COURSE DESCRIPTION
According to the course catalog, Social Action 164 will analyze, “The tactics and strategies of social action. Topics may include applying social action to the local community, studying current and past U.S. and international social action organizations, or examining theories of social movements.”

Over the past eight years, this course has examined the tactics and strategies of current and past U.S. social action organizations; however, this year, we will focus primarily on past SJSU social action campaigns (e.g., Smith & Carlos’s Olympic protest and Chicano Graduation), as well as previous Soci. 164 social action projects. I have made this change because I have come to believe that one of the greatest factors preventing social change is that many people, including students, do not believe—in their heart of hearts—that they can change the social order (i.e., the way things are).

In order to begin to believe, and to learn how to do social change well, we will explore the basics of community organizing, as well as the tactics and strategies of successful Soci. 164 social action campaigns. Excitingly, you will have the opportunity to hear from previous Soci. 164 students, as they have written down their reflections about their social action projects. In addition, many of them will return to SJSU in order to speak with you.

As you will learn, students in this course have created both organizations and change, including:

- In 2006, the Student Homeless Alliance developed Poverty Under the Stars, which is now in its 8th year.
- In 2006-2009, the Gulf Coast Civic Works Project created two federal bills, had them introduced into Congress, and then lead a coalition of 200 organization to enact the bills;
- In 2007, Students Against Sweatshops got the President to sign an executive order creating a sweatshop-free campus;
- In 2008, Students for EOP led the successful campaign, along with faculty (Dr. Alaniz and others) to re-instate the SJSU Education Opportunity Program (EOP);
- In 2010, provided critical leadership to Collective Voices for Undocumented Students, which won the campaign to allow AB 540 (undocumented) students to use computers from Clark Hall and to receive certain SJSU scholarships;
- In 2011, Students for Campus Safety won two of their demands: (1) to have an opt out system rather than an opt-in system for SJSU Action Alerts, (2) to extend the SJSU shuttle service to six blocks off the campus;
- In 2010-2012, the Campus Alliance for Economic Justice (CAFÉ J) initiated and led the San Jose Measure D campaign, which won 60% to 40% in the November 2012 election, which raised the minimum wage from $8 to $10 an hour.

What is unique about this course is that it is designed to actually do social action. Instead of just reading about it in a book, you will learn about how to bring about social change by doing it. Of course, we will still use “book knowledge,” but my hope is that this knowledge will be
challenged by your social actions, and that you will develop a more critical and deeper understanding of public issues and community change by integrating praxis with theory. Thus, this course is an action-oriented, solutions-based, course on community activism. More specifically, this class will explore various aspects of community organizing, such as issue development, target analysis, strategy and tactics, campaign implementation, leadership development, building an organization, and evaluation.

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 46 million people in poverty (like in the United States), 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*. Get ready—we will be using our sociological imagination throughout this course.

**SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS**

All students will be involved in social action. This will require a minimum of two hours per week of community work. Of course, if you want to do more, that is great. In fact, I can give you an extra one to three units of course credit (Soci. 181) for additional community work. Please come see me if you are interested in this additional course credit.

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 community projects, so you will be able to do some of your organizing in class. During the second class, you will brainstorm various social action projects, and then select one to work on. The requirements for the project are: (a) that you have a minimum of three students on your team, (b) you have passion for the issue, and (c) your project tries to change some type of policy. We will discuss more about this on the 2nd day of class.

**READING**

The books for this course are *Tools for Radical Democracy* by Joan Minieri and Paul Getsos and a reader. The book is available at Spartan Bookstore, and the reader is available at San Jose Copy (408-297-6698), which is located on 11 S. 3rd Street (near the corner of Santa Clara Street and 3rd Street). Please bring the book and reader to class, as we will be discussing the readings during every Tuesday and Thursday.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

There are four course requirements for Sociology 164. They include a portfolio, quizzes, participation, and an open-book final exam.

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**Portfolio (50%)**
Students will keep a portfolio of the weekly assignments. Importantly, the portfolio is where you demonstrate your knowledge of the text and you are integrating with your experiences surrounding social action. Therefore, you must integrate the text throughout each portfolio.

