“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

Course Overview
This course is dedicated to the role of organizations in creating social change. Whether advocating on behalf of the environment or for an end to gang violence, social change requires a sustained, concentrated effort to disrupt settled systems of communication and introduce new ways of understanding and approaching complex problems. Although the communicative efforts of a single individual can and do play an important role in making social change seem possible, the work also requires the use of communication strategies to organize and sustain collective action over time. Your participation in this course will provide opportunities to learn more about the communicative processes that build and sustain successful social change organizations. Throughout the course, you will be encouraged to reflect upon your own identities as leaders and participants in social change.

Course Objectives
By the end of the semester you will have developed:
1. An understanding of structural sources of power inequality and their role in distorting systems of communication;
2. An understanding of how social change organizations help build community and the capacity to act with greater freedom, and
3. A proposal for a new social change organization grounded in the ideas of the course.

Required Reading


Additional required readings and course materials are posted to CANVAS.
Course Schedule

Aug. 21  Introduction to Course

Aug. 23  Why Organize?
READ:  Introduction and Chapter 1 – From the Bottom Up by Chad Pregracke (with Jeff Barrow)

Aug. 28  Becoming an Organizer
READ:  Chapter 9 – Dreams from My Father by Barack Obama

Aug. 30  Called to Participate
READ:  Ledwith & Springer, Chapters 1 & 3

Sept. 4   Organizational Approaches: Bureaucracies & Hierarchies
READ:  Mechanization Takes Command: Organizations as Machines by Gareth Morgan

Sept. 6   Organizational Approaches: Networks
READ:  Changing the World in the Networked Society by Manuel Castells
READ:  “Small Change: Why the Revolution Won’t be Tweeted” by Malcolm Gladwell

Sept. 11  Organizational Approaches: Dialogues
READ:  Chapter 6 – The Role of Dialogue by Margaret Ledwith & Jane Springett

Sept. 13  Proposing Your Social Change Organization

DUE: Social Change Organization Vision Paper Due
Sept. 18  Building an Organization – Self-structuring
READ: McPhee & Zaug, pp. 35-38
READ: Fundraising handout

Sept. 20  Building an Organization – Member Negotiation
READ: McPhee & Zaug, pp. 21-35

Sept. 25  Building an Organization – Activity Coordination
READ: McPhee & Zaug, pp. 38-39

Sept. 27  Building an Organization – Institutional Positioning
READ: McPhee & Zaug, pp. 39-41
READ: Cheney, Christiansen, Zorn & Ganesh, pp. 120-124

Oct. 2     Model SCO: Homeboy Industries
READ: Tattoos on the Heart, by Gregory Boyle, pp. xi-108

Oct. 4     continued
READ: Tattoos on the Heart, pp. 109-112

Oct. 9     continued
VIEW: “G-Dog” (Part 1)

Oct. 11    continued
VIEW: “G-Dog” (Part 2)
READ: “An Altar Boy with a Gun” by Raul Diaz

ESSAY EXAM DISTRIBUTED

Oct. 16    No Class - Fall Break!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 18</td>
<td><strong>ESSAY EXAM DUE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 23</td>
<td>Organizing Resources – Story-telling</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5, The Use of Story by Margaret Ledwith &amp; Jane Springett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 25</td>
<td>Organizing Resources – Critical Reflection</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 7, Critical Reflection by Margaret Ledwith &amp; Jane Springett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 30</td>
<td>Organizing Resources – Framing &amp; Re-framing</td>
<td>READ: “Frame Your Message” by John Daly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td>Organizing Resources – Music to Mobilize Emotions</td>
<td>BRING TO CLASS: Your community music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
<td>Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association</td>
<td>Class does not meet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 8</td>
<td>NCA Meeting</td>
<td>Class does not meet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 13</td>
<td>Organizing Resources - Public Poetry</td>
<td>READ: Poetry is Not a Luxury by Audre Lorde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 15</td>
<td>Organizing Resources – Community Art</td>
<td>View: Philadelphia Mural Arts Project <a href="https://muralarts.org/programs">https://muralarts.org/programs</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mission of the Communication Studies Department

The mission of the faculty and students of the Department of Communication Studies is to examine human symbolic activity as it shapes and is shaped by relationships, institutions, technology and culture. This work concerns the creation, analysis, and critique of messages ranging from face-to-face to digital media contexts. The department’s research and teaching devote particular attention to scholarly initiatives aimed at understanding and explaining the role of communication in (a) facilitating civic engagement, mediating public controversies, and organizing social change, (b) constituting individual and family health, promoting healthy behaviors, and helping persons navigate relational challenges, and (c) creating, maintaining, and challenging personal, social, and community identity in a complex and diverse world.

