The Science and Practice of Effective Advocacy
Urban Studies 178/Public Policy 178/CSRE 178P
Spring 2017-18

Course Overview

Units: 3 (basic curriculum) or 5 (including community-engaged learning option)

MW 12:30 – 2:20 p.m. (regular class time)
T 3:00-4:20 p.m. (community-engaged learning discussion section)

Larry Litvak Lecturer
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How can purposeful, collective action change government policies, business practices and cultural norms? In this course, you will learn about the components of successful social change campaigns and develop several practical skills required in these efforts. The concepts taught will be relevant to both issue advocacy and electoral campaigns, and will draw on both research-based and practice-based sources, including social psychology, political science, communications, sociology, community organizing and social movements. The purpose of the course is to make you a more effective changemaker.

You will be able to take the course for 3 or 5 units. If you choose to take the course for 5 units, you will have a placement with a partner advocacy organization, and have an opportunity to participate in and observe its activities. The instructor is currently in discussions with potential partner organizations working in the areas of civil liberties, climate change, racial justice, immigration and labor rights. You also will participate in a weekly discussion section, write reflections and complete a project related to the partner organization.

The regular class session will be twice-a-week for 90 minutes, and class time will combine lectures and engaged learning exercises. Some class sessions will include expert outside speakers. There will be a midterm and final.

The focus on the course will be on advocacy in situations where societal groups may not possess sufficient traditional sources of power to achieve their goals. These traditional power sources include assets such as individual wealth, prestige, elite networks, and proprietary information. Given the significant economic inequality that exists in the U.S.
and globally, combined with large discrepancies in baseline political participation, this power imbalance is a challenge facing many communities. It can be made up for through collective action based on effective strategy, organization, persuasion and group cohesion.

**Course Content**

Major components of the course include:

- **How to build collective power:** Understanding power. Working in varied communities. Organizing and mobilizing supporters/volunteers. Structures for organization and collaboration. Funding advocacy.

- **How to make decisions about strategy:** Choosing issues and goals. Identifying and influencing targeted decision-makers, allies and opponents. Developing and adapting a change strategy. Evaluating advocacy results.

- **How to choose and execute tactics:** Lobbying. Electing candidates & winning ballot initiatives. Public protest and non-violent direct action. Influencing corporate behavior.

- **How to persuade:** Principles of persuasive communications. Creating an advocacy campaign’s story. Leadership through persuasion.

**Instructor**

Larry Litvak, has been a Lecturer in Urban Studies since 2010, and in Public Policy since 2014. He was one of the principals in developing two highly successful, socially-oriented business ventures: Walden Asset Management, one of the pioneers of socially responsible investing, and Working Assets/CRED0 Mobile, a telecommunications firm that has generated $78 million of support to progressive non-profits. Both these organizations have major advocacy programs, the former focusing on changing corporate behavior and the latter on changing on public policy (CRED0 Action). Larry served for many years on the board of the Tides Foundation and Center, a leading funder and sponsor of social justice advocacy. He has also been a board member of domestic and international community loan funds, social service providers, a public oversight board, and an anti-viral drug development enterprise. Larry has been a decision-maker in awarding more than $100 million to various social sector initiatives, including many advocacy organizations. In addition, he has participated in several political campaigns around the country. Larry was one of the organizers of the South Africa Divestment campaign at Stanford and nationally in the 1970s. He has a Bachelor’s Degree in Economics from Stanford University and a Master’s Degree in Public Policy from the Kennedy School, Harvard University.