

## Organizing for Social Change 37:575:359 and 01:790:356

**Fall 2023**

Thursdays, 2-5 pm

Room 133 Labor Education Center

Professor Janice Fine ([fine@work.rutgers.edu](mailto:fine@work.rutgers.edu))

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### Course Overview

Organizing is how people come together to pursue their collective interests. Organizing is moving people into Relationship, Reflection, Story-telling, Leadership, Team-Building 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, build a base and take action to win on the issues they care about? What is power, how does power operate and how do organizations build it and leverage it to win?

The curriculum and examples are drawn from my twenty-plus years working as an organizer and trainer before entering academia and from classics of organizing, political science, sociology, management, urban studies, economics, public policy and anthropology that shed light on key ideas. I'm always adding to it and welcome your suggestions.

The course will cover the building blocks of organizing including:

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

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 will answer the questions in that week's module *or* submit one page of written reflections on *at least two of the readings* as well as the class presentations, discussions and exercises each week through the Canvas assignment portal.

- These papers must be handed in on the day they are due (**AKA the day prior to that week's class**).
- You have the option to skip TWO weeks of your choice.

#### ***Organizing Practicum:***

In order to receive full credit for this course (3+1=4 credits), you can choose a *campus organizing organization* or *off-campus organizing organization* and actively participate in it over the course of the semester including planning, organizing and participating in at least one action or conducting ten one-on-one meetings and building a functional team in an organization. The Teaching Assistants and I are available to help with matching you to organizations.

You may also work with peers from this class to organize your own campaign.

Students need to register for the 4<sup>th</sup> credit within the first few weeks. **You must choose an organization and notify me of your choice by September 28** and begin working with the group from that week on. You will submit one paragraph of a description of what you have been doing and your reflections on it per week with your homework, beginning October 5.

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. Do you have one in mind? Here are some suggestions:*

*Campus organizations: URA, Bargaining for the Common Good, Students for Justice in Palestine, RU Progressive, Rutgers SEA (environmental), Anakbayan, FemLib, UndocuRutgers, NJPIRG, or whatever other campus organizing organizations you are connected to*

*Specific community organizations and unions that are partnering with the class: AAUP/AFT, NJ Organizing Project, New Labor, Make the Road NJ, SEIU 32BJ, Work Environment Council,*

*Time to Care Coalition/ New Jersey Citizen Action, Cosecha, Sue Altman for Congress, Central NJ Democratic Socialists of America, Food and Water Watch*

*Other organizations we can try: Planned Parenthood, Unity Square, Black Lives Matter, New Jersey Communities United, Wind of the Spirit, New Jersey Working Families, CWA, New Jersey AFL-CIO, other gender, racial, environmental and social justice organizations.*

**Essays:** Students will write two short 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).

NOTE: Students needing accommodation should talk to me about doing an oral exam if they feel this is needed.

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

**DUE: October 19, 2023**

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: November 30, 2023**

### ***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 the final class **will present a power point of a full strategy chart, along with a timeline and written 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: October 26, 2023**

**DUE: Draft: Allies, Constituents and Opponents: November 9, 2023**

**DUE: Draft: Targets, Tactics, Message: November 21, 2023**

**FINAL FULL ASSIGNMENT DUE: December 18, 2023**

**Attendance:** Class meets only once a week and I cover a lot.

When you miss class, you miss out on presentations, role plays, exercises and group discussions that are essential to learning how to organize—it's not something you can make up and I can't re-run everything I covered in class just for you, that's why attendance is mandatory. You should have no unexcused absences. Of course, I will understand if you are sick or have an emergency if you communicate with me about it in a timely manner. Believe it or not, I've had students miss almost the entire semester's worth of classes and then show up and ask if they can hand in the homework and pass the class!

**You must also arrive at class on time.** I know the buses make it hard, I know parking is difficult and mass transit can be delayed, please build that in so you can make it on time. I have some students who are habitually late and after a while, there are consequences.

