

CST 605: Communicating for Social Change

Spring 2007

Wednesdays 5:30 - 8:20 p.m. Curry Building 237

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. and by appointment

Course Overview

This course is intended to give you the theoretical views and/or practical experience of working for social change. Recognizing that change can be initiated both within established community institutions and among grassroots coalitions outside the mainstream, we will seek to identify, understand, and analyze the practices and rhetoric of those who strive to transform values, assert credibility, and mobilize others.

We will operate as a seminar, meaning that our time in class will be spent engaging in thoughtful conversation about the readings (and for those of you involved in social change, we'll discuss the issues as related to your experiences in the field). The emphasis of our discussions and the assignments will be in exploring the role of the individual and associations in communicating social change. Toward that end, we will read a variety of philosophical, critical, and communication perspectives in order to examine the political and ethical demands of social change action.

Outside class meetings, you will have the opportunity to do extensive research into a social movement of your choice OR participate in a community program for social change.

Thematically, we will study six broad areas:

1. **Ethics** and **Social justice** as a relentless dialectic.
2. **Democratic theory**, representation, and association.
3. The role of the **communication discipline** in advancing social justice.
4. **Conversation's** critical role in community formation and the development of inclusive, equitable relationships.
5. The **moral imperative of political engagement**.

Course Objectives

1. Demonstrate a deep understanding of the philosophical and theoretical bases of leading scholars' views of discourse, democracy, visions of community, ethics, and social justice.
2. Analyze how the theoretical learnings have been applied to pressing social issues.
3. Reflect on the role of a social activist, and the attending demands of citizenship.

4. For those who choose to get involved in a program for social change, provide concrete community-based assistance for implementing social action plans.

Required Readings

Alinsky, S. (19xx). *Rules for radicals*. New York: Vintage.

Frey, L. R. & Carragee, K. M. (2006). *Communication activism volume one: Communication for social change*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton.

Morris, C. E. & Browne, S. H. (2006). *Readings on the rhetoric of social protest, 2nd ed.* State College, PA: Strata.

Swartz, O. (2006). *Social justice and communication scholarship*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Zinn, H. (2003). *A people's history of the United States*. New York: Harper Collins.

Journal articles as assigned (access by electronic reserve).

Assignments

1. **Seminar Discussion Papers:** You will write a question that the reading for that week inspires, and then draft a response (not necessarily an answer). I recommend that you focus on a particular passage, theme, claim, or sentence that you find particularly revealing, confusing, or both. The intent of these short papers (one to two typewritten pages) is to facilitate your understanding of the readings, generate class discussion, and examine the practical implications of the authors' arguments.
2. **Book Review:** You will need to write a critical analysis of one additional book of your choosing focusing on social change and communication. The review should be 4-7 pages in length and include the following:
 - The central argument the author is making. Ask yourself, what is the main thesis and what are the arguments in support of that?
 - The implications or consequences of the claims for democracy, discourse, social justice, ethics and community. Ask yourself, what seems to follow from these claims?
 - Your assessment of the author's analysis, reasoning and conclusions. Here, you will want to relate the book to class discussions, other readings in the course, provide a new perspective or issue for us to consider, etc.
 - Questions or issues the reading raises for you regarding communication and social change.
 - NOTES: Read some book reviews in communication journals as a guide for your paper. You can choose an "academic" text, a novel, or a nonfiction book for this assignment. Try to consider one with a topic that will contribute to your final paper.

3. **Descriptive narrative:** It is impossible to appreciate the complexity of initiating social change without learning from those who actively participate in this type of work. Unfortunately, many social activists never have the time or inclination to write of their experiences. To tap into the rich resources available to us here, locally, you will produce a narrative account of an individual or group. You will need to rely on interviews, documents and other sources such as on-going conversations, past events, and others' comments to construct a story whereby we can learn from and appreciate the significance of the social activists' work. As with any piece of academic writing, you should weave in scholarship we've explored in class to date or other articles/books as relevant to your subject. The end product should be an essay (not a transcript), approximately 5-7 pages, with citations in text and a reference page at the end.

4. **Final Paper:** Here is your opportunity to write a structured response and critique of an idea, concept, theme, or issue connected to communication and social change based on the readings, your field experiences (if applicable), and outside research. You should integrate all the class readings into your paper, plus an extensive (if not complete) literature review on your social movement/issue, and at least one interview. For those choosing to engage in a social change effort, I would expect your literature review to be less exhaustive, but still with a minimum of 10 outside references. Those writing a more theoretical or rhetorical paper should have at least 20 outside references. Paper length: 18-25 pages.

