

A-144
EDUCATION ORGANIZING

Fall 2007
M/W 10-12
Staff Asst.: Melita Garrett
454 Gutman Library
Tel. 617 496-4808
melita_garrett@gse.harvard.edu

Mark R. Warren
207 Nichols House
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Tel. 617 495-5960
mark_warren@harvard.edu
Office hours: M 1-3

Course Description

This course will focus on the role of community organizing in fostering school change. We will examine the large range of ways community groups and schools are promoting the active engagement of participants to improve education – whether that be parents, teachers, community residents, students, or the public at large. Within that context, we will examine efforts to foster collaborations among and between a wide array of stakeholders in education, including community organizations, school personnel, school system administration, unions, the business community, faith institutions, civil rights organizations, and youth. We will also examine the role of political organizing in addressing structural inequalities in education in America, and consider that ways that education organizing strengthens broader community building efforts.

A critical component of the course will be its connections to various institutions involved in education organizing in the greater Boston area. Students will be offered the opportunity, and required, to participate in some direct way with an organization/school/institution active in school change and community-building. Forms of engagement might include volunteer support, collaborative research, community education, or some other activity that both creates a learning opportunity for students and results in a practical contribution to organizing efforts.

The class may be taken for a letter grade or satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

Required Texts

Course packet of readings

Jeannie Oakes and John Rogers, *Learning Power: Organizing for Education and Justice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2005).

Dennis Shirley, *Community Organizing for Urban School Reform* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

Clarence Stone, *Changing Urban Education* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

Course Requirements

1. Attend class and participate actively
This course will follow an active learning model in which discussion and participation by students is essential. Students must do the reading and come to class prepared to participate.
2. Case Analysis

Students will choose 1 of the case studies to be discussed in class and write a case analysis (4-6pp.). They will also form a group with several other students and prepare to lead the class discussion of this case. Guidelines will be distributed.

3. Case Briefs

Students are required to write and submit in advance one-page briefs for the classes in which there are case study analyses, but for which they are not preparing the longer case analysis. You can opt out of one brief, so that means you will do 4 briefs in all. Guidelines for these briefs will be distributed in advance. Briefs will not be graded separately.

4. Participation with Boston area organizing group

Students are required to participate in some collaborative effort with a group/school/organization involved in education organizing in Boston. Several options will be offered to students and assistance will be provided to match groups with student interest and skills. In most cases, students will volunteer for a group along with 2 or 3 other students in the class. It is expected that students will spend about 3 hours per week in this volunteer work (plus travel time).

Students are required to attend an open house, Wednesday, September 19th 6-8pm., in Conroy Commons. Representatives from Boston groups/schools interested in hosting students will give short presentations and be available for individual conversations.

Students will not be graded on the quality of their work with local groups per se. Rather, they will be graded on three associated requirements:

- a. Two short reflection essays (2-2_ pp. each) that connect an important issue or set of issues discussed in the course with the student's experience with the organizing group. These essays will be assigned a *provisional* grade, to get some feedback towards the eventual writing of the final paper – a case study.
- b. A presentation to the class that involves a case study of the group. This presentation will be done as a group with other students involved with the same effort. Presentations will occur during classes in December.
- c. A 15pp. written case study of the group done by each student individually. Students involved with the same group can collaborate in the research for the study, but must each write their own analysis, appropriately citing the insights of their collaborators. Grades are awarded for the learning that takes place, not for the success of the project. An excellent essay can be written about a project that is not particularly successful, although of course we'd like our efforts to produce results.

Grading for the course will be apportioned accordingly:

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| 20% | Four case briefs (1p. each) and class participation. Grading will be based upon the quality of participation, not just the amount of it. |
| 20% | One case analysis (4-6pp.) |
| 10% | Class presentation of case study of Boston organizing group (group grade) |
| 50% | Written case study (15pp.) of Boston organizing group |

Note: the two reflection essays are required, but their (provisional) grades do not count towards the final grade.

Schedule of Classes

9/12 Introduction to the course (Shopping class)

Part I What is Organizing?

This part of the course will introduce students to the distinctive elements of American community organizing. We will examine the roots of contemporary organizing and discuss why an organizing approach might be necessary to transform urban schools. We will also begin to discuss some of the important tensions within organizing, around issues of power, between self-interest and values, among organizers and leaders across racial lines.

9/17 Power and Self-interest

Saul D. Alinsky, "The Purpose" and "A Word about Words," from *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 3-23 and 48-62.

Bernard Loomer, "Two Conceptions of Power," *Criterion* Vol. 15, No. 1 (winter 1976): 11-29.