### *One-on-Ones and Class Discussions:*

- The richness of our larger conversations will be dependent upon having done the reading and bringing thoughts and ideas to the larger discussion. Please don't be a "free rider", take part in our conversations and in your small groups.
- Each week at the start of class, students will engage in a one-on-one conversation with each other. I'll put a question up on the screen for you to discuss.

### **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**

Weekly Reaction Papers	45%
Essay One	20%
Essay Two	20%
Group Assignment	15%

### **Week 1: September 7, 2023**

#### **\*\*\*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&](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 and isn't.

## Week 2: September 14, 2023

*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:

Choose 3

- 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
- Strike Debt “Student Debt: Foreclosing on the Future” pp. 65-78
- What a Story of 1970s Abortion Activism Can Teach Us Today  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2022/06/the-janes-hbo-max-review-abortion-roe/661446/>
- “Reclaiming Our Financial Power”, Maurice BP Weeks, Racism is Profitable Podcast  
<https://www.liberationinagenerationaction.org/podcasts/reclaiming-our-financial-power/>.

Optional:

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

## Week 3: September 21, 2023

*Relations of Power*, continued

### Readings for Week 3:

**Read all three:**

- John Gaventa: *Power and Powerlessness*, Power and Participation 1-32
- Stephen Dumcomb: Cultural Hegemony, *Beautiful Trouble*, 222-223
- The Forge, “The Rise and Fall of Racial Capitalism”  
<https://forgeorganizing.org/issues/rise-and-fall-racial-capitalism>  
(choose one article)

**In addition, choose one:**

- Hahrie Han, Elizabeth McKenna, Michelle Oyakawa, *Prisms of the People*, pp. 69-83
- Jennifer Jihye Chun, *Organizing at the Margins: the Symbolic Politics of Labor in South Korea and the United States*, pp. 13-19
- Deepak Pateriya, “What’s Your Power Analysis? An Interview with Doran Schrantz,  
[https://forgeorganizing.org/article/interview-doran-schrantz?utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_medium=email](https://forgeorganizing.org/article/interview-doran-schrantz?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email)
- Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, Signaling Power and Signaling to Power, 189-222

Optional:

- Richard Healey and Sandra Hinson "Three Faces of Power"
- 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: September 28, 2023**

##### **Deadline for choosing an org to work with**

*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.

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
- Dara T. Mathis, "King's Message of Nonviolence has been distorted"
- Mark Engler and Paul Engler, *The Strategic Turn*, pp 1-27

Optional:

- Doug McAdam *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, pp. 125-142.
- 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, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/01/us/dream-act-gives-young-immigrants-a-political-voice.html>
- Michael Specter "How Act Up Changed America" a book review of *Let the Record Show...* by Sarah Schulman  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/06/14/how-act-up-changed-america>

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: October 5, 2023**

*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 relationship between them?

#### Readings for Week Five:

##### Choose 3:

- Rinku Sen, Picking the Good Fight, in *Stirring It Up*, 48-78
- Alicia Garza “The Meaning of Movement” in *The Purpose of Power: How We Come Together When We Fall Apart* pp. 141-148
- 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

##### Optional:

- Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*, chapters 3, 6 and 7
- Andrew Boyd and Joshua Kahn Russell, “Action Logic” pp 208-209 *Beautiful Trouble*
- Rinku Sen “Movement Moments” <http://www.colorlines.com/articles/occupying-organizing-and-movements-demand-both>
- John Harwood, “A Sea Change in Less Than 50 Years as Gay Rights Gained Momentum” *NYT* March 26, 2013, A16.

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

### **Week 6: October 12, 2023**

*Strategy Continued: Tactics and Actions, Organizer’s Math*

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:

##### **Read all 3:**

- Michal Gecan, *Going Public*, The Habit of Action, 49-99
- Jane McAlevey, *No Shortcuts*, Introduction, 1-22
- Alicia Garza, *The Purpose of Power* No Base, No Movement, 212-218

##### **In addition, choose one:**

- 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: October 19, 2023**

**FIRST ESSAY ON POWER DUE SEE PAGE THREE FOR ESSAY QUESTION AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Actions and the Act-Recruit-Train Cycle

