

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
SPRING 2009

**SOCY.525.001 Social Advocacy and Social Change**

T 5:30p - 8:00p

Ward 103

Instructor: **Dr. Bette J. Dickerson**

Office: Battelle-Tompkins, T-20

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:30p-5:30p and Friday 1p-2p, 3:30p-6:30p  
Appointments recommended.

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*People say "what is the sense of our small effort?" They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time.*

---Dorothy Day

*I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others. I'd like for somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to love somebody. I want to say that day that I tried to be right on the war question. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. And I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe those who were naked. I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison. I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity.*

-----From Dr. King's sermon, "The Drum Major Instinct"

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The objectives for this course are:

- o To provide an overview of what it means to be a public sociologist;
- o To challenge you to use a critical approach and to develop and apply higher-level critical thinking skills;
- o To demonstrate the importance of doing systematic observation and research;
- o To encourage you to not only think about social justice but, also, to act when possible to reduce inequalities in society;

- o To aid you in developing specific strategies and in building a toolkit for engaging in the process of bridging the classroom and the community.

The focus of this course is on how to build groups and organizations through which people can exercise power on behalf of their common interests and that move from charity to social justice approaches. Although "real world" community organizing experience is helpful in this course, it is not required. You will be successful if you have are passionate about a social issue.

**Campus Resource: The Community Service Center**

This course is about the application of knowledge and skills to real-life issues and concerns as is AU's Community Service Learning Program (CSLP). CSLP uses a process commonly called "community-based learning" or "service-learning." In addition to deepening the student learning experience, this approach provides much-needed and appreciated support to nonprofit organizations and schools that are serving local communities and develops AU "town-gown" partnerships.

*The CSC, located in Mary Graydon 273, is positioned to help you explore how and where to incorporate a service-learning project into this course. One flexible and manageable option is the Community Service Learning Project (CSLP) which allows you to earn an additional course credit if you relate volunteer work to this course by way of a project, product, or service. The CSLP requires 40 hours of service during this semester at a nonprofit site.*

For more information about AU's service-learning programs, contact Marcy Fink Campos ([mfcampos@american.edu](mailto:mfcampos@american.edu)). You can also reach her by calling 202-885-7378, stopping by the CSC in Mary Graydon 273, or going to the CSC website at [www.american.edu/volunteer](http://www.american.edu/volunteer).

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering for this course, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Code will not be treated lightly and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. The code is available online at [www.american.edu/academics/integrity/index.htm](http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/index.htm) Please see me if you have any questions about the information contained in the Code in general or as it relates to the particular requirements for this course.

## REQUIRED READINGS

Readings provide background to class discussions. You are expected to complete required readings before you come to class.

The following book is required for this course and is available at the AU bookstore:

Korgen, Kathleen Odell and Jonathan M. White. 2009. *The Engaged Sociologist: Connecting the Classroom to the Community* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Additional readings will be distributed in class and via email.

## REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Class Attendance and Participation (1/4 of final grade, or 1/3 if NOT completing Requirement)

You are expected to attend all class sessions, do all of the readings and take an active part in class discussions and activities. Adequate break times and "flexible days" will allow individual time while not limiting the learning experience. You will be evaluated on the extent to which you are actively participating in each class session. Problems may arise which make it impossible for you to be in class but you are still responsible for keeping up with information shared in class (confer with your classmates) and submitting written assignments on time. **Late submissions will NOT be accepted.** *The only exceptions to this policy are those absences supported by official documentation (i.e. doctor, academic advisor).*

This course is interactive rather than one in which you sit passively taking lecture notes. Participation is a requirement not an option. You are asked to engage in out-of-class activities that you must participate in and to read the related readings. You are encouraged to share your personal insights and experiences in the class sessions and to critically analyze information shared in the readings, by your classmates, by me, and most of all, by YOU. If you are uncomfortable speaking in front of others, try preparing in advance a question to ask or insightful comment to make.

### **Recommended and Required Field Activities (partial list)**

You must participate in one recommended and three required field activities. You must then submit a one to two page

observation or evaluation paper on each experience (observation and evaluation tools will be distributed in class). Dates, times, locations and information on field activities appear in the syllabus course schedule. Retain related programs or general-information-documents to verify attendance and to attach to submitted mini-assignment. Though you must engage in both the required activities you may request an event in lieu of those recommended below.

- ❖ **Marian Wright Edelman**, Metropolitan Church (recommended)
- ❖ **Lavender Languages XVI** (recommended)
- ❖ **"Road to Freedom" exhibit**, S. Dillon Ripley Center (required, ends March 9)
- ❖ **Women's History Tours #1 and #2** (required)
- ❖ **National Young Women's Leadership Conference & Congressional Day of Action** (recommended)
- ❖ **CAS Robyn Rafferty Mathias Student Research Conference** (required)

A grade scale based on the class record of attendance/participation will be developed and shared at the end of the semester. Not completing a field activity assignment will count as an absence.

