



## **Community Organizing 101--Instructor’s Syllabus Guide**

**Prepared by Danny HoSang<sup>1</sup> for the Community Learning Partnership**

### **OVERVIEW**

This syllabus guide is a resource for instructors preparing to teach some version of “Community Organizing<sup>2</sup> 101”—an introductory course designed to familiarize students with the basic ideas, practices, history and theory of community organizing in the United States. It is equally useful for community partners working with faculty in planning classes and experiential learning on community organizing.

Different versions of this kind of course have been taught for many years in social work schools, public policy departments, planning departments, sociology departments, community economic development units and other entities, at both two and four year colleges and in graduate programs.

This guide is designed to be both comprehensive and flexible. It includes detailed resources on course books and readings, sample learning units, and examples of course design and structure.

It is intended to serve as a resource guide for instructors developing or revising their syllabi. Examples of other course syllabi can be found on both the CLP site ([clpclp.org/curriculum](http://clpclp.org/curriculum)) and the extensive [COMM-ORG archive of syllabi](#), organized by topic.

**N.B. Since there are many aspects to good community organizing and social change strategies, the topics covered in this syllabus guide could easily be covered in greater depth by dividing them into two courses on community organizing – one an intro CO 101 and the other a more advanced CO 102.**

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Martinez HoSang formerly was with the Center for Third World Organizing where he worked extensively with grassroots community and racial justice organizations. He currently is Associate Professor and Ethnic Studies Department Head at the University of Oregon.

<sup>2</sup> Different colleges use a variety of titles, depending on the instructor’s preference and the department which offers it. CLP affiliates use “community organizing”, “social justice leadership”, “community development” and other titles to denote what this paper means by “community organizing”.

## Community Organizing 101—Instructor’s Syllabus Guide

In community colleges and universities affiliated with the Community Learning Partnership, courses in community organizing are one key element in an integrated series of courses and opportunities to learn from practical experience. Other courses<sup>3</sup> cover at a minimum Culture and Identity, the Region’s Political Economy and History of Social Change, a Practicum/Capstone Project and most also include courses on specific change issues, expanding certain sets of skills and other subjects.

All instructors, whether in graduate seminars or introductory courses for first-time college students, need to think about ensuring that the syllabus and course is both accessible and challenging. For community college faculty in particular, this often means taking into account a broad range of learning styles, backgrounds and experiences.

The CLP site also has several useful resources related to adult education and popular education in general which may be useful to instructors, including the following:

- **Jane Vella.** “Creating a Safe Environment for Learning”-- Chapter Five from *Learning to Listen: Learning to Teach* (Vella) on the importance of creating a safe space for learning when educating adults
- **Jane Vella.** “Learners as Decision Makers: Harnessing the Power of Self Through Respect.” Describes ways to engage adult learners in making decisions about the setting and content for their workshops and formal learning experiences.
- **Jane Vella.** “Twelve Principles for Effective Adult Learning.” Vella outlines the basics of her principles for adult education, which draw from Paulo Freire’s dialogue approach. Throughout this book, she uses interesting case examples from her work worldwide, in a range of community-based settings.
- **Paulo Freire.** *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: Chapter 1
- **Joan Minieri and Paul Getsos.** “Training for Trainers: A Guide to Designing Interactive Trainings Using Popular Education Techniques.” A how-to guide to training design, based on Freire’s dialogue approach to popular education. Includes exercises for workshops on training design, as well as worksheets for developing trainings.

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<sup>3</sup> Names for these courses also vary from one college to another.

**Community Organizing 101: History & Practice**  
*Instructor’s Syllabus Guide*



**A. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An effective syllabus typically includes a brief explanation of the goals of the course, the main questions that students will engage, and an overview of the readings and class activities. Two to four short paragraphs are generally sufficient.

**EXAMPLE:** This course focuses broadly on the history of social movements, social change efforts and community organizing, both in U.S. and other countries. The course helps students engage several fundamental questions: What is community organizing and how can we trace its origins and development in the US? What key assumptions lie at the center of this approach to social and political change, and what differences and divisions characterize the field? Finally, what do community organizers do in their day-to-day work, and how does one become a community organizer?

The class explores community organizing history, theories and practice, as well as models of social change through a mix of skills-based workshops, guest speakers from local social justice groups (as available), theoretical readings, and practicum-based work. It is designed for students with research interests in community-based organizing, as well as those considering career and leadership opportunities in a variety of nonprofit and social change fields.

