



INTERGENERATIONAL ORGANIZING: BUILDING NETWORKS OF SOLIDARITY AND MUTUAL AID **PAX 694**

SPI 2026
Session 1: May 18–28, 2026

Course meeting location and time: TBD

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Amanda K Gross, PhD

Email: amanda.gross@emu.edu (Until August 7 only)

Email: mistresssyndrome@gmail.com (after August 7)

Email to set an appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

How do we build collective power to hold systems and structures accountable while co-creating life-giving alternatives? How can we organize from a place of solidarity and align our methods with our peacebuilding and social justice goals? This seven-day intensive will delve into strategies, considerations, and tensions within intergenerational grassroots community organizing for collective liberation with a focus on leadership development, political education, power mapping, mutual aid, and culture shift.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

This course invites participants to:

- Locate intergenerational and other approaches to community organizing within social movement ecosystems.
- Analyze and map power structures for impacting change across multiple levels.
- Identify and practice tools and strategies to interrupt the status quo, shift power, and co-create solutions-based alternatives.
- Integrate cultural, arts-based, embodied, play, and other creative strategies and tactics within community organizing praxis.
- Understand how intersectional identities, culture, history, family systems, and multigenerational trauma, resistance, and resilience impact abilities of groups and coalitions to work together effectively.
- Deepen commitment to self- and collective care as core practices for (re)generating healthy power amidst conflict, vulnerability, uncertainty, and stress.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND OTHER RESOURCES:

The following are reading materials and texts, required for all participants taking the course **for credit**. Note that **non-credit participants** are encouraged (though not required) to read the texts.

Please read **before** the class:

1. *Let this Radicalize You* by Kelly Hayes and Mariame Kaba, 2023, \$14.36, ISBN: 9781642598278
2. *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next)* by Dean Spade, New and Expanded Edition, 2026, \$16.95, ISBN: 9781836742555 (first edition available as a pdf: <https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Mutual-Aid-1.pdf>)
3. *We Will Not Cancel Us & Other Dreams of Transformative Justice* by adrienne maree brown, 2020, \$12, ISBN: 9781849354226
4. *Stir It Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy* by Rinku Sen, 2003, \$42.95, ISBN: 9780787965334

Additional Readings, excerpts, and articles will be included on the course Moodle page (can be accessed 2 weeks before start of course). Required readings will be specified throughout the course.

1. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, Second edition, by Barbara Ransby, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469681375_ransby
2. *Solidarity is the Political Version of Love: Lessons from Jewish Anti-Zionist Organizing* by Rebecca Vilkomerson and Rabbi Alissa Wise, <https://bookshop.org/p/books/solidarity-is-the-political-version-of-love-lessons-from-jewish-anti-zionist-organizing-alissa-wise/a38047aafbed04fa?ean=9798888900956&next=t&>
3. *More than A Score: The New Uprising Against High-Stakes Testing* edited by Jesse Hagopian, <https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/618-more-than-a-score>
4. *Been in the Struggle: Pursuing an Anti-Racist Spirituality* by Regina Shands Stoltzfus and Tobin Miller Shearer, <https://bookshop.org/p/books/been-in-the-struggle-pursuing-an-antiracist-spirituality-regina-shands-stoltzfus/c265855fd957f9b7>
5. *What It Takes to Heal: How Transforming Ourselves Can Change the World* by Prentis Hemphill, <https://prentishemphill.com/book>
6. *Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto* by Tricia Hersey, <https://bookshop.org/p/books/rest-is-resistance-a-manifesto-tricia-hersey/72039c1cbdfea3ed?ean=9780316365215&next=t>
7. *How We Show Up: Reclaiming, Family, Friendship, & Community* by Mia Birdsong, <https://bookshop.org/p/books/how-we-show-up-reclaiming-family-friendship-and-community-mia-birdsong/d94d5a2d4466b882>
8. *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* by adrienne maree brown, <https://www.akpress.org/emergentstrategy.html>
9. “Anti-Authoritarian Playbook” on Substack by Scot Nakagawa, <https://antiauthoritarianplaybook.substack.com>
10. “The Fascism Barometer” podcast by Ejeris Dixon, <https://www.fascismbarometer.org>
11. “The Auntie’s Dandelion” podcast, <https://www.theauntiesdandelion.com>
12. *Occupation: Organizer: A Critical History of Community Organizing in America* by Clément Petitjean, <https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/2008-occupation-organizer>
13. *Theory of Water: Nishnaabe Maps to the Times Ahead* by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, <https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/2533-theory-of-water>

14. *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good* edited by adrienne maree brown, <https://www.akpress.org/pleasure-activism.html>
15. *Your Attention is Sacred: Except on Social Media* by Amelia Hruby, <https://www.akpress.org/pleasure-activism.html>
16. *Art and Upheaval: Artists on the World's Frontlines* by William Cleveland, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt21pxmqx>
17. *Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance* by Edgar Villanueva, <https://bookshop.org/p/books/decolonizing-wealth-second-edition-indigenous-wisdom-to-heal-divides-and-restore-balance-edgar-villanueva/62bcb42a8f454780?ean=9781523091416&next=t&next=t>

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

Community Organizing is a co-created project. Your participation and contributions are essential to shaping the course content and our shared learning. Regardless of whether you are taking this course for credit, all participants are asked to:

- Show up to all sessions, as the learning is designed as a cumulative and iterative and community-based experience.** We value your presence and insights.
- Commit to ongoing self-care and community care during, after, and in between the SPI experience.**
- Engage with curiosity, continue to develop self-awareness, and practice clear and kind communication.**
- Offer a Cultural Share Moment (5-10 minutes) at some point during the course.** More details and signups will be shared on our first day of class.

