

Changemakers & Social Impact

(GSI 280)

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the themes of social impact and social change, with attention to the systemic and global aspect of social issues. Throughout the semester we will explore what it means to think about formal and informal social change, from the local to the global, and examine how different communities are fostering social innovations that help to improve society or address important community issues. We will discuss social change theory and practice, with special attention to issues of community organizing for social change.

Course Goals

There are three primary goals of this course. The first is to introduce students to various theories of social change, social innovation and social impact, ranging from local community organizing to global social initiatives. We will engage with theories of change as well as look at a number of real-world cases to better understand the dynamics of social change. The second is to provide students with an opportunity to study and discuss examples of social change on a range of issues, and to better understand the challenges and opportunity for social change work. The third is to help students develop practical skills, knowledge and experience by engaging with local issues.

Required Books

How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas (Updated Ed)
David Bornstein, Oxford University Press, 2007

Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy (The Chardon Press Series)
(1st Ed)

Rinku Sen, Jossey-Bass, 2003 – *available online in Ebook Central/Course Reserve*

Blueprint for Revolution: How to Use Rice Pudding, Lego Men, and Other Nonviolent Techniques to Galvanize Communities, Overthrow Dictators, or Simply Change the World
Srdja Popovic, Spiegel & Grau, 2015

**Additional course readings and content will be posted on Blackboard.*

This course is subject to all GVSU policies as listed here: <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies>.

Policies and Procedures

Class Organization

- **Class Participation:** Students will be expected to have done all assigned reading before class and to take an active role in all classroom discussions.
- **Group Presentations:** Students will be organized into small groups, and each group will be responsible for developing a service/volunteer project and reporting on their work.
- **Thought Pieces:** Students will write a series of monthly blog posts documenting their experiences and critically reflecting on their service project/volunteer work.
- **Community Service Project:** In partnership with a local group/organization, students will participate in a community project that engages with a local social issue.

Class Participation (10% of grade)

Students are expected to read and reflect on the assigned material before class, and to actively participate in the class in an informed and respectful way throughout the semester. Please bring the assigned readings (books or handouts) for that week with you to class.

Group Presentations (20% of grade)

Students will be divided into small groups and each group will be asked to provide periodic activity updates on their service projects, as well as give a formal presentation at the end of the class highlighting their activities, obstacles and successes, and lessons learned.

Blog Posts (40% of grade)

Students will be asked to write short, monthly blog posts (4 posts in total, 1000-1500 words) reflecting on their activities in their service project. These posts will require students to critically reflect, analyze and document aspects of how they are engaging class materials with real-world experiences over the course of the semester. Each post will count for 10% of your grade.

Community Service Project (30% of grade)

Students will be asked to work with a community service project or organization that engages with local social issues in the community. Projects will be coordinated with a local service organization through the [Community Service Learning Center](#). Students will write a 3-page reflection paper at the end of the class documenting their experiences, as well as sharing these lessons with the rest of the class.

Assignment Due Dates

Late assignments will automatically have points deducted from the total. This is a firm policy, except for the extenuating circumstances noted above. No credit will be given for any assignment more than 4 days late without official documentation.

Class Attendance

More than 3 unexcused absences may result in a grade reduction for the course. Coming to class significantly late will count as an unexcused absence. See policies in the GVSU [Student Code](#).

Exceptions for class absences are as follows:

- Personal illness or death in the family (documentation required)
- Religious holiday or participation in university-approved activity (documentation required)
- Cosmic event making attendance impossible (flood, earthquake, zombie apocalypse, etc.)

Classroom Conduct

Students are expected to treat each other and the professor with courtesy, and refrain from any personal attacks. Due to the nature of political disagreements, arguments may emerge from time to time over deeply-held convictions. Students are encouraged to express their beliefs and convictions, but must do so respectfully, and without insulting or attacking fellow classmates. Any discriminatory remarks, personal attacks or threats will not be tolerated, and students will be asked to leave the class if they cannot respect their peers or the professor.

Office Hours & Communication

Students who wish to meet with me can either speak to me before or after class or e-mail me to schedule a time to meet during regular office hours. I will try to respond to all e-mails within 48 hours. If for some reason you don't receive a reply after two days, please send a follow up email.