The readings draw from a variety of political commitments and perspectives and are designed to help us all reflect on our own ideas and worldviews within a shared and constructive framework. Across the term, the course pays particular attention to the ways that race, class, gender, sexuality, indigeneity and other forms of difference shape privilege and power. Many of the class sessions incorporate small group activities and other collaborative approaches and activities.

*The goals of this course are:*

- (1) To familiarize students with the history, development and basic assumptions of community organizing
- (2) To introduce students to some of the basic capacities central to community organizing work, including outreach, listening, building, relationships, issue development, strategy and campaign development, leadership development and movement building through readings and workshop style exercises.

- (3) To expose students to a range of community organizing approaches and issues taken up by social justice organizations in the region.
- (4) To provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their own political development, assumptions and understanding in relationship to the principles of community organizing.

## B. BOOKS

There are now several books that can give students an overview of the principles and key methods of community organizing. Most are quite accessible and require no background in the field, though they presume different levels of literacy levels. Some are written as “how to” guides for organizers and focus on nuts-and-bolts skills for organizers and organizing campaigns. Others combine organizing and social change theory with a discussion of practice.

An advantage of using a text in addition to a set of readings or other articles is once students are oriented to the author(s) basic point of view and writing style, it can be easier for them to assimilate new information.

The list below includes books which (1) provide a basic overview of community organizing in the US; and (2) are currently available in print as paperbacks. The listed price indicates the Amazon.com price in 2012.

- **Joan Minieri & Paul Getsos.** *Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community* (Jossey-Bass, 2007)--\$25.
  - An essential resource for grassroots organizers and leaders, students of activism and advocacy, and anyone trying to increase the civic participation of ordinary people. Co-authored by former Program Director of the Community Learning Partnership. Links both skill-based trainings and content as well as many examples of effective organizing campaigns.
- **Rinku Sen,** *Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy.* (Jossey-Bass, 2003). \$25
  - Examines the primary components of community organizing, using case examples of several initiatives to organize women, including exploring race and gender in organizing. Worksheets and tools provided.
- **Saul Alinsky,** *Rules for Radicals.* Vintage, NY (1971)--\$11
  - Classic text outlining the main ideas of pragmatic radicalism authored by a key figure in the history of community organizing.
- **Szakos & Szakos,** *We Make Change: Community Organizers Talk About What They Do—And Why.* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2007) --\$28
  - Fourteen in-depth profiles tell the life stories of a cross-section of the diverse people who choose the life of an organizer. Other chapters, focused on issues of organizing, are tapestries of experience woven from the 81 interviews the authors conducted. Provides a useful introduction to what organizers do in their daily lives.
- **Michael Jacoby Brown.** *Building Powerful Community Organizations: A Personal Guide to Creating Groups That Can Solve Problems and Change the World* (Long Haul Press, 2007) \$14

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- A guidebook with stories, personal exercises and lessons learned from direct experience. Provides worksheets, activities and includes an annotated bibliography.
- **Mark Warren and Karen Mapp.** *A Match on Dry Grass: Community Organizing as a Catalyst for School Reform* (Oxford, 2011)--\$24
  - Case studies of community organizing throughout the United States to improve and reform public education. Not necessarily an introductory text, but provides excellent examples and descriptions of contemporary organizing campaigns. Companion website also available.
- **Si Kahn.** *Creative Community Organizing: A Guide for Rabble-Rousers, Activists, and Quiet Lovers of Justice* (Berrett-Koehler, 2008)--\$13
  - “Organizer and musician Si Kahn regales us with entertaining, funny, sad, dramatic, and inspiring tales of his work in some of the most important progressive struggles of the past fifty years — the Southern civil rights movement, the Harlan County coal miners' strike, the fights to abolish prison privatization and immigrant family detention.
- **Midwest Academy,** *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists* (4th Edition—Forum Press, 2010)--\$37
  - A comprehensive manual produced by the Midwest Academy for grassroots organizers working for social, racial, environmental and economic justice at the local, state and national levels. Includes skill-based chapters with extensive practical examples.
- **Larry R. Salomon,** *Roots of Justice: Stories of Organizing in Communities of Color* (Josey-Bass, 1998)--\$30.
  - “These are the stories of people who fought back against exploitation and injustice—and won. From the Zoot Suiters who refused to put up with abuse at the hands of the Navy, to the women who organized the welfare rights movement of the 1970s.” Provides useful historic examples of organizing in communities of color in the US.
- **Eric Mann.** *Playbook for Progressives: 16 Qualities of a Successful Organizer* (Beacon Press 2011--\$12
  - “This comprehensive guide articulates pragmatically what is required in the often mystifying and rarely explained on-the-ground practice of organizing. Mann distills lessons he learned from over forty years as an organizer, as well as from other organizers within the civil rights, labor, LGBT, economic justice, and environmental movements.” Especially useful for connecting the political dimensions of organizing to effective strategy and tactics, especially in relation to the role of the organizer.
- **Lee Staples.** *Roots to Power: A Manual for Grassroots Organizing* (Praeger, 2004)--\$25
  - “This how-to manual presents strategies, tactics, methods, and techniques that community members can use to set their own goals, select issues, campaign for these issues, recruit members, develop leaders, hold effective meetings, conduct research, lobby politicians and legislators, and get the word out to the media.”
- **Loretta Pyles.** *Progressive Community Organizing: A Critical Approach for a Globalizing World* (Routledge 2009)--\$42
  - “This interdisciplinary textbook offers a comprehensive view of the central issues facing progressive community organizers who seek to mobilize those negatively impacted by local, national, and global social policies and practices. Intended for

