NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Sustainable Communities
SUS 208: Community Engagement Fieldwork Experience

Spring 2026
Wednesdays, 4:00PM - 6:00PM
SBS-Raul H. Castro, Rm 241

1-3 credit hours
Pass/Fail
Offered in conjunction with SUS 320
Course Prerequisites: none
Mode of Instruction: In-Person

Instructor: Sydney Rittershaus
Office Hours: Please contact via email to set up an appointment.
Email: Sar567@nau.edu

Course Purpose

This 1-3 credit class offers an opportunity for students to engage in community-based social change work for credit. Students are expected to devote approximately 3-9 hours each week (depending on whether you have registered for 1, 2, or 3 credits) to their action team meeting, and agreed-upon work with their action team members and partner organization. The course has two key components: learn practical social action skills through in-class training, and work together through action teams to co-design a social action project. Importantly, students directly choose which nonviolent campaigns/projects to develop, and can change action teams at any point in the semester.

Action team meetings provide the opportunity for students:

1. To intentionally develop important grassroots democratic organizing skills as they seek to work on social change projects in their communities.
2. To reflect, evaluate, and better envision together the work they are doing, building a lively, open, engaged community.
3. To relate on-the-ground community organizing work to the theories, historical perspectives, and research strategies introduced in the Community Engagement Minor and other courses..

This is a required course for the Community Engagement Minor.

Course Student Learning Outcomes

Students will:
- Acquire ***facility with grassroots democratic organizing and mentoring skills*** such as relational meetings, public narrative, group facilitation, research actions, decision-making and power mapping.
- Develop ***arts of effective communication*** - including public speaking and listening in diverse contexts – in ways that enhance capacities for grassroots leadership in their own and others' lives.
- ***Analyze processes of community-based social change.***
- ***Connect*** to a variety of organizations and individuals doing social justice and environmental sustainability work in the community.

Assignments/Assessments of Course Student Learning Outcomes
Attendance and Participation
Students are expected to attend all class sessions and fulfill the agreed-upon expectations for their team and community partner. If you must miss class, please be in touch with your team members *and* class instructor.

Action Team Meetings
Each week, students will gather in their action teams during the weekly SUS 208 class meeting to collaboratively complete an activity or set of questions related to the weekly theme of our course materials. All students should participate actively in the discussion and rotate the responsibility of recording responses and submitting them. Sometimes, this activity will just require proof of participation in an action outside of class (e.g., sign-up sheets from a recruiting presentation, photos from tabling, notes from relational meetings, etc.). You will actively add to your Action Team Archive to keep track of your time logs, meeting notes, timeline, project materials, and final report. .

Time Log
Since the success of your action team's organizing campaign depends so much on the contributions of each team member, you will need to keep a time log keeping track of what you have done each week to advance the campaign and complete requirements for the class. We understand that your availability and the needs of the campaign will vary each week, but on average, you should log 3 hours of work for each course credit. This includes class time, though you should specify what you were working on during the action team meeting during class. Each student will have a physical time sheet that you will fill out and share with the instructor each week.

Action Team Report and Presentation
At the end of the semester, each action team will turn in a campaign report, describing the work they have engaged in and providing a roadmap for future work on this issue. All students on the team are expected to participate in both the preparation of the report and the public presentation. These project reports will be collected in a physical binder that is shared with the next action team working on this issue, so that they can continue to move the work forward.

Grading System
Students may take SUS 208 more than once and may take it for up to three credits. Requirements for this course therefore vary depending on how many times you have taken the course before and for how many credits you are registered. The chart below explains in detail what the requirements are for students taking the course for one, two, or three credits. If you are taking the course for the second or third time, please meet individually with your instructor to work out how you will take additional leadership in the course. All individual and group assignments are due on Fridays at 5pm unless stated otherwise.

To receive a passing grade, **students must:**
1. Miss no more than *four* class meetings over the course of the semester. If missing more is unavoidable, you must communicate with your team and the instructor ahead of time to make an alternate plan.
2. Participate in a relational meeting with your 208 instructor.
3. Participate in relational meetings with members of your action team and community members involved with your focus area (4 relational meetings = total minimum; see chart below for details).
4. Submit all individual and group activities (only one submission required per group for group activities).
5. Submit a time log that demonstrates that you have contributed the expected hours to this project for 16 weeks of the semester, including class time.
6. Take a clearly defined role in planning an action.
7. Submit a clear, thoughtful, and analytical Action Team Report that fulfills the requirements of the rubric provided in Canvas.
8. Present about your project with your action team at the end of the semester.

