MILANO THE NEW SCHOOL FOR MANAGEMENT AND URBAN POLICY

Power, Strategy and Social Change
Fall 2010 – MPLC 5015
Syllabus

Wednesdays 6:00 – 7:50 PM

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Office hours are flexible and by appointment – Please email or call ahead.

"Power" and "social change" are evocative and loaded terms. People of all political persuasions seek power and strategize for social transformation. What do these terms mean to us? And how do we develop an understanding that can help advance our own goals?

In this course, we will explore the meaning of social change, the nature of power—and, most importantly, the methods people have used to deploy power in their efforts to change policies, organizations or cities. We will learn theories of power, and we will look at real-life cases to see how theory is applied. We will explore how power and resources can be acquired, evaluated, mobilized, and deployed in the service of promoting a particular agenda for change. Strategy, too, comes in many forms; there are nearly as many strategies as there are organizations pursuing them. We will identify common themes and analyze the choices people have made in their strategic pursuit of the power necessary to achieve their goals.

By the end of the course, students—working in small groups—will produce either: 1) a comprehensive analysis of one organization's (or one campaign's) strategy for achieving a policy goal or other major change in the civic sphere, or 2) an original and comprehensive strategic plan for a campaign for issue advocacy or political change.

Attendance

Consistent attendance is essential for a passing grade.

Books:

Please purchase these four books:

* Michael Gecan, *Going Public: An Organizer's Guide to Citizen Action,* New York: Anchor Books (2002).

* Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics,* University of Chicago Press (1993).

* Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*, University of North Carolina Press, 2005

* Jeannie Oakes and John Rogers, *Learning Power*, New York: Teachers College Press (2006)

Additional readings, including book chapters, journal articles, newspaper articles and reports, will be available in e-reserves via the course page on Blackboard.

Students should also be—or become—adept at searching electronic databases, such as Lexis/Nexis Academic Universe and Proquest, for news and scholarly articles. These are available online to all students. If you need training, please contact Fogelman Library.

Grade Requirements

- Active participation at all sessions. Course grading values informed class discussions. I will assume you have completed all assigned reading in preparation for each class, and that you are ready to discuss them.
- Equitable participation in the group project, which will include interviews, documentary research, written analysis and a group presentation.
- Short papers as assigned, including a final reflective essay.

Final grades will be based on the following:
Class participation and familiarity with the readings—35 percent
Short papers—30 percent
Group project—35 percent

A Note on Academic Integrity

Please take great care documenting your sources in your written work. It is dishonest to claim another author's words or ideas as your own by using them without attribution. Use quotes and accurate citations whenever appropriate. Cutting and pasting material from websites into your papers constitutes plagiarism unless they are quoted and cited.

"If we don't have integrity in the small things, if we find it possible to justify plagiarism or cheating or shoddy work in things that don't seem important, how will we resist doing the same in areas that really do matter, in areas where money might be at stake, or the possibility of advancement, or our esteem in the eyes of others?

"Personal integrity is not a quality we're born to naturally. It's a quality of character we need to nurture, and this requires practice in both meanings of that word (as in practice the piano and practice a profession). We can only be a person of integrity if we practice it every day." From "Integrity: Academic and Political—A Letter to My Students," By Bill Taylor. The full letter can be found on the website of the Center for Academic Integrity, at www.academicintegrity.org.

Failure to abide by basic standards of academic honesty are grounds for failing an assignment and, potentially, failing the course.

Course Schedule and Readings:

September 1: Course introduction

September 8: No class. **(Rosh Hashanah)**

September 15: Social Change and its Purposes

Paul Farmer, "Never Again? Reflections on Human Values and Human Rights," (pp. 487-527) and "Making Human Rights Substantial," (pp. 545-559) from *Partner to the Poor*, University of California Press (2010).

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* Harvard University Press (1971/1999). Read Chapter 1, "Justice as Fairness," pp.3-46.

September 22: Understanding Power

Hannah Arendt, "Communicative Power," in *Power,* edited by Steven Lukes, New York University Press (1986), pp. 59-74.

John Kenneth Galbraith, "Power and Organization," in *Power,* edited by Steven Lukes, New York University Press (1986), pp. 211-228

Jeffrey Pfeffer, "Power Play," *Harvard Business Review*, July-August 2010, pp.84-92

Jane Mayer, "Covert Operations: The billionaire brothers who are waging a war against Obama," *The New Yorker*, August 30, 2010, available online at http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/30/100830fa_fact_mayer

September 29: Knowledge as Power

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Chapter 1.