both undergraduate and graduate students in social work, it aims to articulate the depth of the subject by introducing students to the philosophical, political, and sociological theories that inform community organizing and advocacy.”

## OTHER READINGS

The digital library of the [CLP site](#) contains a long list of readings appropriate for different types of community organizing courses, with links to PDF copies of the readings for your reference. The readings cited below can all be found on that site. Please bear in mind that the following fair use notice applies to all of the referenced readings:

FAIR USE NOTICE. These documents contain copyrighted material whose use has not been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. The Community Learning Partnership is making this material available as part of our mission of enhancing curricular offerings within higher education around community organizing and community development. We believe that this constitutes a 'fair use' of the copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. If you wish to use this copyrighted material for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

In addition, the COMM-ORG site maintains a [readings webpage](#), with links to articles. [Buildthewheel.org](#) also maintains a resource library, with many popular education and training modules. (Free but website registration required to view some materials).

Making the materials available and accessible to students varies greatly by institution. Some instructors create course packets available for photocopy, others pass out hardcopies in class or make electronic copies available online.

The examples used in this guide draw on a range of different kinds of readings in each week, balancing “how to” topics and trainings with readings on organizing history and theory.

## C. SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to traditional assignments such as quizzes and exams, CO 101 courses often rely on other assignments to engage students and assess their comprehension of the course materials. For example:

- 1. CAMPAIGN ROLE PLAYS.** Early in the term, students can be assigned to a small group of 4-5 persons that take on the identity of a community organizing group (either an actual organizing group from the community/region or a fictional one). From week to week, small groups can be given different scenarios and activities requiring them to implement various skills, analyses, and frameworks addressed in the class. For example, during a week covering grassroots fundraising, small groups can be tasked with creating a grassroots fundraising plan for the organization. Assignments related to campaign planning, issue identification, research and direct action can be organized on a similar basis.

2. **REFLECTION JOURNAL.** Each week, students can be asked to write entries in a personal journal, reflecting on specific prompting questions in reaction to the assigned readings, class activities, and discussions. The journals can be submitted several times during the term for comment, or exchanged with others students.
3. **PRACTICUM/SITE VISITS.** If local opportunities and conditions permit, students can be encouraged to visit local community or union organizing groups, either for an educational visit or to contribute work to a specific project, such as conducting research or helping to prepare for an event. Students can be asked to maintain journal entries about these experiences.
4. **CAMPAIGN CASE STUDY.** Students can be asked to analyze news articles or videos related to a specific organizing campaign, and write a case study about the campaign, such as explaining how the issue was identified, analyzing who makes decisions on the issue and how they might be influenced, writing out a campaign time line or strategy chart, or answering other questions designed to assess their understanding of organizing vocabulary and concepts.
5. **INTERVIEWS.** Students can be asked to conduct individual interviews of local community organizers or leaders, provided that such requests are cleared in advance by the instructor with the organization. Ideally, students can volunteer or contribute other labor to the organization as well.