For some assignments, requirements vary depending on whether you have taken the class before and for how many credits you are registered for. The chart below explains the different requirements in more detail.

Reading and discussion leading - applying readings to action team

1-credit (3 hours/wk)	2-credits (6 hours/wk)	3-credits (9 hours/wk)
4 relational meetings	6 relational meetings	8 relational meetings
Facilitate action team meeting at least once	Facilitate action team meeting at least twice	Facilitate action team meeting at least three times
Participate in all class workshops	Co-lead a workshop in class or your action team	Co-lead a workshop in class or your action team
Review optional resources	Apply at least one optional resource to action team (details discussed in class)	Apply at least three optional resources to action team (details discussed in class)

Readings and Materials
There are both on-campus and online resources that you can and should consult for
social action. The syllabus contains an initial set of references that are necessarily an incomplete
set. I welcome your contributions and suggestions for adding to these resources. I also welcome
your feedback on the readings for the course and suggestions for adding to or revising the
reading list. All chapters, articles, and resources will be posted in the class Canvas shell.

Course Schedule *Individual and Group assignments are subject to change*

Week 1 (01/14): Course Introduction/Issue Exploration
- During class:
  - Community agreements
  - Syllabus & course overview
  - Issue Exploration Activity
  - Individual assignment: **Issue Exploration**
- *Attend Community Partner Pitches in SUS 320*
  - *Individual assignment: **Action Team Preference Form***
- Resources:
  - Meyers-Lipton *Change!* Chapter 1: Issue Development (p.1-19)
  - Ganz Ch. 1 and 2
  - National Equity Project - "Developing Community Agreements"
    https://www.nationalequityproject.org/tools/developing-community-agreements

Week 2 (01/21): Relational Meeting (1:1) Training
- Before class:
  - Read Ganz, Chapter 2 pages 14-17 and pages 60-61
  - Watch Katie Horvath's training
  - Prepare for your first action team meeting! What do you want to know from your community partner?
- During class:
  - Training: Relational Meetings and Group Dynamics
  - **Schedule** relational meetings with *all members* of your team
  - Group assignment: **Group Contract Form**
- Resources
  - See Canvas shell

Week 3 (01/28): Facilitation For Mutuality
- Before class:
  - Complete **Relational Meeting 1** with a member of your action team
  - Read Spade, "Leadership Qualities that Support Mutuality and Collaboration"
  - Read Seeds for Change Short Guide to Consensus Decision Making
  - Review Social Change Ecosystem Map
- During class:
  - Training: Facilitation For Mutuality
  - Individual assignment: **Roles in Social Change Ecosystem**
  - Individual assignment: **Relational Meeting 1 Reflection**
- Resources:
  - Ganz, Chapter 3 pages 23-26
  - Rebrii, "Zapatistas: Lessons in community self-organisation in Mexico"
  - "On Being" podcast interview with sociologist Arlie Hochschild
    https://onbeing.org/programs/arlie-hochschild-the-deep-stories-of-our-time/

Week 4 (02/04): Cycle of Organizing
- Before class:
  - Research information about related & broader movements that your action team is a part of. Share these among your action team members in a google doc.
  - Read Myers-Lipton Chapter 5: Research
- During class:
  - Training: Cycle of Organizing

- Resources:
  - See Canvas shell

Week 5 (02/11): Building Power
- Before class:
  - Complete another relational meeting and fill out the appropriate form in Canvas (keep doing these when it works for you until you reach *at least 4* by the end of the semester)
  - Read Myers-Lipton Chapter 4: Building Power
- During class:
  - Training: Power and Recruitment
  - Group assignment: **Recruitment Plan**
- Resources:
  - See Canvas shell

Week 6 (02/18): Strategy and Tactics Training
- Before class:
  - Read Myers-Lipton Chapter 7: Strategy and Tactics
- During class:
  - Training: Strategy and Tactics
  - **Finalize group timeline for action(s)**
  - **Practice action proposals with action team members**
- Resources:
  - Ganz, Chapter 6
  - "198 METHODS OF NONVIOLENT ACTION"
    https://www.brandeis.edu/peace-conflict/pdfs/198-methods-non-violent-action.pdf

Week 7 (02/25): Action Proposals
- Before class:
  - Practice action proposals with action team members
  - Review Myers-Lipton Chapter 7: Strategy and Tactics
- During class:
  - Action Team Project Proposals
  - Individual assignment: **Mid-semester Check-in Form**
- Resources:
  - "Building Organizations for the Long Haul!"
    https://www.deanspade.net/2019/09/25/building-organizations/

