



**SW822-003: Topics in Policy Practice and Advocacy:
Skills for Effective Social Action
MSW Program, Spring 2026**

Instructor:	Dr. Sacha Klein [she/her/hers]
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Phone:	(818) 744-6445 [instructor’s cell phone, 9am-5pm Monday-Friday only]
Office Hours:	Fridays Noon-1pm via Zoom at https://msu.zoom.us/j/93164629770 (passcode: SMK) and also by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Mondays 1:40pm - 4:40pm in person
Classroom:	Psychology Building, Room 119

Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.
Frederick Douglass

Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand.
Xun Kuang, 312-230 BCE Confucian philosopher, revised version

Course Description

Information and skills for policy practice for advocacy at local, community, agency, state and federal levels. National and international policy comparisons.

Course Objectives

Through this course, students will gain in depth knowledge of a specific system of social policies and programs (e.g. child welfare, aging & disability, health care) that aligns with their career interests and goals.

Students will also learn how to design and implement a social action campaign by doing it. After successfully completing this course, students will be competent in the following social action skills:

- Conducting issue development,
- Building collective power,
- Conducting social issue research (historical analysis, power map, and target analysis),
- Enacting various social action strategies and tactics,

- Working with news media,
- Implementing a social action campaign, and
- Conducting a campaign evaluation.

Pre-requisite

SW 812B or SW 820

Co-requisite

None

Required Texts and Course Materials

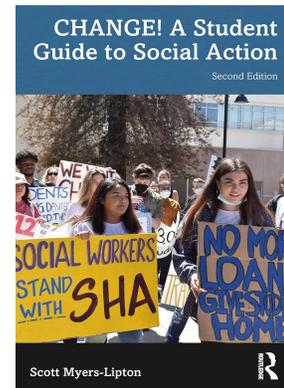
- Myers-Lipton, S. (2023). *CHANGE! A student guide to social action* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

This textbook is available from the publisher at:

<https://www.routledge.com/CHANGE-A-Student-Guide-to-Social-Action/Myers-Lipton/p/book/9781032418025>

and via Amazon at the following prices;

- Paperback [new] ~\$27.88
 - Kindle ~\$26.49
- Electronic course pack (articles and other required reading material will be posted on Desire to Learn [D2L] course website)
 - Free



Method of Instruction

This course will be delivered in person, with certain materials being provided online through D2L. You will need your MSU NetID to login to the course at <https://d2l.msu.edu>. In D2L, you will access online lessons, course materials, and additional resources. Additionally, we will be using Mural Board to post group work related to student action campaigns.

Technological Course Requirements

- High speed internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable)
- Access to Desire2Learn (D2L).

CSWE Competencies Assessed

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Additional CSWE Competencies Addressed

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

What to Expect in This Course

In this course you will gain in depth knowledge and understanding of a specific social policy area selected at the beginning of the semester by you, the student, in consultation with the instructor. Potential social policy focus areas include:

- Aging and older adults
- Child welfare
- Criminal justice
- Early childhood learning
- Economic security
- Health care
- Housing
- Immigration
- LGBTQIA+ youth & families
- Family supports and prevention
- Racial equity & justice

You can also work with the instructor to identify a different social policy focus area that is not listed above. You will learn about a range of social policies and social welfare programs in the U.S. related to your focus area and will have an opportunity to work with a small group of your classmates to design and deliver a classroom lesson on the topic.

Students will also engage in social action to change an organizational or government policy related to their focus area. Social action occurs when everyday people band together to develop their power in order to change policy, and it has been a part of the American experiment in democracy throughout our history and is central to the social work profession.

What is unique about this course is that students:

- a) have a say in what topics they will learn about, and
- b) they do social action rather than just learn about it in theory.

In a traditional course on social action, students read about theories of social change, analyze social problems, read about campaigns, develop an abstract understanding of concepts, all with the professor being the “sage on the stage”. In the experiential social action model that we will use in this class, students read about theories of social change and apply it to real world campaigns, as well as define a social problem and develop concrete, quantifiable solutions (i.e., demands). In this experiential social action model, students choose and lead campaigns and are transformed through a direct experience of democracy, all with the instructor being a “guide on the side” where the professor is de-centered and a co-creator of knowledge with students.

A key part of the social action model is that students have the opportunity to enact a policy (i.e., a rule, regulation, norm, or practice of an institution) on campus or in the community, with the students choosing and developing the campaigns on their own rather than them being assigned by the instructor. Another exciting part of this course is that you will learn about previous student-led social action campaigns at MSU and other universities and colleges.

An additional key feature of the social action model is the topic and flow of the course. The motto of this model is “On Your Mark, Go, Get Set.” In order to launch the campaigns by mid-semester, students go through the issue development process (identifying demands and targets) during the opening days of the class. By choosing the campaigns by the second (at latest third) week of class, students have enough time to learn about all of the necessary aspects of social change, and then to launch a campaign by the ninth week, and they still have almost half a semester to do several actions.

Experiential Social Action Course Model



With this model, a typical class includes the following: (a) a student doing a 1-2 minute organizational rap (i.e., who, what, why, where, and when of a campaign), (b) a class discussion of the assigned reading and videos, and (c) group work on their campaigns. These activities are designed to de-center the instructor, empower students to believe that social action is possible, and to give students the opportunity to be active participants in their education.

All students will be involved in social action. **This will require a minimum of 1½ to 2 hours per week of campaign work outside of class (25 hours minimum over 15 weeks, with about one-half of the time DOING something, that is, doing campaign activities (e.g., tabling,**

flyering, giving organization raps) **or campaign actions** (marches, rallies, street theater, etc.). **If you do not do more than 25 hours a semester, you will most likely not receive a grade higher than a 2.0 in the course.** Of course, if you want to do more campaign work, that is great. FYI: The course reading has been reduced to offset the 25 hours of campaign work.