#### D. SAMPLE CLASS UNITS

The class sessions below are organized into three sections:

- A. **“Introduction to Social Change and Power”** focuses on the political and historical context of community organizing. The readings address organizing history, the relationship of race, class, gender, and sexuality to organizing, and the connection between personal transformation and political transformation.
- B. **“The Building Blocks of Community Organizing”** focuses on “nuts and bolts” skills including fundraising, recruitment, actions, and research. The readings draw from various organizing manuals and text books, and many of the classroom exercises involve role plays designed to introduce these skills.
- C. **“Organizing, Political Analysis, and Social Change** focuses on the individual and collective political analysis that guides social change efforts. The classes focus on movement-building, popular education and training, and career paths into organizing.

Depending on instructor preferences as well as the length and organization of the course, a syllabus could incorporate any combination of these units or individual classes. Some of them could be organized as a second course on Advanced Community Organizing 102.

## SECTION A: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL CHANGE AND POWER.

These sessions provide students with a basic overview of a definition of community organizing, its main concepts, and introduce some historical and political context to the study of organizing within a college classroom.

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### A1: COURSE INTRODUCTION & THEORIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE.

The first week of the course is typically designed to introduce students to the course, the instructor, and one another. using 1-2 icebreakers during the beginning of class this week—see one list of suggested icebreakers below. In addition to covering typical course business (syllabus, expectations, etc) instructors might allocate time for an exercise designed to introduce students to the basic ideas of community organizing, and how it differs from other approaches including direct service, advocacy, and electoral politics.

One such option is the “Raining Rocks” exercise, which introduces students to various approaches to social change, asking them to compare and contrast the relative advantages and disadvantages of each approach. The recommended reading “Power and Social Change” is a brief overview of the concept of power as it is used within community organizing, and can be used to debrief the “Raining Rocks” exercise.

The film, *The Democratic Promise*, introduces Alinsky to students in the context of his early work in Chicago through his organizing in Rochester, NY in the late 1960s. The second part profiles a congregation-based organizing project in Brooklyn. The film provides a useful overview of the historic emergence of one approach to community organizing.

#### *Sample Readings*

- **Grassroots Policy Project**, “Power and Social Change”—Introduces students to the basic principles of community organizing for social change. Brief and accessible.
- **Cesar Chavez**, “The Organizer’s Tale” (1966)—A brief first person account of Cesar Chavez’s early organizing lessons with the United Farm Workers—students might be asked to explore how it works with the reading and exercise above.
- **Kevin Ryan**. “Building Whole Communities: Approaches to Problems”—Handout that reinforces the basic approaches to social change concepts.

#### *In class activities*

- Introduction & icebreaking activities
- Training--Approaches to Social Change: The “Raining Rocks” exercise
- Film: *The Democratic Promise: Saul Alinsky & His Legacy* (2000). (A preview of the film is available online).
- Training--**Michael Jacoby Brown**. [Hartford Community Colleges - Community Organizing Curriculum Guide](#). Includes a workshop on comparing different approaches to social change.

## A2: COMMUNITIES, POWER, AND THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF ORGANIZING

This session focuses on some contemporary debates within community organizing to help students engage the question, “what is organizing for?” Assigned readings ask students to identify key aspects or elements of different organizing models and consider the relationship between organizers and communities.

### Sample Readings

- **Alinsky**, *Rules for Radicals* Prologue,” “The Purpose,” “Of Means and Ends,” “A Word About Words.” Basic introduction to Alinsky’s key arguments and principles.
- **Sen**, *Stir It Up*,” Introduction,” “1. New Realities, Integrated Strategies.” A critique of the main assumptions guiding Alinsky-style organizing)
- **Gary Delgado**, “[The Last Stop Sign](#).” *Shelterforce Online*. Critique of organizing models that focus on place rather than identity.
- **Kristina Smock**, “Democracy In Action.” Compares models of community organizing in the Northwest.

### In class activities

- “[Saul Alinsky Explains Community Organizing as an Outside Agitator.](#)” 7 minute audio interview with Alinsky about the role of the organizer and the organizer’s relationship to the community. Students might listen to the interview in class and discuss how authors like Delgado and Sen might engage his arguments.

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## A3: PERSONAL AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

How does community organizing change and develop the way people view themselves and each other? How do those ideas integrate with beliefs about race, class, gender and sexuality? About power and privilege? These readings invite students to situate themselves in these discussions.

