San José State University
Department of Sociology & Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
Soci. 164: Social Action

Course and Contact Information

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Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand.
Xun Kuang, 312-230 BCE. Confucian philosopher, modern version

Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.
Frederick Douglass

Course Description

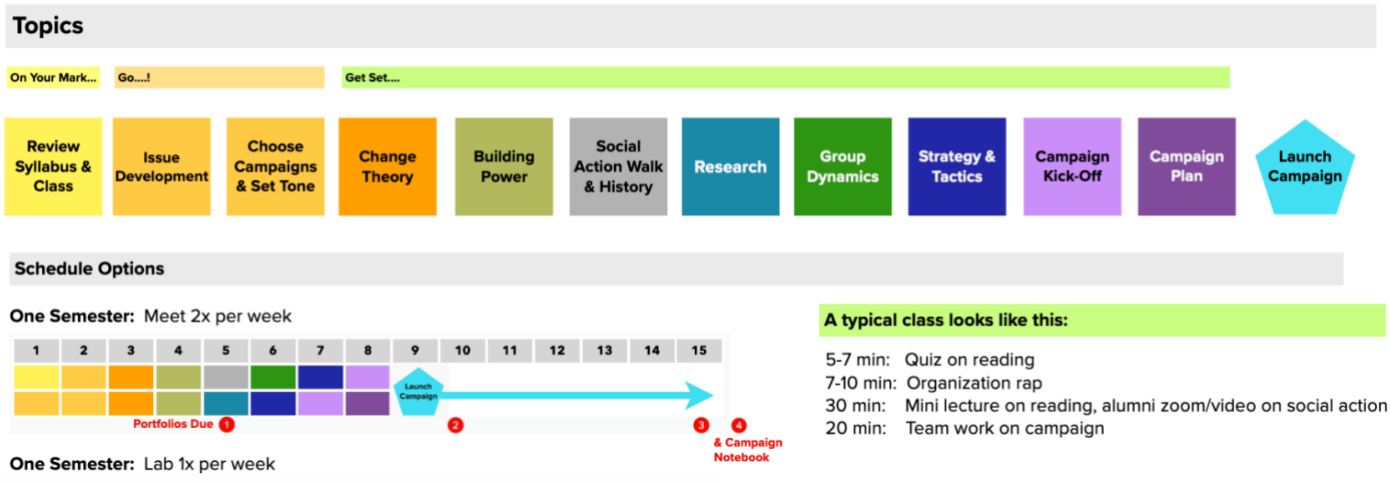
The United States is at a crossroads, as democracy itself is under attack. At the K-12 level, think tanks and scholars are calling for a major investment in civics education and social studies in order to respond to the breakdown of trust in our democratic institutions. How will higher education respond? I argue that higher education needs to mainstream "social action" in order to do its part in creating the next generation of democratic citizens and residents.

Social action occurs when everyday people band together to develop their power in order to change policy, and it has been a part of the American experiment in democracy throughout our history. Sociology 164: Social Action is a course that explores power and democracy, both of which are central to the Social Sciences in general, and Sociology in particular. More specifically, this course examines the topics of issue development, change theory, building power, group dynamics, strategy and tactics, and campaign planning and implementation.

What is unique about Soci. 164 is that students do social action rather than just learn about it. In a traditional course on social action, students read about theories of social change, analyze social problems, read about campaigns, develop an abstract understand of concepts, all with the professor being the "sage on the stage". In the experiential social action model, students read about theories of social change and apply it to real world campaigns, as well as define a social problem and develop concrete, quantifiable solutions (i.e., demands). In this experiential social action model, students choose and lead campaigns and are transformed through a direct experience of democracy, all with the professor being a "guide on the side" where they are de-centered and co-creators of knowledge.

A key part of the social action model is that students have the opportunity to enact a policy (i.e., a rule, regulation, norm, or practice of an institution) on campus or in the community, with the students choosing and developing the campaigns on their own rather than assigned by the instructor. Another exciting part of this course is that you will hear directly from previous Soci. 164 students about their social action campaigns.

