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 to Curricular Themes.

*Relationship to Multiculturalism and 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.

*Relationship to Social Justice and Social Change* 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.

*Relationship to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and 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.

*Relationship to Behavioral and Social Sciences 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 Social Work 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 the following:

1. Book review OR review of ten research studies (30% of grade);
2. In class presentation (10% of grade);
3. Organization analysis (40% of grade);
4. Self-reflection paper I (10% of grade)
5. Self-reflection paper II (10% of grade)

Grading: A 100 point system is used.

A 95-100
A- 91-94
B+ 87-90
B 84-86
B- 81-83
C+ 77-80
C 74-76
C- 70-73

“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, no later than 12:00 midnight. You can either submit assignments in class or electronically on the course Ctools website.
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.

- Although the University of Michigan, as an institution, does not observe religious holidays, it has long been the University's policy that every reasonable effort should be made to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Absence from classes for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss in-class assignments as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent. Such notice must be given by the drop/add deadline of the given term. Students who are absent on days of class assignments shall be offered an opportunity to make up the work, without penalty, unless it can be demonstrated that a make-up opportunity would interfere unreasonably with the delivery of the course.

- 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.

- 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. 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://www.lib.mich.edu/ug/research/citationguide/AP5thed/pdf)

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Session 1: September 10

- What is theory and why is it important to social work practice?
- What are the different ways to think about the relationship between the individual,
communities, and society?
Hurst, Chp 3: Private lives and public connections

Johnson, Chapter 2: Privilege, Oppression and Difference

Session II: September 17

• Political theories on the relationship between the individual and society
• Focus on the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality


Chp 5: The politics of poverty
Chp 8: Politicizing poverty


Hurst, Chapter 7: The polarization of economic resources.

*During class we will watch an interview with Joseph Stiglitz on the causes and consequences of rising inequality, found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olKOPrRqdH4

Recommended:


Session III: September 24
• Political, institutional, and cultural theories of the relationship between societal, community, and individual level processes and outcomes.
• Stratification and the unequal distribution of material, emotional, and symbolic resources.
• Focus on the criminal justice system


*Recommended:*


Session IV: October 1

• Competing social paradigms, and how they relate to social work practice.
Mullaly chp 2: The social work vision: a progressive view

Mullaly chp 3: The Neo-Conservative Paradigm

Mullaly chp 4: The Liberal and Neo-Liberal Paradigms
Mullaly chp 5: The Social Democratic Paradigm

Session V: October 8

• Critical theories; Feminist, Antiracist, and Postmodern critiques
Mullaly Chapter 7: Feminist, Anti-Racist, and Postmodern Critiques

Mullaly Chapter 9: A Reconstructed Theory of Structural Social Work

Johnson Chapter 3: Capitalism, Class, and the Matrix of Domination
October 15: Study Break—no class

Session VI: October 22

- How can we define communities and neighborhoods? Why are they important to social work practice?
- What are the societal forces that impact neighborhoods and communities?
- Demographic impacts; Economic forces; Patterns of residential segregation
- Focus on employment, schools, and racial segregation


Teranishi, Robert T., & Parker, Tara L. Social reproduction of inequality: The racial composition of feeder schools to the University of California. Teachers College Record, 112(6), 1575-1601.


Recommended:


*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”

Session VII: October 29

- 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?


Johnson Chapter 4: Making Privilege Happen

Recommended:


Session VIII: November 5

- The role of community social institutions in building community and social capital
- Community needs and human services
- Discrimination and community social institutions


Recommended:


SELF-REFLECTION PAPER I IS DUE

Session IX: November 12
Johnson Chapter 5: The trouble with the trouble

BOOK REVIEW or REVIEW OF JOURNAL ARTICLES is due

---In-class presentations of book or journal article reviews---

Session X: November 19

- What are human service organizations? What theories help us to understand them?
- Why are social work values and ethics important for organizational analysis?


Chapter 2: Hasenfeld, Y. The attributes of human service organizations.

Chapter 3: Garrow, E. and Hasenfeld, Y. Theoretical approaches to human service organizations.

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

Session XI: November 26

- What are organizational ideologies?
- Where do they come from?
- How do they influence social work practice?


Chapter 6: Hasenfeld, Y. Organizational forms as moral practices

Chapter 11: Martin, P. Rape crisis centers: Helping victims, changing society


Johnson Chapter 7: How Systems of Privilege Work

Session XII: December 3

- 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? What are the consequences for their services?

