

Syllabus

SST 902:

Outreach and Social Action: The Approach to Learning Social Action

Section 7090

0 units (noncredit) free for CA residents

August 31-Nov 20, 2026 (12 Weeks)

Format: In person **Wednesdays 11:00am-12:30pm**

Location: Math and Science bldg. **MSB 206**

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Every movement has a moment – ours is NOW.

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

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

Course Concepts:

This course explores contemporary advocacy and social movements focused on equity, environmental justice, and social justice, inspired by Dr. Scott Myers-Lipton's social action model. Students will engage in experiential learning by developing and launching policy-change campaigns of their choice, connecting academic study with real-world impact.

Unlike traditional courses where students only study theories, here you will apply social change concepts by identifying social issues, setting a clear demand, and leading non-violent, rights-respecting campaigns from **any** ideological perspective. The professor (s) act as a facilitator (s), supporting you as a co-creator of knowledge.

The course follows the motto: "On Your Mark, Go!, Get Set." You will select a campaign by **weeks 4-5**, launch it by **week 9**, and spend the remainder of the semester taking action and deepening your understanding of social action through readings and discussions. This immersive approach empowers you to directly experience democracy and make a tangible difference.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. **Analyze** and develop social action issues by identifying specific demands and targets.
2. **Build** power and **organize** stakeholder support for social action campaigns.
3. **Design** and **implement** varied strategies and tactics for effective advocacy.
4. **Conduct** research using historical analysis, power mapping, and target analysis to inform campaigns.
5. **Communicate** campaign goals effectively through media engagement.
6. **Develop** and **evaluate** comprehensive campaign implementation and assessment plans.

Communication Guidelines

- **Check Canvas Weekly Modules** for weekly expectations.
- **Review Announcements** before starting your weekly assignments.
- **Sign up for Pronto** to receive timely updates and class communication.
- **Use email for** personal questions or academic concerns.
- **Include your full name and course name (SST902)** in your emails and text messages.
- **Allow 48 hours for a response on weekdays;** We take weekends off to model work/life balance and encourage you to do the same.

What to Expect in This Course

To support your learning and engagement throughout the course, you are encouraged to:

1. **Be Present and Participate**

Join and actively engage in our class meetings. Your voice and presence are valued, and we grow through shared discussion and collaboration. Cell Phones and Computers: Anytime we are in the large group, please DO NOT use your cell phone. If you need to answer a text, please step outside and do so. In addition, any type of social networking on your computer is NOT allowed. When we break into small groups, you will be able to use your cell phone and computer to look up information.

2. **Come Prepared with Readings**

Please complete the assigned readings before each class session so you can fully participate in our conversations. These readings are chosen to help deepen your understanding and enrich our time together.

3. **Engage in a Social Action Campaign**

As part of the course, you'll contribute approximately 1.5–2 hours per week outside of class to a social action campaign aimed at changing a real-world policy or practice. You'll also reflect on this experience through written assignments and collaborate with a group presentations connected to your campaign work.

4. **Complete Assignments with Flexibility and Support**

You're expected to complete all assignments by the due dates listed in the schedule below. However, if a personal or family situation arises that may impact your ability to meet a deadline, please reach out as soon as you can—ideally before the due date. We're committed to supporting your success and well-being.

Grading Scale: Pass or No Pass

Course Assignments Overview

There are course requirements. They include discussions/reflections, participation, and a campaign presentation.

1. **Discussions/reflections** - At the college level, you generally demonstrate that you understand the ideas from a course in an exam. This class is different. In this class, discussion threads take the place of exams. Importantly, the discussions are where you demonstrate your knowledge of the text in light of your social action experiences, this can be in through your own personal reflection or as a class discussion.