Another key feature of the social action model is the topic and flow of the course. The motto of this model is "On Your Mark, Go, Get Set." In order to launch the campaigns by mid-semester, students go through the issue development process (identifying demands and targets) in the opening days of the class. By choosing the campaigns by the 4th or 5th class, students have enough time to learn about all of the necessary aspects of social change, and then to launch a campaign by the ninth week, and still have almost half a semester to do several actions.



With this model, a typical class involves the following: (a) a student doing a 1-2 minute organizational rap (i.e., who, what, why, where, and when of a campaign), (b) a mini-lecture by the professor of the reading, (c) a Zoom call with an alumni, and (d) group work on their campaigns. These activities are designed to de-center the faculty, empower students to believe that social action is possible, and to give students the opportunity to be active participants in their education.

All students will be involved in social action. This will require a <u>minimum of 1½ to 2 hours per week</u> of campaign work (25 hours minimum over 15 weeks, with about one-half of the time DOING something, that is, doing *campaign activities* (e.g., tabling, fliering, giving organization raps) or *campaign actions* (marches, rallies, street theater, etc.). If you do not do more than 25 hours a semester, you will most likely not receive a grade higher than a C on your overall portfolio grade, since it is difficult to do reflection if you are not doing campaign activities and actions. Of course, if you want to do more campaign work, that is great. In fact, you can get an extra one to three units of course credit (Soci. 181B) if you do additional community work. Please come see me if you are interested in this additional course credit. FYI: The course reading has been reduced to offset the 25 hours of campaign work.

It will be possible to do your social action on campus, so all students should be able to work it into your schedule. In addition, class time will be dedicated to your social action campaign, so you will be able to do some of your organizing in class. During the second through fourth classes, you will brainstorm various ideas for a social action campaign, and then you will choose one to work on.

The requirements for the campaign are: (i) that you have a minimum of 3 students on your team, (ii) you have passion for the issue, and (iii) your campaign tries to change some type of policy. The campaign you choose to work on may come from a liberal, conservative, social democrat, or libertarian perspective…or it may have no ideology. Whatever campaign you choose to do, I will teach you about democracy, power, and how to bring about change.

Importantly, there is no political indoctrination, as students develop and choose what campaigns to work on, and can change campaigns at any point in the semester. Furthermore, my role is to offer guidance about strategy and tactics, and to help students consider the variety of options available, with the students deciding on how to best move forward.

If for some reason a student wants to leave a group, please contact the professor. At that time, the student and professor will discuss what group you would like to join. After the student makes a choice, I will contact the other group. If the group believes there will be little disruption to the group, then the student is able to join. However, if the group feels that there would a disruption to the group due to possible lack of trust and transparency issues, or negative behavior by the student, that group has the right to say no. If the student still wants to join the group even after the student group has said that it would cause a disruption, the professor will make the final decision, as I am ultimately in charge of the classroom environment. Personally, I am fine with any student joining another group if it would cause minimum disruption to the group. At the same time, I am not okay if by a student joining the group, it would cause disruption to the group. As professor, I am responsible for the classroom environment, and I will base my decision on the impact to the classroom environment. If the student has no group to join, then the student will be given an independent study with no negative repercussions to her/his/their grade.

Soci. 164 has fundamentally changed the campus and community. Over the past fifteen years, Social Action students have won 15 campaigns, leading successful efforts to: (1) raise the minimum wage in San José from $8 to $10 and then to $15, (2) develop a 12-emergency bed program and a centralized location to provide emergency housing and food to students, (3) modernize the city's business tax, and (4) make SJSU a sweatshop-free campus, and (5) get Santa Clara County to clear and expunge 13,000 cannabis convictions. Perhaps even more importantly, the students participating in social action have had their lives transformed as a result of a direct experience with democracy, with social action alumni taking on leadership positions in government and the non-profit sector, as well as obtaining community organizing jobs locally and pursuing advanced degrees.