Your final paper will be written in two parts. The first part will include the following sections: Abstract, Introduction, Theoretical Issues/Themes/Concepts (including review of relevant literature), Social Movement Timeline (historical overview). The second part will include a rewrite of the first part as needed plus the additional sections: Analysis of Social Change Movement (perhaps focusing on key documents, media reports and or rhetorical strategies), Implications/Conclusions, References, Appendices.

Grading

Weekly seminar discussion papers/participation	20%
Book Review	20%
Descriptive Narrative	20%
Final paper	40%

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS OF ENDURING INTEREST (partial list)

Civil Rights Anti-racism	Child Labor
Disability Rights	Health Care
Media Activism Anti-corporate	Sustainability
Women's Movements	Globalization
Anti-Nuclear Movement	Anti-Smoking
AIDS Activism	Peace Movements
Arts Activism Guerilla Theatre	Christian Right
American Indian Movement	Slow Food
Anti-War Movement	Wild Caught Fishing
Environmentalism	Prison Reform
Education Reform	Immigration (Control)
Labor Movements	Apartheid
Pro-Life/Pro-Choice Movements	Gay Rights Marriage
Homelessness Affordable Housing Living Wage, Increase in Minimum Wage	Skinheads, Neo-Nazis
	KKK
	Death Penalty

UPCOMING MEETINGS & RESOURCES

Thurs., Jan. 11, 7:00 pm: Kick-off meeting for Petition Signing for Minimum Wage Campaign, Faith Community Church, 417 Arlington Street

Tues., Jan. 16, 7:00 p.m.: Greensboro Truth and Community Reconciliation Project, Student Conference Organizing Group, Faith Community Church, 417 Arlington Street

Peace and Justice Network—For a listing of Greensboro area (and state) events for social change, email pjn@triad.rr.com. You'll receive regular announcements.

Class Schedule

(Note: This schedule is tentative. Changes will be announced in class.)

- Week 1**
1/10/07
Course overview, themes, and assignments.
- Week 2**
1/17/07
Communication Scholars Doing Social Justice Research
Read: Swartz, chapters 1-4 and 6
See: Dr. Joseph Lowery, MLK Celebration, EUC Cone Ballroom, 7 pm
DUE: SD #1
- Week 3**
1/24/07
Obstacles and Opportunities in the Scholarship of Social Justice
Read: Swartz, chapters 7-9 and 11-12
DUE: SD #2
- Week 4**
1/31/07
The Beginnings of Social Change in the United States
Read: Zinn, especially chapters 2, 5, 6, 9, 13
DUE: SD #3
- Week 5**
2/7/07
Social Change Comes of Age
Read: Zinn, especially chapters 15, 17, 18, 19, 23, 25
See: Ellen O'Grady's "Outside the Ark" Art Reception, Multicultural Center, EUC, 5:00 p.m.
DUE: Final Paper Topic (2-4 pages that "could" be your introduction)
DUE: SD #4
- Week 6**
2/14/07
Foundations of the Rhetoric of Social Protest
Read: Morris & Browne, chapters 1 & 2 (you can skip the Scott essay)
DUE: SD #5
- Week 7**
2/21/07
Social Change for External and Internal Audiences
Read: Morris & Browne, chapter 3 & 4
DUE: SD #6
- Week 8**
2/28/07
Social Change for External & Internal Audiences
FILM VIEWING and DISCUSSION: Wild Caught with Matt Barr
- Week 9**
3/7/07
Spring Break
- Week 10**
3/14/07
Tactics of Control and Tactical Modifications
Read: Morris & Browne, chapters 5 & 6
DUE: Interview with Social Activist

- Week 11** Guerilla Tactics
3/21/07 Read: Alinsky to p. 97
DUE: SD #7
- Week 12** Grassroots Activism
3/28/07 Read: Alinsky, to end
DUE: Final Paper, part I
- Week 13** Book Reviews & Presentations
4/4/07 **DUE:** Book Reviews
- Week 14** From Social Justice to Communication Activism
4/11/07 Read: Frey & Carragee, chapters 1-4
DUE: SD #8
- Week 15** **Heading**
4/18/07 Read: Frey & Carragee, chapters 5-8
DUE: SD #9
- Week 16** **Heading**
4/25/05 Read: Frey & Carragee, 9-11
DUE: SD #10
- Week 17** Final Reflections
5/2/07 **DUE:** Final Papers—Parts I & II