- **Robert Jensen**, “White Privilege Shapes the U.S.” A brief and accessible essay about the often invisible role of white privilege in everyday life.
- **Robin Kelley**. “People In Me” *ColorLines*, Winter 1999. Allows readers to consider the multiple bases (economic, cultural, geographic, etc.) that contribute to a sense of racial identity and self.
- **Robin Kelley**. “Finding the Strength to Love and Dream.” *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Beacon, 2002). A short essay that pairs well with ‘People in Me,’ exploring the ways that individual identity and experience connects to visions of political transformation.
- **Angela Davis**. “The Color of Violence Against Women.” A short essay examining the connections between race, gender, and violence and the organizing that can be done to address violence against women of color.

- **Audre Lorde**, “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action.” (Essay considering the ways that organizing and other forms of political action can name and confront oppressive conditions).

*In class activities*

- Journaling or personal reflection exercise asking students to reflect on their own social and political identities and communities, as well as their sources of privilege and power.

See elsewhere in this database for information on full-length classes on Culture and Identity

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#### **A4: MOVEMENT HISTORY**

These sessions help to place the principles and practices of present-day community organizing in a deeper and wider historical framework. Ideally, students can use their own experiences (and/or those of friends and families) to help construct this framework through a sample timeline, as described below. Instructors should seek out resources about movement history relevant to their local communities.

*Sample readings*

- **Robin D.G. Kelley**. “We Are Not What We Seem: Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South.” A longer academic essay on the relationship between individual acts of resistance and collective organizing.
- **Gwendolyn Robinson and Diane Nash**. Excerpts from [Hands on the Freedom Plow](#) .First person accounts of woman organizers within the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).
- **Robert Fisher**. [Let the People Decide - chapter two: Organizing 1929-1946](#) Covers Communist Party organizing in the US and concludes with the emergence of Alinsky in Chicago's Back of the Yards neighborhood.
- **Syd Beane**: ["You learn organizing by doing organizing."](#) *Twin Cities Daily Planet*, November 22, 2009. Biographical account of a longtime community organizer based in Minnesota.
- **Christine Marin**. [The Union, Community Organizing, and Civil Liberties: Clinton Jencks, Salt of the Earth, and Arizona Copper](#). 1950`s based case study of community and labor organizing and the Empire Zinc Company.

*In class activities*

- Selections from *Eyes on the Prize: America’s Civil Rights Movement 1954-1985*. Many episodes available on YouTube or through college or public libraries. There is also an excellent companion to the series with historical timelines and primary documents [here](#).
- Selections from ***Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement***. Video. NLCC Educational Media, 1996.
- *Sample class exercise: Constructing a movement history timeline*: Have the class collectively create a timeline in the front of the room (perhaps from the 1930s to the present) charting key dates, events and movements in the history of community organizing (the Civil Rights Movement, women’s movement, Alinsky’s emergence, ACORN,

voter registration and electoral work, etc). Students can brainstorm these events in small groups and then begin to write them on index cards or pieces of paper to begin placing at the front of the room. Sample timelines with key dates can be found on Project South’s website [here](#). This exercise can also be done online, asking students to collaboratively produce a timeline using a free platform such as [Preceden](#).

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## **SECTION B: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING.**

These sessions focus on “nuts and bolts” skills including fundraising, recruitment, actions, and research that form the basic building blocks of community organizing. The readings draw from various organizing manuals and text books, and many of the classroom exercises draw upon role play exercises designed to introduce these skills.

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### **B1: RECRUITMENT AND CONSTITUENCIES**

These readings focus on the role of different constituencies within community organizations, and approaches to effective recruitment. Ideally, students can spend time with a local organization participating in a recruitment effort. If not, the “Organizing Game” simulation can be a useful online activity to help students think about effective approaches to recruitment.

#### *Sample readings*

- **Sen, *Stir It Up*,** 2. Organizing New Constituencies.”
- **Szakos and Szakos, *We Make Change*,** “Chapter 1.”
- **Michael Jacoby Brown . [Why People Join Organizations](#).** “Building Powerful Community Organizations.” Worksheets and brief how-to's on how to recruit people based on thinking about why people typically join groups.