One last thing: this is a Sociology course, so you should know something about one of the most famous American sociologists, C. Wright Mills. Mills once said that, "personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues - and in terms of the problems of history making." For example, if in a nation, there is just a small minority of the population in poverty, then it is the individual's personal trouble, and for its relief we properly look to the character of the person and her or his skills. But if in that nation, there are 38 million people in poverty (like in the USA), then that is a social problem, and relief must come from a change in social structure (i.e., the arrangement of society). Mills called this approach to understanding reality the *sociological imagination*, which we will use throughout this course.[1]

[1] C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 226.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. conduct issue development
2. build power
3. implement various strategies and tactics
4. conduct research (historical analysis, power map, target analysis)
5. work with the media
6. perform campaign implementation and evaluation plans

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

Scott Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE! A Student Guide to Social Action,* ISBN: 9781138297296*,* ISBN: 9781612057279. The book is available at the Spartan Bookstore or on-line.

Other Readings

The other reading for the course is a reader. The articles in the reader are available at www.bonner.org/socialaction-docs.

Course Requirements

There are four course requirements. They include quizzes, a portfolio and log, participation, and a campaign presentation and binder.

8 Very Short Quizzes, Count 5 (20% of total grade)

The purpose of these very short quizzes (i.e., less than 5 minutes) is to encourage reading. In order to encourage reading, you will be given short quizzes throughout the semester. If you do the reading for each class, these short quizzes will be very easy to answer. I will count five quizzes toward your grade, so if you are feeling at all sick, please DO NOT come to class to take the quiz.

Portfolio and Log (40% of total grade)

At the university, you generally demonstrate that you understand the ideas from the course in an exam. This class is different. In this class, portfolios take the place of exams. Importantly, the portfolio is where you demonstrate your knowledge of the text in light of your social action experiences. Therefore, you must integrate the text with your community work throughout each portfolio. With no integration of text, you cannot receive above a C on your portfolio. You can talk to your teammates but all of the portfolios will be your own work.

In addition, you will most likely not receive higher than a C on your overall portfolio grade if you do not complete at least 25 hours of social action work (1.5 to 2 hours a week). Please use the log at this website (www.bonner.org/socialaction-docs) to keep track of your community work, and then turn it in with the portfolios. Your portfolio and log will be collected every three to four weeks. Late portfolios will be accepted, but 1/3 grade will be deducted for each class day it is late. **Also, I don't accept emailed papers**, but you can email me your late portfolio to stop the "late clock", and then bring in a hard copy to the next class.

Participation (20% of total grade)

The purpose of evaluating your participation is to encourage and reward students who prepare for, and engage in, the habits of the mind. Thus, you will be evaluated on the extent and quality of your participation in the class. Your classroom participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

Excellence (A) requires that you play a leadership role in the large class discussion and your team, apply the text, discuss points articulately and respond intelligently to other's views; ask insightful questions, and take responsibility for the direction of the class discussion and your team.

Above average (B) requires that you participate regularly in the large class discussion and your team, demonstrate good knowledge of the text, discuss points articulately and respond intelligently to other's views; ask insightful questions, but you do not take a strong leadership role in the overall class discussion and the direction of your team.

Average (C) requires that you follow the discussion in the large class and your team, make occasional comments, have a basic knowledge of the text, and sometimes ask questions in the large group and team.

Below average (D) requires that you occupy a seat and occasionally show signs of life.

Failure (F) requires that you occupy a seat but show no signs of life.

At the end of the course, you will be asked to evaluate your level of participation, as well as your teammates. This evaluation will be taken seriously when participation grades are determined.

Campaign Presentation and Binder (20% of total grade)

For the final exam, students give a group presentation on your social action campaign. In addition, your group will turn in a campaign binder, which will be evaluated. The binder will be used by future students when they choose their campaigns.

Grading Scale

Since the various parts of the course add up to 100%, each percent equals a point. For example, your participation is 20% of your grade; thus, this assignment is worth 20 points. The scale that I use to measure your work is the following:

98-100=A+	88-89=B+	78-79=C+	68-69=D+	59 & below =F
93-97=A	83-87=B	73-77=C	63-67=D	
90-92=A-	80-82=B-	70-72=C-	60-62=D-	

Extra Credit

There will also be other extra credit opportunities for attending campus events having to do with social action. To receive the extra credit, you need to go to the campus event, and then a 1-single spaced reflection paper (about 3-4 paragraphs): (1) describing what you saw and heard (i.e., the major points and key lessons of the event), and (2) integrating your insights with the reading from Soci. 164: Social Action. To receive full credit, the extra credit must be turned in one week after the event.

