University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
School of Social Work

Course Number: SOWO 882 (Section 957 – Winston-Salem)  
Course Title: Citizen Participation and Volunteer Involvement  
Semester: Spring 2008  
Day/time: Fridays, 9am – 11:50am  
Instructor: Mat Despard, MSW  
Tate-Turner-Kuralt Building, Room 402-E, UNC-Chapel Hill  
despard@email.unc.edu  
Website: Blackboard.unc.edu  (see SOWO882.001.SPRING2008)  
Office Hours: 12:00 - 1:00pm, Fridays (after class) in Winston-Salem

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course examines the role of grassroots organization in advocacy, self help and social development; the involvement of citizens in public and nonprofit planning; and the development of volunteer programs.

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES: At the end of the course, students should be able to:
1. Describe philosophical perspectives, value orientations (including the NASW Code of Ethics and the International Federation of Social Work Code), and theoretical understandings regarding citizen involvement in public and voluntary community development activities.

2. Identify and analyze the degree to which local public and voluntary programs currently involve citizens in their plans and policy-making.

3. Identify, practice, and evaluate methods and techniques for involving diverse populations in community planning and change.

4. Describe the role of voluntarism in citizen participation, and examine the effective integration of volunteers in service organizations.

5. Describe their personal philosophy, including ethical principles, for effectively facilitating citizen involvement in social planning and economic development.

6. Demonstrate personal skills as facilitators of citizen participation and volunteer involvement with a focus on supporting diversity and enabling members from all sectors of the community to participate in its positive development.
C. REQUIRED TEXTS AND ADDITIONAL READINGS: The VeneKlasen & Miller required text is available through the Health Sciences Bookstore at UNC-Chapel Hill in the form of a course pack. Additional required readings (see class schedule below) will be available online in one of three ways:

1) Via Blackboard under “Assignments” (indicated by BB)
2) Via University Libraries online (indicated by UL)
3) Directly from the internet (when a web address is provided)

Some additional material may be given to you as handouts in the class prior to the material being assigned.

Required Text:

Recommended Texts:


A longer list of recommended readings is available on Blackboard under Course Documents.

D. EXPANDED DESCRIPTION AND TEACHING/LEARNING METHODS: We will focus on current methods for involving citizens in public and voluntary organizations and the philosophy and values that guide those methods. Students will analyze and practice methods and techniques for developing the capacity of people to be involved in decisions that affect their lives, especially for people most often excluded in such decisions. The course also examines volunteer involvement in both nonprofit and public organizations,
emphasizing reasons for volunteering and how volunteers are incorporated into the work of the organization.

The class format will include readings, lectures, videos, discussions, class exercises, outside speakers, and field experiences. Students are expected to come prepared for class having completed the required readings. I will be listening for students’ questions and perspectives about the readings, whether or not I specifically cover a particular reading.

Simulation: to help make course content come alive, we will act as a group of citizens that lives in Winston-Salem that has concerns about their quality of life that they wish to address through local government. We will study the Winston-Salem City Council, Forsyth County Board of Commissioners and Forsyth County Board of Education and invite its members to class to speak with us about citizen participation. We will monitor certain community issues and develop and practice strategies and tactics for how our citizen group can make a difference by closely watching the work of a major citizen group called CHANGE – an Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) affiliate in Winston-Salem. This will require active participation from students, including the completion of certain “homework” assignments.

Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course should notify the instructor if they wish to have special accommodations in instructional format or other factors considered.

E. WRITING GUIDELINES: For all written assignments, APA style must be used and students are expected to apply concepts, theory and practice skills from the literature listed in this syllabus (an expanded reading list is available on Blackboard). Failure to do so will result in a reduced grade. Please refer to the APA Style Guide and the SSW Writing Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism, and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments.

Your bibliography for any of the three written assignments should contain no more than one third of its citations from Internet sources that are not generally recognized academic journals or government or foundation reports.

