

**SYLLABUS**  
**SOC307/HON205 ACTION FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE**  
**Lasell University - Spring 2024**  
**Professor Betsy Leondar-Wright**

**OVERVIEW:** In this course, all the students together will design and carry out a brief activist campaign to move Massachusetts towards a better juvenile justice system.

Can a small group make a difference in just three months? Yes, history shows that brief, single-issue campaigns waged by small groups of students have contributed to the success of many social movements. The course will give you real-world experience in activist skills *and* invite you to think critically about social change strategies.

**REQUIRED BOOKS** (for sale in the bookstore and on reserve in the library):

- Bobo et al, *Organizing for Social Change*, Seven Locks Press, **4th** edition, 2010
- Myers-Lipton, *Change! A Student Guide to Social Action*

If the cost of the books poses a hardship for you, please talk with the professor.

Other readings are online, with links from Canvas.

**SUMMARY OF DEADLINES**

(Individual deadlines in **bold**; *committee and whole group deadlines in italics*)

**January 29 - Your issue proposal**

*February 6 - Committees research and present issues (post on OneDrive before class)*

*February 6 - Group decision on issue*

*February 13, 15, 22 - Committees present about extra reading in their area*

**Feb 27 - Results of research on campaign options; post by 8 am, present in class**

*March 6 - Committees upload draft sections of Campaign Action Plan*

*March 23 - **\*\*MAJOR DEADLINE\*\*** Group submission of Campaign Action Plan by noon*

**April 4 - Individual participation log for February and March**

April 11 – Committees complete all contacts before class

*May 1 - Complete all campaign activities*

**May 2 - Turn in individual participation logs for April; and assessments of all students;**  
*and committee activity reports*

**May 3 - Final reflection paper**

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

This course has a light load for reading and writing compared with other 300-level and/or 4-credit courses, but that does not mean that the workload will be easier. The Tuesday session has an extra hour for campaign meetings. An important assignment will need work around or during spring break. At least two off-campus trips will require leaving campus at 2 pm and returning as late as 6:30. In March and April, students should expect to attend at least one committee meeting, event, work session or other commitment per week, in addition to the two T/Th class sessions. Each committee must find a mutually convenient time to meet regularly. Please plan in advance to free this time from other courses' demands in April. It is important to read the assigned readings before the class when they're listed, as the readings contain ideas and how-to advice essential for that day's class.

**THE GROUP CAMPAIGN**

The class will design and carry out a small-scale activist campaign on a problem related to youth and the juvenile justice system, chosen by consensus of all students.

Just as in a real campaign, students' success or failure will be collective. Almost half the grade will be based on the whole class successfully writing a Campaign Action Plan, on committees carrying out their roles, and on the whole group successfully implementing the plan.

The students in the class are free to choose which problem will be addressed by the campaign, which sub-issue and which goal, which target and what tactics - within certain parameters. While social justice campaigns have been effective with a wide range of riskiness, from high-risk to low-risk, these parameters are intended to keep this campaign fairly low-risk, for student safety and to enhance learning.

First parameter: The campaign activities won't break any laws or put participants at risk of arrest or danger.

Second parameter: The campaign's targets may not include the Lasell administration or any part of the Lasell community. The constituency to be educated and recruited may include anyone at Lasell, but not the target decision-maker to be pressured for change. (For example, if the problem chosen were the school-to-prison pipeline, the campaign could pressure a K-12 school, a local government or the state legislature, but not Lasell to change its disciplinary procedures.) This parameter is intended to encourage students to broaden their worldview, their sense of empowerment and their belief in their potential influence on off-campus public affairs.

## **WHOLE GROUP ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES**

1. The Campaign Action Plan – due March 20 - same grade to each student, up to 15 points

Before you carry out the campaign, you will write down what you plan to do. This is a crucial step for campaign success, so please treat this as the most important writing deadline of the semester.

The written Campaign Action Plan will be graded on timeliness, thoroughness, incorporating lessons from the readings and classroom activities, and realistic chance of success. An A-level (14 or 15 point) plan will specify a coherent sub-issue, a clear target, a winnable goal, a coherent strategy towards the goal, creative and realistic tactics including a public demonstration, plan for constituency outreach and recruitment, a media plan, a social media plan, a timeline and a diagram using the campaign strategy template and many terms from the course.