John McKnight, "Services are bad for people," *Organizing*, Spring/Summer 1991.

9/19 Institutions, Relationships and Values

Mark R. Warren, "A Theology of Organizing: From Alinsky to the Modern IAF," chapter 2 of *Dry Bones Rattling* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

Larry MacNeil, "The Soft Arts of Organizing," *Social Policy* (winter 1995): 17-22.

Robert Bellah, et al, "Introduction: We Live through Institutions," in *The Good Society* (New York: Knopf, 1991).

Recommended:

Ed Chambers, *Organizing for Family and Congregation*, Franklin Square, NY: Industrial Areas Foundation, 1978.

9/19 Open House 6-8pm.

Meet representatives of community groups, youth organizations and schools to help decide on placements for the course. Location: Conroy Commons (with pizza)

9/24 Organizers and Leaders: Building Relationships, Addressing Race

Edward T. Chambers, "The Relational Meeting" and "Democratic Organizers," pp. 44-54 and 104-111 in *Roots for Radicals* (New York: Continuum, 2003).

Reverend Louise Green, "Sustainable Action: Planting the Seeds of Relational Organizing,"

Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres, *The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 11-22, 67-107

Beverly Daniel Tatum, "Teaching White Students about Racism: The Search for White Allies and the Restoration of Hope," *Teachers College Record* Vol. 95, No.4 (Summer 1994): 462-476.

9/26 Schools and organizing: A brief overview

Lisa Delpit, "The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children," *Harvard Educational Review* Vol. 58, No. 3 (1988): 280-298

Mark R. Warren, "Communities and Schools: A New View of Urban Education Reform," *Harvard Educational Review*, 75 (Summer, 2005): 133-173

Kavitha Mediratta and Norm Fruchter, *From Governance to Accountability: Building Relationships that Make Schools Work* (New York: Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University, 2003), available at:

<http://www.drummajorinstitute.org/library/report.php?ID=10>

Recommended:

Pedro Noguera, "Confronting the Urban in Urban School Reform," *Urban Review* Vol. 28 No. 1 (1996): 1-27.

Charles M. Payne and Mariame Kaba, "So much Reform, so little Change: Building-level Obstacles to Urban School Reform" *Journal of Negro Education* (forthcoming), available at: <http://www-ftp.ucsd.edu/courses/eds280/LeadershipSampler/2District%20Reform/SoMuchReformSoLittleChange.pdf>

10/1 Panel on Education Organizing in Boston
Panelists and readings to be announced

Part II Education Organizing Today: Approaches, Cases, Paradigms

This part of the course examines contemporary organizing for school change. Each topic will take 2-3 class sessions. For each of these topics we will introduce an analytic framework or paradigm for understanding organizing and then examine 1 or 2 cases using these tools. Students will be asked to analyze the cases from the point of view of various stakeholders (parents, teachers, principals, etc.) and suggest strategies for advancing the work being discussed based upon their analyses.

Topic: Parent Engagement

Questions to be considered: Why does parental participation matter to educational outcomes? How does the traditional notion of parental involvement compare to parental engagement in an organizing approach? How can schools become sites for building social capital among families and communities? The first case in this section is one where parent organizing took place outside of, and largely in conflict with, the school system, while the second case examines a collaborative model.

10/3 Parent Involvement and Parent Engagement

Guests: Soo Hong, Carolyn Leung, and Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy

Joyce L Epstein et al, *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, 1997), pp. 1-10 and 34-45.

Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp, *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement* pp. 21-41.

Mark R. Warren, Soo Hong, Carolyn Leung, and Phitsamay Sychitkokhong Uy, "Beyond the Bake Sale: A Community-based, Relational Approach to Parent Engagement in Schools" (to be supplied)

Recommended:

Susan Crawford and Peggy Levitt, "Social Change and Civic Engagement: the Case of the PTA," pp. 249-296 in *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*, edited by Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press and New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press. 1999).

10/8 Columbus Day Holiday

10/10 Parent Organizing: Race, Class and Power

Pedro Noguera, "Transforming Urban Schools through Investments in the Social Capital of Parents," pp. 189-212 in *Social Capital and Poor Communities*, edited by Susan Saegert, J. Phillip Thompson and Mark R. Warren (New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press, 2001).