Chapter 3: Organization-environment relations.


Chapter 13: Smith, B. Service technologies and the conditions of work in child welfare.


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

Recommended:


Chapter 16: Watkins-Hayes, C. Human services as “race work”? Historical lessons and contemporary challenges of black providers.

--- In class presentations of organizational analyses ---

Session XIII: December 10

- What can we do? From micro to macro
- Worker client relations: power and social work practice
- Policy advocacy


Chapter 19. Hasenfeld, Y. Worker-client relations: Social policy in practice

Garrow, Eve, and Yeheskel, Hasenfeld. The advocacy of nonprofit human service organizations in the neoliberal regime: How the organization’s moral frame determines advocacy type.

Johnson Chapter 9: What Can We Do?

Recommended:


--- In class presentations of organizational analyses ---

SELF REFLECTION PAPER II IS DUE
COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Critical Review (30 points)

The assignment is due on Session IX: November 12

Choose one of the following two options:

I.  Book Review: Select a book on a social issue that is of interest to you and that is national in scope (e.g., poverty, inequality, immigration, lone-parents, low-wage workers, childhood poverty, homelessness, education, health, culture and poverty, race, gender discrimination, issues around sexual orientation, criminal justice system). Make sure that the book includes empirical research or a review of empirical studies on the topic. Prepare a critical review (10 pages) of the book that includes: a) a statement of the issues being addressed; b) the theoretical approach used by the author(s); c) the key findings and evidence supporting them; and d) your critical assessment of the 1) theoretical approach and 2) evidence supporting the author's conclusions. Refer to a theory or theories discussed in class in your critique of the author’s theoretical approach (part d) to answer the following questions: 1) what potential causes or consequences of the social issue or problem are highlighted by the author’s theoretical approach? 2) What does the author’s theoretical approach mask or fail to consider? 3) What additional theory or theories from class could usefully be applied to the social issue or problem to increase understanding of its causes or consequences? The book review should follow APA style. For examples of book reviews look at The American Journal of Sociology, Social Service Review or Contemporary Sociology. Some examples of books on various social issues are listed at the end of the syllabus.

II. Review of journal articles: Select 5-10 articles from peer reviewed journals on a social issue that is of interest to you (e.g., poverty, child poverty, culture and poverty, inequality, immigration, lone-parents, low-wage workers, homelessness, education, health, mental health, racial or gender disparities, issues around sexual orientation, criminal justice system). Make sure that the articles include empirical research or a review of empirical studies on the topic. Prepare a critical review (10 pages) of the articles that includes: a) a statement of the issues being addressed; b) the theoretical approach(es) used by the studies; c) the key findings and evidence supporting them; and d) your critical assessment of the theoretical approach(es) and evidence supporting the authors’ conclusions. Refer to a theory or theories discussed in class in your critique of the author’s theoretical approach (part d) to answer the following questions: 1) what potential causes or consequences of the social issue or problem are highlighted by the theoretical approach? 2) What does the theoretical approach mask or fail to consider? 3) What additional theory or theories from class could be usefully applied to the social issue or problem to increase understanding of its causes or consequences? The review of journal articles should follow APA style.
In class presentation (10 points):

This presentation will count 10% of your final grade. You have two options for your in-class presentation.

1. Option 1: This presentation will be based primarily on the topic of your book review or review of journal articles. Summarize and present the content of your review. Identify the social problem that is addressed. Elaborate on how the review informed your developing understanding of the social problem under consideration. Include your preferred guiding theory or theories to understanding the problem’s causes and consequences, including empirical evidence to support the theory. Presentations are on November 12.

2. Option 2: This presentation will be based primarily on your organizational analysis (see assignment II). Identify a theory or theories that help explain the issues of interest. Summarize the content of your analysis. Presentations are during the last two weeks of class (December 3 & 10).

Organizational Analysis (40 points)

Paper is due on Tuesday of Exam Week: December 18.

Paper should be between 10 and 15 pages, double-spaced. Please use APA style. Cite at least five class readings to support your analysis.

Select between one of the two options listed:

Option 1: Comparative analysis:

Select two similar human service agencies. For example, you could select two recreation centers, elementary schools, social service agencies, public libraries, and so on. 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. You may work individually or in groups of up to 3. All students in a group will receive the same grade. No exceptions.