2. Campaign implementation – completed by May 2 - same grade to each student, up to 15 points

Campaign implementation will be graded on timely completion of the Campaign Action Plan; on skill and creativity shown in carrying out all components; on flexibility (responding creatively to the unexpected); and on how well students work together and collaborate. Victory on the goal is not required, but will be rewarded with extra credit.

## **COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each student will belong to one committee, which will take charge of one aspect of the campaign. All members are expected to attend committee meetings and actively participate in committee activities. The committee grade of up to 20 points will be based on meeting the following 4 deadlines, fulfillment of the committee job description, creativity, flexibility, collaboration within and between committees, and documentation of activities in the committee report.

- Each committee will gather information about possible issues, upload it and present it to the class on February 3 – up to 3 points
- Each committee will read and report on an extra reading on the date assigned between February 13 and 22 – up to 2 points
- Each committee will write a draft section of the Campaign Action Plan by March 6 – up to 5 points
- Each committee will do their part to implement the campaign, including reaching out to enough people outside the class to complete at least 12 connections by April 2, and will report on committee functioning and fulfillment of the job description by May 6 – up to 10 points

## **INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS**

1. **Issue proposal** – 100- to 300-word persuasive essay for other students to read. Due January 30. Post in OneDrive folder and present in class on January 30. – 5 points

2. **Report on research into campaign options** - due Feb 27 by 8 am in writing and during class verbally - 5 points

In campaign planning meetings, you will sign up for at least two avenues to explore. Besides following online links and making initial contacts, for each promising idea, make at least 2 follow-up phone calls and personal emails, persisting until you get responses. Keep digging until you can give a strategic recommendation for or against possible sub-issue(s), target(s), goal(s), public demonstration plans, messaging, etc. In your write-up, describe what you learned and the reasons behind your recommendations pro or con. (No minimum length, but write enough detail that other students can understand the sub-issue and follow your reasoning. No maximum length, but please summarize any long documents; don't just give links or overwhelm the other students; just write pithy explanations.)

3. **Logs of individual participation in campaign planning and implementation** – due by April 4 for February and March, by May 2 for April – 15 points

Each student is expected to take an active role in planning and implementing the campaign: serving on a committee, facilitating at least one meeting, giving at least two verbal reports to the class, attending campaign events and putting in at least 2 hours per week outside class in March and April. Only activities and hours of work outside class sessions and documented in log will be credited, @ approximately a point per hour.

4. **Final paper: Reflections on and evaluation of the campaign** – 1200 to 2000 words - due May 3 – 10 points

Please cast a critical eye on the campaign, using concepts from handouts and at least two readings to assess its impact 1) on themselves individually and on other students in the course; 2)

on the target; 3) on the constituency; and 4) on the future of the social problem. What were the best and worst aspects of this collective endeavor? What would have made the campaign more effective? If the campaign continues, what should happen next?

An A-level (9.5 or 10-point) paper will show thought and critical thinking to multiple aspects of the campaign; will apply course concepts including some from both books; will cover all questions listed above; and will be well-organized and clearly written.

## **COURSE GRADING**

Grades will be calculated on a 100-point scale, with up to 50 points for group grades and up to 50 points for individual performance:

**WHOLE GROUP GRADES** - up to 30 points:

- Written Campaign Action Plan – due March 20 – up to 15 points
- Campaign implementation by May 1 – 15 points

**COMMITTEE GRADES** - up to 20 points:

- Committee reports on research into options - due February 1 - 3 points
- Committee drafts of Campaign Action Plan – due March 6 – 5 points
- Each committee read and report on an extra reading between March 19-28 - up to 2 points
- Committee functioning and accomplishments, including 12+ contacts completed and reported on, completed by April 9, as documented in report due May 2 – 10 points

**INDIVIDUAL GRADES** - up to 50 points:

- Issue proposal due January 29 - 5 points
- Research write-up on campaign options due March 9 - 5 points
- Individual participation in campaign planning and implementation outside of class sessions, as documented in logs due April 4 and May 2 and in other students' assessments of your involvement – total 15 points
- Final reflection paper – Due May 3 – 10 points
- Class attendance & participation, including meeting co-facilitation; at least two in-class presentations (including issue proposal); evidence of reading – 15 points