Erin Horvat, Elliot Weininger and Annette Lareau, "From social ties to social capital: Class differences in the relations between schools and parent networks," *American Educational Research Journal* 40 (2): 319-351

Kavitha Mediratta and Jessica Karp, *Parent Power and Urban School Reform: The Story of Mothers on the Move* (New York: Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University, 2003), available at:

<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/iesp/publications/pubs/cip/MOM.pdf>

Case 1: Mothers on the Move (South Bronx)

10/15 Social Capital and Parent Organizing

James S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 94 Supplement (1988): S95-S120

Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling alone, Revisited," *The Responsive Community* (Spring 1995): 18-33.

Soo Hong, Teaching case: Logan Square Neighborhood Association

Case 2: Logan Square Neighborhood Association (Chicago)

Topic: Community Organizing: Creating a Relational Infrastructure for Schooling

Questions to be considered: Why are strong relationships between school, family and community necessary for successful schooling? How do service approaches to making these connections compare to organizing approaches? How can resistance be overcome to tap the motivations of teachers, principals and parents to collaborate to transform the culture of schooling? The case here examines the nation's largest school reform collaborative in Texas and focuses on one of its local alliances between schools and faith communities in Austin.

10/17 Community Organizing and Trust

Anthony S. Bryk and Barbara Schneider, *Trust in Schools* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press, 2002), pp. 3-34.

Dennis Shirley, *Community Organizing for Urban School Reform* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), pp. 13-31, 56-82

10/22 Communities of Learners

Guest: Sheri Andes, Lead Organizer of Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (to be confirmed)

Dennis Shirley, *Community Organizing for Urban School Reform* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), pp. 97-116, 200-264

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2001[1970]), chapter one, pp. 25-51

Texas Interfaith Education Fund, "Texas IAF Vision for Public Schools: Communities of Learners" (Austin: TIEF, 1990)

10/24 Community Organizing and Small Schools

John Dewey, "The Democratic Conception in Education," chapter 7 in *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: MacMillan, 1938 [1916]).

Research for Action and Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, "Case Study: Oakland Community Organizations," part of the *Strong Neighborhoods, Strong Schools, The Indicators Project on Education Organizing* (Chicago: Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, 2002), available from:

http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1a/72/50.pdf (and scroll down to p. 107)

Case 3: Oakland Communities Organization

Topic: Civic Capacity and Political Advocacy

Questions to be considered: What is the relationship between civic capacity and social capital? What kinds of city-wide coalitions are necessary to advance system-wide change? What are the politics of forging alliances across different sectors: school systems, business, teachers unions, faith-based and community-based organizations, and city administrations. What is the relationship between school-by-school organizing and advocating for broader structural change? The case here examines a civic alliance that has driven school reform in Kentucky.

10/29 Civic Capacity

Clarence Stone, *Changing Urban Education* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), chapters 1, 12, 5 and 8

10/31 Statewide Alliances and Local Organizing

Clarence Stone, *Changing Urban Education* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), chapters 6 and 9

Harvard Family Research Project, The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence: Building Capacity for Public Engagement in Education Reform (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2000), available at:

http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/content/projects/fine/resources/case_study/prichard_committee.pdf

Case 4: Pritchard Committee for Academic Excellence (Kentucky)

Topic: Race, Unions and Cross-Sector Collaboration

Questions to be considered: How does the history of racial conflict between predominantly white teachers unions and communities of color affect the prospects for organizing collaboratives? What contemporary forces structure conflict and cooperation today when communities of color organize to empower themselves and confront racism in education? One case examines the efforts of black and Latino parents in New York to confront racial discrimination in schools “from the outside,” while the second case looks at a collaborative model in Oakland.

11/5 Community Control

Kwame Ture (Stokeley Carmichael) and Charles V. Hamilton, “Black Power: Its Need and Substance,” and “The Search for New Forms,” chapters 2 and 8 of *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

Theresa Perry, “Freedom for Literacy and Literacy for Freedom: The African-American Philosophy of Education,” pp. 11-51 in *Young, Gifted and Black: Promoting High Achievement among African-American Students* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003)

T. L. McCarty, “School as Community: The Rough Rock Demonstration,” *Harvard Educational Review* 59(November, 1989): 484-503

Recommended:

James Jennings, "The Politics of Black Empowerment in Urban America: Reflections on Race, Class and Community" in Joseph M. Kling and Prudence S. Posner, eds., *Dilemmas of Activism*

11/7 Organizing against Racial Discrimination

Joy Amulya et al, *Vital Difference: The Role of Race in Building Community*, (Cambridge: Center for Reflective Community Practice, MIT, 2004), especially pp. 17-40, available at:
http://web.mit.edu/crcp/vitaldiff1/Documents/Vital%20Difference%20PDFs/Report/Vital_Difference_fullreport.pdf

Research for Action and Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, "Case Study: New York ACORN," part of the *Strong Neighborhoods, Strong Schools, The Indicators Project on Education Organizing* (Chicago: Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform, 2002), available from:
http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1a/72/50.pdf (and scroll down to p. 80)

New York ACORN, *Secret Apartheid: A Report on Racial Discrimination Against Black and Latino Parents and Children in the New York City Public Schools*, 1996, available at:
<http://www.acorn.org/index.php?id=549>

New York ACORN, *Secret Apartheid II: Race, Regents, and Resources*, 1997, available at: <http://www.acorn.org/index.php?id=538>

Recommended:

Peter C. Murrell, Jr., "The Development of Practice in Community Partnership," chapter 4 in *The Community Teacher* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).