It will be possible to do your social action on or off campus, so all students should be able to work it into their schedule. In addition, class time will be dedicated to your social action campaign, so you will be able to do some of your organizing in class. During the first and second classes, you will brainstorm various ideas for a social action campaign, and then you will choose one to work on. The requirements for the campaign are: (i) that you have a minimum of 4 students on your team, (ii) you have passion for the issue, and (iii) your campaign tries to change some type of policy. The campaign you choose to work on may come from a liberal, conservative, social democrat, or libertarian perspective...or it may have no ideology. Whatever campaign you choose to do, I will teach you about democracy, power, and how to bring about change.

Importantly, there is no political indoctrination, as students develop and choose what campaigns to work on, and students can change campaigns at any point in the semester. Furthermore, my role as course instructor is to offer guidance about strategy and tactics, and to help students consider the variety of options available, with the students deciding on how to best move forward.

This course is based on a model developed the by Dr. Scott Myers-Lipton and the Institute on Teaching Social Action (ITSA), which has trained faculty across the nation to teach college students how to engage in effective social action. Courses taught by ITSA-trained faculty **have fundamentally changed campuses and communities**. Over the past sixteen years, Social Action students have won more than 15 campaigns, leading successful efforts to: (1) raise the minimum wage in San José, California from \$8 to \$10 and then to \$15, (2) develop a 12-emergency bed program and a centralized location to provide emergency housing and food to college students, (3) modernize the city's business tax, and (4) make a university a sweatshop-free campus, and (5) get a county to clear and expunge 13,000 cannabis convictions. Perhaps even more importantly, the students participating in social action have had their lives transformed as a result of a direct experience with democracy, with social action alumni taking on leadership positions in government and the non-profit sector, as well as obtaining community organizing jobs locally and pursuing advanced degrees. You will learn more about some of several of these campaigns as part of this class and can find additional examples at: <https://teachingsocialaction.org/campaigns>.

Method of Instruction

This course will be delivered in person, with certain materials being provided online through D2L. You will need your MSU NetID to login to the course at <https://d2l.msu.edu>. In D2L, you will access online lessons, course materials, and additional resources. Activities may consist of readings, videos, discussion forums, email, journaling, and other online activities.

Course Policies, Procedures & Expectations

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD))

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.) and also upload a copy to the RCDP Visa folder on the class D2L site. Requests received after this date may not be honored.

Adjustments to Course Schedule

Minor changes to the Course Schedule may occasionally be necessary. These changes will be announced in class and/or over the course website/email.

Appealing Grades

Students are expected to retain copies of all written work and instructor comments. You are encouraged to contact the instructor with any questions or concerns you have about the evaluation of your work. Appeals about grades will only be accepted 48 hours after the assignment is returned to the student so that you can think through what you want to say or ask about the evaluation. After 48 hours, I'll be happy to talk with you about how the grade was determined. Formal appeals will be accepted *in writing* and adjustments made at the discretion of the instructor.

Attendance

Class attendance is a programmatic expectation for all social work classes and a critical component of your preparation for the profession. As MSW students, regular attendance demonstrates your commitment to the field, where dependability, accountability, and active participation are essential. Missing class means missing vital discussions and skill-building opportunities essential for your growth as a social worker. Your adherence to this policy reflects professional standards, including accountability, integrity, and a commitment to lifelong learning—qualities that are foundational to effective social work practice. If you anticipate an absence, please communicate with the instructor in advance when possible.

That said, life happens, so each student may miss one class during the semester without it negatively impacting their grade. You do not need to provide a reason for this absence. However, each additional unexcused absence will result in losing 2 points from your Class Attendance & Participation grade. Excused absences are provided for religious observance, grief/loss (based on university policy), medically documented illness, or RCPD documented disability.

There will be a sign-in sheet at the front of the classroom each week. It is your responsibility to make sure you sign in. You may never sign-in on behalf of another student. You cannot make up attendance points as they are a reflection of the engagement and work you will do in class.

Class discussions

Class discussions may raise complex and sometimes difficult issues. It is important that you identify and be honest (with yourself and others) about your perspective on the issues that we will deal with throughout the course. Sharing your perspective when you think it will add to the class is essential, with the awareness that everybody should have the chance to contribute their ideas. Respond critically, but constructively and with kindness to your colleagues' ideas and challenge each other to grow with new concepts and skills. Strive for dialogue in class, not debate. You are asked to be respectful of each other and to refrain from activities that may cause a disturbance or interfere with others' abilities to participate and learn. As the instructor, I reserve the right to penalize disruptive students either by loss of points, or in extreme cases, by dismissal from the class.

Communication with Instructor

Please contact me by email with questions and concerns either directly or through D2L. I will do my best to respond to all emails within 48 hours on weekdays. Most emails received after 3pm on Friday will not be answered until Monday so take that into account when you are anticipating working on assignments over the weekend. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, please feel free to resend your email – chances are I did not receive it, or it got buried in an email flood. Handouts, links, lectures, and other course resources will be posted throughout the semester on D2L. Announcements and other information will also be posted on D2L and/or sent through email so please check your MSU email account and the course D2L page regularly including the morning of class if possible. Additionally, I will be checking your student action campaign Mural Board postings 1-2 times a week and will provide coaching comments/feedback. Students should review these comments/feedback at least weekly and implement any recommendations or suggested edits that your group feels are useful.

I hold weekly virtual office hours that you can access via the link on the first page of the syllabus. I am also happy to meet by appointment at other days and times. Please email me to schedule.

I am available to answer questions about course content and to problem solve challenges that may impede your ability to attend class, meet class deadlines, or otherwise complete work expected as outlined in the syllabus. Please consider me a first stop for any issues that may arise. However, I know that sometimes students need additional supports that they are not comfortable

bringing to instructors or fall outside our scope. Your Graduate Advisor is also available to help you with any challenges you encounter in this class or the program. If you do not know who your advisor is, please contact Kelly Fornwalt, Assistant MSW Program Director, fornwalt@msu.edu, and she can direct you to the right person.

