
Fall 2023
Thursdays, 2-5 pm
Room 133 Labor Education Center
Professor Janice Fine (fine@work.rutgers.edu)
Office Hours: Thursdays 9-11, 5-7 and by appointment
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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 4th 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,
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:


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
- 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

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
- 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

In addition, choose one:

- Hahrie Han, Elizabeth McKenna, Michelle Oyakawa, _Prisms of the People_, pp. 69-83
- Zeynep Tufekci, _Twitter and Tear Gas_, Signaling Power and Signaling to Power, 189-222

Optional:
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:


Handouts:

- Bobo, Kendall and Max, Organizing for Social Change “Developing a Strategy” 20-34, Fine Revised Strategy Chart and Blank strategy charts
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
- 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

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 McAlvey, 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
● 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
● 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
● Jane McAlevey, “What #MeToo Can Teach the Labor Movement”

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
● 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](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:


**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 and the New Organizing Institute, “Creating Shared Story: Story of Self,” “Story of Us” and “Story of Now”.

**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)
- 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:


**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

**Week 14: December 7, 2023**

Final Strategy Chart, Campaign Structure and Pathways of Participation presentations