# 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, and 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 intra-group and inter-group 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 to Curricular Themes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiculturalism and Diversity:</th>
<th>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.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Social Justice:</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation:</td>
<td>Will be addressed through discussion of programs and systemic interventions to prevent stress and oppression of individuals, families, and groups and enhance their quality of life and well-being. The role of risk, resiliency, and preventive social factors will be discussed in relations to social problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavioral and Social Science Research:</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Work Ethics and Values:</td>
<td>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</td>
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preventing discrimination in the work place, improving agency policies and procedures, and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations.

ADDITIONAL COURSE DETAILS

### Required Texts

*Additional assigned readings will generally be available in PDF form on CTools.*

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you need an accommodation for a disability please let me know (in person or via email) as soon as possible. Many aspects of this course (the assignments, in-class activities, teaching methods, etc.) can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. I will make every effort to use the resources available to us to develop appropriate accommodations. If you disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities at G664 Haven Hall; 734-763-3000; http://www.umich.edu/sswd.

### Religious Observances
Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

### Cell Phones and Laptops
Cell phones should be turned off at the beginning of each class and stored appropriately; laptop use is to be confined to taking/making notes and referencing readings if you do not have a hard copy. If it becomes clear that students are checking e-mail, Facebook, or otherwise using technology in distracting and irrelevant ways, I reserve the right to modify the policy. Students requiring an exemption from these rules for any given class should discuss this with the instructor prior to the beginning of that class.

### Assignments and Grading
The overall grade for the course will be based on the following:

1. Written Community Analysis Project (20%)
2. Multi-media Group Presentation for Community Analysis (20%)
3. Organization Analysis (40%)
4. Self-reflection paper I (10%)
5. Self-reflection paper II (10%)
I follow the standard 100-point scale and letter distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>below 70</td>
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“A” is given for exceptional performance and mastering of the material
“B” is given to students who demonstrate mastery of the material
“C” is awarded when mastery of the material is minimal
“E” indicates failure and carries no credit

Attendance Policy and Participation
In-class activities and discussions comprise a large portion of the course, and everyone is required to attend and actively participate. Informative, lively, and thought-provoking discussions are only possible if everyone comes to class having read and thought about the assigned readings. Although attendance and participation are not explicitly included in the grade rubric, excessive absences, as determined by the instructor, may result in a reduction in grade or a failing grade, and will be brought to the attention of the student and the faculty advisor by the course instructor.

Late Policy
All assignments are to be completed by the date due. Exceptions will be granted with the permission of the instructor in advance of the due date for the assignment. Assignments submitted late without such permission will be downgraded.

Notes about Written Assignments
- I prefer that you submit a hard copy of all written assignments during the class in which they are due. If you are unable to attend class for any reason and have not made alternative arrangements in advance, you may email me the document as an attachment by the beginning of class (6:00 pm).
- All papers must be typewritten and double-spaced using a standard 12-point font and one inch margins.
- Students are to use APA citation format for each of the assignments. Each assignment needs to include appropriate attribution of authorship for paraphrases or ideas acquired from another source or appropriate citations, including page numbers, for direct quotes. The University of Michigan Library system has an on-line resource that can assist you in preparing proper citations for assignments using APA format ([http://www.lib.umich.edu/files/libraries/grad/apastyle6th_final.pdf](http://www.lib.umich.edu/files/libraries/grad/apastyle6th_final.pdf)).
- Plagiarism – not referencing words or ideas from another source – is a violation of academic integrity and will be grounds for failure on an assignment. For more information about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid committing it, visit: [http://www.lib.umich.edu/shapiro-undergraduate-library/academic-integrity-resources-students](http://www.lib.umich.edu/shapiro-undergraduate-library/academic-integrity-resources-students). Additionally, please review the MSW program student guide section on “Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct” (Chapter 12).
Writing quality is important. You may have brilliant ideas, but no one will know that if you cannot communicate them effectively in writing. Please read and re-read your work before turning it in. For further assistance with writing, the Sweetland Writing Center offers excellent resources and individual consultations (1310 North Quad; http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/; 734-764-0429).