Course materials and D2L

Communication about the course will be done through MSU email, our D2L course site, and Mural Board. Check your MSU email account, the course D2L page, and your student action campaign Mural Board regularly. Failing to do will not be a valid excuse for missing a deadline. Handouts, links, activities, and other course resources will be posted for each session—it is your responsibility to listen to them, read them, respond to them, and/or print them out as necessary.

Format & Style of Written Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments must be typed in Times News Roman 11 or 12-point typeface, with one-inch margins all around, aligned left, printed on one side of the paper only, with hyperlinks removed, stapled in the upper left-hand corner, and should conform to the **APA style** Manual. Students are expected to consult the Purdue OWL website (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>) regarding appropriate application of APA style. This is particularly critical with respect to how students cite others' work in the body of their papers and list references at the end of their papers.

Name and Pronoun Policy

All people have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. Many people do not identify with the name on their birth certificate, school ID, or other forms of identification. In this class, I will include the opportunity for students to indicate the name and the pronouns they use. If you would like to change your name, you can do that through StuInfo. Your gender marker can be changed by filing a request at the Office of the Registrar at the Hannah Administration Building. More information about MSU's preferred name policy can be found at: <https://gsc.msu.edu/trans-msu/msu-preferred-name-policy/>. I will do my best to respect students by using the correct name and pronouns for them. Please advise me at any point if you need to update your name and/or pronouns in my records.

Plagiarism Will Not be Tolerated

Plagiarism is defined below by the University as:

presenting the work of another as one's own. This is usually done through the failure to acknowledge the borrowing of ideas, data, or the words of others. Examples include submitting as one's own work the work of another student or a commercial writing service; quoting, either directly or paraphrasing, a source without appropriate acknowledgement; and using figures, charts, graphs or facts without appropriate acknowledgement. Inadvertent or unintentional misuse of another's work is still plagiarism (MSU Ombudsperson, n.d.).

This message serves to clarify my position on plagiarism and set clear expectations and consequences for all work in this course. I have a zero tolerance policy toward plagiarism. I check written assignments against course material and the Internet. Academic honesty means using your own words to communicate an idea. Therefore, changing a few words of another's text and/or rearranging words from another source without appropriately citing the source of the ideas constitutes plagiarism. If you paraphrase material you must still cite and reference the source. (To paraphrase means to restate a text or passage in other words, often to clarify meaning. Paraphrasing is a restatement of an idea, not rearrangement of specific words.) If you copy material exactly, you must use quotation marks and then cite and reference the source. One sentence, two sentences, a paragraph, or an entire paper – copying constitutes plagiarism/cheating. Those assignments will automatically receive a 0.0 and the student may be recommended for academic review.

Respectful Communication and Political Partisanship

Class discussions will raise complex and sometimes difficult issues. Social policy issues are full of controversial concerns. Sharing your perspective is strongly encouraged. Students are also encouraged to respond thoughtfully (but not judgmentally) to ideas presented by the instructor and their classmates. *Responses should be thoughtful and communicate respect for others.* Feel free to challenge others' ideas and encourage them to grow with new information, concepts and skills but remember that the classroom should be a safe place where we can give and receive *constructive* feedback.

Students are encouraged to assess political practices and policy issues in this course critically from the standpoint of social work professional values and take into account credible evidence supported by scientific research. No single political party is the exclusive champion of the social work profession's values. Therefore, students are encouraged to express their personal thoughts and beliefs about relevant political practices and policy issues but are also encouraged to help each other and the instructor check uncritical ideological presumptions at the door so that we avoid unreflective 'group think'. Some assignments may call for the instructor to assess student's ability to apply Social Work values and scientific evidence to their work, but no student will be penalized for expressing a political belief solely because it differs from that of the instructor or of their classmates.

Technical Assistance

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem you can:

- Call MSU IT Services at 517-432-6200 (personally, I keep this number of speed dial)
- Visit the [Distance Learning Services Support Site](#)
- Visit the [Desire2Learn Help Site \(http://help.d2l.msu.edu/\)](http://help.d2l.msu.edu/)
- Or call Distance Learning Services: (800) 500-1554 or (517) 355-2345

Timely Submission of Assignments

Assignments must be turned in on time, by the due date. If there is a problem, please communicate with me. *Late assignments* are rarely accepted and will not receive full credit. If the instructor agrees to accept a late assignment, one point will be deducted from all accepted late work for the first day, and one point per day (including weekends and holidays) will be deducted until the assignment is turned in. You are responsible for contacting me in a timely manner to request permission to turn in a late assignment.

Use of Generative AI

The University has clear policies related to academic integrity and plagiarism which are referenced in more detail at the back of this syllabus; however, so far there is only general guidance related to the use of generative AI such as ChatGPT. I see generative AI is a tool, and, of course, with all tools there are pros and cons and potential pitfalls – some quite perilous – that need to be considered. ChatGPT, the most mentioned generative AI tool at the moment, uses each conversation you have with it to fine tune its algorithms and there are virtually no data privacy protections. It uses general information without any citations and is not particularly discriminating about what sources it draws on, so it is subject to the biases and inaccuracies in the information available to it. This means it can be useful for brainstorming when you're stuck with prompts like "Provide me with five ideas for topics on immigration and health care from a social work perspective", but not so good for writing a paper that requires you to cite real, verifiable sources. **You may not use generative AI to write or create content for any parts of your graded assignments in this class.** If you decide it is helpful for some pre-writing aspect of the work (e.g., drafting a case study, brainstorming an outline), I ask that you **acknowledge that within the assignment** by describing how you use it and properly citing the tool you used. (See guidance for how to do this here: <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>).