Group Work on Goals, Org Considerations, Research Needs continued, due next week

Readings for week 7:

- Alicia Garza Chapters 6&7 “Trayvon, Obama and the Birth of Black Lives Matter” and “Rebellion and Resistance” in *The Purpose of Power* 95-137
- Cristina Jimenez and Peter Dreier, “How Undocumented Youth Moved the Immigrant Rights Movement” Gettysburg Case Study, Spring 2015

Optional:

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

**Week 8: October 26, 2023**

*Understanding People is Key to Organizing People*

Emotional Intelligence

Hand Model of the Brain

Triggers

Reappraisal

Coaching

How to be an anti-racist

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

Readings for Week 8:


**Choose 3:**

- Alicia Garza, “Imposter Syndrome and the Patriarchy” in *The Purpose of Power* 196-211
- JM Smucker, “Life of the Oppositional Group”, *Hegemony How-To*, 46-62
- Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*, *Movement Cultures*. 83-112
- 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”



- Ed Chambers, *Roots for Radicals*, “The World As It Is and the World As It Should Be” 21-43

Self-care- **In addition, read the following 2:**

- “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

### **Week 9: November 2, 2023**

*Building the Organization:* The essence of all effective organizing is recruitment, leadership development, having clear roles on teams and coaching. Drawing upon ideas and exercises from Northeast Action, the IAF, Marshall Ganz, Momentum, Cosecha, PowerLabs and others, the next four 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.

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

- Often Overlooked, The Power of Ritual in Organizing
- Michael Gecan, *Going Public*: Part I. The Habit of Relating: 19-32, 33-46
- 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
- Ibram X. Kendi *How to Be an Antiracist* pp. 3-23

### **Week 10: November 9, 2023**

*Building the Organization* continued

Due: Constituents, Allies and Opponents and Actual Research

#### Readings for Week 10:

##### **Read all 3:**

- Mike Gecan, *Going Public* Part III. The Habit of Organization 129-166
- McKenna and Han, *Groundbreakers*, Creating a Structure to Share Responsibility: Neighborhood Teams, 130-152
- Chris Surratt, “A Clean Slate” in *Small Groups for the Rest of Us*, 57-75

##### **In addition, choose one:**

- Janice Fine, Jill Hurst and Allison Porter “Solving for Growth” 1-15
- Janice Fine, “Is it Important for Members to Pay Dues?”
- Han, Chapter Five: Mobilizing, 123-151

Optional:

- 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: November 16, 2023**

*Building the Organization* continued  
Relational Organizing and Telling Our Stories

#### Readings for Week 11:

Choose 3

- 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: November 21, 2023 \*TUESDAY\***

*Circles of Commitment, Leadership Pathways, Systems and Structures*

Group work on Targets, Tactics and Message

#### Readings for Week 12

Choose 3:

- Bobo, Kendall and Max: *Organizing for Social Change*, Chapter 20 "Tactical Investigations" 232-274 (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
- Naomi Klein, "The Right is Right" *This Changes Everything*, pp 32-63
- Narrative Power Analysis, *Beautiful Trouble*, 244-245

Optional:

- David Vogel, "Why Businessmen Distrust Their State: The Political Consciousness of American Corporate Executives" *British Journal of Political Science*, 1978 pp. 45-78.
- Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, "Business Power and Social Policy: Employers and the Formation of the American Welfare State" pp 277-283

- 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: November 30, 2023**

Due: Essay on Organizing and its Elements

**Group Work on Targets, Tactics and Message**

*Building Teams*

Readings for Week 13:

- Wageman, et al, Give Your Leadership Team the Structure it Needs to Work, in *Senior Leadership Teams: What it takes to make them great* Chapter 1 pp.1-23 and When to Coach the Team pp. 165-177
- Hackman Interview, Why Teams Don’t Work, *Harvard Business Review*, pp 2-10
- Gordon Whitman, Stand Up! Team, Finding a Home Base in a Movement for Change pp. 83-108

**Week 14: December 7, 2023**

Final Strategy Chart, Campaign Structure and Pathways of Participation presentations