The following web sites provide additional information:
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html) (general information about documentation using APA style, 5th Ed.)
- [http://www.bartleby.com/141](http://www.bartleby.com/141) (e-version of Strunk's *The Elements of Style*, a valuable writing resource)
F. HONOR CODE: It is the responsibility of every student to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing in actions involving the academic processes of this class. Students will properly attribute sources used in preparing written work and will sign a pledge on all graded coursework certifying that no unauthorized assistance has been received or given in the completion of the work. All written assignments must contain a signed pledge from you stating that, “I have not given or received aid in preparing this written work.” Credit will not be awarded for work that does not contain this pledge.

G. GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS: Students will be evaluated based on the following:

- Class Attendance and Participation 20%
- Assignment 1: “Speak Out” and paper 20%
- Assignment 2: Facilitation and Analysis of Exercise 25%
- Assignment 3: Case Study 35%

The School of Social Work uses the following grading system: 94-100 = H; 80-93 = P; 70-79 = L; and 69 and below = F.

| Note: For Assignments 1-3, students have the option of presenting alternatives to the instructor for completing each assignment that meet their learning objectives as long as the assignment idea meets the objectives of the assignment and involves roughly the same amount of work. The instructor will review each request on a case-by-case basis. |

Class Attendance and Participation (20%)

Students are expected to come prepared for class having done the readings and able and willing to contribute to our learning experience through active participation in class discussions and small group exercises and other learning activities. While all students will have a public speaking experience (see Assignment 3), students that are quieter learners yet who want to illustrate that they are actively engaged have the option of posting reflections based on class readings and discussions on Blackboard under the “Discussion Board” section.

An important part of this grade will be the completion of certain homework assignments as part of the class simulation (see above).
Any unexcused absences will hurt this part of the grade. If a student has an extenuating circumstance (such as illness) that prevents them from attending class, it is their responsibility to notify the instructor before the class by phone or email.

**Assignment 1: Speak Out (20%)**

**Objectives:**
1) To articulate a concern and position on a current community or social issue for which you have a self-interest.

2) To gain experience and perspective in adopting a public advocacy role as a citizen.

**Due Date:** You may complete this assignment at any time, but no later than **February 29, 2008** (4-6 page paper). Students will share their speak outs in class on this date as well. This will be in informal discussion format – a formal presentation is not required.

**Requirements:** Choose one of the following methods of informing the public or a policy making body about an issue of concern to you. The concern you choose must be something of personal importance, such as concern about how you and other parents are treated by the staff of your child’s school, the threat of crime in your neighborhood or the lack of good job opportunities for young people in your community. You must identify a **self-interest**, which can either be based on how an issue impacts you directly (such as crime in your neighborhood) OR on how an issue is meaningful to you based on your personal values (such as a concern about homelessness in your community).

The methods from which you can choose include:

a) Present a statement concerning your chosen issue at a municipal, county or state public hearing, **OR**

b) Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper concerning your chosen issue, **OR**

c) Present a radio or TV editorial concerning your chosen issue, **OR**

d) Some other form of public advocacy concerning an injustice that is approved by the instructor.

Your position should shed "light" rather than "heat" on the issue and should be shared with the class, (share the published version if it gets published). In conjunction with this activity a **short paper** (4-6 pages) is required that includes the following sections:
a. **Issue summary:** What is the issue of concern to you? Why is it a problem? What evidence can you point to that shows that it is a problem?
b. **Self-Interest:** On what basis do you have an interest in this issue? How does it affect you?
c. **Personal Impact & Reflection:** How did the speak out experience affect you? How did it or do you think if affected others? What lessons can you draw from this experience in terms of the role of citizens taking a role as advocates?

Your paper should include appropriate attachments and/or media that indicate the speak out that you completed (i.e. letter to the editor, CD transcript or recording, public testimony notes, etc.)

Your analysis will be evaluated based on persuasive value, articulation of the chosen issue, clear identification of self-interest, and the thoughtfulness of the reflection section. The paper should incorporate required course readings and/or other scholarly sources.