Grading

Deadlines

Posted assignment deadlines are listed in the syllabus. Late work is rarely accepted. If you foresee a difficulty in submitting an assignment on time, let the instructor know as soon as possible in writing. The instructor will respond in writing to let you know if you have permission to submit the assignment late. If permission is granted, one point will be deducted for each 24 hour period (or portion thereof) that an assignment is submitted after the posted due date.

Submitting assignments

All assignments will be submitted through D2L in folders specified for each assignment or on Mural Board. Grades are final. The exception to this is instructor error in grading and/or instructor error in computation of grades. You should assume each assignment will be graded on a traditional scale unless you are given other instructions.

Feedback will be provided mostly via graded rubrics on D2L. Barring unforeseen circumstances, I will provide feedback within 2 weeks of submission or notify you if I will not be able to make that deadline. Evaluation rubrics will be posted on D2L. Your final grades for each assignment will be posted on D2L.

Grading scale

Points	Percentage	Grade
93.50 points to 100.0 points	94% - 100%	4.0
86.50 points to 93.49 points	87% - 93%	3.5
79.50 points to 86.49 points	80% - 86%	3.0
71.50 points to 79.49 points	72% - 79%	2.5
64.50 points to 71.49 points	65% - 71%	2.0
57.50 points to 64.49 points	58% - 64%	1.5
50.50 points to 57.49 points	51% - 57%	1.0
0 points to 50.49 points	0% - 50%	0.0

Assignments and Basis for Grading

Due Date	Assignment	Percentage Points
General		
Weeks 2-13	Reading Quizzes (individual grade)	10
Weeks 1-13	Class Attendance & Participation (individual grade)	15
In Depth Knowledge of Social Policy Focus Area		
As Scheduled Weeks 3-9	Student-led Lesson on Social Policy Focus Area (group grade)	15
Social Action Campaign		
Weeks 2-13	Campaign Portfolio	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection Questions (individual grade) • Campaign Activities & Products (group grade) 	20 20

Week 13	Campaign Presentation (group grade)	10
Finals Week	Campaign Binder (group grade)	10
	TOTAL	100

Reading Quizzes (10% of total grade)

Weekly quizzes will be posted on D2L and consist of ~10 questions about the week’s assigned reading or other instructional material (e.g., video or podcast). They are designed to incentivize and reward doing the assigned reading/viewing/listening and coming to class prepared to apply this learning. The quiz questions are designed to test your basic comprehension and help students identify some of the most important points from the assigned learning materials. Each quiz is worth 1 (percentage) point. There are 12 quizzes and your lowest 2 grades will be dropped. Students must complete these quizzes individually.

Class Attendance & Participation (15% of final course grade)

The purpose of evaluating your attendance and participation is to encourage and reward students who prepare for, and engage in, the habits of the mind. Thus, you will be evaluated on the quantity and quality of your participation in the class based on your attendance and the instructor’s subjective assessment. Additionally, at the end of the course, you will be asked to evaluate your level of participation, as well as each of your campaign teammates’, with a focus on the how well each campaign member adhered to the Campaign Group Agreement that you will co-develop and how each member contributed to the success of the campaign using the definition of campaign leadership provided by Dr. Scott Myers-Lipton in the course textbook. These evaluations will inform your Attendance & Participation grade.

Students are expected to:

- attend EVERY class session,
- have completed ALL the assigned reading and watch ALL assigned videos ahead of time,
- come to class with opinions, ideas, and questions about the reading and videos, and
- ACTIVELY participate in the class discussion (i.e., each student will be expected to ask insightful questions and make insightful observations multiple times during each class that demonstrate that they have completed the assigned reading and thought about it).

As previously noted, with respect to **attendance**, each student may miss one class during the semester without it negatively impacting their grade. You do not need to provide a reason for this absence. However, each additional unexcused absence will result in losing 2 points from your Class Attendance & Participation grade. Excused absences are provided for religious observance, grief/loss (based on university policy), medically documented illness, or RCPD documented disability.

Your class participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

Excellent (19-20 points) requires that you play a leadership role in the large class discussion and your team, apply the text, discuss points articulately and respond intelligently to other's views; ask insightful questions, and take responsibility for the direction of the class discussion and your team.

Good (17-18 points) requires that you participate regularly in the large class discussion and your team, demonstrate good knowledge of the text, discuss points articulately and respond intelligently to other's views; ask insightful questions, but you do not take a strong leadership role in the overall class discussion and the direction of your team.

Acceptable (15-16 points) requires that you follow the discussion in the large class and your team, make occasional comments, have a basic knowledge of the text, and sometimes ask questions in the large group and team.

Developing (13-14 points) requires that you occupy a seat and occasionally show signs of life.

Unacceptable (<13 points) requires that you occupy a seat but show no signs of life or that you don't even occupy a seat (i.e. you have multiple unexcused absences).

Student-led Lesson on Social Policy Focus Area (15% of total grade)

Each social action campaign group will be responsible for conducting in depth research on a broader social policy area related to their social action campaign issue. They will demonstrate their mastery of this topic by creating and leading a 75-minute lesson on this policy area for their classmates. The lesson should cover:

- The scope, primary causes, and social consequences of the 1-3 major social problem(s) addressed by this area of social policy;
- An overview of 2-5 major U.S. social policies in this area and how they attempt to address these social problems, as well as the extent to which credible research indicates they are effective at doing so;
- A description of the major U.S. social welfare programs, including who is eligible and the nature of the services/assistance each program provides participants; and
- A discussion of 1-2 current controversies or debates related to this policy area.

This assignment is not merely a presentation but a lesson. Thus, it should include both didactic (presentation of factual information via slides, videos, etc.) and interactive learning (case studies, discussion exercises, games, quizzes, etc.) designed to bring the content alive for your classmates.