Classroom Protocol

1. *Cell Phones and Computers:* Anytime we are in the large group, please DO NOT use your cell phone. If you need to answer a text, please step outside and do so. In addition, any type of social networking on your computer is NOT allowed. If you use your computer to take notes or to do the reading, DO NOT have it open to Facebook, Gmail, etc. However, when we break into small groups, you will be able to use your cell phone and computer to look up information.

2. *Office Hours:* Office hours are generally used to help clarify information from lectures, discussions, group activities, readings, or social action campaign. I highly encourage you to come to my office hours!

3. *Late Papers:* The late policy for any work is a 1/3 drop in grade for each school day that it is late. Thus, if the portfolio is due on Tuesday, and you turn it in on Thursday, your grade will be dropped by 2/3s (i.e., a grade of B would be a C+).

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 *(http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf)*, relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/

Academic Integrity Policy

According to the University's Academic Integrity Policy, cheating is "the act of obtaining credit, attempting to obtain credit, or assisting others to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means, while plagiarism is "the act of representing the work of another as one's own without giving appropriate credit, regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. The university's Academic Integrity Policy is available at: https://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/SJSU-Academic-Integrity-Policy-F15-7.pdf . If I determine there has been a violation of this policy, students will receive an automatic F for the paper. In addition, I may file a report with the Academic Affairs Judicial Officer regarding the violation of the academic integrity policy.

Course Schedule, Soci. 164: Social Action / Spring, 2023

WEEK 1:

1/26 DISCUSS SOCIAL ACTION CLASS (i.e., SYLLABUS AND LOG)

Reader: Myers-Lipton, 2022 Silicon Valley Pain Index

1/31 ISSUE DEVELOPMENT

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!,* Student Victories (XI-XII), Preface (XIII-XVII), & Ch. 1, p 1-6

Reader: Myers-Lipton, 2021 Silicon Valley Pain Index
Student Reflection: Josh Barousse, Class of '08

WEEK 2:

2/2 ISSUE DEVELOPMENT

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!,* p. 7-19, Message to Teachers (XIX-XXIII)

Reader: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE! A Guide to Teaching Social Action*, Ch. 1, Section A & B
Myers-Lipton, 2020 Silicon Valley Pain Index

Video: "Walk the Walk" (first 15 minutes*)*

Portfolio 1: Assigned

2/7 SETTING THE TONE

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!,* Ch. 2, p. 21-28

Reader: Plato, "Allegory of the Cave"

*Video: "*Walk the Walk" (2nd 15 minutes)

Portfolio 2: Assigned

WEEK 3:

2/9 CHANGE THEORY – Part 1

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!,* Ch. 3, p. 31-38

Reader: Student Reflection: Rochelle Jackson-Smarr, Class of '08

Video: Jo Ann Robinson
Zoom Speaker: Rochelle Jackson-Smarr

2/14 CHANGE THEORY – Part 2

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!,* Ch. 3, p. 38-48

Reader: Myers-Lipton, "Students for DMH and the Fight for Air Conditioning"
Lowman, "Students Get Heated Over Building Conditions"

Video: Saul Alinsky & Faint-In from the Students for DMH

Portfolio 3: Assigned

WEEK 4:

2/16 BUILDING POWER – Part 1

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!,* Ch. 4, p. 51-59

Reader: Myers-Lipton, "Chicano Commencement"

2/21 BUILDING POWER – Part 2

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!,* Ch. 4, p. 60-68

Reader: Student Reflection: David Salinas, Class of '19

Portfolio 4: Assigned

WEEK 5:

