The University of Michigan School of Social Work
SW 701 Practice in International Social Work
Fall 2013 Syllabus

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Office Hours: Mondays 1-3 PM and by appointment as location may change.

Course Description
This course is intended to prepare social work students for involvement in social development interventions in an international arena. This course will focus selectively on the challenges developing countries face in improving the lives of its citizens and the roles social workers can play in solving them. Among the issues that may be included are: provision of basic life necessities, hunger and nutritional insufficiency, education, economic development, the strains related to urbanization and modernization, ethnic conflict, child protection, community and familial violence, environment and community health, organization and administration of human services, and citizen empowerment. Students will learn about strategies used by service providers, institutions, and self-help groups for the purposes of social transformation, community development, and enhancement of individual well-being. Central to the discourse will be an idiographic-nomothetic dialectic which counterposes what is universal and what is culturally specific about social welfare issues and interventions across countries and regions. Course readings and discussion will begin with a focus on the globalization of social problems. An array of skills will be drawn from the traditional practice armamentarium of micro and macro social work methods. Discourse will also focus on ways that these must be adapted to increase their relevance for work in developing regions of the world, in international aid or relief organizations and in programs for immigrants or refugees in this country.

Course Content
With increased global communication comes an awareness of the similarity of social problems faced by nations, both “developed” and “developing” throughout the world. Urbanization, poverty, rising costs, and maldistribution of health care, teen pregnancy, family instability and violence, child abuse, alcohol and substance abuse, gender inequality, racial discrimination, and cultural conflicts are just few commonly shared problems. The social work and social welfare models we have used in the United States represent only a subset of the large number of possible models that could respond to the diverse needs of communities and societies. This course will prepare students for international social work experiences by exposing them to emerging methods and training them to think more broadly and raise questions about the suitability of the social welfare models employed in the United States.

The focus of the course will be on the enhancement of practice knowledge and skills in program design, development, and evaluation related to issues encountered in the human services. Among the challenges to be considered are: the provision of basic resources, such as food, shelter, potable water and sanitation; unemployment, sustainable economic development, disaster relief, ethnic identity and conflict, urbanization and the erosion of traditional family life, community and familial violence, cross-national adoptions, environment and community health, education, gender inequality, efficient organization and management of human services, and development of civic values. This course will examine how micro and macro skills can be integrated to address these problems in international settings. The course will also include development of programs built on interpersonal practice skills, community self-help, inauguration and management of such services and the development and evaluation of social policy.

The course will utilize case studies of methods that other societies have employed to meet social welfare needs in such areas, as health, mental health, and social services for children, youth, elderly, and their families, and those in poverty. Examples will be selected to represent countries in early stages of industrial development; countries which are newly creating or recreating social welfare systems, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia; and countries in various parts of the world that have social welfare systems that sharply contrast in philosophy and scope with those found in the United States, such as Scandinavia, Canada, and Great Britain.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of a global perspective on social welfare problems, with particular appreciation of the role to be played by social workers in addressing them.
2. Enhance their skills in assessment of problems of developing countries and in design and implementation of interventions.
3. Demonstrate the ability to use assessment, development, and evaluation strategies which take into account differences based on class, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, spirituality, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, national origin, and gender.
4. Display an increased in sophisticated awareness of the interplay among cultural social, political, and economic factors in application of micro and macro social work practice.
5. Develop sensitivity and awareness to understand people with different cultural, economic, historical, political, and ideological backgrounds.
6. Explain the role of idiosyncratic culturally-specific factors and use them in shaping strategies to address critical problems that occur around the world.
7. Envision and gain new exposure to new and innovative models of social welfare approaches to domestic social problems used in different countries.
8. Demonstrate the capacity to take collective action and gain more influence as a body to make substantial and sustainable change.
9. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to practice in international social work.