My goal is that you get to learn about the social policy area that holds the greatest interest for *you*. However, this requires that you select a social action campaign that is related to your interest area and that your teammates are in agreement; some compromise and negotiation may be necessary. Groups will be scheduled to present, one per week, during Weeks 3 through 9. Presentation dates will be assigned on a first come, first serve basis.

Campaign Portfolio (40% of total grade)

At the university, you generally demonstrate that you understand the ideas from the course in an exam or via academic papers. This class is different. In this class, portfolios take the place of exams. There are two components to your campaign portfolio:

1. Campaign Activities & Products; and
2. Reflection.

Starting in Week 2, your campaign group will be collectively responsible for completing various assigned campaign activities and/or creating various campaign products to help advance your group's goals. You will post your Campaign Activities & Products on Mural Board, where the instructor will review your work and provide feedback that your group is expected to incorporate into revisions. This part of your portfolio is graded collectively on a pass/fail basis.

Additionally, starting in Week 2, you will be asked to submit short written responses to a set of weekly reflection questions where you demonstrate your knowledge of the text in light of your social action experiences. Therefore, **you must integrate the text with your community work throughout each portfolio**. With no integration of text, you cannot receive above a 2.0 on your portfolio. You can talk to your teammates but responses to the reflection questions will be your own work and you will be graded individually.

Campaign Presentation and Binder (20% of total grade)

For the final exam, students give a group presentation on their social action campaign. In addition, your group will turn in a campaign binder, which will be evaluated. The binder will be used by future students when they choose their campaigns.

Extra Credit (maximum 3% of total grade)

The National Association of Social Worker (NASW) Michigan Chapter is hosting Capitol Action Day on March 17th, 9:00am – 2:00pm in Lansing. This is an opportunity to get hands on experience in legislative advocacy, and participating students will receive 3 extra credit points. You will need to register for the event. I am in conversations with the School of Social Work to see if they are willing to cover the \$60 registration fee for students.

Other Policies, Resources, and Expectations

MSU has a webpage which houses all the University policies broken down by content area, with an index, and search feature. Some of the most relevant policies and resources are included on this syllabus but visit <https://policies.msu.edu> for additional information.

In addition to university policies, as a social work major you are expected to use the [National Association of Social Work \(NASW\) Code of Ethics](#) as a guideline and standard for your behavior as a student. Note that the six core professional values outlined in the Code of Ethics are: integrity, competence, service, social justice, the importance of human relationships, and the dignity and worth of all people.

Academic Honesty

Resources include:

- The MSW Student Handbook
- The Spartan Code of Honor Academic Pledge
- Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities
- The Office of the University Ombudsperson page on University Policies and Guidelines and Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Article 2.3.7 of the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities states that “The graduate student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards”. In addition, the School of Social Work adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructors, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com website to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact me if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work.

Academic Misconduct

Policies and procedures related to academic misconduct are outlined in the Integrity of Scholarship and Grades policy (ISG). If I believe you have committed an act of academic misconduct, I will arrange a time to meet with you to discuss my concerns. I may give you a penalty grade, which is defined as any grade based on a charge of academic misconduct. A penalty grade may include, but is not limited to, a failing grade on an assignment or in the course. At a minimum, you will receive a 0.0 on the assignment and be recommended to the School of Social Work Graduate Office for academic review. The ISG also requires that I report academic misconduct to the Dean of the College of Social Science through an electronic

Academic Dishonesty Report. The form, which will end up in your student folder, also asks if the instructor wants to request an academic disciplinary hearing to impose sanctions in addition to the penalty grade. Additional sanctions include probation, suspension from your program or the University for a designated time. The Dean may also call for this hearing independent of the instructor. Deans usually call for disciplinary hearings for repeat offenders or in cases involving egregious acts of academic misconduct. The ISG policy requires first-time offenders to complete an Academic Integrity Education Program, which is administered by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education or the Dean of the Graduate School.

Code of Conduct

The social worker uses self as a tool in the helping process and must constantly examine the self to identify barriers to effectiveness. Self-awareness (the accurate perception of one's own actions and feelings, and the effects of one's behavior on others) is emphasized throughout the social work curriculum. Students may be called upon through exercises, written assignments, and in discussions, to identify and explore their values, beliefs, and life experiences in order to assess their effects on future worker/client interactions. Although students are encouraged, assisted, and expected to engage in the process of self-exploration and personal growth, no student will be required to disclose information beyond what is considered by the student to be comfortable and appropriate. Different, even conflicting opinions and viewpoints are to be expected. You are expected to speak up about the issues we discuss in class, especially when you disagree with other students or with the instructors. Professional and respectful behavior is required of all class members during the course. Multiple perspectives are what make class discussions interesting and learning possible.

Disruptive Behavior

Article 2.3.6 of the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR) for students at Michigan State University states: "Graduate students and faculty share the responsibility of maintaining classroom decorum and a collegial atmosphere that ensures teaching and learning." Article 2.3.11 of the GSRR states that "Graduate students and faculty members share the responsibility for maintaining professional relationships based on mutual trust and civility." General Student Regulation 5.02 states that no student shall "obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with the functions, services, or directives of the University, its offices, or its employees (e.g., classes, social, cultural, and athletic events, computing services, registration, housing and food services, governance meetings, and hearings)." Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through School, College, or University procedures.

Drops and Adds

The last day to drop this class with a refund is 2/5/26. The last day to drop with no grade reported is 3/9/2026. Be sure to confirm these dates for yourself by consulting the current semester's university calendar. Also see: [Late Drops, Adds & Section Changes](#).

Etiquette/Netiquette

Professional and respectful communication with instructor and other students, whether the communication is by electronic means, telephone or in person is expected. All communication

should demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to cultural differences. Email communication and other written communication should use Standard English as opposed to popular abbreviations used online and regional colloquialisms. Spelling and grammar are important in all communication. All emails should include complete sentences and identify the writer as well as whom the email is directed to. These expectations apply to online discussions and interaction.

