Organizational, Community, and Societal Structures and Processes

Course Description
This course examines theory and research knowledge about political economic and societal structures and process related to communities, groups and organizations within contemporary society. Consideration is given to ways in which these social systems have significant social, political, economic, and psychological impacts on the functioning of individuals, families and social groups. The course provides a framework for understanding the influences of medium to large social systems on individuals, families and groups with whom social workers practice. This course will also introduce students to the curricular themes and PODS concepts (i.e. Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice) that are infused in the advanced practice areas. There is a focus on oppression, discrimination, prejudice and privilege and their relationship to social and economic justice for populations served by social workers. This knowledge is considered within a context of social work values and ethics that support the general welfare of all citizens, especially the disadvantaged and oppressed.

Course Content
The course uses the central social work values of social justice, multiculturalism, empowerment to generate a framework for the critical examination of theoretical perspectives of organizational, community, societal, and global structures and processes. The key theoretical foundations that will be discussed include theories of poverty, inequality, racism, social change and social justice, theories of political economy and communities, and organizational theory. In examining these theoretical foundations, students will explore the intersectionality of the diverse dimensions [e.g. ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation], and how this intersectionality plays out in discrimination, oppression, and privilege.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Identify, describe, and critique selected theoretical perspectives on organizational, community, and societal structures and processes.

2. Describe and analyze how community and societal structures and processes impact the client groups served by social agencies.
3. Describe how (PODS) privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice are manifested in the structures and processes of society, communities, and complex organizations.

4. Analyze how the intersections of the diverse dimensions impact their own life experiences, their relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and their relationships with agency clientele and community groups.

5. Identify major processes and contemporary manifestations of oppression, discrimination, prejudice, power and privilege as they impact on populations-at-risk and vulnerable and oppressed groups by:
   a) Describing barriers to organizational and community competence;
   b) Identifying sources of intragroup and intergroup conflict stemming from cultural group membership;
   c) Identifying the role of risk and protective social factors in relation to social problems and social/economic justice.

6. Apply professional values and ethics by:
   a) Distinguishing differences among culturally sensitive, culturally competent, multicultural, and ethnoconscious frameworks in social work;
   b) Critically evaluating organizations, community, and societal structures and processes that seek to promote social and economic justice.

**Relationship of the Course to the MSW Curriculum**

This course is part of the HBSE (Human Behavior and Social Environment) component of the foundation, generalist component of the curriculum. As such, it focuses on the “macro” knowledge base for social work practice in all methods and fields, emphasizing mid to larger size systems. It draws from some areas of psychology, but more from sociology, political science, and anthropology, with some economics and history. The course will emphasize what evidence is available to support particular perspectives and theories and will analyze the strengths and limitations of each. A major goal is to develop the capacity to think, plan, problem-solve, and create change at larger systems levels, and to understand how larger systems affect individuals, families, and groups.

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes**

**Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity:** will be addressed through presentation of theory and research about oppressed and at-risk populations, and the impact that community, organizational and societal functioning has on the well-being of these groups.

**Theme Relation to Social Justice:** will be covered in the empirical and theoretical literature that document socially just organizational, community, and societal structures and processes. Social change theories and strategies will be presented that demonstrate how we move toward a more socially just society.
Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation: will be addressed through presentation of theory and research about oppressed and at-risk populations, and the impact that community, organizational and societal functioning has on the well-being of these groups.

Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research: will be reflected in the organizational, community, and societal theories that are presented in order to analyze the impact that the social environment has on individuals, families and groups.

Relationship to SW Ethics and Values: This course will address ethical and value issues related to working with organizations, communities, and societal structures and processes. The NASW Code of Ethics and other professional codes will be used to inform practice in this area. Examples of ethical and value related issues will include: the social worker's responsibility to promote the general welfare of society by preventing and eliminating discrimination, ensuring equal access to resources, expanding choices and opportunities for all persons, encouraging respect for diversity, advocating for changes in social policies, and encouraging informed participation by the public. In addition, issues related to organizations will be covered, such as preventing discrimination in the workplace, improving agency policies and procedures, and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations.