2. Final Group Project: Social Action Campaign

Campaign Presentation and Campaign Binder

For your final project, your group will **design, implement, and present a Social Action Campaign** focused on a sustainability or community issue. This project includes two major components:

1. Group Campaign Presentation

At the end of the semester, your group will deliver a presentation that highlights your campaign, including:

- The issue or policy your group selected
- The research that informed your campaign
- The actions your group implemented
- The results, outcomes, and lessons learned
- Recommendations for future campaigns

2. Campaign Binder

Each group will submit a **Campaign Binder** documenting the development and implementation of your campaign. The binder will be evaluated as part of your final project and will serve as a resource for future SST 902 students as they develop their own campaigns.

Your binder should include all required assignments, research, planning documents, campaign materials, reflections, and evidence of your group's work.

Campaign Preparation Assignments

Assignments #1, #2, and #3 are designed to help your group prepare for and successfully launch your policy or social action campaign.

Additional instructions, templates, and discussion prompts will be provided during class and posted on Canvas.

You will have dedicated class time to collaborate with your group and begin working on these assignments. Please refer to Canvas for deadlines and specific requirements.

Important: If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to contact your group members, review the materials posted on Canvas, and complete your assigned tasks.

Group Presentations

Throughout the semester, each group will give **two presentations** that document the progress of your campaign.

Presentation #1: Issue and Policy Research

Your group will present:

- The sustainability issue or policy your campaign addresses
- Background research and supporting data
- Why this issue is important
- Your campaign goals and objectives
- Your proposed action plan

Presentation #2: Campaign Results and Evaluation

Your final presentation will summarize your campaign by discussing:

- The activities your group completed
- The outcomes and impact of your campaign
- Challenges encountered and how they were addressed

- What you learned from the experience
- Recommendations for future campaigns and next steps

This project is an opportunity to apply the concepts learned throughout the course while developing leadership, teamwork, communication, and civic engagement skills through real-world action. Further guidelines and support for both presentations will be provided in class.

This course is designed to support your growth as a learner, collaborator of knowledge, and changemaker. Here's what you'll be doing throughout the term:

1. Attendance and Participation

Attend all scheduled class meetings and actively participate in discussions and group activities. Your contributions help foster a collaborative and inclusive learning environment.

2. Course Readings

Complete all assigned readings **prior** to each class session. These readings provide the foundation for our discussions and activities, and engaging in advance will help you get the most out of each class.

3. Social Action Campaign

Participate in a group social action campaign outside of class that aims to change a policy or practice. This work will involve approximately 1.5 to 2 hours per week and will serve as the basis for your group presentation.

4. Assignments and Deadlines

Submit all required assignments by the deadlines listed in the course schedule. If a personal or family situation arises that may prevent you from meeting a deadline, please communicate with the instructor as soon as possible—ideally before the due date—to discuss possible extensions or accommodation.

Required Readings:

This course requires the following book, which will be provided for you to borrow. We will have copies on the first day of class. To check out a copy, you must sign it out and return it at the end of the term. Returning the book is a requirement for receiving a Pass grade in the course.

Book: Myers-Lipton, Scott. 2023. *Change! A Student Guide to Social Action, Second Edition*. New York and London: Routledge

Class Schedule

When	Module Topic	Notes
Week One No in person class	Igniting Change: Introductions & Issue Development	Lesson Topics: Introductions & Key Concepts • Syllabus overview • Overview of Social Action  READ/WATCH Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE!, Student Victories (XI-XII), Preface (XIII-XVII) Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE! Chapter 1: Issue Development: (Pages 1-19) Read: Stanford article "Culture and Community Power Building" (Optional)

		Read: Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. 1991 (Optional) (October 24-27). "Principles of Environmental Justice." https://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.pdf ACTIVITIES (To Do) • DQ Portfolio Assignment- What does social action mean to you? Small group discussion in class • See Canvas for activities
Week Two In class	Building the Foundation: Issue Development , Intentions (setting the tone) & Teamwork	Lesson Topics • Group introductions • Overview of Social Action • Issue Development • Setting the Tone  READ/WATCH Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE! Message to Teachers (XIX-XXIII) (optional) Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE! Chapter 1: Issue Development (pages 1-19) Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE! Chapter 2: Setting the Tone (pages 20-27) Read: Abraham Lincoln's Lyceum Address (Optional) https://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/lyceum.htm Watch: Walk the Walk https://vimeo.com/345582963/57c6ce810c ACTIVITIES (To Do) Select teams TBD
Week Three In class	Change Starts Here: Theories of Transformation and Building Power	Lesson Topics • Change Theory • Building Power • Guest Speaker TBD  READ/WATCH Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE! Chapter 3: Change Theory (Pages 28-41) Read: Myers-Lipton CHANGE! Chapter 4: Building Power (pages 43-59) Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2iCADt0QS8 Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N28iaWlzlzg ACTIVITIES (To Do) • Working Session in Class: Chapter 6 and 4 Portfolio Questions