[The Gender and Sexuality Campus Center](#)

The mission of the Gender and Sexuality Campus Center is to celebrate, affirm, and support Queer and Trans individuals and communities at Michigan State University. We strive to create a more just and equitable campus for people of all genders and sexualities, centering the voices of Black and Indigenous people of color. We enact this work through advocacy, education, programming, and community-building. The center website includes a variety of useful resources, programs and supports including information on the use of pronouns and resources for trans students.

[Grief Absence](#)

Students who experience the loss of a family member or experience emotional distress due to a similar incident should refer to the University Grief Absence Policy. The form to request a grief absence is available on the MSU Registrar website.

[Limits to Confidentiality](#)

Michigan State University is committed to fostering a culture of caring and respect that is free of relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and to ensuring that all affected individuals have access to services. For information on reporting options, confidential advocacy and support resources, university policies and procedures, or how to make a difference on campus, visit the Title IX website at civilrights.msu.edu and supportmore.msu.edu.

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues based on external legal obligations or that relate to the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, and a social worker who is a mandated reporter, I must report the following information to Children's Protective Services and/or other University offices if you share it with me:

- Suspected current child abuse/neglect, if you are a minor or it involves another minor
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they occurred at a University-sponsored event or on University property or involves a University community member with respect to conduct that may have occurred while they were a University community member.
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential

setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center (<https://caps.msu.edu/>) or the Center for Survivors (centerforsurvivors.msu.edu or the 24/7 hotline 517-372-6666).

Mental Health Services

Students often experience issues that may interfere with academic success such as academic stress, sleep problems, juggling responsibilities, life events, relationship concerns, or feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, or depression. If you or a friend is struggling, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Helpful, effective resources are available on campus, and most are free of charge.

- Self-guided online resources are available at <https://caps.msu.edu>
- 24/7 phone crisis counseling at (517) 355-8270 (press “1” at the prompt)
- Drop-in crisis counseling in Olen Health Center, 3rd floor, 8am – 5pm Monday through Friday
- 24/7 MSU Sexual Assault Crisis Hotline at (517) 372-6666
- Additional resources at <https://centerforsurvivors.msu.edu/>

Religious Observance

Please inform the instructor of any conflicts between class assignments, attendance or other expectations by the second week of class. I will happily work with you to make accommodations.

Safety

To be safe is everybody’s right. We will likely deal with some controversial and difficult topics during the semester, and students are encouraged to take care of themselves in whatever way needed. Please keep the instructor informed if anything occurs that might affect your grade or if you need my help. Everyone contributes to creating a safe atmosphere and maintaining respect for each person’s boundaries—both physical and emotional—is vital to the process. Growth comes from expanding boundaries and testing limits and is usually personally uncomfortable.

Student Veteran Resource Center (SVRC)

If you are an active service member or veteran, the SVRC may be of interest to you. The mission of the SVRC is to promote “the education, career, and personal advancement of service members and veterans at Michigan State University.” For more information, please visit <https://veterans.msu.edu/>.

Tolerance and Civility

Web Accessibility

SW 822 SPRING 2025 Class Schedule (KLEIN)

- [SML] = Scott Myers-Lipton (2023)

A **typical class session** will consist of two ~75-minute sections punctuated by one 20-minute break to allow time for you to rest your brains, get something to eat, etc:

1. *Social Action* [~75 minutes]: Group discussions of SML reading and related newspaper articles or videos, social action course alumni reflections, campaign raps, and small group work on social action campaigns.
2. *Deep Dive into Specific Social Policy Area* [~75 minutes]: Students learn about a specific area of social policy and related social action campaigns through a combination small group presentations, discussion, and interactive learning activities led by students.

WEEK 1: JANUARY 12TH
<p>Topic(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introductions & Course Expectations</i> • <i>Social Action: Issue Development, Walking the Walk, Campaign Identification</i> <p>Required Reading & Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Syllabus • Spend 15-30 minutes exploring the Teaching Social Action website to learn more about the model that will guide this course, being sure to read descriptions of Spring 2025 MSU campaigns and at least 3 other past student campaigns that pique your interest • SML Chapter 1: Issue Development (pp. 1-19) <p>Assignments Due: None</p>
JANUARY 19TH
<p>MLK Holiday – No Class</p> <p>[Email instructor 1. final campaign group selection and 2. proposed social policy focus area for the Student-led Lesson on Social Policy by Thursday 10am]</p>
WEEK 2: JANUARY 26TH
<p>Topic(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Policy Deep Dive: Finalize Social Policy Focus Areas and Schedule for Student-led Lessons</i> • <i>Social Action: Setting the Tone, Finalizing Campaign Topics/Groups, Establishing Campaign Group Contracts</i> <p>Required Reading & Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SML Chapter 2: Setting the Tone (pp. 20-27) • On D2L: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plato’s Allegory of the Cave ○ Josh Barousse SJSU ’07 Reflection <p>Assignments Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Quiz 1 (covers Week 1 & 2 assigned learning materials)

- Email instructor your Social Action Campaign issue and names of other group members
- Campaign Mural Board Assignments:
 - Description of campaign issue
 - 1-3 campaign demands (initial draft)
 - Tentative list of campaign members
- Portfolio 1 Reflection Questions

WEEK 3: FEBRUARY 2ND

Topic(s):

- Policy Deep Dive: *Group 1 Student-led Lesson*
- Social Action: *Change Theory*

Required Reading & Videos:

- SML Chapter 3: Change Theory (pp. 28-41)
- On D2L:
 - Rochelle Jackson-Smarr, SJSU Class of '08 Reflection
 - Myers-Lipton, "Students for DMH and the Fight for Air Conditioning" and Lowman, "Students Get Heated Over Building Conditions"
 - Video: Interview with Jo Ann Robinson
 - Video: I'd Organize Hell – Saul Alinsky
 - Video: Students for DMH First Ever Faint-In (street theater on Students for DMH's Facebook page)

