



**Michigan
Technological
University**

Course Syllabus

SS 4915 – Effective Social Action/Advocacy for Communities College of Science and Arts Spring 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor: Susanna Peters, JD Associate Teaching Professor
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Office Hours: T/W 2-3pm or by appointment

Course Identification

Course Number: SS 4915
Course Name: Effective Social Action/Advocacy for Communities
Course Location: 201 AOB (Academic Office Bldg.)
Class Times: 3:30-4:15 T/Th
Prerequisites: Sophomore status or greater the semester that the course is taken.

Course Description/Overview

Students will work directly with a community organization that provides legal, social, or cultural resources through engagement in a project identified by that organization. Weekly class sessions to focus on related challenges such as engaging constituencies, communicating with Civic leaders, marketing and funding community services for low income and/or rural populations.

Because this is an Essential Education Experience Courses it will also meet the following criteria:

1. Engagement outside of the classroom through immersive project-based or experiential learning. At least 50% of course time (likely more) will be spent engaging in the project-based experience or experiential learning component.
2. Critical reflection assignments connected to experience, at least once every other week reflection assignments will be due. Similarly reflections on assigned readings or speakers will be due as needed.
3. Student work is to be showcased in the E-portfolio system for Essential Education.

Course Website(s)

- [Canvas](http://www.courses.mtu.edu) [www.courses.mtu.edu] Required Course Text: Readings to vary- go to canvas to find readings.

Course Learning Objectives

Essential Education Experience courses must assess one of the essential abilities for the learning goal **Contribute/Transform - In this course the engage in Civic Life ability will be assessed.** (Note full rubric for this is at the end of this document)

- **Engage in Civic Life:** *Students develop the knowledge, skills, and motivation to make a difference in the civic life of their communities.*

Grading Scheme

Grading System

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade points/credit	Rating
A	93% & above	4.00	Excellent
AB	92.9% - 88%	3.50	Very good
B	87.9% - 80%	3.00	Good
BC	79.9% - 78%	2.50	Above average
C	77.9% - 70%	2.00	Average
CD	69.9% - 68%	1.50	Below average
D	67.9% - 60%	1.00	Inferior
F	59.9% and below	0.00	Failure

Grading Policy: Grades will be based on the following

Course Component	Points
Homework/Pre-Class Preparation/Mentor Interactions/Reflections	60
Class attendance/participation	25
Eportfolio Showcase Item	15
Total Points	100

Late Assignments

Late assignments and reflection entries are accepted but will lose 10% of the points available if they are 1 day late and 5% more each subsequent calendar day. The most you can lose is 50% of the score. If you are sick and contact me before the assignment is due I can give you an extension. If you have a university excused absence you can also have an extension.

Attendance: Because this is an Experience Course, attendance both in class and in all group meetings is essential. I will record attendance and expect the project mentors to let me know if you miss meetings. I will also check in with group mentors about attendance. More than 2 unexcused absences in class over the course of the semester will result in a grade reduction for class attendance.

Work time expectations: While this is a very flexible course outside the weekly class meetings, you are expected to put in **about 10-12** hours weekly into your project. This can include research you do to learn more about the subject of the project and time spent interfacing with your group and mentors and of course time spent organizing and planning activities. If you don't feel you have enough work to do, or too much work, reach out to your instructor so we can work together to make this a balanced class.

Schedule:

In general Class will meet both T/Th for the first two weeks and weeks 12/13/14 so there is time for presentations. Otherwise the common schedule will be one day per week for class discussion and project updates and speakers. . Students will also have weekly meetings with mentors and some individual/group meetings with the instructor. The other class day could be used for this purpose as well. For updates and schedule of speakers and events please go to modules in canvas.

Course Policies

Michigan Technological University Policies on Academic Integrity, Discrimination, Disability: <https://www.mtu.edu/ctl/instructional-resources/syllabus/policies/>

Academic Integrity Rules:

Students may discuss homework assignments but are expected to individually work/write/solve any and all submitted work. All authorized resources used, including but not limited to internet sites artificial intelligence tools, etc., should be appropriately cited.

Please restrict all use of cell phones and/or other electronic devices during class to course-related activities. The focus of class time should be interaction between students, and with the instructor. Any other unauthorized activities are likely to be distracting to other students and the instructor.

.Because it's important to everyone at Michigan Tech that academic standards be maintained, academic misconduct may result in an appropriate conduct sanction/educational condition(s) imposed by the Office of Academic and Community Conduct and/or in an academic penalty (lower grade/failing grade) imposed by the faculty.

For more details on academic integrity, please review the [Academic Integrity Policy of Michigan Tech](http://www.admin.mtu.edu/usenate/policies/p109-1.htm) [<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/usenate/policies/p109-1.htm>].

Student Mental Health:

Michigan Tech is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help or to find additional resources, contact

Counseling Services at 906-487-2538 or visit the [Counseling Services website](http://www.mtu.edu/counseling) [http://www.mtu.edu/counseling].

Limits and Conditions on AI Assistance

The use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools may be permitted or recommended for specific assignments in this course. Those assignments that allow or call for GAI use will be expressly listed as such and require proper citation and documentation. When the instructor grants express permission for GAI tool use, it is with the understanding that its use should be accompanied by critical thinking and reflection. Responsibility for the work's integrity remains with the student, including any inaccuracies stemming from GAI use. The use of AI for assistance in completing other coursework is prohibited and constitutes [cheating](#).

Transparency in AI tool usage is mandatory, and instructors reserve the right to ask students to explain their process for creating work at any time. This includes but is not limited to including prompt appendices, AI-generated outputs, and reflective analyses. While students are permitted to use AI tools such as ChatGPT for assistance with homework. However, it is required that any significant assistance received from such tools be properly attributed in the submitted work. This is to maintain academic integrity and transparency in the learning process. For Example: "In completing this assignment, I utilized [AI Tool Name] to assist with [specific aspect, e.g., generating ideas, understanding concepts, outlining the report]."

Please make sure to appropriately cite any authorized resources used on assignments. You should refrain from using artificial intelligence (AI) to generate text or responses to graded assignments unless permitted in the assignment instructions.

Other University Policies

Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for purposes of university, program, or course assessment. All work used for assessment purposes will not include any individual student identification.

Michigan Tech has standard policies on academic misconduct and complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For more information about reasonable accommodations or equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office at 906-487-2212. More information is also available from the [Syllabi Policies webpage](http://www.mtu.edu/ctl/instructionalresources/syllabus/syllabus_policies.html) [http://www.mtu.edu/ctl/instructionalresources/syllabus/syllabus_policies.html].

Rubric for Engage in Civic Life:

Level 4 - Exemplary (Post-graduation)	Level 3 - Proficient (at Essential Ed completion)	Level 2 - Developing	Level 1 - Beginning
<p>Demonstrates independent experience and leadership of complex civic engagement activities, accompanied by reflective insights or analysis about the aims and local and broader accomplishments of one's actions. Demonstrates commitment to being an active participant in society and working with others towards public purposes</p>	<p>Recognizes the aims, complex patterns, and strategies for individual or collective engagement in civic life, social interaction, or politics. Considers local and broader consequences of individual and collective interventions. Acknowledges the importance of being an active participant in society and working with others towards public purpose</p>	<p>Begins to identify the aims, patterns, effects and importance of individual participation and collective engagement in civic life, social interaction, and/or politics</p>	<p>Identifies engagement taking place in civic life, social interaction or politics in a particular case stud</p>