Course Requirements & Assignments

Social Change Organization Proposal (200 points)

SCO Vision Paper (50 points) – Working in small groups you will identify an issue you all care about and lay the groundwork for a social change organization that could be developed to address this issue. See the more detailed assignment sheet on p. 9.

SCO Proposal Paper (150 points) - Working in small groups, you will develop a more specific proposal for the social change organization you briefly described in your vision paper. The features of the organization you propose should align with and illustrate the ideas of the course in action. A more detailed assignment sheet is provided on pp. 10-11 of the syllabus.
Essay Exam (100 points)
One essay exam will be administered in this course. It will be designed to assess your understanding of important concepts related to communication and organizing social change. The essay questions will be distributed and discussed in class on Thursday, October 11 and will be due in class on Thursday, October 18.

Model Social Change Organization Conversation (50 points)
This assignment requires you to select a social change organization you find so inspiring it could serve as a model for others to follow. You will prepare for and lead a class-wide conversation about the organization and its communication. See the more detailed assignment sheet on p. 9.

Attendance and Participation (50 points)
It is possible to earn as many as 50 points for attending class regularly and making a difference in class discussions. Among other things, you can make a difference in class discussions by raising questions for each other and for me, by responding to each other’s questions, by pointing out connections between course readings and your own experience with social change and/or interesting cases of organizations seeking social change in the local community and larger world.

Course Policies

Class Climate
Please respect each other and everyone’s learning experience by turning off the ringer on your cell phone and paying attention during class discussion. Behaviors such as texting, sleeping during class and carrying on lengthy conversations with your neighbors during class-wide discussions fail to support a climate of learning and may adversely affect your participation points.

Attendance Policy
I expect you to attend class with great regularity, to be on time, and stay throughout the entire period. Tardiness or missed classes will be reflected in participation points. Repeated absences will likely result in weaker performance on assignments as requirements frequently are discussed further in class. Our in-class sessions are designed to complement course readings and to further develop your understanding of key concepts. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get class notes and assignments from classmates. If you have additional questions, please contact me.

Excused Absences
Excused absences include university-affiliated activities with prior notification, a documented emergency or an illness verified in writing by a health care provider. These notes do not need to state the specifics of your emergency situation or illness, but should state that you are not well enough to attend class. If an emergency arises and you know in advance that you will not be making it to class on an assignment due date, please contact me as soon as possible. If a presentation is not made on the assigned day it will receive a grade of zero.
Policy on Written Work
Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments should be submitted in paper form in class on the day they are due. Documents should be word-processed in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. All work should be spell-checked and grammatically correct. All citations should be documented using the most recent guidelines for citing research outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA). If you are accustomed to writing within the guidelines of another established style, please let me know.

Late Assignments
An assignment is considered late if it is not presented in hard copy form in class on the due date. Depending on the circumstances and the assignment, you may have the opportunity to turn in work late for a penalty (usually a 10% point deduction for every 24 hours the assignment is overdue). Please contact me first to see if I will accept the assignment late. If so, we will agree to a process for turning it in.

Make-up Work
Make-up work and alternative accommodations for full credit will only be allowed for students who seek permission prior to the absence and/or provide documentation of extenuating circumstances.

Pass/No Pass Option
If you have elected the pass/no pass option in this course, you must earn a grade of at least a “C” in order to pass. A grade of “C” also is needed in order to count this course toward the Communication Studies major.

Academic Dishonesty & Student Misconduct
The Department of Communication Studies is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity. The Department adopts the campus definition of academic dishonesty in the Student Code of Conduct (Article 3, Section B-1) including cheating, fabrication or falsification, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), abuse of academic materials, complicity in academic dishonesty, falsifying grade reports, impermissible collaboration, and misrepresentation. The instructors will meet with the student and if they determine that academic dishonesty or misconduct has occurred, the instructor will prepare a written account and file a “Misconduct Referral Form” with the Office of the Dean of Students. The full “Academic Dishonesty and Student Misconduct” policy is linked to the Communication Studies Department’s website: https://comm.unl.edu/forms-and-policies.