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**Assignment 2: Facilitation and Analysis of a Participatory Exercise (25%)**

**Objectives:**

1) Apply tactics for facilitating citizen participation.
2) Understand how social workers can help citizen groups build capacity to achieve the change they desire.

**Due Date:** You may complete this assignment at any time, but no later than March 28, 2008 (4-6 page paper)

**Requirements:** Students will choose an exercise from the book *A New Weave of Power, People & Politics*. Practice the exercise by facilitating it with an organization or group with whom you are involved in any capacity (as a participant, volunteer, employee or intern), including a faith community, special interest group, neighborhood association or civic organization. Choose an exercise that is relevant to a need the group may have, or that can help them learn new ways of communicating with each other for focus or problem resolution. Write a short paper (4-6 pages, excluding references and appendices), responding to the following questions:

a. **Exercise Used & Client:** Identify the exercise and the group with whom you practiced the exercise. Indicate how long it took to facilitate and describe the problem/focus with which you helped them. Describe why you chose this particular exercise to use with the group.

b. **Effectiveness:** How effective was the exercise for stimulating inclusive participation? In what ways did the exercise help your group, or not? Based on your attempt to stimulate participation, what factors do you believe facilitate or hinder this group’s ability to strengthen participation? How would you modify this exercise for future use?
c. **Diversity:** How did issues of difference - race, class, culture, gender, sexual orientation, etc. – affect this exercise? Are there aspects of the exercise that facilitate appreciation of diverse perspectives? Are there aspects of the exercise that transcend diversity?

Assignment 3: **Case Study (35%)**

**Objectives:**
1) Describe and analyze the ability of citizens to organize around an issue(s) of concern.
2) Describe and analyze the effectiveness of strategies and tactics used by a citizen group to achieve quality of life improvements.

**Due Date:**
- Outline due February 8, 2008.
- Final paper (10-15 pages) due April 25, 2008 (Group presentations will take place April 18 & 25).

**Requirements:** Students will write a **Case Study** that describes and analyzes how citizens participate in efforts to improve their quality of life through neighborhood associations, civic groups, advocacy groups, advisory committees or nonprofit health or human service organizations.

Students have three (3) different options for completing this assignment, with varying degrees of collaboration with other students:

**Option A:** **Group Project:** Students will work in teams of two or three persons based on their geographic proximity to one another and/or shared interests to complete a case study on a group or organization.

**Option B:** **Collaborative Project:** Students will work in teams of two or three persons. Each student will select a group or organization for the case study, yet work together to do a presentation and complete the required sections of the paper. An additional section comparing and contrasting results from the two or more groups or organizations will be required.

**Option C:** **Individual Project:** Students will complete their own case study of an organization. However, in addition to completing the assignment requirements, students choosing this option will also need to complete a negotiated task or limited project (“service extension”) that helps the group or organization meet an objective (i.e. conduct research about local services or resources or legislation, facilitate a planning session, assist with a grant proposal, help plan a special event, etc.). This task
should be meaningful to the group or organization but time limited and feasible for the student.

Students will form their own groups for Options A & B and can seek help from the instructor to form their groups if needed. Exactly how each option is exercised can be discussed and negotiated with the instructor.

**Note:** If for some reason it is not possible for a student to interact with a group or organization in their community, they have the option, with instructor approval, of choosing a group or organization with whom to correspond and interview. It will be important, however, to get permission to review meeting minutes and other documents that will be needed to complete the assignment requirements (see below) and it may not be possible to negotiate a service extension without having direct contact.

**Principles of Engagement**

To complete this assignment, it is necessary to get the permission of a group or organization to observe them. The group or organization should clearly understand the purpose of the assignment and how the case study results will be used. Confidentiality should be strictly upheld and students should consider making some type of service contribution (in addition to the service extension described with Option C) to the group or organization, depending on the circumstances. Please be sensitive to the principle of reciprocity: the group or organization should feel that they get something out of the experience.

