

Instructor:	Dr. Sarah Chivers
Availability:	Flexible appointments (in person, by phone or Zoom)
Phone:	503-501-8565 (if text, please include your name)
Email:	chivers2@pdx.edu
Course Location:	Karl Miller Building 470
Course Meeting Schedule:	Mondays 2pm-3:50pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores sociological theories of social change and the relationship between change and the pursuit of transformative justice through community organizing. Community organizing seeks to involve people in collective action to address inequality and oppression. We use a historicizing vantage point to consider the collective actions of social groups and social networks as they create shared meaning through culture, challenge hierarchy and the distribution of power, and create new patterns of production and resource mobilization. We consider case studies of community organizing in Black and Indigenous-led liberation movements, union-led movements, student-led movements, debtor movements, and environmental movements.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn key aspects of community organizing.
- Students will learn how to build solidarity within social groups in community.
- Students will learn how to build coalitions and networks between groups in community.
- Students will learn how to organize economic and political campaigns.
- By the end of the course, students gain an understanding of theories and research about social change and utilize the tools to organize for power in their own communities.

This course is organized in ways to help students achieve several expected learning outcomes of the Toulon School's Bachelors in Community Development degree program.

- **Think critically using social theories about community and community building:** apply theories to understand community and the social forces driving it; evaluate one's own perspectives.
- **Understand the significance of place:** appreciate the sense of place that exists in all communities; observe the ways in which the natural and built environment of a community affects its social structures; and observe the ways in which locality is important to personal identity in a given community.
- **Uphold the values of democratic decision-making and participatory planning:** facilitate people in the community identifying and establishing assets and needs; include the public in defining the public good; and encourage self-governance.
- **Commit to civic engagement and civic responsibility:** be informed about local issues; act in reciprocity; fill a community organizer's role; and be entrepreneurial in support of the development of communities
- **Build human capital:** help to build community leadership; impact the development of others in a positive way; build community consensus; and facilitate communication to support community solidarity

- **Act to promote social justice:** recognize and appreciate social, cultural, and economic diversity; work against discrimination based on facts such as social class and race; work to empower the disenfranchised; and commit to inclusionary practice.
- **Develop an international perspective and understanding:** recognize the diverse assets, interests, needs, perceptions and contexts of the global community, especially the Global South; be familiar with the unique contexts and differences in international community development practice; commit to address actions that negatively impact the global community.

LEARNING MATERIALS ~ All materials are available on Canvas in Weekly Modules

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS ~ Choose one from OPTION A, B, or C

- ❖ **OPTION A: Emergent Strategy Journal** ~ 6 activities and writing entries that involve exploring and reflecting on aspects of your identity, interpersonal relationships, and existing organizing skills to activate your agency and power. **Due by email on or before June 5th.**
- ❖ **OPTION B: Community Organizing Journal** ~ 6 activities and writing entries to create social ties with other groups, explore a local community-based organization doing work you are passionate about, and help to build collective action. Journal about your experience organizing with one community-based or labor union organization focused on a particular campaign this term. What have you seen change, what does the future look like? **Due by email on or before June 5th.**
- ❖ **OPTION C: Direct Action Journal** ~ Show up to 3 different community events in April and May. Record your observations (notes, photos, audio, video – with permission!) of the groups, organizations, and networks involved in the event(s) and their collective demands; identify the target/s of the direct action; interview other participants of the events; reflect on the tactics and strategies used by organizers and identify any gains/wins made from the collective actions. Write a 5–6-page paper that analyzes these events by applying at least three concepts we have discussed this term.

COURSE SCHEDULE ~ Check your email every week for updates!

Week 1 – Welcome + Personal Introductions

Read: William Gamson: Constructing Social Protest article

Watch: Concerned Student 1950

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxJLvMxVFdQ>

Discuss: What tools of community organizing did students at University of Missouri use to challenge racial injustices on their campus? Which strategies and tactics were most effective and why?

Week 2 – Read: The Intercept: The Origin of Student Debt

<https://theintercept.com/2022/08/25/student-loans-debt-reagan/>

Read: The Debt Collective: Debt Abolition

<https://debtcollective.org/what-we-do/debt-abolition/>

Watch: Astra Taylor: You are Not a Loan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWSkDCx8gH4>

Discuss: How are students leading a social movement to abolish student debt? In what direction do you see the Supreme Court case going in June? How do you think existing unions of debtors will respond?

Week 3 – Read: Instructor Notes Community Care and Mutual Aid

Read: Instructor Notes Emergent Strategy

Watch: Adrienne Marie Brown: The Future was Collective (30 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qiFPEWDDDAc>

Discuss: What community issues you are most passionate about? What are you committed to changing in this world?