**Electronic Communications.** AU provides free email and web access to all students. You must have an accurate email address so that you can receive course-related notes, activity announcements, supplemental readings, etc. **CHECK EMAIL REGULARLY!**

**2. Specific Action Exercises** (1/4 of final grade, or 1/3 if NOT completing Requirement 5)

You must complete **two** exercises from the *Suggestions for Specific Actions* sections located at the end of each chapter in the Korgen and White textbook. One of the exercises is of your own choosing. The other must be completed by all and is a choice between Exercise 6.7 or 6.8 (Korgen and White, pp. 84-85) **due Feb. 24.**

Display your intellectual and experiential engagement with the information and issues provided. Of primary interest is evidence of careful and thoughtful intellectual engagement--the attempt to grapple with, think through, and apply the information and issues explored. **Do incorporate sociological theory and concepts.**

Due dates correspond to when the given chapter is indicated in the syllabus course calendar. If you want to raise your grade on these exercise papers you can submit more than two if you wish. The

final grade will be determined by averaging the grade on each paper.

**3. Chapter Analysis/Discussion Leader and Group Paper (1/4 of final grade, or 1/3 if NOT completing Requirement 5)**

You will take part in a Discussion Group that has been assigned a specific chapter from the Korgen and White textbook. These groups will be responsible for responding to the *Discussion Questions* at the end of the assigned chapter and then sharing with the class in a clear fashion their responses. You must then submit a group paper that consists of all of the group responses to the *Discussion Questions*.

Your group will share your responses with the class (30 min. max for the entire group). Initiate and guide the class discussion related to your assigned chapter/discussion questions. **Do not merely read your answer.** Instead, raise some "jump-start" questions that stimulate responses from your peers. Ask questions like "What do you think about...?" or "Does it bother you that...?" Offer your own opinion: "I found...to be particularly important/unimportant because...". Be sure to steer us back to the topic if we stray to unrelated topics. Visual material, artistic expression, audio, and multi-media forms are encouraged. **Audio-visual equipment must be requested in writing at least one week before your discussion.**

The group paper is due immediately after the group's class discussion. All satisfactorily participating group members' names must be listed on the front page.

**4. CAS Robyn Rafferty Mathias Student Research Conference Research Paper and Policy Memo (If completed, is 1/4 of final grade. This**

**is an "optional" assignment but it is required for A/A- final grade consideration [1/3'ers earn final grades no higher than B+])** An A/A- final grade can only be earned if this assignment is completed. At the same time, completion of this assignment in no way guarantees an A/A- as the grade for this assignment will be assessed and its grade averaged into the rest of your grades for the other course assignments.

**a. Research Paper.** To complement the content of this course, you must write a research paper on a "social advocacy and social change" topic you are particularly interested in and submit a paper presentation proposal to the **CAS Robyn Rafferty Mathias Student Research Conference**. The deadline date for

proposal submission is **Friday, February 27, 2009**. If your proposal is accepted, present your paper at the conference on **Saturday, April 4, 2009**. This research paper must clearly **incorporate sociological theory and concepts** and directly cite information from relevant outside readings, class discussions and readings, etc. This is an opportunity to advance to higher levels of critical analysis and to personally explore a variety of issues related to social advocacy and change.

**b. Policy Memo**. Rather than the typical Abstract, the first page of the paper must consist of a policy memo (can also serve as a conference presentation handout and/or PowerPoint presentation). It must address whether, why, and how policymakers should intervene. In answering these questions, try to take into consideration the particular concerns of the policymakers. You may find that a variety of scenarios for intervention and applying pressure exist. You may consult with classmates and others in thinking through the interests and perspectives of policymakers. Outside research is permitted although you should be able to respond with the required readings, class discussions, and some sociological imagination. Your overall learning goal is to think through the different stakeholders and why they have different positions on the issue.

A good policy memo utilizes a different style of writing. Use complete sentences but emphasize brevity and coherence. Policy makers are extremely busy so you need to convey as much relevant and useful information in as little space as possible. Therefore, limit yourself to two single-spaced pages plus any citations on your works cited page. You may use "bullet points" but make sure each one conveys a coherent idea or piece of information. Structure your memo with headings or subheadings that: (1) succinctly summarize the overall memorandum in a few sentences, (2) give background on the social issue, (3) outline the policymaker's perspective on the issue, and (4) offer a few well-informed recommendations regarding your proposed intervention, which take into account the likely responses by some of the other concerned actors.