**Types of Groups or Organizations**

Case studies may examine a group of citizens that is formed by state or local government or a nonprofit organization (e.g. CFACs, citizen advisory councils, client advisory boards); grassroots/citizen initiated (e.g. neighborhood association, local chapter of NAMI, Alliance for Economic Justice); or a combination government/private organization (e.g. Partnership for Young Children), that has formed in response to a community issue(s) of concern. The group or organization you select must be comprised of citizens – not paid, professional service providers (e.g., you could not select a coalition of agency staff representatives concerned about homelessness).

**Assignment Requirements**

The case study should address the following:

a. **Goals/Objectives:** What is the change that this group seeks to achieve? What are the quality of life improvements that they want to be true?
b. **Stakeholders:** Identify the group(s) of people (residents of a neighborhood, a group of people with shared circumstances, etc.) that have a stake in these desired quality of life improvements and analyze the extent to which they participate in the organization.

c. **Participation:** Describe and analyze the efforts of the organization to increase the capacity of people who are affected by adverse conditions (stakeholders) to become involved in doing something to improve their quality of life. Include the extent to which these stakeholders make decisions that affect the organization. Describe the lessons you or your group learned about citizen participation/volunteer involvement from your observations and analysis.

d. **Strategies and Tactics:** Describe and analyze the strategies and tactics that the group or organization uses to achieve quality of life improvements. Besides meeting, what do they do to seek the change that they desire? Be sure to relate these strategies and tactics to your course readings.

e. **Impact:** How successful is this group or organization in achieving desired quality of life improvements? Incorporating theory and practice skills and concepts from the course readings, what are the factors that facilitate or hinder the group or organization’s impact?

f. **Capacity Building/Social Work Role:** Incorporating theory and practice skills and concepts from the course readings, what ideas do you have for how this group or organization could strengthen or improve participation and its strategy and tactics? As a professional social worker, how would you go about working with this group or organization to help them improve in these respects?

g. **Contrast and Comparison (Option B only):** Based on the sections completed above, write a collaborative section that analyzes and summarizes the key similarities and differences between or among the groups chosen for the case study.

h. **Service Extension (Option C only):** Finally, describe what your group did for the organization to repay them for allowing you to engage in learning with them, (helped with a fundraiser or annual meeting, collected material for their use, provided facilitation skills for a meeting, etc.)

An outline of the Case Study is due February 8. The outline should contain your team’s major points of inquiry, the methods you are using to collect the data about the organization, some listing of the literature that is guiding your observation and analysis, and the role that each team member is playing in the development of the case study.
Each team will present the results of their findings during the final two class periods (April 18 and 25). Students may invite representatives from the host organizations to join us during the team presentations.

Group presentations should be planned for 20-25 minutes and individual presentations for 10-15 minutes. Plan to use visual material, handouts, maps, charts, etc. to quickly and graphically convey your understandings and perspectives. Each presentation will be followed by a brief question and answer session.

**The written Case Study will be due the last class – April 25.** It should be 10 to 15 pages (not including attachments), double spaced and in APA format. Attachments can be included such as brochures, charts, graphs and other illustrative items.

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**Note:** "TEXT" refers to readings from the required text for this course; **BB** = Blackboard; **UL** = University Libraries (online);

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 11</td>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understand course objectives and format</td>
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<td>• Learn about each other’s interests and learning goals</td>
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<td>• Define our learning environment</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Class 2</th>
<th>What is Citizen Participation?</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 18</td>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Explain principles and key concepts associated with citizen participation</td>
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<td>• Describe varying degrees of citizen participation</td>
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**Homework Reports**  
**Assignment #1:** Role of Local Government

**Readings:**  
**TEXT:**  
*Chapter 1:* Politics & Advocacy, pp. 11-24.  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 3</th>
<th>January 25</th>
<th>Social Work and Citizen Participation, Part 1</th>
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| Objectives | • Describe the connection between social justice and citizen participation  
                       • Explain the importance of consciousness raising among citizens and consumers  
                       • Critically examine the tension between citizen and voluntary action and professional services |
| Readings: | Chapter 4: Constructing Empowering Strategies, pp. 59-78.  