With no integration of text, you cannot get above a D. In this class, portfolios take the place of exams. Generally, you demonstrate that you understand the main ideas from the readings in an exam. However, in this course, you will demonstrate your knowledge of the reading in your portfolio.

Your portfolio will be collected about every three weeks. Late portfolios will be accepted for one week after the due date, but 1/3 grade will be deducted for each school date it is late. Thus, if the portfolio is due on Tuesday, and you turn it in on Thursday, your grade will be reduced by 2/3s (i.e., a grade of B- would be a C). Please buy a very thin folder to place all of your portfolio work.

**Four Very Short Quizzes (4% each / 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 the reading process, you will be given short quizzes throughout the semester. Actually, you will take five quizzes and the lowest one will be dropped. If you do the reading for each class, these short quizzes will be very easy to answer.

**Participation (20%)**
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 general 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 apply 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, make occasional comments, have a basic knowledge of the text, and sometimes ask questions in the large group and your 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.

**Final Exam Essay (10%)**
The final exam will consist of an in-class, open-book essay exploring my 3rd book, which is entitled *Solving Poverty and Economic Inequality: An Economic Bill of Rights Approach.*
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:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-97</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-77</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-67</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59 &amp; below</td>
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EXTRA CREDIT
There will also be extra credit opportunities throughout the semester (see reading schedule). To receive the extra credit, you need to attend the campus or community event that I have assigned, and then write a 3-4 paragraph reflection paper on how the event is connected to this course. Depending on the quality of the extra credit paper, you will receive +1 to +3 points to be added to a quiz.

SJSU WRITING CENTER
The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall in Room 126. Please take advantage of this resource. The Writing Center website is: http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter.

FACULTY WEB PAGE
You can download a copy of the syllabus at my faculty web page, which is at: http://www.sjsu.edu/people/scott.myers-lipton. You can also get to my web page at the SJSU home page and go to More Quick Links>Faculty Pages link.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY
According to the University’s Academic Integrity Policy, “cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means” (see Section 1.1.1 through 1.1.7), 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/or submitting it to fulfill academic requirements” (see Section 1.2.1 and 1.2.2). The university’s Academic Integrity Policy is available at: http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf.

If I determine there has been a violation of this policy, students will receive an automatic zero for the paper. In addition, I will file a report with the Academic Affairs Judicial Officer regarding the violation of the academic integrity policy. (Please note: I often checks papers on the web!) To learn more about student conduct and ethical development, go to http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

CAMPUS POLICY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT
Sociology 164 complies with campus policy regarding the American Disabilities Act. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability (e.g., if you need a note taker, you need to view the course readings on a screen, or you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated), please contact me as soon as possible. In addition, if your disability Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that a student with a disability register at SJSU’s Disability Resource Center (DRC, Admin 110, 924-6000) to establish a record of that disability.
OTHER INFORMATION

1. Cell Phones and Computers:
Cell phones and texting are BANNED from my classroom. If you are texting in class (on your lap counts), I will give one verbal warning, take your name down, and then the next time you are texting, I will ask you to leave the class. You are free to return the following class, of course, without the cell phone. To avoid confusion, please do not take notes with your phone.

I have also BANNED any type of networking on the computer. If you use your computer, and it is open to facebook, Gmail, etc, I will give you one warning, and then ask you to leave the class if it occurs again.

2. Office Hours:
My office hours are on Monday and Wednesday. Office hours are generally used to help clarify information from lectures, discussions, group activities, readings, essays, or social action projects. However, at least once this semester, you should come by my office so that I can get to know you better on a personal basis.

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 paper 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+). I will still accept a paper five school days late (or one week). After one week, I will not accept the paper, and a zero will be recorded for the assignment.

4. Strongly Recommended for Students in Community Change Concentration:
This class is strongly recommended for students in the Sociology Department’s Community Change Concentration (CCC), and is recommended for anyone interested in being an engaged, democratic citizen. The prerequisite is Soc. 1 or equivalent; the professor also has discretion.