Week 8 (03/04): Power Is Relational
- To do before class:
  - Read Ganz, Chapter 5 pages 36-42
- During class:
  - Training: Power Mapping & Analyzing
  - Group assignment: **Power Map**
- Resources:
  - Anita Tang, "Power Mapping & Analysis"
  - Rethinking Economics: "Power Mapping"

Week 9 (03/11): *Spring Break!*

Week 10 (03/18): Press Release Training

- Before class:
  - **Read** Press Release Guide
- During class:
  - Press Release Training
  - Campaign Kickoff updates and asks
  - *Optional* assignment: **Action Team Press Release**
- Resources:
  - See Canvas shell

Week 11 (03/25): Conflict Navigation
- Before class:
  - Check in with your action team members, how is everyone doing? What needs to be prioritized right now?
- During class:
  - Training: Dialogue Across Difference and Nonviolent Communication
  - Individual assignment: **Nonviolent Communication**
- Resources:
  - See Canvas shell

Week 12 (04/01): Event Logistics & Accessibility
- Before class:
  - Review "Venues and Accessibility" https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/access
- During class:
  - Training: Planning for Event Accessibility
  - Individual assignment: **What I Do Under Pressure: Self-Reflection Sheet**
- Resources:
  - "A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People With Disabilities" https://adata.org/guide/planning-guide-making-temporary-events-accessible-people-disabilities

Week 13 (04/08): Art of Organizing
- Before class:
  - Review the artfarm website and come ready with something that stands out to you and that you find interesting. Which events would you go to? Which of the *points of unity* do you resonate with?
  - Schedule remaining relational meetings
- During class:
  - Training: Art of Organizing
  - Individual Assignment: **Art of Organizing**
- Resources:
  - See Canvas shell

Week 14 (04/15): Autonomous Grassroots Organizing
- Before class:
  - Prepare for your last action team meeting
  - Review resources below and in Canvas
- During class:
  - Training: Zapatismo and the Black Radical Tradition
  - Facilitate last action team meeting
  - Reminders:

- schedule & complete **remaining relational meetings**
- ***Submit your Unconference idea to canvas!***
- Resources:
  - Linda Quiquivix Writings https://quiqui.org/writings/
  - Crossing the Chasm: Episode 014 w/Linda Quiquivix (Geographer and Educator) https://youtu.be/EBpVUUc53PY?si=0SdADMebXaaQ1hX9
  - Spade, Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During this Crisis (and the Next)

Week 15 (04/22): Unconference
- Before class:
  - Prepare agenda and materials for your activity!
  - Invite your community partners to your final presentations! See below.
- During class:
  - Unconference Skill-Sharing Rotations
- Resources:
  - Wikipedia Unconference Definition
  - How to Run an Unconference
  - Unconference Video

Week 16 (04/29): Final Presentation Practice
- Before class:
  - Prepare final presentation with your action team
- During class:
  - Final Presentation practice run-throughs
  - Group Assignment: **Final Presentation Materials**
  - Individual Assignment: **Student Action Team Evaluation**

- ***Final Presentations/CEM Celebration: Friday, May 1 from 12:00-1:30pm, location TBD***
  Please contact Sydney in advance if you have a class time conflict

Week 17: *Finals Week*
- No class!
- Group Assignment: **Campaign Report** (due May 8, 5:00pm)

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SYLLABUS POLICY STATEMENTS

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

NAU expects every student to firmly adhere to a strong ethical code of academic integrity in all their scholarly pursuits. The primary attributes of academic integrity are honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, and responsibility. As a student, you are expected to submit original work while giving proper credit to other people's ideas or contributions. Acting with academic integrity means completing your assignments independently while truthfully acknowledging all sources of information, or collaboration with others when appropriate. When you submit your work, you are implicitly declaring that the work is your own. Academic integrity is expected not only during formal coursework, but in all your relationships or interactions that are connected to the educational enterprise. All forms of academic deceit such as plagiarism, cheating, collusion, falsification or fabrication of results or records, permitting your work to be submitted by another, or inappropriately recycling your own work from one class to another, constitute academic misconduct that may result in serious disciplinary consequences. All students and faculty members are

responsible for reporting suspected instances of academic misconduct. All students are encouraged to complete NAU's online academic integrity workshop available in the E-Learning Center and should review the full *Academic Integrity* policy available at https://policy.nau.edu/policy/policy.aspx?num=100601.