#### *Sample training exercises on designing recruitment strategies to target particular constituencies and asking for commitments*

- **“[The Organizing Game](#).”** Organizing recruitment simulation website. Students can complete the simulation outside of class and discuss it in class.
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### **B2: ACTIONS & TACTICS**

The readings below (and others available in other organizing trainings) explore the use of direct actions within community organizing strategy. Together with the video below, a class might use the readings to have a discussion on the principles and best practices of effective direct actions. Sample trainings often involve direct action role plays.

#### *Sample readings*

- **Sen, *Stir It Up*,** “4. Ready, Set, Action.” Explores the role of direct action organizing in building strong organizations.

- **Alinsky**, *Rules for Radicals*, “Tactics.” A basic primer on the principles of effective tactics.
- [198 Methods of Nonviolent Action](#). The Albert Einstein Institution.

*In class activities*

- Selections from **Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement**. Video. NLCC Educational Media, 1996. Part III, “Taking Back Our Schools” (available on YouTube) focuses on the Chicano student “Blowouts” in Los Angeles in 1968 and presents a good historical case study of an example of direct action.
- **Michael Jacoby Brown**. [Hartford Community Colleges - Community Organizing Curriculum Guide](#). Includes a sample training, workshop style, on conducting direct actions.

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### B3: ISSUE FRAMING & STRATEGY

These readings and discussion focus on the role of organizers and organizations in selecting and framing campaign issues.

*Sample readings*

- **Sen**, *Stir It Up*, “3. Picking the Good Fight.” A basic introduction to issue selection.
- **Alinsky**, *Rules for Radicals*, “Communication,” “In the Beginning.” Provides a useful overview to the principles guiding issue identification within community organizing.
- **Midwest Academy**, [Issue Identification Chart](#). Includes the Checklist for Issue ID (worksheet), the Strategy Chart and worksheet, and Tactics Checklist (worksheet) from *Organizing for Social Change*

*Sample training exercises on issue framing with a racial justice lens*

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### B4: RESEARCH & CAMPAIGN PLANNING

This session focuses on the role of research in organizing, power analysis and research on how decisions are made, and the ways that organizing campaigns get planned.

*Readings*

- **Sen**, *Stir It Up*, “Take Back the Facts.”
- **Taylor Branch**. *Parting the Waters*. Excerpt from an award-winning biography of Martin Luther King Jr., a history of the civil rights movement, and a portrait of an era. This selection, from Chapter Four and a full Chapter Five, focus on King's establishing himself as a young pastor and leading the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Useful for campaign analysis as well as for leadership and history.
- **Minieri/Getsos**, *Tools for Radical Democracy*. “The Components of a Campaign.” Step by step description of each phase of a successful campaign led by low-wage workers and people on public assistance, through Community Voices Heard (CVH) in New York.
- **Judy Hertz**, *Saving the Heart of Hammond*. Case study, told primarily in the words of those who were directly involved, of a successful congregation-based organizing

campaign in Illinois. Engaging story format that explores the development of a campaign, leadership development, and congregation-based organizing.

- **Californians for Justice [College Access Toolkit](#)**. A comprehensive guide to implementing organizing campaigns in public high schools seeking to increase increasing college access for low income students and students of color. Can be used as an example of a campaign strategy, youth/student-led organizing, or as an exercise to help define organizing terms.
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## **B5: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

This session focuses on the role of leadership development within community organizing, and its relationship to developing strong and effective organizations.

### *Sample Readings*

- **Michael Jacoby Brown**, *Building Powerful Community Organizations: A Personal Guide* (Chapter 7) Examines the relationship between developing strong leaders and strong organizations).
- **Minieri & Getsos**, *Developing Leaders from All Walks of Life*. Chapter Five on Leadership Development from *Tools for Radical Democracy*. Includes an overview of leadership styles, a case study of developing a leader, and worksheets for organizers to use when training and developing leaders.
- **Sen**, *Stir it Up*. “Leading the Way.” Includes case examples, a leadership development chart, and a brief overview of culture, race, class and gender in leadership development.
- **Michael Jacoby Brown**, *Building Powerful Community Organizations*. [The Iron Rule of Organizing](#). Describes the importance of the Iron Rule: Never do for others what they can do for themselves.
- **Marshall Ganz**. “Learning to Lead: A Pedagogy of Practice.” A CLP-edited version of an article by Ganz on five key practices for organizers and leaders. Ganz was the Lead Organizer for Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers and is now a Professor at Harvard’s Kennedy School.
- **Jo Freeman**. [The Tyranny of Structurelessness](#). An essay from the 1970's women's movement on how structure and lack of structure affect engagement in social change efforts.