Grading & Grade Appeals
If you have a concern about a grade you have received on an assignment, the first step is to register your concern with me. If your concern is not resolved, you may continue your appeal following the process detailed in the Department of Communication Studies “Grading and Grade Appeal” policy document linked to the department’s website: https://comm.unl.edu/forms-and-policies.
**Students with Special Needs**
I encourage students with special needs to contact me for a confidential discussion of your individual needs for academic accommodation as determined by Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). This includes students with mental health disabilities like depression and anxiety. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide individualized accommodations to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, 232 Canfield Administration, 472-3787.

**Total Points and Final Grades**
I encourage you to keep track of your earned points in this class. Your final grade will be determined based on the quality of your work and number of points earned on each of the following assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Earned Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCO Vision Paper</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model SCO Conversation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Change Organization Proposal</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(400 points possible)</td>
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You can earn as many as 400 points in this class. The grading scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Minimum Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98-100%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-97</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
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<td>73-76</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 60</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>F</td>
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*Enjoy the course!*
The purpose of this assignment is to make visible the work of social change organizations you find inspiring and powerful. Toward that end, you will identify a SCO whose work you respect and you believe could serve as a model for others to follow. Learn as much as you can about the organization and plan a 10-minute conversation with the class about the organization. To help us process the information and to guide the conversation, create three slides including:

- **Slide 1:** a brief overview of the organization (e.g., How was it started? What does it seek to accomplish? How?)
- **Slide 2:** present two-three connections with course concepts
- **Slide 3:** two-three questions to prompt class-wide conversation

Conversations will be held throughout the semester. A copy of your slides will be due in class on the date you are scheduled to lead a conversation.

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**Social Change Organization Vision Paper**

Working in small groups, you will generate a set of concerns each of you has as individuals. Discuss these with each other, explaining why a particular situation concerns you. Select one of these that you would like to address as a group. By the end of the semester, you will propose a social change organization that could be built to address this particular concern. The “vision” paper needs to include:

1. Describe a strong concern held by each group member & why it matters to him/her
2. Select one of these. Describe how and why you selected this one to build an organization around.
3. Briefly describe the organization you plan to propose.
4. What will it stand for?
5. What will it try to accomplish?

Papers should be about 4 pages in length (typed, double-spaced) and are due in class on **Tuesday, September 13**.
The purpose of this assignment is to put your new understanding of social change organizing to work in the development of a proposal for your own social change organization. Final papers must include the following elements:

**Title Page**
This should include a creative title for the organization you are proposing, each of your names and a statement that you completed the paper to fulfill the requirements of COMM 271.

**Introduction, Rationale, Purpose Statement (1 page)**
Introduce your paper by stating the important role organizations play in creating social change. Introduce the problem your organization seeks to address. Explain the purpose of your paper (i.e., to present a plan for an organization capable of addressing this particular problem).

**Vision/Mission Statement for the Organization (1 pages)**
What is the organization’s mission/purpose? What will the organization stand for? What will the organization try to accomplish?

**Proposed Use of Communicative Processes of Organizing (5-6 pages)**
*Self-structuring* – discuss your plan for how to set up the organization and get it started, a proposed budget, fundraising ideas and your proposed board of directors.

*Member negotiation* – discuss how your plan to recruit volunteers and develop leaders; present your plan for unifying and motivating members over time

*Activity Coordination* – list the calendar of activities you propose for the first few months, describe each activity and discuss how you will coordinate their implementation

*Institutional Positioning* – discuss how you plan build and maintain the organization’s identity, to make its efforts visible and known to the larger community; to build and maintain a positive reputation

**Proposed Use of Organizing Resources (2-3 pages)**
How will you use critical reflection in the process of organizing? How will you challenge settled ways of talking about a problem by re-framing? How will you use story-telling, community music, poetry, or community art in the process of organizing?
Conclusion (1 paragraph)
Summarize your proposal and re-cap your organization’s potential for contributing to meaningful social change.

Attachments
Among other items you can attach examples of how you will represent the organization’s identity, a proposed budget, a proposed board of directors, a schedule of activities, an example of a policy.

Finally, attach a one-page description detailing how each group member contributed to the development of your proposal.

Proposal Papers should be approximately 12-13 pages in length (typed, double-spaced excluding references and attachments) and are due in class on Thursday, December 6.


http://muralarts.org/programs (retrieved August 20, 2018)