2/23 WALKING TOUR -- SJSU SOCIAL ACTION HISTORY

Reader: Myers-Lipton: Edwin Markham, "The Man with the Hoe and Tower Hall"
Myers-Lipton: "Japanese American Internment at Men's Gym
Notice: Headquarters Western Defense Command
Seib, "Uchida Hall was Once a Transfer Point…" (bottom of page 1, Spartan Daily)
Thompson, email
Baca, "The Arch of Dignity, Equality, and Justice" (click on 4 boxes)
Myers-Lipton: "Gaylord Nelson's Earth Day & Burying of a New Ford Maverick"
Myers-Lipton, "Tommy Smith, John Carlos, and the Statues"
Walker, "It is Finished"

DUE: Portfolio 1-3 and Social Action Log

2/28 RESEARCH (start organizational raps; one org rap each class from now on)

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!,* Ch. 5, p. 71-82

Reader: Student Reflection: Leila McCabe, Class of '12

Portfolio 5: Assigned

***WEEK 6*:**

3/2 GROUP DYNAMICS: How is your team working?

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!,* Ch. 8, p. 129-141

Reader: Rodriguez, "A More Balanced Playing Field…",
AS, SJSU, Board of Directors' Resolution,
Student Reflection: Lucila Ortiz, Class of '10

Zoom Speaker: Lucila Ortiz

Portfolio 6: Assigned

3/7 PERSONAL HOLIDAY

WEEK 7:

3/9 STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!*, Ch. 6, 87-96

Video: Student Homeless Alliance

3/14 STRATEGY AND TACTICS (Part 1)

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!*, Ch. 6, 96-102

Reader: Franco, "Students Declare Housing Crisis"
Mehta, "No Deal"
DeRuy, "SJSU Students Blast University Leaders for Handing of Housing Crisis"
Trujano, "SJSU's New Housing Solutions"
Student Reflection: Mayra Bernabe, Class of '19

Zoom Speaker: Mayra Bernabe

WEEK 8:

3/16 STRATEGY AND TACTICS (Part 2)

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!,* Ch. 6, 103-108

Reader: Rey, "Campus Safety: A Reason to be Worried?"
Bradley, "Campus Safety and Statues Garden"
Clark, "Escort Program to Expand Its Boundaries of Transportation"
CMS Info, "Students Auto-Enrolled in Alert-SJSU"
Student Reflection, Natasha Bradley, Class of '11

Portfolio 7: Assigned

3/21 CAMPAIGN KICKOFF (part 1)

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!*, Ch. 7, p. 111-120

Reader: Myers-Lipton, "Donald Williams Jr. and Students 4 Racial Equality"
Murphy, "San Jose State Donor's Alleged Remarks about Latinos Investigated"
O'Connor, "University's Officials Step Down After Anti-Latina Comments"
Hernandez, "Sit-in for Racial Justice: Students Ask for Apology from President"
Murphy, "SJSU Donor Did Makes Offensive Remarks about Latinos, Investigation Confirms"
Student Reflection: Estelia Velasquez, Class of '16

Video: SJSU Students Denounce Board Member's Alleged Racist Statement

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WEEK 9:

3/23 CAMPAIGN KICKOFF (part 2)

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!*, Ch. 7, p. 120-126

Reader: How to Get Press to your Event
Ewing, "Anti-Sweatshop Groups Gain Steam"
Morgan, "Groups Rally for WRC Support
AS University Affairs Meeting
Parker, "SJSU Signs with Labor Rights Group"
Student Reflection: Austin Gieger, Class of '08
Student Reflection: Darcie Kiyan, Class of '07
Yap, "Labor Rights Violations Suspected"
Videos: United Students Against Sweatshops and GCCWP

Portfolio 8: Assigned

3/27-31: SPRING BREAK!