Please cover the following dimensions:

I. 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?

II. 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?

III. 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 get 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?

IV. 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 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?

V. 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 that 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?
VI. Comparison

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?

Option 2: Organizational analysis:

Select one human service agency. As in the first option, it can be a recreation center, elementary school, social service agency, public library, and so on. Gather data from the 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. You may work individually or in groups of up to 3. Please cover the following 5 dimensions, as described in option 1 (see above):

I. Organizational domain and mission
II. Policy environment
III. Task environment
IV. Service technology
V. Staff-client relations.

Next, using the information you have gathered in parts I through V, I want you to use one or more of the organizational theories discussed in class to explain one or more issues that are of interest to you. This will be the focus of part VI (below). In part, the issue can emerge from your developing understanding of the organization and a problem or issue it faces. In part, it can emerge from your own interests (e.g., administration, advocacy, services).

VI: Briefly describe the organizational issue (s) you are interested in understanding. Describe the organizational theory (ies) used to aid you analysis (e.g., human relations, political economy, institutional, critical, postmodern, etc). Answer the following questions:

- Identify an issue of interest:
  - Examples could include but are not limited to: treatment of clients, client outcomes, the organization’s degree of responsiveness to client or community needs, worker burnout, mission drift, turnover, the allocation of resources in the organization, development of new programs, budget cuts or dismantling of programs, the organization’s willingness to engage in policy advocacy, the content of advocacy.
• Frame the issue as a question. Examples: Why are clients treated (dis)respectfully by frontline staff? Why did the organization discontinue program X when it is clearly needed? What factors seem to be contributing to worker burnout? What keeps workers motivated? Why does the organization seem to address community problem X but not community problem Y?
• What is the theory used to analyze the issue?
• What aspects of the organization are highlighted by this theory (e.g., power dynamics, cultural stereotypes, stakeholder demands, policy environment)?
• Use the theory to answer the question you pose about the organizational issue of interest.

Self-reflection paper 1 (10 points)

Due on Session VIII: November 5

Social justice, social categories, privilege, oppression, and critical consciousness

You have two options for this reflection paper.

Option 1 (I would like to thank Beth Reed for developing this reflection exercise)

This reflection should be about 2-4 double spaced pages. Please use APA format.

• Create your own definition(s) of social justice and identify where this definition fits among those we have read about and discussed. Discuss some implications of this definition.
• Articulate your major social locations and areas of unearned privilege and oppression. Discuss how these are embedded within macro structures and forces, with examples of how the categories intersect and amplify or neutralize one another, and how privilege and oppression are continuously recreated.
• Discuss your everyday awareness of the categories in which society places you and others. Are you constantly reminded of your category and social position vis a vis other categories and social positions? Is this made visible or invisible to you? In what ways?
• You should include how much you have explored each category, your awareness of relevant categories, and implications for yourself as a social worker and macro theorist.

Option 2

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.
Assignment: In your field placement, community analysis for SW560, or in other circumstances in your daily life you enter communities, neighborhoods, or social institutions that may correspond with social categories such as race, socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and so forth. As a person entering the social space you bring with you an identity that is shaped by your membership in these social categories and in the neighborhoods, communities, and social institutions you live or grew up in. Choose a neighborhood, community, or other social space that either corresponds to or is quite different from selected social categories with which you are affiliated. Reflect on your experiences and feelings while in the neighborhood or community. Try to determine how these experiences 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 (2006) book, write 2-4 double spaced pages describing your experiences and making sense of them. Try to answer the following questions:

- How does the community/neighborhood/social institution align with the social categories with which you are affiliated? Describe relevant characteristics of the community.
- Do your experiences give you any insights into power, privilege, and difference? What are they?
- What might you use from this experience in your future practice?


**Self-reflection paper II (10 points):**

Due on Session XIII: December 10

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 this 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 how you might carry yourself as a social worker. Drawing on your journal notes and course material, write two double spaced pages. Try to answer the questions:

- How has your understanding of the case changed over the course of the semester?
  - In particular, what readings, theories, or topics in particular influenced your
understanding of the case?

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

Examples of major books on poverty, inequality, and welfare


Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Homelessness:


The criminal justice system and criminal involvement:


Examples of major books on education:

Orfield, Gary, Martin, Patricia, and Horn, Catherine. Higher Education and the Color Line: college access, racial equity, and social change.