Assignments Due:

- Reading Quiz 2 (covers Week 3 assigned learning materials)
- Campaign Mural Board Assignments:
 - Revised campaign demands
 - Name and contact information of campaign target(s)
 - Name of campaign group
 - Posted copy of Campaign Team Agreement
 - Posted copy of completed student org application
- Portfolio 2 Reflection Questions
- Instructor-led Social Policy Area Lesson [Child Welfare Policy]

WEEK 4: FEBRUARY 9TH

Topic(s):

- Policy Deep Dive: *Group 1 Student-led Lesson*
- Social Action: *Building Power*

Required Reading & Videos:

- SML Chapter 4: Building Power (pp. 42-59)
- On D2L:
 - Myers-Lipton, "Chicano Commencement"
 - Rodriguez, "A Bold Statement That Still Resonates"
 - David Salinas, SJSU Class of '19 Reflection

Assignments Due:

- Reading Quiz 3 (covers Week 4 assigned learning materials)
- Campaign Mural Board Assignments:

- Summary of 1 stakeholder interview (interviewee, what you learned about campaign issue)
- Summary of 2 student interviews (interviewees, what you learned about campaign issue)
- Updated draft campaign demands and targets & confirmation that they have been submitted to TSA leadership for review
- Portfolio 3 Reflection Questions
- Student-led Social Policy Area Lesson [Group 1 only]

WEEK 5: FEBRUARY 16TH

Topic(s):

- Policy Deep Dive: *Group 2 Student-led Lesson*
- Social Action: *Research & Group Dynamics*

Required Reading & Videos:

- SML Chapter 5: Research (pp. 60-71) and Chapter 6: Group Dynamics (pp. 72-80)
- On D2L:
 - Leila McCabe, SJSU Class of '12 Reflection
 - Rodriguez, "A More Balanced Playing Field..."
 - AS, SJSU, Board of Directors' Resolution
 - Lucila Ortiz, SJSU Class of '10 Reflection

Assignments Due:

- Reading Quiz 4 (covers Week 5 assigned learning materials)
- Campaign Mural Board Assignments:
 - Initial draft of organizational rap
 - Campaign member sign-up sheet and commitment card
 - Instagram and/or other social media handle/group/link
 - Name of member who will serve as campaign's Recruitment Leader
 - Copy of campaign flier
 - List of buildings/other places to hang fliers
 - Photos of signs for tabling
 - Classroom presentation/org rap schedule
 - Tabling schedule with locations, dates/times and which members will staff table(s)
 - List of student and community groups to reach out to as potential allies with contact information and status of outreach
 - Date/time, location, and agenda for meeting with new recruits
 - Names of who will complete the Historical Overview, the Power Map, and the Target Analysis (added during class)
- Portfolio 4 Reflection Questions
- Student-led Social Policy Area Lesson [Group 2 only]

WEEK 6: FEBRUARY 23RD

Topic(s):

- Policy Deep Dive: *Group 3 Student-led Lesson*
- Social Action: *Strategy & Tactics*

Required Reading & Videos:

- SML Chapter 7: Strategy & Tactics (pp. 81-98)
- On D2L:
 - Franco, "Students Declare Housing Crisis"

- Mehta, “No Deal”
- DeRuy, “SJSU Blast University Leaders for Handling of Housing Crisis”
- Trujano, “SJSU’s New Housing Solutions”
- Mayra Bernabe, SJSU Class of ’19 Reflection
- Video: *Student Homeless Alliance Demands Resources from SJSU*
- Rey, “Campus Safety: A Reason to Be Worried?”
- Bradley, “Campus Safety and Statues Garden”
- Clark “UPD to Expand Its Escort Program”
- CMS Info, “Students Auto-Enrolled in Alert-SJSU”
- Bradley, SJSU Class of ’11 Reflection

Assignments Due:

- Reading Quiz 5 (covers Week 6 assigned learning materials)
- Campaign Mural Board Assignments:
 - Posted copy of Target Analysis
 - Posted copy of Historical Analysis
 - Posted copy of Power Analysis
 - Sign-up sheet and minutes from meeting with new recruits
- Portfolio 5 Reflection Questions
- Student-led Social Policy Area Lesson [Group 3 only]

MARCH 2ND

MSU Spring Break – No Class

WEEK 7: MARCH 9TH

Topic(s):

- Policy Deep Dive: *Group 4 Student-led Lesson*
- Social Action: *Campaign Kickoff*

Required Reading & Videos:

- SML Chapter 8: Campaign Kickoff (pp. 99-113)
- On D2L:
 - How to Get Press to Your Event
 - Myers-Lipton, “Donald Williams Jr. and Students for Racial Equality”
 - Murphy, “San Jose State Donor’s Alleged...”
 - O’Connor, “University’s Officials Step Down...”
 - Hernandez, “Sit-in for Racial Justice: Students Ask for Apology from President”
 - Murphy, “SJSU Donor Did Make Offensive Remarks about Latinos”
 - Estelia Velasquez, SJSU Class of ’16 Reflection
 - Video: *SJSU Students Denounce Board Member’s Alleged Racist Statement*

Assignments Due:

- Reading Quiz 6 (covers Week 7 assigned learning materials)
- Campaign Mural Board Assignments:
 - Select and describe at least one Campaign Action that your group will implement in the next few weeks. Consider which of the 6 Strategies your campaign will use (legislation, policy, alliance building, media and public education, disruption, target meetings or other). Then identify which of the 11 Tactics or Actions your campaign will use (rallying, marching, picketing, street

theater, public hearings, occupying space, direct negotiation, lobby day, walk out, a day in the life, accountability session, other?)