Week 4 – Read: AMB: Emergent Strategy pp 1-50

Watch: Homeland: Four Portraits of Native Action

Discuss: What are the environmental threats faced by the Cheyenne, Gwich'in, Navajo, and Penobscot communities? What organizing tools, strategies, and tactics did each community use to challenge the environmental racism brought into their communities by imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy?

Week 5 – Read: AMB: Emergent Strategy, pp 51-102

Read: Instructor Notes Youth led Organizing

Read: Cross Cultural Narrative of SW Washington

Participate: Possible May Day Event

Week 6 – Read: AMB: Emergent Strategy, pp 103-66

Read: Instructor Notes Racial Justice Organizing

Watch: Disarm PSU 101

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozu5Ym0xuDw>

Discuss: How has PSU responded to student demands to Disarm PSU? How has the city of Portland responded to calls to defund the police and make economic investments in community development?

Week 7 – Read: JM: No Shortcuts, chapters 1 & 2

Watch: Maquilapolis: City of Factories

https://search.library.pdx.edu/permalink/01ALLIANCE_PSU/1sk2t0o/alma99902994246001853

Discuss: In what ways do economic relations shape social relationships in Tijuana? What organizing tools did workers in maquiladoras use challenge the environmental injustices harming their community?

Week 8 – Read: JM: No Shortcuts, chapter 7

Read: Instructor Notes Persuading those in Power

Watch: The Rebirth of Dudley Street

https://search.library.pdx.edu/permalink/01ALLIANCE_PSU/1sk2t0o/alma99236048301853

Discuss: How did residents of Dudley Street build collective power to revitalize their community? What tools did they use to maintain ownership and control over the decision-making and resource mobilization in their community? How did residents ensure community power in the future?

Week 9 – No Class (Memorial Day)

Week 10 – Last week - course wrap up

ALL JOURNALS DUE BY JUNE 5th TO CHIVERS2@PDX.EDU

GRADING SCALE

Course grades will be assigned on the student's proportion of total points based on the standard Portland State University grading scheme: 93-100%(A), 90-92%(A-), 87-89%(B+), 83-86%(B), 80-82%(B-), 77-79%(C+), 73-76%(C), 70-72%(C-), 67-69%(D+), 63-66%(D), 60-62%(D-) and below 60%(F).

- An 'A' assignment demonstrates original thought and synthesis of ideas in a cogent and clearly written manner. Outstanding work.
- A 'B' assignment offers above average analysis with appropriate evidence to support ideas and is clearly written. Good work.
- A 'C' assignment shows a level of understanding where analysis is limited to basic arguments and writing is competent. Adequate work.
- A 'D' assignment misrepresents the material or is so poorly written that as presented, obscures the analysis. Inadequate work.

Course Assignment Make-up Policy

The world is in turmoil. We are entering uncharted territory. I want to do what is needed to support student success. Please communicate as best you can (and as soon as possible) about situations that may delay your work or present challenges to completing this course. Let's work together to find a solution.

PSU Policies & Resources

Drop/Withdraw Deadline

<http://pdx.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2017-2018/Bulletin/Undergraduate-Studies/Grading-System-for-Undergraduates/Drops-and-withdrawals>

Disability Access Statement

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>

Safe Campus Statement

Portland State University desires to create a safe campus for our students. As part of that mission, PSU requires all students to take the learning module entitled Creating a Safe Campus: Preventing Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Assault. See <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/safe-campus-module>. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources on PSU's Enrollment Management & Student Affairs: Sexual Prevention & Response website at <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault>

Student Food Security

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact Committee for Improving Student Food Security for support at foodhelp@pdx.edu. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.

Title IX Reporting

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. Please be aware that as a faculty member, I have the responsibility to

report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals on PSU's Enrollment Management & Student Affairs: Sexual Prevention & Response website at <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault>. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module "Creating a Safe Campus: Preventing Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Assault" in the "My Courses" section of D2L.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital part of the educational experience at PSU. Please see the [PSU Student Code of Conduct](#) for the university's policy on academic dishonesty. A confirmed violation of that Code in this course may result in failure of the course.

Cultural Resource Centers

The Cultural Resource Centers (CRCs) create a student-centered inclusive environment that enriches the university experience. We honor diversity, explore social justice issues, celebrate cultural traditions, and foster student identities, success, and leadership. Our centers include the Multicultural Student Center, La Casa Latina Student Center, Native American Student & Community Center, Pan African Commons, Pacific Islander, Asian, Asian American Student Center and the Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian program. We provide student leadership, employment, and volunteer opportunities; student resources such as computer labs, event, lounge and study spaces; and extensive programming. All are welcome!