Faculty Approval: 11/8/2006

Accommodations

Any Student who has a disability or condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please feel free to contact me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at: G664 Haven Hall, (734) 763-3000.

Required Reading

The following books are required for the course. The textbooks are available for purchase at Ulrich’s bookstore on S. University or through Internet distributors. Other readings (articles and other book chapters) will be available electronically through our Ctools site or in a Coursepack (labeled as CP) available from Excel (also on S. University). You can assume that all articles are on the Ctools site unless stated otherwise.


**Course Assignments, Requirements, and Grading**

10% of your grade will be based on class participation – showing up for class is very important as is participation in a number of in-class/out-of-class group and individual activities.

Everyone will be assigned a specific date on which she/he will co-lead a half-hour discussion/experience/activity of the readings for that particular class date. The group will be responsible for jointly developing 3-5 discussion questions (which should be made available to the class) and for facilitating the actual discussion. This activity will not be formally graded, but will be considered as part of your class participation grade. If it is possible to find a fictional or non-fictional video/movie clip (of no longer than 7 minutes) which illustrates and/or illuminates some of the material in the readings, please feel free to include this video in your presentation.

For Class 10 and 12 (on Nov. 17 and Dec. 1), I would like the presenters to focus on the assigned chapters from David Bornstein’s *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*. For Class 11 (on Nov. 24), I would like the presenters to specifically integrate the concepts from *Leadership and Self-Deception* (in the Resource Section) into the presentation.

Your presentation should have specific learning objectives that include:
- a. “terms” (actual terms from the readings);
- b. “facts” (important facts you feel the class should remember); and
- c. “principles of practice” actual practice principles revealed in the readings.

There will be three (3) written papers for the course. Each paper is worth 30% of your course grade. The requirements for each paper will be explained in detail at least 3 weeks prior to the due date. If you have a creative idea for one of the papers, please come up with a 1-2 paragraph proposal which explains your idea AND explains how your idea will address/embrace the basic premises of the assignment. This kind of creativity is welcome! Papers will be marked down 5% for every day late. A paper is late after 8:10AM on the day it is due. The papers will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
- Systematic and logical presentation of arguments;
- Appropriate use of evidence;
- Familiarity with and appropriate use of relevant literature and concepts;
- Clarity and coherence of presentation;
• Originality and creativity;
• Conformity with the requirements of the assignment

I am not interested or impressed by lengthy papers that exceed the page limit or meet the page limit exactly. In many instances, the conciseness of a paper indicates that it has been well organized and well contemplated.

If you are unhappy with your grade, you can turn in a rewrite of Papers 1 & 2 no later than 1 week after it is returned to you. All changes should be highlighted and you should also turn in a copy of your original paper. Paper 3 cannot be rewritten.

**Assignment 1 – Examination of self in relation to the macro world. – Due Oct. 11**

This assignment asks you to examine yourself and your background in relation to the macro world and the material in this course. Details will be provided in class.

**Assignment 2 – Multicultural Conceptions of Community – Due November 16**

This assignment utilizes literary and social science sources to examine different perspectives on the nature of community. Each student will select a novel (or anthology of short stories) that explores the role of community in the lives of individuals, families, and groups. The assignment will require students to compare and contrast the conception of community presented in the novel with their own perspective(s) on community in the context of a theoretical perspective on community drawn from the course readings. A list of potential readings will be distributed in class. Students may also suggest additional titles. **Note: Students must select a book that describes a racial, ethnic, or cultural group different from themselves.** Further details will be provided in class.

**Assignment 3 – Community/Organizational Theory and Change – Due Dec. 7**

This assignment requires students to explore the utility of a theoretical perspective on community or organizational change in the context of their field placement agencies. Details will be provided in class.

All assignments should be 5-8 double-spaced, typewritten pages (using a 12-point font). Sources used must be cited using the appropriate citation format. Note that two important criteria for the evaluation of each assignment are that its emphasis must be on analysis, and not merely description; and that the paper applies concepts and theories covered in class and required readings.