**Romeo Ramirez**. [Eliminating Slavery in Agricultural Labor: The Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#). A first-hand account of developing as a leader in the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, based in Florida.

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## **B6: FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING**

These readings and exercises introduce students to the basic principles of grassroots fundraising, the importance of grassroots fundraising within community organizing,

*Sample readings*

- **Kim Klein**, “A Definition of Grassroots Fundraising.” A basic introduction to grassroots fundraising.
- **Kim Klein**, “[Kim Klein’s Tips on Getting Over the Fear of Asking](#)”. Discusses anxieties and fears associated with asking for money and how to overcome them.
- **Lisa Duran**, “Caring for Each Other: Philanthropy in Communities of Color.” Discusses the relationship between grassroots fundraising and organizing within communities of color.
- **Tina Cincotti**, “Silos are for Farms: How to Make Fundraising a Part of Your Organizing.” A short piece on integrating fundraising into community organizing.
- **Cesar Chavez**, “Money and Organizing.” A short and useful piece about the role of grassroots fundraising within the United Farm Workers.

All these readings provide short introductions to the role of grassroots fundraising within community organizing—providing an overview and definitions, suggestions about asking for money, and contextualizing the need for grassroots fundraising within community organizations. Several organizing manuals and texts, including *Organizing for Social Change* and *Tools for Radical Democracy* also have valuable chapters on fundraising and organizing.

*Sample training exercises on grassroots fundraising and asking for money. See texts above.*

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## SECTION C: ORGANIZING, POLITICAL ANALYSIS, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

This section focuses on the individual and collective political analysis that guides social change efforts. The classes focus on movement building, popular education and training, and career paths into organizing.

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### C1: MOVEMENT BUILDING

This session helps students to understand the relationship between building strong community organizations and strong social justice movements.

*Readings*

- **Sen**, *Stir It Up*, “Education for Engagement.”
  - **Minieri/Getsos**, *Tools for Radical Democracy*. “Chapter 15/Conclusion.” Examines the importance of movement building in community organizing, and how organizations can integrate movement building into their local work. Conclusion examines sustaining the work of organizing over time, for organizers as well as for organizations.
  - **Neil F. Carlson**, [The Making of a Movement](#). Case studies of successful housing organizing in New York City, in the early 2000's
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## C2: POPULAR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

These readings explore the role of popular education and leadership development within community organizing, including training for trainers techniques. The readings should assist students in understanding

### Readings

- **Paulo Freire**, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*(Selections)
- **John Hurst**, “On Popular Education”
- **Howard Gardner**, “Multiple Intelligences.” Excerpt from *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons* (Basic Books, 2006), in which Gardner summarizes and updates his influential theory of multiple intelligences.
- **Theatre of the Oppressed Laboratory**. [Theatre of the Oppressed Overview](#). A summary, in handout form, of the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques originated by Augusto Boal.
- **Joan Minieri**. [Training for Trainers: A Guide to Designing Interactive Trainings Using Popular Education Techniques](#) A how-to guide to training design, based on Freire's dialogue approach to popular education. Includes exercises for workshops on training design, as well as worksheets for developing trainings.
- **Joan Minieri/French American Charitable Trust**. [Mujeres Unidas y Activas](#). Case example on the impact of staff development, coaching and leadership development in a women-led organization that combines social service delivery and organizing.

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## C3: THE LABOR MOVEMENT: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

This session is designed to orient students to the basics of the labor unions in the United States, since many will likely be unfamiliar with this history. Instructors could also use the session to focus on another particular sector of social justice organizing, such as environmental justice, indigenous organizing, youth organizing, etc.

### Readings

- Selections from **Bill Fletcher, Jr. and Fernando Gapsin**. *Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and A New Path Toward Social Justice* See also companion interview with Bill Fletcher on Bill Moyers, available [online](#).
- Selections from **Janice Fine**, [Worker Centers: Organizing Communities at the Edge of the Dream](#). Explores the organizing model and potential of independent worker centers, and their relation to traditional labor organizations.
- **Laura Pulido**. [A Day Without Immigrants: The Racial and Class Politics of Immigrant Exclusion](#). An analysis of the 2006 Immigrant Rights Marches in Los Angeles, and its race and class divisions.