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

**September 6**

*Introductions*

*Overview of the course*

**September 13**

*Different ways to think about the relationship between the individual, communities, and society*

*Trends in poverty and inequality in the United States*

  - Chapter 3: Private Lives and Public Connections
  - Chapter 2: Privilege, Oppression and Difference

*Recommended Reading:*

  - Chapter 2: Poverty Levels and Trends in Comparative Perspective (Meyer and Wallace)
  - Chapter 3: Economic Change and the Structure of Opportunity for Less-Skilled Workers (Blank)
  - Chapter 4: Family Structure, Childbearing, and Parental Employment: Implications for the Level and Trend in Poverty (Cancian and Reed)
  - Chapter 5: Immigration and Poverty in the United States (Raphael and Smolensky)

**September 20**

*Consequences of poverty and inequality*

*During class we will watch a video on the impact of poverty on early childhood development, found at http://www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/media_videos_home.html.*

**September 27**

*Causes of poverty and inequality, part I*

  - Chapter 5: The Politics of Poverty
  - Chapter 8: Politicizing Poverty
- Hurst (*Living Theory*), Chapter 7: The Polarization of Economic Resources

*Recommended Reading:*


*During class we will listen to the podcast “Piecing Together the Puzzle of Executive Pay” available at http://www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/media_audio_podcasts.html*

**October 4**

*Causes of poverty and inequality, part II*

  - Chapter 1: How Stratification Works

**Recommended Reading:**


**October 11**

*Competing social paradigms and how they relate to social work practice*

  - Chapter 2: The Social Work Vision: A Progressive View
  - Chapter 3: The Neo-Conservative Paradigm
  - Chapter 4: The Liberal and Neo-Liberal Paradigms
  - Chapter 5: The Social Democratic Paradigm
- Johnson, Chapter 3: Capitalism, Class, and the Matrix of Domination

**October 18**

*Fall break – NO CLASS!*
Enjoy the long weekend😊

**October 25**

*Communities, neighborhoods, and their importance in social work practice*

- How can we define communities and neighborhoods?
- What are the forces that impact neighborhoods and communities?
  - Demographic impacts
  - Patterns of residential segregation
  - What are poverty neighborhoods?
  - What happens to a community when work disappears?
  - Chapter 4: The Continuing Causes of Segregation.


  - Chapters 2 and 3.

**Recommended Reading:**


*During class we will listen to the podcast “A Home in Morningside” available at [http://thestory.org/archive/the_story_1089_Kelley_Marx.mp3/view](http://thestory.org/archive/the_story_1089_Kelley_Marx.mp3/view)*

**November 1**  
**Culture, structure, and oppression**  
- What is the relationship between culture and structure in poverty neighborhoods?  
- How do cultural categories influence the distribution of resources?  
- What is the relationship between culture and oppression?

**Culture and Structure**


  - Chapter 7: A Culture of Poverty?

**Culture and Oppression**


- Johnson, Chapter 4: Making Privilege Happen
November 8
Community social institutions
  - The role of institutions in building community and social capital
  - Community needs and human services

- Johnson, Chapter 5: The Trouble with the Trouble

**SELF-REFLECTION PAPER I DUE**

November 15
In-class presentations

**COMPARATIVE COMMUNITY ANALYSIS DUE**

November 22
Human service organizations
  - The idea of a formal organization
  - What are human service organizations?
  - Why are social work values and ethics important for organizational analysis?

  - Chapter 2: The attributes of human service organizations (Hasenfeld)
  - Chapter 3: Theoretical approaches to human service organizations (Garrow and Hasenfeld)

- Johnson, Chapter 6: What it All Has to Do with Us

November 29
Organizational ideologies
  - What are organizational ideologies?
  - Where do they come from?
  - How do they influence social work practice?
  - Chapter 6: Organizational forms as moral practices (Hasenfeld)
  - Chapter 11: Rape crisis centers: Helping victims, changing society (Martin)


Johnson, Chapter 7: How Systems of Privilege Work

Mullaly, Chapter 7: Feminist, Anti-Racist, and Postmodern Critiques

### December 6

*Policy and task environments*

- How do social policies affect human service organizations?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- How do human service organizations adapt to a complex environment?


  - Chapter 3: Organization-Environment Relations

  - Chapter 2

Johnson, Chapter 8: Getting Off the Hook: Denial and Resistance

### December 13

*Human service technologies*

- What are human service technologies?
- How does technology influence practices and worker-client relations?
- Worker client relations: power and social work practice

  - Chapter 13: Service technologies and the conditions of work in child welfare (Smith)
  - Chapter 15: Emotional labor in the human service organization (Guy et al)
  - Chapter 16: Human services as “race work”? Historical lessons and contemporary challenges of black providers (Watkins-Hayes)
  - Chapter 19: Worker-client relations: Social policy in practice (Hasenfeld)

Johnson, Chapter 9: What Can We Do?
ASSIGNMENT I: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TWO COMMUNITIES (40 points)
Due Tuesday, November 15

The assignment consists of an in-class presentation (20 points) and a paper (20 points). This project can be done in groups of no more than five. Each group member will receive the same grade for the project.