- Describe efforts to date to meet with your Campaign Target to let them know of your demands and see if they will agree BEFORE you go public and do a Campaign Action.
- Portfolio 6 Reflection Questions
- Student-led Social Policy Area Lesson [Group 4 only]

WEEK 8: MARCH 16TH

Topic(s):

- Policy Deep Dive: *Group 5 Student-led Lesson*
- Social Action: *Campaign Plan & Campaign Frame*

Required Reading & Videos:

- SML Chapter 9: Campaign Plan (pp. 114-121)
- On D2L:
 - IFSW Global Statement of Social Work Ethical Principles
 - UN Declaration of Human Rights
 - Ewing, “Anti-Sweatshop Groups Gain Steam”
 - Spartan Daily, “Groups Rally for WRC Support”
 - AS University Affairs Meeting
 - Parker, “SJSU Signs with Labor Rights Group”
 - Austin Gieger, SJSU Class of ’08 Reflection
 - Yap, “Labor Rights Violations Suspected”
 - Video: *Fox News Coverage of Louisiana Winter 2001*
 - Video: *Groups Calls on SJSU President to Ban School Apparel Made with Sweatshop Labor*

Assignments Due:

- Reading Quiz 7 (covers Week 8 assigned learning materials)
- Campaign Mural Board Assignments:
 - Post Kickoff Event/Campaign Action Plan (Choose 1 campaign action and then figure out all the things that will happen at the event and what needs to be done in advance to make these things possible; choose date/time and site, invite speakers, etc.)
 - Post copy of Commitment Cards and photos of at least 10 signed cards for campaign launch)
 - Write a press release for Campaign Kickoff Event/Action and email to the professor; post final version
 - Name of member who will be Media Relations Coordinator
- Portfolio 7 Reflection Questions
- Student-led Social Policy Area Lesson [Group 5 only]
- Mid-course Evaluation

MARCH 17th

**National Association of Social Workers – Michigan Chapter’s Capitol Action Day 2026
9am-2pm at State Capitol (extra credit available)**

WEEK 9: MARCH 23RD

Topic(s):

- Policy Deep Dive: *Group 6 Student-led Lesson*
- Social Action: *Lessons from U.S. Case Studies, Campaign Groups meet*

Required Reading & Videos:

- No SML reading
- On D2L:
 - U.S. Social Action Campaign Case Study: Act Up readings
 - U.S. Social Action Case Study: Occupy Wall Street readings

Assignments Due:

- Reading Quiz 8 (covers Week 9 assigned learning materials)
- Campaign Mural Board Assignments:
 - Post 2-3 Campaign Messages
 - Plan for dry erase board day/night (location, date/time, etc.)
 - Post photos of signs for Campaign Kickoff Event
 - Post Campaign Timeline
 - Update/expand Kickoff Event/Campaign Action Plan with details for the day of the event: What's going to happen, who is going to do what, who will speak, make signs, recruit?
 - Send final, approved press release to assignment desks
- Portfolio 8 Reflection Questions
- Student-led Social Policy Area Lesson [Group 6 only]

WEEK 10: MARCH 30TH**Topic(s):**

- Policy Deep Dive: *N/A*
- Social Action: *Lessons from U.S. Case Studies, Campaign Groups meet*

Required Reading & Videos:

- On D2L:
 - U.S. Case Study: Black Lives Matter readings
 - U.S. Case Study: NRA & Parkland Students readings

Assignments Due:

- **Hold Campaign Kickoff Event or Social Action during Week 10-11!!!**
- Reading Quiz 9 (covers Week 10 assigned learning materials)
- No Portfolio Reflection Questions or Mural Board Assignments

WEEK 11: APRIL 6TH**Topic(s):**

- Policy Deep Dive: *N/A*
- Social Action: *Lessons from U.S. Case Studies, Campaign Groups meet*

Required Reading & Videos:

- On D2L:
 - U.S. Case Study: Sunrise Movement readings
 - U.S. Case Study: Keystone Pipeline readings

Assignments Due:

- **Hold Campaign Kickoff Event or Social Action during Week 10-11!!!**
- Reading Quiz 10 (covers Week 11 assigned learning materials)
- No Portfolio Reflection Questions or Mural Board Assignments

WEEK 12: APRIL 13TH

Topic(s):

- Policy Deep Dive: *N/A*
- Social Action: *Campaign Evaluation*

Required Reading & Videos:

- SML Chapter 10: Campaign Evaluation (pp. 122-124)
- No readings on D2L

Assignments Due: None

- Reading Quiz 11 (covers Week 12 assigned learning materials)
- Mural Board Assignments:
 - Post Fundraising Plan (will you fundraise? what type? rationale)
 - Table of Contents for Campaign Binder (what will you include in your binder?)
- Portfolio 9 Reflection Questions

WEEK 13: APRIL 20TH

Topic(s):

- The Hero's and Shero's Journey
- Campaign Presentations

Required Reading & Videos:

- SML Chapter 11: The Hero's and Shero's Journey (pp. 125-130)
- SML, "Dr. King's Legacy for Today" (speech)
- The Matrix video clips (not quite fitting in, the call, the blue or red pill)
- Harry Potter video clip
- Luke Skywalker video clip

Assignments Due:

- Reading Quiz 12 (covers Week 13 assigned learning materials)
- Campaign Presentations (submit presentation slides/documents to Dropbox)
- Portfolio 10 Reflection Questions
- Assessment of Campaign Team Members

FINALS WEEK

- Class does not meet, but instructor will be available via Zoom during university scheduled final exam period: Monday, April 27th 3-5pm
- **Campaign Binder is due by 11:59pm on Thursday, April 30th**
- Students strongly encouraged to participate in the virtual Spring '25 College Summit on Social Action on Thursday, May 7th, 3-5pm EST