**C4: BECOMING AN ORGANIZER**

This session explores career pathways into community organizing, the role of spirituality in organizing, and how the course fits into a broader effort to create new career opportunities in community organizing.

*Reading*

- **Szakos and Szakos**, *We Make Change*, Chapters 3-9
- **Zimmerman et al.** [Out of the Spiritual Closet: Organizers Transforming the Practice of Social Justice](#). A report from the Movement Strategy Center exploring how organizers tap into their spirituality and spiritual practice to sustain their work.
- **Saul Alinsky**. [Reveille For Radicals \(chapter 11\)](#). Alinsky's call to action for radicals, based in historical perspective, to build mass peoples' organizations.
- **Ken Rolling**. [Educational Pathways into Community Change Careers](#). Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families (GCYF) article on the Community Learning Partnership's pathways into community change careers programs. Provides an overview of CLP's work around the US and the thinking behind its approach.

**C5. CONCLUSION**

Instructors should use the last one to two class meetings to review major course themes, engage students about their main insights and continuing questions from the course, and talk about future opportunities related to organizing at their college and the surrounding community.

**APPENDIX ON STANDARD SYLLABUS COMPONENTS TO CONSIDER**

At most colleges, standard syllabi also include several other components:

1. **ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:** Most syllabi include a standard policy regarding academic honesty that includes a working definition of plagiarism, the potential consequences of plagiarism, and a reference to the appropriate university language and policies. For example:

SAMPLE 1: “All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you are in doubt regarding the requirements, please consult with the instructor before you complete any requirement of the course. Please review the University’s policies at (website).”

2. **DISABILITY SERVICES/ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION.** Syllabi can include a statement establishing the instructor’s commitment to making the class accessible for all students, including those with disabilities, and establishing a process of working with the instructor to identify any barriers. College or university disability services offices often have standard syllabus language. For example: “The instructor is committed to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability related barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You may also wish to contact (College Disability Services/Accessible Education Office).”

3. **GRADING POLICY.** Most standard syllabi include policies explaining how final grades are calculated. These policies establish:

- a. The **relative weight** of each assignment in determining the final grade. For example: “Final paper: 20%; Group presentation: 15%; Attendance and participation: 20%; Weekly quizzes: 45% )
- b. A **grading rubric**, explaining the criteria used to determine grades for particular assignments. Some rubrics are very detailed, specifying the necessary characteristics of an assignment in order to receive a certain grade. (For example: “An ‘A’ paper will contain the following characteristics:”). Criteria can also be established more generally. For example, a rubric for a writing exercise might simply list the criteria used to evaluate the assignment.
- c. A chart or list that specifies **cutoff points for final letter grades** for the course. For example, if a student could get up to 100 points in a course for all assignments, the chart might look like this:

|          |           |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 100 : A+ | 87-89: B+ | 77-79: C+ | 68-69: D+ |
| 93-99: A | 83-86: B  | 73-76: C  | 65-67: D  |

|           |           |           |        |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| 90-92: A- | 80-82: B- | 70-72: C- | <65: F |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|

4. **Other syllabus components.** Many instructors find it useful to outline other relevant course policies and expectations in the syllabus, both to clearly communicate instructor expectations from the beginning, and to use as a reference if students are not meeting those expectations. These components include:
- a. **Policies on appropriate classroom conduct and respectful exchange.** For example: “CLASSROOM CONDUCT. We are all accountable to create a climate of mutual respect in the classroom. While differences of opinion and perspective are vital and will be encouraged, common courtesy as well as University policy prohibits personal attacks and discriminatory conduct.”
  - b. **Policies on attendance and participation**—Is course attendance required? Will attendance be taken? Are some kinds of absences excused? Do students need to notify instructors in advance of absences? Will attendance or participation count toward grade?
  - c. **Use of electronic devices**—Some instructors incorporate the use of electronic devices into the class, while others view them as a distraction to student engagement. A standard policy should answer: Are students permitted to use laptops in class? Are there any restrictions on such use (e.g. wireless function must be turned off)? Are students permitted to use other electronic devices (e.g. cell phones)?
  - d. **Accessing required course texts.** syllabi typically include instructions for students about accessing required course texts, explaining where any required texts can be purchased and other materials accessed (for example, through an online college/university system, library reserves, etc.). In general, the syllabus should list the full citation information (author, title, publisher, publication year, edition) for required texts.