Week Four In class	Research for Action: Investigating Issues That Matter. Group Dynamics -How is your team working?	Lesson Topics • Research • Group Dynamics: How is your Team working? • Select a Campaign • Guest Speaker- TBD SML  READ/WATCH Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE! Chapter 5: Research , pages 60-68 Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE! Chapter 6: Group Dynamics (pages 72-80) ACTIVITIES (To Do) • Working Session in Class: • Discuss and respond to selected and/or revised portfolio questions. -Myers-Lipton, Chapter 4: Building Power: • Divide into teams & begin your research in response to selected issue
Week Five In class	Power in Motion: Strategy and Tactics for Social Movements	Lesson Topics • Strategy and Tactics  READ/WATCH Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE! Chapter 7: Strategy and Tactics (pages 81-98) Read: Sunrise Movement. 2025. “We Demand a Green New Deal for All to Stop the Climate (Optional) Crisis” [Review (1) What is a Green New Deal? (2) Our Demands (3) Our Strategy] (Optional) https://www.sunrisemovement.org/our-demands/ Watch: Scott Myers-Lipton, Bonner Network: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59CX2b4oPxg ACTIVITIES (To Do) • Discussion Thread
Week Six In class	Ignite the Change: Campaign Kickoff	Lesson Topics • Campaign Kickoff  READ/WATCH Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE! Chapter 8: Campaign Kickoff (pages 99-113) Read: Student Campaigns in Canvas Watch: SJSU Students Denounce Board Member's Alleged Racist Statement Watch: United Students Against Sweatshops and GCCWP Watch: Student Homeless Alliance ACTIVITIES (To Do) • Identify the campaign event you will launch Describe the plan to launch the event during the next two weeks

Week Seven TBD	Blueprint for Change: Developing Your Campaign Plan	Lesson Topics • Campaign Plan  READ/WATCH Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE! Chapter 9: Campaign Plan (pages 114-121) ACTIVITIES (To Do) • Campaigns
Week Eight TBD	Campaign Architecture: Goals, Messaging, and Mobilization	Lesson Topics • Campaign  READ/WATCH Read: UN DECLARATION of HUMAN RIGHTS and 2ND BILL of RIGHTS Watch: FDR's 2nd Bill of Rights ACTIVITIES (To Do) • Campaigns
Week Nine TBD	Measuring Impact: Evaluating Your Campaign	Lesson Topics • Evaluations • Continue to work on campaign READ/WATCH  Myers-Lipton, Chapter 10: Campaign Evaluation (pages 122_124) ACTIVITIES (To Do) • Campaigns
Week Ten TBD		Lesson Topics • Continue to work on campaign  READ/WATCH Read: Myers-Lipton, Chapter 11: The Hero's and Shero's Journey (pages 125-130) Watch: The Matrix: Not Quite Fitting in, The Call, & Blue or Red Pill ACTIVITIES (To Do) • Campaigns
Week Eleven TBD		Lesson Topics • HERO's and SHERO's JOURNEY • Continue to work on campaign  READ/WATCH Read: Myers-Lipton, CHANGE!, The Hero's and Shero's Journey (pages 125-129) ACTIVITIES (To Do) • work on campaign presentations
Week Twelve In Person class	Voices for Change: Final Campaign Showcase	Lesson Topics • Campaign Presentations ACTIVITIES (To Do) • Present campaigns in class