Select two neighborhoods or communities located within driving distance for you. One community should have a median income of no more than twice the poverty threshold for a family of four (about $40,000/year or less). The other community should have a median income of around $70,000/year or more for a family of four. The idea is to compare an impoverished neighborhood to a middle to upper class neighborhood.

A neighborhood usually consists of a few census tracks and is typically bounded by some distinct geographic markers such as freeways, major roads, or other landmarks such as factories, shopping malls, etc. Often, a neighborhood is identified by the boundaries within which the elementary school draws its students. Wikipedia offers an overview of neighborhoods in Detroit (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neighborhoods_in_Detroit), and the Census Bureau (http://www.census.gov) is a comprehensive source of data for all communities. If you choose to study two communities that each encompass several neighborhoods or census tracts, aim for a total population of each community of no more than around 40,000 to 50,000 people. When collecting data, you can divide your group so not everyone has to visit and research both communities.

Present a very brief description (one page maximum) and a map of the neighborhoods to me by September 27. If you have difficulty selecting the neighborhoods, consult with me. After the neighborhoods have been identified, please complete the following analysis.

**Written Assignment (20 points):**
The body of the paper should be approximately 10 pages (no less than 8 and no more than 12), double-spaced (excluding references and appendices). Please use APA style. Cite at least five class readings that provide theoretical and/or empirical support for your comparative analysis. Provide an appendix for the demographic profiles and maps of your two neighborhoods, and include additional appendices as needed. Excellent papers will cover all of the sections listed below with an emphasis on the conclusion. Your analysis should cover these key elements:

**Demographics**
Demographic profile (use census data to provide an overview of the residents of the community) that includes – but is not limited to – median income, age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, home ownership, and other relevant descriptive variables (for example, crime statistics, if available). Do the demographics point to certain issues or problems facing the neighborhood or community? How do the demographics in the high- and low-income neighborhoods compare? What are the differences? What are the similarities?
Quality of Life Overview
Drive or walk around the communities. What is the physical condition of the neighborhoods? What do the streets look like? The housing units? The businesses? The parks? (You can include visual depictions of the neighborhood to provide graphic information about life in the community). You might also try to talk to a few people. How do different residents rate quality of life in their neighborhood? Do they point to issues that affect the quality of life either positively or negatively? In what ways does the quality of life seem to differ across the two neighborhoods?

Neighborhood Economic and Political System
What are the main sources of income for residents? Where are the jobs? Are there significant economic or commercial institutions in the community or nearby that would provide jobs? Overall, how economically viable or vulnerable is the neighborhood? Are there identifiable political leaders in the neighborhood? Do they seem to have certain political objectives for the neighborhood? Are political institutions (e.g., the city council) responsive to the needs of residents? What opinions do residents have about the politics of their neighborhood? What are the differences in the economies and political systems of your selected neighborhoods?

Social Institutions
Describe the main educational, religious, and social service organizations in the neighborhood. What do the leaders of these organizations think about the neighborhood, its strengths and challenges? How responsive are these organizations to the demographic characteristics of the neighborhood? What seems to account for the ability of these institutions to respond to resident needs? Are there important service gaps? If so, can you speculate as to why? If there do not appear to be any important service gaps, what might explain this pattern of coverage? Compare the social institutions in your selected neighborhoods.

Analysis and Conclusions
Now that you have compared and contrasted your selected neighborhoods, try to synthesize your findings. Overall, how do the two neighborhoods differ? Given the information you have gathered, can you speculate as to the societal and community-level mechanisms that have contributed to any observed inequalities? Identify specific theories from the readings that seem to apply.

Multimedia Group Presentation (20 points):
This presentation will be based primarily on the comparative community analysis. Using any creative visual format (e.g., posters, videos, photos, electronic posters, website, etc.), summarize and present the content of your group paper. The length of the presentation is limited to 20 minutes. Be sure to encourage all group members to actively participate and contribute toward the completion of the presentation. And be creative! The lack of clear parameters for the presentation should encourage your group to think outside the box and have fun with the assignment. Note: The presentation should cover your analysis, not just an overview of the two communities. Illustrate the differences, but make sure to include your explanations for observed similarities and differences.
ASSIGNMENT II: ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS (40 points)

Due Friday, December 16 by 5:00pm

The paper should be between 10 and 15 pages, double-spaced. Please cite at least five class readings to support your analysis (use APA style for citations and references). You may work individually or in groups of up to 5.