Michael Bess, Interview with Foucault at UC Berkeley, *History of the Present 4,* Spring 1988, pp. 1-2 and 11-13

Trent Hamann, "Neoliberalism, Governmentality, and Ethics," *Foucault Studies*, Number 6, February 2009.

October 6: Political and Electoral Power

John Mollenkopf, *A Phoenix in the Ashes: The Rise and Fall of the Koch Coalition in New York City*. Princeton University Press (1994). Read Chapter 2, "How to Study Urban Power" (pp. 23-43).

Kathleen Staudt and Clarence N. Stone, "Division and Fragmentation: The El Paso Experience in Global-Local Perspective," in *Transforming the City: Community Organizing and the Challenge of Political Change,* edited by Marion Orr. University Press of Kansas (2007), pp.84-108.

Michael Gecan, *Going Public: An Organizer's Guide to Citizen Action,* New York: Anchor Books (2002), read the Preface, Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. ix – 32).

October 13: Policy Change in a Political Environment

Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, University of Chicago Press (1993). Read Parts I and II, pages 1 to 171

October 20: Versions of Common Wisdom

Jacob Hacker, Suzanne Mettler and Joe Soss, "The New Politics of Inequality: a Policy-Centered Perspective," in *Remaking America: Democracy and Public Policy in an Age of Inequality,* Russell Sage Foundation (2007) pp. 3-23.

Joshua Guetzkow and Bruce Western, "The Political Consequences of Mass Imprisonment," in *Remaking America*, Russell Sage Foundation, (2007) pp. 228-242.

William Bennett and John DiIulio, *Body Count: Moral Poverty…and How to Win America's War Against Crime and Drugs,* Simon & Schuster (1996). Read Chapter 2, "Root Cause of Crime: Moral Poverty" (pp.18-81).

October 27: Citizen Mobilization

Michael Gecan, *Going Public,* pp. 33-178

Guy and Candie Carawan, "Sowing on the Mountain: Nurturing Cultural Roots and Creativity for Community Change," in *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change,* edited by Stephen L. Fisher. Temple University Press (1993), pp. 245-262.

Kate Zernike, "Shaping Tea Party Passion Into Campaign Force," *The New York Times,* August 25 2010, Page A1. Online at http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/26/us/politics/26freedom.html

November 3: Leadership of Organizations for Social Change

Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*, University of North Carolina Press, 2005. Read chapters 5 thru 9.

November 10: Antipoverty Strategies and Action in NYC: How They Did It

Steve Katz, "The Faded Dream of Washington Avenue: A Look Back at the People's Development Corporation 1974-1979," *City Limits*, April 1983 pp.10-18

Michael Leo Owens, *God and Government in the Ghetto,* University of Chicago Press (2007). Read chapter 6, pp. 140 to 172.

Joan Minieri and Paul Getsos, *Tools for Radical Democracy: How to Organize for Power in Your Community.* Chardon Press (2007). Read chapters 1 and 2, and pages 125 thru 207

November 17: Strategies for Education Reform Activism: How they Tried

Jeannie Oakes and John Rogers, *Learning Power,* New York: Teachers College Press (2006). Selections to be assigned.

Kavitha Mediratta, Sara McAlister and Seema Shah, "Improving Schools through Youth Leadership and Community Action: Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition and Sistas & Brothas United." Annenberg Institute for School reform at Brown University, September 2009. Available online at: http://www.annenberginstitute.org/pdf/Mott_Bronx.pdf

December 1: Innovation in a Network Society

Maarten Hajer, "Policy without polity? Policy analysis and the institutional void," *Policy Sciences;* Jun 2003; 36, 2; ABI/INFORM Global pg. 175

Donnella Meadows, *Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System,* Hartland VT: Sustainability Institute (1999). Available online at http://www.sustainabilityinstitute.org/pubs/Leverage_Points.pdf

December 8: Project Presentations

December 15: Transforming Conventional Wisdoms

John Judis, "The Unnecessary Fall: A Counter-History of the Obama Presidency," *The New Republic,* September 2, 2010.

Manuel Castells, *Communications Power*, Oxford University Press (2009). Chapters TBD

December 20: (MONDAY!) Final Papers due.