WEEK 10:

4/4 CAMPAIGN PLAN

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE!*, Ch. 9, p. 143-150

Portfolio 9: Assigned

4/6 CAMPAIGN FRAME: UN DECLARATION of HUMAN RIGHTS and 2ND BILL of RIGHTS

Reader: UN Declaration of Human Rights
Myers-Lipton, "Prologue": An Economic Bill of Rights"

Video: FDRs 2nd Bill of Rights

DUE: Portfolio 4-7 and Social Action Log

WEEK 11:

4/11 RIGHT TO A JOB / GULF COAST CIVIC WORKS PROJECT (2006-2010)

Reader: Myers-Lipton, "The Right to a Job"
Diroy, "Louisiana Winter Project Seeks National Awareness for Gulf Coast"
Goldston, "Forgotten in Louisiana"
GCCWP Website (click around, make sure to view Summit Agenda)
Lieurance, "Students to March for Katrina Anniversary"
ACT letter to President-elect Obama
Tilove, "Unlikely Allies Back House bill for Gulf Coast Jobs"

Video: Fox News Coverage of Louisiana Winter 2007

4/13 RIGHT TO A LIVING WAGE / RAISE THE WAGE, SAN JOSE (2010-2012)

Reader: Myers-Lipton, "The Right to a Living Wage"
Myers-Lipton, "Raise the Wage in San Jose"
Noguchi, "Measure Sets Sights on Wage Increase"
SJ Mercury News, Readers' Letters
SJ Mercury News, Internal Affairs
Seipel, "Minimum-wage Hike Measure Heads to Ballot"
Guevera & Krenak, "Higher Min Wage in SJ Will Help"
Mendoza, "Student Class Project Leads to Minimum Wage Jump"
Mungia, "Students Push for Faster Wager Increases"
Student Reflection: Elisha St. Laurent, Class of '12

Speaker: Elisha St. Laurent

WEEK 12:

4/18 Group Work

4/20 RIGHT TO A GOOD EDUCATION / RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EOP (2011)

Reader: Myers-Lipton, "The Right to A Good Education"
Myers-Lipton, "Re-Establishment of Equal Opportunity Program (EOP)
Student Reflection: Chis Temblador, Class of '11, "Students for EOP"
Patterson, "Many March to Celebrate Black History Month…"
Lanham, "Protest Yields Support for Student Equality" (bottom of Spartan Daily, p. 1)

WEEK 13:

4/25 RIGHT TO DECENT HOUSING / STUDENT HOMELESS ALLIANCE (1992-present)

Reader: Myers-Lipton, "The Right to a Decent Home"
Myers-Lipton, "National Hunger and Homeless Awareness Month"
Myers-Lipton, "Student Homeless Alliance and the Push for Emergency Beds on Campus"
Jimenez, "Students Demand SJSU Fix Homeless Response, Provide Emergency Shelter"

4/27 U.S. CASE STUDY: ACT-UP (1990)

Reader: DeParle, "Rage, Rash, Effective, Act-Up Shifts Aids Policy"
Myers-Lipton, "Graduate Schools for Social Action"

Video: United in Anger (from 0-4:22 minutes, and 21-34 minutes)

WEEK 13:

5/2 CASE STUDY: OCCUPY WALL STREET (2011)

Reader: Hammond, "Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street"
Declaration of the Occupation of New York City
Kina, Prichard, and Swann, "Anarchy in the USA: 5 Years on and the Legacy of Occupy…"

Video on Occupy: "Consensus: Direct Democracy at Occupy Wall Street"

5/4 U.S. CASE STUDY: BLACK LIVES MATTER (2013 - present)

Reader: Lowery, "Black Lives Matter: Birth of a Movement"
Belton, "Leaderless or Leader-ful?"

WEEK 14:

5/9 HERO's and SHERO's JOURNEY

Book: Myers-Lipton, *CHANGE*!, Ch. 11, p. 157-163

Reader: Myers-Lipton, "Dr. King's Legacy for Today"

Video: The Matrix: Not Quite Fitting in, The Call, & Blue or Red Pill

Portfolio 10: Assigned

5/11 U.S. CASE STUDY: SUNRISE MOVEMENT (2018 - present)

Reader: Witt, "The Optimistic Activists for a Green New Deal"

Video: Inside the Sunrise Movement

DUE: Portfolio 8-10 and Social Action Log

Extra Credit: 5-6:30 pm on Zoom, National College Summit on Social Action

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5/18 FINAL: CAMPAIGN PRESENTATION & BINDER
9:45 am-12 noon