Use of Electronics in Class

All cell phones and other electronic devices should be silenced and put away during class. Laptops or tablets are allowed **if** being used for note taking or accessing electronic readings. Use of Facebook/Twitter/WeChat/WhatsApp/Instagram/Weibo during class is not active class participation. Repeated abuse of electronics is grounds for a reduced class participation grade.

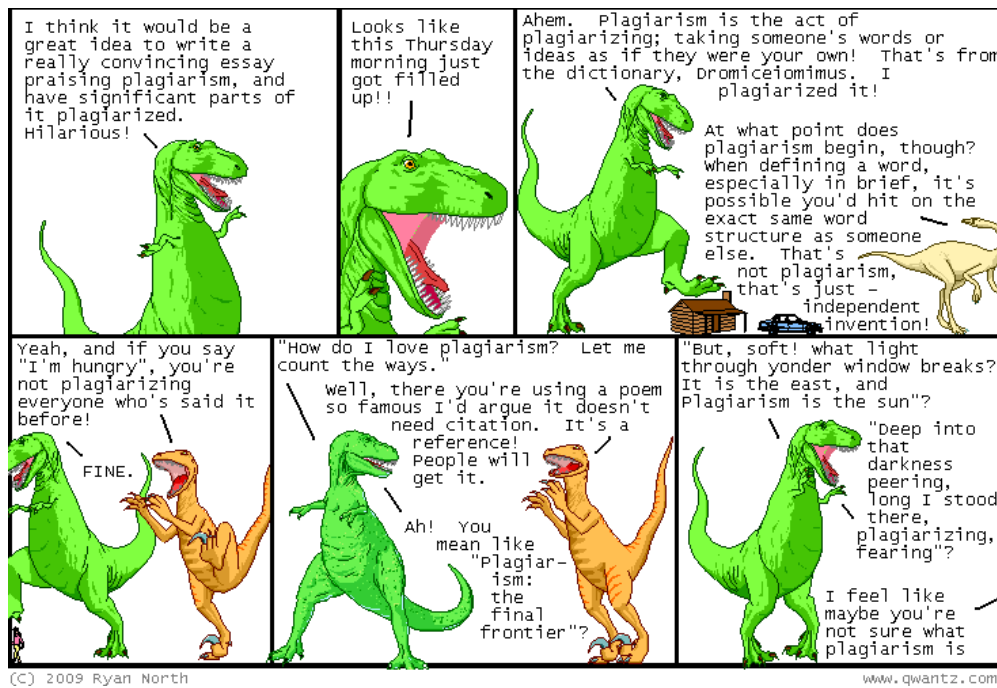
Writing Help

Students needing additional writing or editing help should contact the Writing Center in Lake Ontario Hall, 120. More information is available here: <https://www.gvsu.edu/wc/>.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a sign of intellectual laziness. Students found guilty of plagiarism risk an F for the course. GVSU's statement on Academic Integrity of Grades and Scholarship is listed [here](#):

“The principles of academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to a community of scholars. The University expects that students will not engage in acts of academic dishonesty in curricular and non-curricular academic activities. Engaging in academic dishonesty compromises the integrity of university grades, and scholarship and research. Academic dishonesty is defined as actions or behaviors that misrepresent one’s contributions to or the results of any scholarly product submitted for credit, evaluation, or dissemination. This definition includes, but is not limited to, fabrication, falsification, cheating, and plagiarism.”



Disability Support

I will make every effort to accommodate any special needs students may have in the classroom. If you need accommodations for a learning, physical, or other disability, please give me a memo from Disability Support Resources indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested reasonable accommodations. If you have not already done so, please contact the Disability Support Resources office (JHZ 4015) by calling 331-2490 or email dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu. Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received a copy of the DSR issued memo. More information is available at: <https://www.gvsu.edu/dsr/>.

Gender Pronouns & Preferred Name

I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate/preferred name or gender pronoun (she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, etc.). Please advise me of your preferences so that I can may make appropriate changes to my records and in class. More information about GVSU's myName process online at: <https://www.gvsu.edu/myname/>.

