

Alternative Models for Social Change Winter 2026 (Olympia) Draft Syllabus

CRN: GR 20197

Credits: 4

Days & Times*:** Friday January 16, 6-8:50p, Saturday January 17, 1-4:30p, Sunday January 18, 1-4:30p; Friday February 6, 6-8:50p, Saturday February 7, 1-4:30p, Sunday February 8, 1-4:30p

Location: SEM 2 E3107 on Olympia campus

Faculty: Wenhong Wang, Ph.D. wangw@evergreen.edu

***** Please reserve the entire two weekends for class related work.**

Master of Public Administration Mission Statement:

Our students, faculty and staff create learning communities to explore and implement socially just, democratic public service. We think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, work collaboratively, embrace diversity, value fairness and equity, advocate powerfully on behalf of the public, and imagine new possibilities in order to accomplish positive change in our workplace and in our communities.

Course description:

In face of the overwhelming wicked problems surrounding us, besides the efforts of reforming the current organizations, people ask, “what else can WE do?”

In this 4-credit intensive weekend class, we are going to study samples of alternative social and economic models that fall under the umbrella of solidarity economy centering on social solidarity, democratic governance, cooperation, and community-based development. Topics we are going to study include the history and characteristics of solidarity economy, the workings of different examples with a focus on cooperatives and mutual aid movement and their successes, challenges, and policy implications. The students will explore the fundamental differences between these alternative models and mainstream organization. As a final project, they have the opportunity to research or design an alternative system of their choosing.

Learning objectives:

By the end of this class, students will be able to

1. Articulate the theory and major practices of current solidarity economy;

2. Understand the role of alternative models in addressing social problems and advancing social good;
3. Analyze the advantages and challenges of alternative models;
4. Begin to develop non-conventional mindset and skills to find alternate ways for problem solving

Texts:

Gordon-Nembhard, Jessica. (2014). *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice*. ISBN: 978-0-271-06217-4. (Available as an E-book at [Evergreen library website](#))

Benner, Chris & Pastor, Manuel. (2012). *Solidarity Economics: Why Mutuality and Movements Matter 1st Ed*. ISBN: 978-0226641669. (open access E-book available [here](#))

Spade, Dean. (2020). *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (And the Next)*. ISBN: 978-1839762123. (Available as an E-book at [Evergreen library website](#))

We are also going to read other selected book chapters and watch videos to be posted on Canvas.

Course expectations and credit:

****** All your written work should be submitted to Canvas, typed in Times New Roman font, 12 points, double-spaced, using APA citation style.** To learn APA Style, check American Psychological Association website: <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/index.aspx> or Purdue Writing & Grammar Guide <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>. Check for grammatical and spelling mistakes before turning in your work. If needed, students are encouraged to work with Graduate Writing Assistant.

You will be evaluated in this course based on your progress in meeting the course objectives described above, as assessed by the following assignments and requirements. **You will be awarded 4 credits in health policy in social context upon meeting all the requirements of the course.** To earn full credit for the course, students must satisfactorily meet all the following requirements:

1. **Participation, preparatory work, assignments and discussion:** Students must attend all the class sessions, and come fully prepared having finished readings and other preparatory work. Students should actively participate in class discussion and other activities. As members of the learning community, your participation is essential for the learning of the entire class besides your own. If you are unable to attend class,

please discuss this with faculty in advance to find a way to make up the work. **Students will finish a seminar preparation on Kawano; chapter 1 & 2 of Benner & Pastor (pp.1-66), by Thursday, January 15.** See Calendar on page 4 for instructions. Preparatory work will be assigned before the second intensive weekend meetings starting on February 6. On selected evenings of the weekend meetings, students will be required to submit seminar preparatory work before class and respond to two peers' seminar posts after class. See calendar at the end of the syllabus for details. **To help faculty have a better understanding of the students' interests and learning needs, students will turn in an Intake Form by Saturday, January 10, 2026, on Canvas.**

- 2. Final synthesis paper:** After the weekend class meetings, students will write a 1,500 – 3,000 word (5 to 10 –page) paper reflecting on your learning in this class. This paper is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your critical thinking skills, analytical writing skills and the ability to ask meaningful questions to take your learning to the next level. In this paper you will elaborate on a major theme or key concept that has been covered in the course. Your essay will integrate course readings, videos, discussions, assignments. **The final synthesis paper is due on Saturday, February 28, 2026. Depending on students' background and interest, students are also very welcome to demonstrate their learning in this course working on other types of projects such as designing an alternative model. Consult with faculty for options and requirements of the assignment.**

***** Late assignments:** Turning in assignments late is unacceptable. However, if there is an unavoidable need to turn in an assignment late, the student should contact the faculty no later than the original assignment due date to discuss options.

Evaluation: A written self-evaluation and faculty evaluation are required for credit. All final evaluations are to be submitted via my.evergreen.edu. An evaluation conference will be held at the end of the class.

Academic integrity: Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own) may result in total loss of credit for the class and may result in dismissal from the MPA program. See the MPA Handbook and College statement on academic honesty for more information.

Multiculturalism and diversity: Faculty and students will actively work towards contextually weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning as related to readings, lectures, workshops, seminar, and other class activities. In a learning community students and faculty share the responsibility for the teaching and learning environment. Multiculturalism and diversity is to be understood as: aiming to promote constructive community discourse about issues of culture, power, and differences including but not limited to race, ethnicity, color, nationality, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, class, sexual orientation, age, religion, (dis)ability, and veteran status.

Accessibility:

If you are a student with disability who would benefit from support or services to ensure full access to this course, please contact Access Services at 360-867-6348 or accessservices@evergreen.edu as soon

as possible and get in contact with faculty for possible accommodation. For more information, please visit the Access Services website at <https://www.evergreen.edu/access>.

Conduct and conflict resolution: Discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved (so long as the concerned party feels safe doing so). Respect for others is fundamental to an open, free, and educational dialogue. All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom and learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. All students will be held accountable for maintaining the highest of academic standards. We will abide by the social contract: WAC 174-121-010 College philosophy. We will abide by the student conduct code (including academic integrity and plagiarism): Chapter 174-123 WAC, Student Conduct Code & Grievance/Appeals Process. We will abide by the non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC.

Guest policy: Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during class time with discretionary approval from course faculty in advance of the requested visit. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and await approval. Guests must abide by all social contract conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this syllabus.

Unexpected class cancellation or delay:

If class is cancelled or delayed, a message will be posted on our course Canvas site as soon as possible.