

**University of Pennsylvania
Urban Studies
URBS 448**

**Neighborhood Displacement and Community Power
(Community Organizing and Social Change)**

Overview of Course Syllabus

I

Course Description

The main goal of community organizing is to bring people together to address social and political issues that are problematic. Any such organizing must be a purposeful and collaborative effort and must employ analytical and political skills that foster group interaction.

Effective organizing requires continuous systemic planning with checks and balances that strategically builds stakeholders who can carry out the mission, goals and objectives of the group.

Community organization has historically been centered on the values of self help, self reliance, self determination (empowerment) and social justice. Professional social work has always had a tradition of reform and as such has been deeply rooted in community organization.

This course is particularly relevant to macro and direct practice for advocating for the disenfranchised because it examines how grassroots community and political organizing can impact social and political policy at the executive, administrative, judicial and legislative areas.

This course in community and political organizing and social change is aimed at students who wish to expand and refine their skills in organization-coalition building and collective action. It builds on foundation knowledge and skills from required foundation courses provided in the curriculum.

II

Course Goal

The purpose of this course is to help students develop an understanding of the theory and practice of community and political organizing at the city, state, region and national level and how government can be used to support community and resident displacement or how government can be used to maintain community.

III

Educational Objectives

By the end of URB 448 students are expected to:

- **Be knowledgeable about the difference in politics with a small “p” versus politics with a large capital “P”. i. e., individual, group, community politics as opposed to electoral politics and government politics.**
- **Be knowledgeable about with The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and Bill of Right (the first ten amendments to the Constitution) as primary political tools for political advocacy, social action and social change.**
- **Develop skills on collecting and analyzing data, including histories and ethnographies on displaced populations by institutional, government and corporate entities; thereby learning the linkages between politics and policy formation at the community, institutional, governmental and agency level.**
- **Developing skills on web design and information transference on the web for community organizing, political advocacy and social change.**
- **Understand the roles that individuals can play in the political arena, including legislative advocacy/lobbying, electoral politics, public education and community organizing.**
- **Understand some of the strategies that social activist individuals, groups and communities use to achieve social change. We will explore the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual state of the social activist.**
- **Understanding the intersection of race and racism in urban planning**

IV

Course Requirements

A. Required Texts and Readings

Bobo, K., Kendall, J. & Max, S. (2000)-Organizing for Social Change (3rd edition), Midwest Academy Manual for Activists: Seven Locks Press.

Resources for Organizing Topics

1. Introduction to organizing
2. Building coalitions
3. Recruiting volunteers
4. Working with community boards
5. Planning and facilitating meetings
6. Media relations
7. Designing and leading workshops
8. Working with religious groups
9. Working with labor organizations
10. Tactical investigations
11. Grassroots fundraising
12. Supervision
13. Financial and legal matters
14. Recent U. S. social change history
15. Power, politics, issues
16. Introduction to economics
17. Jobs and industrial base

The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America

Suggested Readings:

See bibliography (Community Organizing) which will be distributed in class.