SW 502 – Organizational, Community and Societal Structures and Processes  
Section: 006  
Fall 2011

Class time and location: Thursdays 9:00am – 12:00pm  
2228 SEB (School of Education Bldg.)

Instructor: Isok Kim, LCSW MA  
3044 East Hall  
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Office hours: Thursdays 12-2pm or by appointment

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 privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice (PODS) 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.

Course Design:
Required readings will be selected by the instructor. Suggested references will be included for each session, along with a list of books related to this course. Selection of required readings, coursepack items, and texts will be made in coordination with instructors of the other HBSE foundation course instructors. Class room activities may include lectures, discussion, simulations, videos/films, group projects, case analyses, etc.

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 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.

**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 work place, improving agency policies and procedures, and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations.

**Required Texts**


Additional readings distributed or assigned by the instructor will usually be available on the Ctools web site under Resources in the subfolders for Readings.

**Design**

The format is a mix of lecture and seminar, including student-facilitated discussions of the assigned readings and in-class presentations.

**Cell Phones, Laptops and Voice Recorders**

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. Students requiring an exemption from these rules for any given class should discuss this with the instructor prior to the beginning of that class.

**Grading and Requirements**

The overall grade for the course will be based on combination of four written and presentation assignments. The grading for this course is based on the following:

1. Class attendance & participation (10 pts)
2. Two self-reflection papers (10 pts each, 20pts total)
3. Structural analysis of agency/field placement (30 pts)
4. Group Project: Comparative Community Analysis (40 pts total)
   A. Written paper (20 pts)
B. Multimedia presentation (20 pts)

Grading: A 100 point system is used.

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>C-</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
“D” indicates deficiency and carries no credit
“E” indicates failure and carries no credit

Submitting written assignments – The written assignments should be submitted on the due date. Please upload your written assignment electronically on Ctools site before the due date. Then submit hard copy of papers at the beginning of the class on the day it is due. Please do not email me the assignment unless you specifically arrange that option with me. Make sure to write “SW502-006” in the subject line when you send emails to me. I won’t be responsible for lost and/or late email submission due to any technical reasons. Be sure to have backup copies of all materials you submit for this course until you receive a final grade.

PLEASE NOTE:

- If you are differently-abled or have a condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please schedule a private appointment with 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.

- 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.

- 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. Go to [http://guides.lib.umich.edu/social-work](http://guides.lib.umich.edu/social-work) for more information about Social Work Research Guide.

- Please review the Student Guide section on “Ethical Conduct in the University Environment.” This section specifically addresses plagiarism and the possible consequences for engaging in this behavior.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

**Session 1: September 8 - Introduction**

- [Johnson] *Chapter 2: Privilege, Oppression and Difference*

**Session #2 (9/15): Competing social paradigms**

- [Mullaly] *Chapters 2-6: The SW vision – a Progressive view; The neo-conservative paradigm; The liberal and neo-liberal paradigms; The social democratic paradigm; The Marxist paradigm*
- [Johnson] *Chapter 3: Capitalism, class, and the matrix of domination*

**Session #3 (9/22): Structural social work theories**

- 1ST SELF-REFLECTION PAPER DUE @ THE BEGINNING OF THE SESSION
- [Mullaly] *Chapter 9: A reconstructed theory of structural social work*

**Session #4 (9/29): Poverty and inequality – Consequences**

*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](http://www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/media_videos_home.html)

Session #5 (10/6): Poverty and inequality – Causes

- [Johnson] Chapter 6: What it all has to do with us

Session #6 (10/13): Structural issues in privilege and oppression

- [Johnson] Chapters 4,7,8: Making privilege happen; How systems of privilege work; Getting off the hook – denial and resistance
- [Mullaly] Chapter 10: Oppression – the focus of structural social work

Session #7 (10/20): Empowerment approach to structural social work

- [Mullaly] Chapter 7: Feminist, anti-racist, and postmodern critiques

Session #8 (10/27): Community development


Session #9 (11/3): Structural social work practice

- [Johnson] Chapter 4: Making privilege happen
- [Mullaly] Chapter 11: Working within (and against) the system – radical humanism

Session #10 (11/10): Structural SW practice
• 2\textsuperscript{ND} REFLECTION PAPER DUE @ THE BEGINNING OF THE SESSION
• [Mullaly] Chapter 12: Working outside (and against) the system – radical structuralism and working within ourselves
• [Johnson] Chapter 9: What can we do?