Policy memos will be shared with the class prior to the Research Conference. As you work on this assignment over the semester, do raise questions and concerns and share suggestions in class.

**Guidelines for all Papers.** Use the spelling and grammar checks in your word processor. Papers will be marked down for poor spelling

or incorrect grammar. All papers should be typed using Times New Roman, 12 point font, double-spaced (except for the Policy Memo), with 1-inch margins at all 4 sides of each page. Pages must be numbered and STAPLED.

The upper left-hand corner of the first page of all papers must include your name, course number, date, and **the title and page numbers of textbook assignments.**

Papers must clearly **incorporate sociological theory and concepts**, include in-text citations when needed and have a related complete bibliography. Follow the ASA guidelines on how to quote, reference, and cite material that others have produced because such material is their intellectual property and must be given proper attribution.

When developing information sources, follow the reference leads in course readings. Acceptable sources can be found in books, journal articles, or newspaper or magazine articles, as long as they are scholarly in nature. As for the newspaper or magazine articles---they should be longer than one page---if it is a summation of a news item it isn't acceptable. If it is an investigative article that seriously addresses the topic, you may use it. Online sources are o-kay but again---they must be scholarly in nature, not someone's blog about his/her experiences in London. Wikipedia.com does **not** count as a scholarly source. However, you may use it (or anything else you choose) in addition to your three sources. What sources to use is up to you to judge but if you are not sure whether something is acceptable ask the teaching assistant or professor.

Papers must be proof read prior to submission. You are encouraged to develop a peer-review system. If you need assistance with your writing skills you may want to utilize the campus support services listed in this syllabus.

### Grading

Papers are assessed for their logic, clarity, and the **integration of sociological concepts and theories, information gained from course readings, discussions, activities, etc.** Comparisons are inevitable. This means that an A paper is often qualitatively better than a B paper which is better than a C paper. The difference may lie in the fact that one paper is more comprehensive than another, argues its case more persuasively, is better organized, contains fewer errors of grammar, spelling and punctuation, or is simply a more literate, polished piece of work.

The assessment of your performance will be guided by the following criteria:

**A Excellent** Truly superior work and active participation in the learning environment, both in and out of the classroom. Students at this level read all assigned materials, demonstrate an ability to think critically in oral and written form, integrate concepts and theories, and submit work that reflects clear organization of thoughts and original ideas.

**B Good** Above average, but not superior, work in terms of familiarity with readings, integration of concepts and theories, level of critical analysis.

**C Satisfactory** Average work with a demonstrated comprehension of major elements of the course.

**D Poor** Less than satisfactory performance in the course requirements and minimal class participation.

**F Failure**

An **"Incomplete"** grade at the end of the semester is **NOT** an option for this course.

### Academic Support Services

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with the professor or the teaching assistant. If you have a disability that requires accommodations, please submit a letter from the Academic Support Center early in the semester so that arrangements can be made to address your needs.

- Academic Support Center (x3360, MGC 243)
- Counseling Center (x3500, MGC 214)
- Disability Support Services (x3315, MGC 206)
- Writing Center (x2991, Battelle 228)
- International Student and Scholar Services (x3350, Butler 4<sup>th</sup> floor)

SOCY 525.001 Social Advocacy and Social Change  
Spring 2009

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Note: This schedule may be modified at the instructor's discretion and in response to class interests and current events. Additional readings and activities will be assigned throughout the semester.

- T, Jan. 13            Introductions and Overview of the Course.
- T, Jan. 20            Inauguration Day—Class is cancelled
- Th, Jan. 22            Marion Wright Edelman (recommended)  
7:00pm                Founder and President, Children's Defense Fund  
Metropolitan Church's Great Hall  
3401 Nebraska Ave., NW
- T, Jan. 27            Public Sociology and Social Advocacy  
                          Korgen and White: Chapt. 1  
Burawoy: "Public Sociologies in a Global Context"  
                          "Public Sociologies and the Grass Roots"  
                          "Public Sociology at Berkeley"  
                          Miscellaneous handouts  
**Sign up for Chapter Discussion Leader/Group Paper**
- T, Feb. 3             Popular Education and Social Change  
                          Korgen and White: Chapt. 1(cont.)  
                          Miscellaneous handouts
- T, Feb. 10            Popular Education and Social Change  
                          Korgen and White: Chapt. 1(cont.)  
                          Miscellaneous handouts  
**Korgen and White: Chapt. 1 Discussion Papers and  
Specific Action Exercises due.**
- T, Feb. 17            Social Action Using Systematic Approaches:  
Theory and Methods  
                          Korgen and White: Chapt. 2 and 3  
                          Miscellaneous handouts  
**Korgen and White: Chapt. 2 and 3 Discussion Papers  
And Specific Action Exercises due.**
- Submit draft research paper proposals for the CAS  
Robyn Rafferty Mathias Student Research Conference  
to professor.**

