

Planning a CO 101 Course – Initial Questions

Why do you want to teach this class?

What do you know about your students?

- Their backgrounds
- Their reasons for taking this course
- Their likely careers
- Do you see any of them as possibly choosing careers or further study in organizing and change efforts?

What do you know about how this fits in with the rest of the curriculum?

- How does this course fit in with their other studies?
 - What they've already learned in other courses?
 - What they'll be studying later?
- Is anyone interested in possibly adding 1 or more courses which would build on what you're teaching? Advanced CO? Other topic(s)?

If you had to narrow your goals for this course down to one, what is the main influence you want to have on your students? In their thinking, their skills, their lives, their careers

What do you think is the best strategy for having that influence?

- How can you best grab their attention to what you're teaching?
- How can you best create the relationships which will open them up to learning?
- How can you give them some direct experience with organizing off-campus or on?

What's the best way of having that influence from the start? What do you want to accomplish in the first few sessions?

Thinking more specifically about the course, what are your primary learning goals for the course?

- What do you want them to know at the end of their course?
- What do you want them to be able to do after taking your course?
- How do you want to influence their future choice of courses? their careers?

Roughly what percentage of the course do you plan to focus on --

- Vision and values which are behind change efforts; philosophy and world-view
- Knowledge-development
 - The social, economic and political conditions which lead to organizing and social change efforts
 - History and theory of "community organizing", movement-building, community development and services, and other strategies for bringing about change
 - Similar efforts nationwide or globally
- Skill-development
 - One on ones, story-telling and building initial relationships
 - Working with groups; helping them make joint decisions and plans
 - Analyzing issues and power analysis; thinking through a campaign to advance an issue
 - Other skills -- Is there time?

- Field experience
 - Will/can you include field experience or other experiential education in the course?
 - What impact do you want that experience to have on students?
 - What are the best opportunities available to you for having that impact? Do you need to construct a “virtual” situation to provide experiential education?
 - How can the experiential education be truly integrated with the rest of the learning process?
- Exposure to pathways to various careers through which to contribute as organizers and change agents
- Exposure to other ways to exert leadership on issues you care about

Do you want to include discussion of the full range of strategies for bringing about social and community change? If so, in addition to community organizing, you may want to cover workplace organizing, nonviolent action, movement-building, legislative, litigation and electoral strategies.

From the point of view of your own career plans, what do you want to achieve in teaching this course?

N.B. As you consider what you want to cover on organizing, you may want to think about whether it might be desirable/possible to offer both an introductory and an advanced course. That would enable you to go into greater depth generally, while covering one or more specialized topics, like coalition-building, use of social media and communications for organizing, or voter participation and electoral strategies.