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<tr>
<th>Class 4</th>
<th>February 1</th>
<th>Social Work and Citizen Participation, Part 2</th>
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| Objectives | • Identify professional roles related to citizen participation  
                       • Articulate how social workers can help and hinder citizen participation  
                       • Describe best practices of community engagement |
| Activity | Field Trip – Winston-Salem City Hall 101 N. Main Street, Winston-Salem  
                       Start time: 9:00am |
### How to Promote Citizen Participation, Part 1

**Objectives**
- Understand social capital, how it is developed and how it relates to citizen participation
- Articulate principles of asset-based community development

**Homework**

**Assignment #2: Local Government Officials**

**Readings:**
- Gittell, M., Ortega-Bustamante, I. & Steffy, T. (1999). Women creating social capital (Chapter 3). In Women creating social capital and social change (pp. 61-77; and 98-103). New York : Howard Samuels State Management and Policy Center , The Graduate School and The University Center of The City University of New York . (BB)

### How to Promote Citizen Participation, Part 2

**Objectives**
- Use group decision-making techniques
- Explain what works to increase citizen participation
- Identify factors that promote participation

**Readings:**


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<th>Class 7</th>
<th>Power</th>
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<td>February 22</td>
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| **Objectives** | - Identify different types of power in a community  
- Explain how power is distributed and used in a community  
- Apply decision-making theories to community examples |

**Homework**  
**Reports**  
**Assignment #3:** Community Issues

**Readings:**  
**TEXT:** Chapter 3: Power & Empowerment, pp. 39-58


*A nation of clients* (pp. 91-100) (BB)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 8</th>
<th>Issues and Strategies For Citizen-Led Change, Part 1</th>
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<td>February 29</td>
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| **Objectives** | - Understand how citizen groups identify and define issues and problems and set priorities for community change  
- Explain how citizen-groups develop strategies for community change |

**Readings:**  
**TEXT:** Chapter 5: The Basics of Planning for Citizen-Centered Advocacy, pp. 81-90
Chapter 9: Planning Moment #4: Analyzing Problems and Selecting Priority Issues, pp. 147-162


Class 9 March 7
Issues and Strategies For Citizen-Led Change, Part 2

Objectives
- Explain how citizen-groups develop strategies for community change
- Describe community organizing as a citizen participation strategy

Readings:


*** NO CLASS ON MARCH 14 - SPRING BREAK ***
*** NO CLASS ON MARCH 21 – GOOD FRIDAY HOLIDAY ***

Class 11 March 28
Issues and Strategies For Citizen-Led Change, Part 3

* Assignment 2 Due *

Objectives
- Describe various advocacy tactics citizen groups can use to pursue community change
- Demonstrate how to hold public officials accountable to citizens

Homework Reports
Assignment #4: Role of Citizen Participation

Readings:


### Class 12  
April 4  
Volunteers & Voluntary Organizations, Part 1

**Objectives**
- Understand the degree and types of voluntarism in the U.S.
- Identify reasons for volunteering and how to sustain voluntarism in organizations.

**Readings:**


### Class 13  
April 11  
Volunteers & Voluntary Organizations, Part 2

**Objectives**
- Explain how all members of the community can and should be involved and supported in voluntary organizations
- Identify overlooked sources of voluntarism in disenfranchised communities

**Activities:**  
- Case Study Presentations

**Readings:**


(BB)

Sherr, M.E. (2008). The context-specific optimal partnership model (Chapter 7) and Putting the context-specific optimal partnership model into action (Chapter 8). In Social work with volunteers. Chicago: Lyceum. (BB)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 14</th>
<th>April 18</th>
<th>Case Study Presentations</th>
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Readings: None.

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<tr>
<th>Class 15</th>
<th>April 25</th>
<th>Review and Course Evaluation</th>
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<td>Case Study Presentations – continued</td>
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<td>* Assignment 3 - Final Paper Due *</td>
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Objectives

- Review what we have learned about citizen participation and how we intend to apply it in social work practice
- Discuss the experience and effectiveness of our learning process

Readings: None.