Robert Moses et al, "The Algebra Project: Organizing in the Spirit of Ella." *Harvard Educational Review* November, 1989, pp. 423-443.

Case 5: New York ACORN and the Secret Apartheid campaign

11/12 Veteran's Day Holiday

11/14 Organizing for Policy Change: Teacher Quality

Dennis Shirley and Michael Evans, "Community Organizing and No Child Left Behind," Forthcoming in Marion Orr, *The Ecology of Civic Engagement* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006)

Michael Fabricant, "Building Parent Power to Reform Public Education: CC9s Organizing Campaign for Educational Justice in the South Bronx," paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 2006

Recommended:

Gilberto Arriaza, "Making Changes that Stay Made: School Reform and Community Involvement," *The High School Journal*, April/May 2004, p. 10-24

Case 6: The CC9 Collaborative in the South Bronx

Topic: Youth Organizing and Community Service

Questions to be considered: What is the role of youth organizing in school transformation? How can youth be engaged to participate in the civic life of their communities? What is the relationship between community service and youth organizing as strategies for civic engagement, school change and youth development?

- 11/19 Guest panel on youth organizing
Jesus Genera & youth leaders, Hyde Square Task Force (to be confirmed)

Shawn Ginwright, *Youth Organizing: Expanding Possibilities for Youth Development* (New York: Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing, 2003), available at:
http://www.fcyo.org/attachments/Papers_no3_v3.qxd.pdf

From Inspiration to Participation: A Review of Perspectives on Youth Civic Engagement, pp. 1-17 available at:
<http://www.pacefunders.org/publications/pubs/Moving%20Youth%20report%20REV3.pdf>

Mary Dailey, "Youth Organizing is Organizing: Case Study of Sistas & Brothas United," *Social Policy* 34 (Numbers 2 & 3, 2003/2004): 95-100.

"Countering Structural Racism," *Forum Focus* Volume 2, Issue 3, July/August 2004, pp. 1-4, available at: http://www.forumfyi.org/Files/ForumFOCUS_July2004.pdf

- 11/21 To be announced

Topic: Local Democracy, Critical Inquiry and Institutional Reform

Questions to be considered: What is the relationship between institutional reform and "on the ground" organizing? More broadly, what is the relationship between expert driven reform "at the top" and the local knowledge and values of actors "on the ground"? What role does critical inquiry play in education organizing?

- 11/26 Local Knowledge and Local Democracy

James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), Introduction and chapter 9.

Jeannie Oakes and John Rogers, *Learning Power: Organizing for Education and Justice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2005), pp. 1-42

- 11/28 Critical Inquiry and School Reform

Jeannie Oakes and John Rogers, *Learning Power: Organizing for Education and Justice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2005), 43-70, 93-180

Part III From the Margins to the Center?

The first part of this section of the course will attempt to synthesize and apply the analytic approaches discussed so far through student presentations of case studies of the Boston organizing groups in which they have participated during the semester. In the second part of this section we will consider the prospects of education organizing moving from the margins to the center of school reform practice.

12/3 Guest panel of parent activists in Boston Public Schools
Readings to be announced

Quality and Equality in Boston Schools I
Student presentations of case studies of Boston education organizing

12/5 Quality and Equality in Boston Schools II
Student presentations of case studies of Boston education organizing

12/10 Quality and Equality in Boston Schools III
Student presentations of case studies of Boston education organizing

12/12 Local Organizing and a National Social Movement

Harry Boyte, "A Different Kind of Politics," John Dewey Lecture, University of Michigan, October 13, 2002.

Mark R. Warren, "Conclusion: Restoring Faith in Politics," from *Dry Bones Rattling* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

Jean Anyon, "Introduction" and "Putting Education at the Center" pp. 1-14 and 177-200 in *Radical Possibilities: Public Policy, Urban Education, and a New Social Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2005)

12/17 Where do we go from here?
Course evaluation, reflections and future plans