COURSE TIME COMMITMENT

Pursuant to Arizona Board of Regents guidance (ABOR Policy 2-224, *Academic Credit*), each unit of credit requires a minimum of 45 hours of work by students, including but not limited to, class time, preparation, homework, and studying. For example, for a 3-credit course a student should expect to work at least 8.5 hours each week in a 16-week session and a minimum of 33 hours per week for a 3-credit course in a 4-week session.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Membership in NAU's academic community entails a special obligation to maintain class environments that are conductive to learning, whether instruction is taking place in the classroom, a laboratory or clinical setting, during course-related fieldwork, or online. Students have the obligation to engage in the educational process in a manner that does not interfere with normal class activities or violate the rights of others. Instructors have the authority and responsibility to address disruptive behavior that interferes with student learning, which can include the involuntary withdrawal of a student from a course with a grade of "W". For additional information, see NAU's *Disruptive Behavior in an Instructional Setting* policy at https://nau.edu/university-policy-library/disruptive-behavior.

NONDISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT

NAU prohibits discrimination and harassment based on sex, gender, gender identity, race, color, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status. Due to potentially unethical consequences, certain consensual amorous or sexual relationships between faculty and students are also prohibited as set forth in the *Consensual Romantic and Sexual Relationships* policy. The Equity and Access Office (EAO) responds to complaints regarding discrimination and harassment that fall under NAU's *Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment* policy. EAO also assists with religious accommodations. For additional information about nondiscrimination or anti-harassment or to file a complaint, contact EAO located in Old Main (building 10), Room 113, PO Box 4083, Flagstaff, AZ 86011, or by phone at 928-523-3312 (TTY: 928-523-1006), fax at 928-523-9977, email at equityandaccess@nau.edu, or visit the EAO website at https://nau.edu/equity-and-access.

TITLE IX

Title IX is the primary federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex or gender in educational programs or activities. Sex discrimination for this purpose includes sexual harassment, sexual assault or relationship violence, and stalking (including cyber-stalking). Title IX requires that universities appoint a "Title IX Coordinator" to monitor the institution's compliance with this important civil rights law. NAU's Title IX Coordinator is Elyce C. Morris. The Title IX Coordinator is available to meet with any student to discuss any Title IX issue or concern. You may contact the Title IX Coordinator by phone at 928-523-3515, by fax at 928-523-0640, or by email at elyce.morris@nau.edu. In furtherance of its Title IX obligations, NAU will promptly investigate and equitably resolve all reports of sex or gender-based discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct and will eliminate any hostile environment as defined by law. Additional important information about Title IX and related student resources, including how to request immediate help or confidential support following an act of sexual violence, is available at https://in.nau.edu/title-ix.

ACCESSIBILITY

Professional disability specialists are available at Disability Resources to facilitate a range of academic support services and accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability, you can request assistance by contacting Disability Resources at 928-523-8773 (voice), 928-523-6906 (TTY), 928-523-8747 (fax), or dr@nau.edu (e-mail). Once eligibility has been determined, students register with Disability Resources every semester to activate their approved accommodations. Although a student may request an accommodation at any time, it is best to initiate the application process at least four weeks before a student wishes to receive an accommodation. Students may begin the accommodation process by submitting a self-identification form online at https://nau.edu/disability-resources/student-eligibility-process or by contacting Disability Resources. The Director of Disability Resources, Jamie Axelrod, serves as NAU's Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator and Section 504 Compliance Officer. He can be reached at jamie.axelrod@nau.edu.

RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

Students who engage in research at NAU must receive appropriate Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training. This instruction is designed to help ensure proper awareness and application of well-established professional norms and ethical principles related to the performance of all scientific research activities. More information regarding RCR training is available at https://nau.edu/research/compliance/research-integrity.

MISCONDUCT IN RESEARCH

As noted, NAU expects every student to firmly adhere to a strong code of academic integrity in all their scholarly pursuits. This includes avoiding fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism when conducting research or reporting research results. Engaging in research misconduct may result in serious disciplinary consequences. Students must also report any suspected or actual instances of research misconduct of which they become aware. Allegations of research misconduct should be reported to your instructor or the University's Research Integrity Officer, Dr. David Faguy, who can be reached at david.faguy@nau.edu or 928-523-6117. More information about misconduct in research is available at https://nau.edu/university-policy-library/misconduct-in-research.

SENSITIVE COURSE MATERIALS

University education aims to expand student understanding and awareness. Thus, it necessarily involves engagement with a wide range of information, ideas, and creative representations. In their college studies, students can expect to encounter and to critically appraise materials that may differ from and perhaps challenge familiar understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss these matters with faculty.