Taking the course for Professional Education/Training

Homework assignments are designed to complement our in-person coursework. These are not required of non-credit students, though short form reflection assignments and readings may enhance your learning experience within the course format. If you choose to do the for-credit assignments, they are just for you, no need to submit to instructor.

Taking the course for Credit

All assignments are listed below. Assignment Guidance Notes with details for each assignment can be found on Moodle. Please show up to all sessions. Presence in class will account for 40% of your grade. Additional assignments below add up to 60% of your grade. **All assignments are due by Friday, Aug 7.**

Assignment	Due date	(% of grade) 2 credit	(% of grade) 3 credit
Participation	All sessions	40	40
Offer a Community Care Contribution. Each student will be responsible for contributing to our collective learning space by signing up to make a contribution for one class period during the semester.	Once, during our SPI course	3	3
Some ideas include:			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a breath or movement practice to help us ground, center, or energize. • Create a playlist for us to play before and after class, and during breaks and reflection time. • Teach us a dance step to get us moving. 			
<p>Share a 5-minute Solutionary Moment.</p> <p>In the spirit of Grace Lee Bogg's Solutionaries, share one example of people, groups, or organizations coming together to co-create alternatives to systems of dominance and harm. Students will have five minutes for this brief presentation and will sign up for their presentation date on the first day of class. A resource list of potential examples will be provided, although students are welcome to bring in examples from the news, current events, or from community engagement or personal experience.</p>	Once, during our SPI course	3	3

<p>Social Justice Movement Genosociogram</p> <p>Research and create a Genosociogram that maps out your relationship to current and past social justice movements.</p>	May 18	18	12
<p>Community Organizer Reflection Paper Write a 6–8 page double-spaced reflection paper in which you consider your past experiences, current practices, and future aspirations related to the following content and activities introduced in class:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The role and qualities of a good organizer 2) Liberatory Gatekeeping 3) Leadership Development <p>You might want to draft reflections in your notes as we engage with these themes and activities during class.</p>	August 7	18	12
<p>Zine</p> <p>Create a zine (8 pages minimum) for political education around an issue that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The historical and systemic context - An intergenerational understanding that reaches Seven Generations back and imagines Seven Generations in the future - Perspectives of at least 2 directly impacted people - A call to action 	<p>Hard Copy due May 28th</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Digital Version due August 7th</p>	18	12

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uses images and text <p>*Note: You have the option of doing this as a hard copy which you turn in on the last day of class, or as a digital version due by August 7th. More instructions and technical support will be provided during class. Some class time will be used for zine construction.</p>			
<p>Analysis Paper (3 credit students only)</p> <p>Using at least two of the required readings and a third reading of your choice, write a 10–15 page double-spaced paper that</p> <p>EITHER</p> <p>A. Identifies, analyzes, and <i>critiques</i> an intergenerational approach that you are currently engaged with in your context</p> <p>OR</p> <p>B. Identifies, analyzes, and <i>proposes</i> an intergenerational approach that would be appropriate for your context</p> <p>Integrate the readings and course content with attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership Development - Power Mapping - The Strategy Chart - Mutual Aid - Culture 	August 7 th	-----	18

These are brief descriptions of required graded assignments for the course. More details for each assignment can be found on the “Guidance Notes” that will be provided on Moodle.

DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE AND KEY RESOURCES:

Schedule will be shared the first day of the course.

*Assignment Suggested Timeline:

(for-credit students only)

***NOTE: YOU MAY TURN IN ALL ASSIGNMENTS ON August 7. THIS TIMELINE IS PURELY TO HELP YOU SPREAD OUT THE WORK.**

Before May 18	Complete Required Reading Create your Social Justice Movement Genosociogram
May 18–28	Participate every day, offer your Community Care Contribution, present your Solutionary Moment

May 28	Complete and turn in your Zine (<i>Hard Copy only</i>)
July 15	Complete and submit your Community Organizer Reflection Paper via email or Moodle
August 7	Complete and submit your Analysis Paper (<i>3 credit students only</i>)

SPI ATTENDANCE POLICY:

It is expected that individuals registering for an SPI session will attend the entire course (barring unforeseen travel delays or emergencies). Please contact SPI directly at spi@emu.edu before registering if you know you will have to miss any days of a course. SPI certificates are provided to participants only if they miss no more than one class day unless prior arrangements have been made with the SPI team and confirmed with the instructor. **For-credit participants are expected to attend all class sessions unless they are given permission from the instructor to miss a session.** SPI courses rely on active student participation in a learning community. If a participant misses class repeatedly and this disrupts the learning for others, they will be asked to leave the course and no money will be refunded for remaining course time.

GRADING CRITERIA AND OTHER POLICIES:

SPI provides all students taking the course for graduate credit some supplemental information that will serve as a resource after SPI when students are working on course assignments. This includes information on library resources, EMU's academic integrity policy, and guidelines for writing graduate papers, information regarding the grading scale and course deadlines, and then some suggestions we have for you in order to make your experience of taking SPI courses for graduate credit as successful as possible! These [documents](#) are all available online.