Session #11 (11/17): Last lecture

• COMPARATIVE COMMUNITY ANALYSIS GROUP PAPER DUE
• Last minute Q/As
• Group project time

Session #12 (12/1): Multimedia group presentation #1 (5 slots)

• Potluck – those not presenting bring light snacks or food to share

Session #13 (12/8): Multimedia group presentation #2 (5 slots)

• Potluck – those not presenting bring light snacks or food to share

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Class attendance & participation (10 points)
   Attendance and active participation in each class are required and will consist of 10\% of your final grade. Participation includes being present, on time, active, and prepared for class and group discussions. Active discussion includes asking questions or providing critical perspectives on your personal experiences and the readings, but may also include e-mail contact with the instructor. Refer to your student manual for further criteria.

   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.

2. Two self-reflection papers (20 points)
   These two papers will count 20\% of your final grade and should be between 2-3 pages each. This assignment asks you to examine yourself and your background in relation to the macro world and the material in this course. APA format does not need to be used in writing these reflection papers.

   For the first reflection paper, I want you to review the SOP you wrote as a part of MSW applications, and explain how this course contents might help you to extend your understanding of the social work as a. DUE by Session #3 (9/22/11; 10 points)
For the second reflection paper, I want you to first review the materials you’ve learned throughout the semester. Then, please examine how the overall course contents – including readings, discussions, papers, and presentations – bolstered or changed your outlook on the social work discipline and how you might carry yourself as a social worker, knowing the things you’ve learned in this course. **DUE by Session #10 (11/10/11; 10 points)**

3. **Structural analysis of agency/field placement DUE by Session #7 (10/20/11; 30 points)**
   This is an individual paper and will count 30% toward your final grade. The instruction on how to complete this assignment is in the appendix of Mullaly textbook (pp.364-366). Paper should be between 8 to 10 pages, double spaced, excluding title and reference pages. Please use APA style.

4. **Group Project: Comparative Analysis of Two Communities (TOTAL 40 points)**
   This is a group project. Each group will consist of 3-5 students. Each group member will receive the same grade for the project. Paper should be between 8 and 10 pages, double spaced, excluding references. Please use **APA style.**

A. **Written paper: DUE by Session #11 (11/17/11; 20 points)**
   
   Select two neighborhoods or communities that are 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 or less). The other community should have a median income of around $70,000 or more for a family of four. The idea is to compare a poverty neighborhood to a mid to upper class neighborhood. You can split up your team, having a couple of people responsible for the data collection on each community.
   
   A neighborhood usually consists of a few census tracks and is typically bounded by some distinct geographic markers such as freeway, major roads or other landmarks such as factories, shopping malls, etc. Most often, a neighborhood is identified with the boundaries within which the elementary school draws its students. Two useful websites to locate neighborhoods and data about them are:


   [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

   Present a very brief description (1/2 page maximum) and a map of the neighborhoods to me by Session #3 (9/22). If you choose to study two communities that each encompass several neighborhoods, aim for a total population of each community of no more than around 40,000 to 50,000 people. If you have difficulties selecting the neighborhoods, consult with me.

   After the neighborhoods have been identified, please complete the following analysis. The accompanying handout adapted from: "How to Diagnose a Neighborhood" by R. Warren & D. Warren provides excellent tips for you to draw on. Your analysis should cover these main parts:

   **1. The Demographics**
Demographic profile (use census data to provide an overview of the residents of the community) that includes, but is not limited: 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?

2. 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? 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?

3. 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?

4. 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 seem to be any important service gaps, why not? Compare the social institutions in your selected neighborhoods.

5. Conclusion
   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 these observed inequalities? Identify particular theories from the readings that seem to apply.
B. Multimedia group presentation: On the last two class sessions (12/8 & 12/15; 20 points)

This group presentation will count 20% of your final grade. This presentation will be based primarily on the group paper (i.e., comparative community analysis) you submit on Session #11 (11/17). Using any creative visual format (e.g., posters, videos, photos, electronic posters, webpage, etc.), summarize and present the content of your group paper. The length of the presentation is limited to 15-20 minutes. Be sure to encourage each other in the group actively participate and contribute toward the completion of the presentation. All group members will receive the same grade for this presentation.

!!!IMPORTANT!!!

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.

- USE TIMES NEW ROMAN FONT WITH 12-PT FONT SIZE
- USE DOUBLE-SPACE WITH 1-INCH MARGIN ALL AROUND
- USE SEPARATE TITLE PAGE
- USE NEW PAGES FOR REFERENCES, FIGURES, AND TABLES

If you exceed the page limit for the written assignments, they will be returned to you without being graded. When this happens to you, please trim the paper length to meet the specified page limit and resubmit it within three (3) days. Resubmission due to exceeding page limit will not be subjected to a late policy as long as you resubmit it within 3 days. Once the 3-day period passes, the regular percentage deduction policy will be applied.

If you are unhappy with your grade, you can turn in a rewrite of self-reflection and structural analysis papers 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. There will be no rewrite of the group paper.