shared Responsibility
- Leadership

Required Readings (September 21)

**Poole, D. Figure 1. Community Building: The Partnership Model. (1 page)**


Supplemental Readings


Unit 5. Agenda Building

- Agenda
- Agenda Building
- Agenda Status
- Group Approach
- Constituency Group
- Symbol Utilization
- Social Networks
- Community Decision-Making

Required Readings (September 28)


Supplemental Readings:


Unit 6. Analysis

- Action research
- Traditional research
- Participatory methods
- Issue identification
- Issue definition
- Issue analysis
- Incidence
- Prevalence
- Etiology
- Value-critical analysis

Required Readings (October 5)


Supplemental Readings:


Unit 7. Structure

Group Dynamics
- Structure
- Representation
- Voluntary associations
- Group decision-making
- Governance board
- Committee Management

Group Functioning
- Task force
- Commission
- Partnerships
- Coalition

Required Readings (October 12)

Group Dynamics

Group Functioning

Supplemental Readings:


Unit 9. Ownership

- Ownership
- Relevant publics
- Issue expansion
- Social significance
- Complexity
- Conflict management
- Education
- Persuasion
- Confrontation

Required and Supplemental Readings (October 26)


Supplemental Readings:

Unit 10. Stewardship

- Stewardship
- Accountability
- Commitment
- Change stabilization
- Process evaluation
- Outcome evaluation
- Empowerment evaluation
- Community building impact

Required and Supplemental Readings (November 2)


Supplemental Readings:


*Note: There will be class time set aside for project consultation on both November 10 and 17*
Unit 11. Community Building in a Caring Society

Required and Supplemental Readings (November 9 & 16)

Supplemental Readings:
Poole, D. L., & Colby, I. (2002). Do neighborhood centers have the capacity to be instruments of change in human services? Social Work, 47, 142-152.

Note: November 23: Class does not meet, Thanksgiving break; November 30: Final papers due and class wrap-up