4 students will be allowed to substitute the 3rd paper with a “theater” performance-piece that is described in the Class 12 Outline. Roleplay scenarios will be developed by the whole class during Class 12. It will then be up to these 4 students to transform the work of their classmates into a viable and effective educational theater performance to be performed on the final day of class.
Class Schedule and Readings (CP = Reading in Coursepack)

The chapters and articles are to be read by the date under which they are listed in the Schedule. Example: On September 9, you need to come to class having read the first 4 chapters of Mullaly.

Class 1  September 6  Introduction to the Course
The Significance of Theory in Social Work

Readings:

- Change the World, Chapters 1, 2

Class 2  September 13  Paradigms and the Social Work vision/Values
Clarification/Theories of Change

Readings:

- Mullaly, Chapters 1-4

Paper 1 assigned

Class 3  September 20  Theories of Society and Social Welfare:
Analyzing Poverty

- Mullaly, Chapters 5-6

Change the World, Chpts. 4, 5, 6

Class 4  Sept. 27  A Theoretical Understanding of Community Practice

Readings:

- Change the World, Chapter 7, 8
Paper 2 Assigned

Class 5  October 4  Theories Underlying Community Change: Modern and Post-Modern Perspectives

Readings

- Payne, Chapter 1: the Construction of Social Work Theory
- How to Change the World, Chapter 3

Guest Lecture: Jim Toy from the Office of Institutional Equity on Community change-efforts and theory that underlies community change

Class 6  October 11  Theories Underlying Community Change: Empowerment and Feminist Perspectives

Reading:

- Payne, Chapter 11
- How to Change the World, Chapter 9

Student Presentation 1

Paper 1 Due

October 18  Winter Break

Class 7  October 25  Community Political Systems and Power:
Anti-Oppressive Social Work

- Mullaly, Chapter 7, “Feminist, Anti-Racist, and Postmodern Critique.”
- Johnson, Chapter 1, 2
- How to Change the World, Chapters 10, 11, 12
- Wilson, A., Bereford, P. Anti-Oppressive Practice: Emancipation or Appropriation, British Journal of Social Work, 2000

Student Presentation 2

Class 8       Nov. 1       Privilege, Power, and Difference: Post Modern And Multicultural Perspectives

Reading:
- Johnson, Chapters 3,4
- How to Change the World, Chapters 13, 14, 15

Student Presentation 3

Guest Lecture: Safehouse on Community organizing and how community conflict can be managed

Assign Paper 3

Class 9       November 8   Community Organizing on the Neighborhood Level/Resiliency Theory

Reading
- Breton, M., Neighborhood Resiliency, Journal of Community Practice, Vol. 9(1) 2001 by The Haworth Press, Inc]
- Johnson, Chapters 5, 6
Student Presentation 4

Class 10  Nov. 15  Theories of Organizations and Organizational Practice I

Reading:
- *How to Change the World*, Chapters 16 (very appropriate for this week as well), 17, 18
- Johnson, Chapter 7, 8

Student Presentation 5

PAPER 2 DUE

Class 11  November 22  Theories of Organizations and Organizational Practice II

Reading:
- Arbinger Institute, *Leadership and Self-Deception*, 1-48
- Nickel and Dimed, “Selling in Minnesota”
- Johnson, Chapter 9

Student Presentation 6

Class 12  Nov. 29  Organizational Development and Change: A Social Justice Perspective

Readings:
- *The Tipping Point*, Chapters 1,2,4
• Mullaly, Chapter 9, Working Within (and against) the System: Radical Humanism, 163-186.
• How to Change the World, Chapters 19, 20, 21
• Johnson, Ch. 10

**Student Presentation 7**

*Guest Lecture: Community Action Network on how diversity and multi-cultural sensitivity can be integrated into organizational structure*

**Class 13   December 6   Interorganizational Relations/Organizational Oppression/Contemporary Manifestations of Social Work Practice**

**Readings:**
• *(Accessible through Proquest Library Database)* T. Reitan, “Theories of Interorganizational Relations in the Human Services,” 285-309.
• Roche, S., Gold, G., A Narrative Principle for Feminist Social Work With Survivors of Male Violence, 2005; 20; 465 *Affilia*

**Student Presentation 8**

**Assignment 3 due**

**Class 14   December 13**