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND MEETINGS

### PHASE ONE: PICKING THE ISSUE AND PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN

Thursday January 18 – The history of student campaigns for social justice; Overview of class and campaign

Tuesday January 23 –What’s wrong with the juvenile justice system? Student campaign stories  
*Two Readings:* Myers-Lipton Chapter 1 (arrive prepared to summarize examples of student campaigns in the book);  
and “The Issues” by Citizens for Juvenile Justice, <https://www.cfjj.org/the-issues> (click the 10 links on the left to familiarize yourself with the variety of problems with the juvenile justice system)  
5-6 pm - Looking ahead to student-led meetings; Discuss juvenile justice issues

Thursday January 25 –Participatory democracy; Persuasive communication; Prepare to propose an issue

*Readings:* Myers-Lipton pp. 21-26 and Chapter 4;  
and Bobo, part of Chapters 2 “Fundamentals” (pp. 5-16)  
There will be a quiz on Bobo Chapter 2 and Myers-Lipton Chapter 4.

**\*\* INDIVIDUAL DEADLINE:** Post a brief issue proposal on Canvas by Tuesday January 29 at noon.

Tuesday January 30 – Introducing Campaign Strategy Template; Roles in Social Movements (TA); Researching issue options; Committee formation

*Readings:* • Bobo Chapter 3 Choosing an Issue; and Chapter 12 “Planning and Facilitating Meetings.” Read all other students’ issue proposals between noon and 3:30  
Weekly Campaign meeting facilitated by 2 students 4:40-6 pm: Issue discussion; divide research tasks among committees

Thursday Feb 1 - Strategy skills

*Readings:* Bobo Chapter 4 Developing a Strategy; Handouts on Campaign Action Plan sections; Myers-Lipton chapter 6

**\*\* GROUP DEADLINE #1** – Decide on juvenile justice issue no later than Tuesday morning February 6 \*\*

Tuesday February 6 – Deciding the issue

*Readings:* Myers-Lipton Chapter 5 “Research” and “Legislative Advocacy Guide” and browse <https://malegislature.gov/Bills>

**Committee deadline:** Committees present research results on finalist issues - upload to OneDrive before class

Weekly campaign meeting: Decision on issue; next steps

Thursday February 8 - Strategies for campaign success (TA)

*Readings:* Bobo, chapter 5 Tactics and chapter 7 Meetings to Pressure Officials

Tuesday February 13 - Campaign planning; Target research

*Reading:* Myers-Lipton, chapter 9, Bobo Chapter 17 Tactical Investigations up to “Timing” (pp. 199-206 in 4th edition)

*Extra reading for the **Target Committee**: Meredith Chapter 2, and browse pp. 59–145 to find other parts relevant to the campaign). Please come to class ready to present what you learned with a visual aid.*

Weekly campaign meeting: Work on deciding goal and target (divide up research tasks for Feb 27 deadline); Prepare to decide among options next week; Name the group; If time, Work on campaign graphics (logo, flyer, social media);

Thursday February 15 - Researching options for public demonstration tactics

- *Readings:* “*The Art of Demonstration*”
- Browse these websites Beautiful Trouble and Global Nonviolent Action Database and come to class ready to show and tell about one tactic that inspires you

*Extra reading for the **Public Demonstration & Art Committee**: Five sections from Beautiful Trouble website below. Please come to class ready to present what you learned with a visual aid.*

<http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/dont-just-brainstorm-artstorm/>

<http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/show-dont-tell/>

<http://beautifultrouble.org/tactic/artistic-vigil/>

<http://beautifultrouble.org/principle/use-the-power-of-ritual/>

<http://beautifultrouble.org/theory/ethical-spectacle/>

Tuesday February 20 - FIELD TRIP to State House – Please clear your schedule from 2 to 6:30 pm. Meet at Campus Police at 2 pm.