Select two similar agencies—one in each of the communities you analyzed in the Comparative Analysis of Two Communities. For example, you could select two recreation centers, elementary schools, social service agencies, public libraries, etc. Gather data from each organization. Websites, annual reports, 990 IRS tax forms, brochures, and data collected by the state, county, or city are good sources of data. You may also want to interview one or more key informants in the organization. If this is an organization that allows entry (e.g., a recreation facility, a library), you could engage in direct observation. Please cover the following dimensions in your analysis:

**Organizational Domain and Mission**
Identify the organizational domain—population to be served, problem to be addressed, and desired outcomes. What are the mission and the resulting goals of the agency? Do the mission and goals correspond to the demographics and to important service needs in the neighborhood?

**Policy Environment**
Are there national, state, and local policies that influence the mission of the agency? How do these policies enable or limit the ability of the agency to meet the service needs of the neighborhood? Does the agency try to do anything (e.g., be a member of a coalition) to influence these policies?

**Task Environment**
Create a conceptual map of the organization’s task environment (a good example is provided on page 63 in the assigned chapter from the book *Human Service Organizations*). Write a short accompanying paragraph covering the following issues: What groups and organizations in the agency’s environment provide it with legitimacy and social support? What are the major sources of funding for the agency? (If the agency is a nonprofit organization you can get its latest budget – Form 990 – from Guidestar). In what ways do the resources available to the agency support or limit how it can serve its clients or service recipients? How does the agency connect with its clients? Is the agency able to meet demand for services? On what other organizations does the agency depend for complementary services? Are there other organizations that compete with the agency for funds or clients? Are there service needs the agency cannot meet because of the structure of its task environment? Are there neighborhood or community characteristics that enhance or limit the capacity of the agency to provide needed services?

**Service Technology**
What are the expected service outcomes? What service technology (ies) is (are) used to achieve these outcomes? Give a brief description of how clients are selected and assessed, how decisions are made about what services they would receive, and how are they are monitored. Do the workers follow set routines in handling the clients? Are the workers able to tailor the service technology to the particular needs and characteristics of their clients? How sensitive is the technology to cultural, ethnic, and gender differences?
**Staff- Client Relations**
To what extent do the gender, race, and ethnic composition of the staff reflect those of the clients served by the agency? How much discretion do the workers have in how to define and respond to client needs? Are there certain clients the workers prefer to work with? Are there clients they try to avoid or terminate? Do the workers try to build trust with the clients, and if so how? How do they try to get the clients to comply? If you were a client in this agency, how would you react to the ways you are likely to be treated by the line staff?

**Conclusions**
Now that you have compared and contrasted your selected organizations, try to synthesize your findings. Overall, how do the two organizations compare, in terms of their policy and task environments, their available resources, their services, their capacity to meet the needs of service recipients, and the quality of services? Given the information you have gathered, can you speculate as to the mechanisms, both environmental and internal, that have contributed to these observed differences or similarities? Are there particular theories from the readings that seem to apply?

**ASSIGNMENT III: SELF-REFLECTION PAPER I (10 points)**
**Due Tuesday, November 7**

**Background**
Johnson (2006) notes that privilege is often invisible. We move very comfortably in some social contexts in which we are insiders and are less comfortable in contexts in which we are outsiders. These categories (insider/outsider) tend to correspond with the social categories that stratify society (race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and so forth). Massey (2007) notes that these social categories often overlap with spatial boundaries, reinforcing processes of stratification by which resources are distributed unevenly across people and groups.

**Assignment**
For the first assignment in this course you entered spatial communities or neighborhoods that may correspond with social categories such as race, socio-economic status, and ethnicity. As a person entering the community you bring with you an identity that is shaped by your membership in these social categories and in the neighborhoods in which you live or grew up. Reflect on your experiences, thoughts, and feelings while in the neighborhood or community. Try to determine how these experiences, thoughts, and feelings are shaped by the degree to which the social categories with which you are affiliated correspond to those that characterize the neighborhood. Drawing on Johnson’s book, write 2-4 double-spaced pages describing your experiences and making sense of them. Try to answer the following questions:

- Do your experiences give you any insights into power, privilege, and difference?
- What might you use from this experience in your future practice?

ASSIGNMENT IV: SELF-REFLECTION PAPER II (10 points)
Due Tuesday, December 13

Background
During this course you will periodically be dividing into groups to discuss a case study. You will keep a journal of this process, writing some notes every time your group revisits the case. The notes should include your own and the group’s evolving ideas about the case.

Assignment
For the second reflection paper, I want you to first review the journal entries you’ve written throughout the semester. Then, please examine how the overall course contents – including readings, discussions, papers, and presentations – bolstered or changed your outlook on the case study, the social work discipline, and the practice behaviors you may adopt as a social worker. Drawing on your journal notes and course material, write 2 double-spaced pages. Try to answer the following questions:

- What have you learned from this experience that you didn’t know before?
- What might you use from this experience in your future practice?