Course Learning Objectives

At the end of this course you should be able to **Demonstrate** knowledge about the relevance of concepts such as globalization, justice and world systems; **Interpret** a range of approaches to evaluate global issues and **Demonstrate** how global conditions and systems affect the well-being of people and the planet; **Identify** underlying causes, actors and actions to address global social problems; **Demonstrate** the ability to write and discuss about global social issues; and **Identify** questions of justice and responsibility (systemic & individual) to show how global changes affect diverse communities at global, regional and local levels.

--- PART I: INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND ---

Week 1 (8/28, 8/30): Welcome & Course Introduction

Hand out syllabus, review goals, organization and materials, class introductions.

Readings:

- **William Cronon** – “‘Only Connect...’ The Goals of a Liberal Education” *The American Scholar*, 1998 67:4
- **Richard Adler and Judy Goggin** – “What Do We Mean By “Civic Engagement”?” *Journal of Transformative Education* 2005, 3:3

Activity:

- What is your issue? Global issue popcorn.

No class 9/4 – Labor Day

Week 2 (9/6): Agents of Change

Readings:

- **David Bornstein** – How to Change the World (Preface-Ch 2, pgs ix-20)

Week 3 (9/11, 9/13): Rural Electric, Health Reform, Children

Readings:

- **David Bornstein** – How to Change the World (Ch 3-8, pgs 21-100)

Activity (9/13 ***REQUIRED***):

- Attend Nonprofit Volunteer & Internship Fair (Kirkhof Lawn, 1-3pm) and choose community group or project to work on for official class project.

Week 4 (9/18, 9/20): Healthcare, Education Access & Excellence

Readings:

- **David Bornstein** – How to Change the World (Ch 9-13, pgs 101-182)

Assignments:

- Blog Post #1 Due (9/18)

Week 5 (9/25, 9/27): AIDS, Disabilities and Social Innovation

Readings:

- **David Bornstein** – How to Change the World (Ch 14-19, pgs 183-261)

Week 6 (10/2, 10/4): The Power of People

Readings:

- **David Bornstein** – How to Change the World (Ch 20-Afterword, pgs 262-306)

--- PART II: OUR SOCIAL CHANGE TOOLBOX ---

Week 7 (10/9, 10/11): Community Organizing Profiles

Readings:

- **Rinku Sen** – Stir It Up (Preface-Introduction, pgs xv-xliii)

Week 8 (10/16, 10/18): Building A Community Base

Readings:

- **Rinku Sen** – Stir It Up (Ch 1-3, pgs 1-78)

Assignments:

- Blog Post #2 Due (10/16)

Week 9 (10/23, 10/25): Putting Social Change into Action

Readings:

- **Rinku Sen** – Stir It Up (Ch 4-7, pgs 79-147)

Week 10 (10/30, 11/1): Engagement and People Power

Readings:

- **Rinku Sen** – Stir It Up (Ch 8-Conclusion, pg 148-184)

--- Part III: GLOBAL SOCIAL CHANGE ---

Week 11 (11/6, 11/8): Learning from Others

Readings:

- **Srdja Popovic** – Blueprint for Revolution (Preface, Ch 1-2, pgs vii-54)

Week 12 (11/13, 11/15): Of Struggles and Revolutions

Readings:

- **Srdja Popovic** – Blueprint for Revolution (Ch 3-5, pgs 55-124)

Assignments:

- Blog Post #3 Due (11/13)

No class 11/22 – Turkey Slaughter Break

Week 13 (11/20): Tips and Tricks for Social Change

Readings:

- **Srdja Popovic** – Blueprint for Revolution (Ch 6-8, pgs 125-172)

Week 14 (11/27, 11/29): Nonviolence and Lasting Impacts

Readings:

- **Srdja Popovic** – Blueprint for Revolution (Ch 9-Goodbye, pgs 173-262)

Week 15 (12/4, 12/6): Fieldwork Reports

Wrap-up Discussion & Review

- Service Project Reports & Reflections

Week 16 (12/11, 12/13): Fieldwork Reports

Wrap-up Discussion & Review

Assignments:

- Blog Post #4 Due (12/11)
- Service Project Reports & Reflections
- Service Project Reflection papers due **Thursday Dec 13.**

End of Class – Happy Yuletide Greetings