- Feb. 13-15      Lavendar Languages XVI (recommended)  
                     6<sup>th</sup> fl conference rooms, Butler Pavilion  
                     [www.american.edu/lavendarlanguages](http://www.american.edu/lavendarlanguages)
- T, Feb. 24      Social Action vs. Apathy: Culture and  
                     Socialization  
                     Korgen and White: Chapt. 4 and 5  
                     Singer: "Why We Don't Care About Darfur"  
                     Dickey and Haq: "Do-Gooders Gone Bad"  
                     Norgaard: "`People Want to Protect Themselves  
                             a Little Bit'""..."  
                     **Korgen and White: Chapt.4 and 5 Discussion Papers  
                     And *Specific Action Exercises* due.**
- F, Feb. 27      **This is the last day for submitting research paper  
                     proposals to the CAS Robyn Rafferty Mathias  
                     Student Research Conference**
- T, Mar. 3        Field Research: Social Justice

**Women's History Self-guided Walking Tours #1 or #2 (required)**  
 On March 3, 1913, Inez Milholland led the Great Suffrage Parade. Organized by Alice Paul, founder of the National Woman's Party, thousands of women marched while 100,000 spectators watched. The tours follow the historic parade route while also stopping at other significantly important sites to the women's suffrage movement.

AND

**"Road to Freedom" exhibit of photographs of the Civil Rights  
 Movement (required; exhibit ends March 9)**  
 S. Dillon Ripley Center, 1100 Jefferson Dr., SW

- Mar. 9-13        SPRING BREAK**
- T, Mar. 17      Deviant Behavior, Social Movements, and  
                     Stratification  
                     Korgen and White: Chapt. 6 and 7  
                     Philips: "Separation Anxieties"  
                     Cose: "Little Rock, 50 Years Later"  
                     **Korgen and White: Chapt. 6 and 7 Discussion Papers  
                     and 6.7/6.8*Specific Action Exercises* from ALL due.**
- T, Mar. 24      ABCs of Community Organizing  
                     Miscellaneous handouts

- Mar. 21-23 National Young Women's Leadership Conference  
& Congressional Day of Action (recommended)  
University of the District of Columbia
- T, Mar. 31 ABCs of Community Organizing (cont.)  
Miscellaneous handouts  
**Sharing of CAS Research Conference Policy Memo.**
- Sat., Apr. 4** CAS Robyn Rafferty Mathias Student Research  
Conference (required)
- T, Apr. 7 ABCs of Community Organizing (cont.)  
Miscellaneous handouts
- T, Apr. 14 Race/Ethnicity/Gender  
Korgen and White: Chapt. 8 and 9  
Lorde: "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle  
the Master's House"  
**Korgen and White: Chapt. 8 and 9 Discussion Papers  
And Specific Action Exercises due.**
- T, Apr. 21 Social Advocacy for Social Institutions  
Family, Education, Economy, Government, Religion  
Korgen and White: Chapt. 10 and 11  
Campbell: "The Opportunity They Never Had"  
**Korgen and White: Chapt. 10 and 11 Discussion  
Papers and Specific Action Exercises due.**
- T, Apr. 28 The Public Sociologist in Action  
Korgen and White: Chapt. 12  
**Korgen and White: Chapt. 12 Specific Action  
Exercises due.**
- T, May 5 Final exam session  
5:30p-8:00p **Final papers due.**

If you want paper(s) returned you MUST include a self-addressed, adequately sized and stamped envelope with your final submission.

Spring 2009  
SOCY 525 Social Advocacy and Social Change

Professor: Dr. Bette Dickerson

TA: Esther Fafard

**GUIDELINES**

- I have read the syllabus thoroughly and I understand the course requirements.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to contact the professor should I have any questions or concerns regarding the syllabus, assignments and/or the activities involved in this course.
- I understand that my signature indicates my acceptance of the requirements for this course.

**COMPLETE, SIGN, DETACH, AND RETURN INFORMATION BELOW TO PROFESSOR**

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**I READ, UNDERSTAND, AND ACCEPT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SOCY351, AS OUTLINED IN THE SYLLABUS.**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Today's Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (Printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

AU I.D. # \_\_\_\_\_

Campus or Local Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Year (sophomore, etc.,) \_\_\_\_\_

Major or MA Area of Specialization \_\_\_\_\_

What are your areas of interest within Sociology?

Is there any particular interest or involvement that led you to take this course, or just curiosity?

**Please tell us a little more about yourself** (use the back of this sheet)! This helps us understand more about your work for this course since students come to it with very diverse backgrounds.