Thursday February 22 – Campaign planning; Building strong groups (TA) and outreach

*Extra reading for the **Outreach Committee**: Bobo Chapter 11 Developing Leadership; Please come to class ready to present what you learned with a visual aid.*

**\*\* INDIVIDUAL DEADLINE** – Tuesday February 27 by 8 am: Written report on your research on options for sub-issues, bills, tactics and/or other groups’ efforts – Upload to OneDrive and present in class

Tuesday February 27 – Present campaign options - Please arrive prepared to present your report and respond to others’ reports

*Reading:* Other students’ reports on OneDrive after 8 am

Weekly campaign meeting: Discuss campaign options for all components of plan, make decisions; Work on messaging, social media and flyer(s)

Thursday February 29 – Making informed decisions on campaign options

**\*\* Committees must schedule at least one extra meeting between February 27 and March 7 to write draft sections of Campaign Action Plan \*\***

Tuesday March 5-- Ally outreach

*Reading:* Bobo chapters 9 Building Coalitions and 10 Recruiting

Weekly campaign meeting: Discuss Campaign Action Plan options; work on graphic materials

**\*\* COMMITTEE DEADLINE** – Upload drafts of sections of Campaign Action Plan to OneDrive by Wednesday March 6 at 6 pm \*\*

Thursday March 7 – Campaign meeting: Discuss draft campaign components, finalizing CAP (CAP) if possible

*Reading: Other committees' draft sections of Campaign Action Plan*

**\*\* If CAP is not complete, committees must schedule at least one extra meeting between March 7 and March 19 to finish their sections of the Campaign Action Plan \*\***

**\*\* SPRING BREAK – No classes on March 15 or 17 \*\***

Tuesday March 19 – Campaign Action Plan

Weekly campaign meeting: If CAP is final, implementing the Campaign Action Plan, including setting date(s) for group event(s); if not, decide remaining CAP issues

**\*\* GROUP DEADLINE #3 – UPLOAD CAMPAIGN ACTION PLAN TO CANVAS BY WEDNESDAY MARCH 20 AT NOON\*\***

Thursday March 21 – Campaign messaging and face-to-face persuasion

*Reading:* Bobo Chapter 13 “Public Speaking” (skip the last part on PowerPoint); and Myers-Lipton pp. 90-95 and 111-113

## **PHASE 2: PUTTING THE PLAN INTO ACTION**

Tuesday March 26 – Campaign materials

*Reading: TBA depending on the target*

Weekly campaign meeting - Led by Public Demonstration Committee, work on event planning; Led by Outreach Committee, work on social media posts and flyer(s)

Thursday March 28 - Media outreach; Framing for media success (TA)

*Reading:* Bobo Chapter 14 Using the Media

Tuesday April 2 - Campaign meeting, work session or committee meetings, as needed

Weekly campaign meeting: Committee reports on outreach progress; Led by Target Committee, work on grassroots lobbying planning

**\*\* INDIVIDUAL DEADLINE** – Turn in logs of February and March participation by April 4\*\*

Thursday April 4 - Campaign meeting, work session or committee meetings, as needed

Tuesday April 9 - Campaign meeting, work session or committee meetings, as needed

Weekly campaign meeting: Committee reports on outreach progress; Event planning

**\*\* COMMITTEE DEADLINE #2:** Contact should have been made with all priority targets, all priority media, all authorities in charge of event spaces, all potential ally groups, and all potential constituencies by April 11 before class. **\*\***

Thursday April 11 - Campaign meeting, work session or committee meetings, as needed

Tuesday April 16 – Campaign meeting, work session or committee meetings, as needed.

Weekly campaign meeting: Public demonstration planning

(Please keep 2 pm - 6:30 pm open in case a campaign event is scheduled.)

Thursday April 18 – Campaign meeting, work session or committee meetings, as needed

(Please keep 2 pm - 6:30 pm open in case an event is scheduled.)

Tuesday April 23 –

Weekly campaign meeting 3:30-4:30: Prepare for Symposium; Final campaign activities. (Please keep 2 pm - 6:30 pm open in case an event is scheduled.)

Last class 4:45-6: Learning from this experience; Farewells and appreciations

*Reading*: Myers-Lipton, Chapter 11

**\*\* Symposium on Thursday April 25 – Campaign booth \*\***

**\*\* GROUP DEADLINE #5: Complete all campaign activities by April 30 \*\***

*Deadline for individual and committee logs - May 2*

*Final paper due May 3*

### **Policy on student opinions**

The final paper, campaign planning and class discussions will require you to put forward opinions. All opinions communicated in a respectful way are welcome. If you disagree with the professor or the author of a reading, you will not be graded more strictly for that; if you agree, you will not be graded more leniently. All positions you take will be evaluated only by whether you present evidence and whether you make a reasoned argument.