Course Design
Because this course will cover a wide range of practice methods and issues, readings and discussion of case studies will be emphasized. Generous use will be made of audiovisual materials and guest lecturers to expand the range of knowledge and expertise we currently have in the School on the social conditions, problems, and solutions in developing countries around the world. Moreover, this course will also draw on the extensive flow of foreign scholars and practitioners in presenting and discussing their social welfare experiences.

Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity
While this course will point to the striking similarities among social welfare issues around the globe, it will also take steps to emphasize the important differences. This course will challenge students to confront their own assumptions about what is normative and bring them face-to-face with social conditions that they have simply taken as a given. Many societies do not share the same dominant values and ideologies upon which U.S. social work models stand; and it becomes difficult to see differences and similarities from the other side when those values and ideologies are assumed in U.S. social work education and practice. This course will foster students' understanding of becoming “co-learners” in the field when faced with situations where their assumptions towards social workers' roles do not necessarily hold. Students will also be prepared for future interaction with people in and from other countries in terms of dealing with stereotypes cast on Americans as foreigners. Discussion of these issues will raise students' awareness of the complex nature of multiculturalism inherent in international social work.

Theme Relation to Social Justice
This course will advance student's understanding of the tensions that arise from global inequities between developed and developing countries and from the political and economic hegemony/exploitation of former colonial powers, such as Great Britain, Russia, France, and Spain, and current economic powers, such as the U.S., Japan, and Germany.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation
Many countries whose programs will be described in this course currently emphasize the use of prevention strategies and community empowerment in social service delivery to a much greater extent than we are used to in this country. Exposure to these approaches will expand the horizons of student’s thinking about what is possible in the arena of prevention. Exposure to these approaches will expand the horizons of student's thinking about what is possible in the arena of prevention.

Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research
The course will serve as the foundation of methods related to advocacy, program development, community development, and policy formation and evaluation. Knowledge will be drawn also from the fields of cultural psychology, anthropology, social psychology, economics, and political science.

**Relationship to SW Ethics and Values**
This course will challenge students’ assumptions in social work ethics and values in critical ways. This course will involve examination of the ethical principles involved in efforts to accelerate modernization and the cost involved for traditional peoples. Moreover, the moral dilemma involved in the wide disparities in income and resource allocation among national groups will be explored. Students will also be introduced to the International Declaration of Ethical Principles of Social Work developed by the International Federation of Social Workers.

**Required Text**


**Additional Required Readings**
Links to most required readings will be found in the Resources Section of the C-tools site. Each student should access the “library materials” link on the C-Tools site for access to current domestic and global news as well as the website developed for this course.

**Class Meetings**
Class meetings will be held every Thursday evening; September 5-December 5 from 6-9PM. Full attendance is required.

**Course Assignments**
1. All written materials MUST be submitted to the C-Tools site in the Dropbox section.
2. The instructor has a course policy that only those students who receive a failing grade on an assignment will have the option of revising and resubmitting that assignment. In the event that you are unable to submit an assignment by its due date, you must have the instructor’s written permission to do so. Without this permission, one point per day will be subtracted from your grade for that assignment.
3. Any student who might need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see me during office hours, see me during our class breaks, or contact me via electronic mail. If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

**Background**
The nature of global social work is the integration of distinct values, persons, contexts, and levels of intervention. Those interested in working within this domain, therefore, will require a knowledge base that simultaneously addresses individuals and families, economic development, small groups and communities, prejudice and oppression, moving among multiple societies, secular and spiritual worldviews, and the values of social development practice in social work. Course assignments are designed to provide participants with individual and group skill development opportunities.

This term we will address issues of human rights, immigration/transnationalism, and local/global intervention strategies and evaluation around the world. Our five specific practice foci will be: (a) women; (b) children; (c) health; (d) sustainable
development of human resources. Each participant will be assigned to one of those four groups no later than second week of class. Those who are bilingual or bicultural are encouraged to note this on the introductory handout. The United States, and Canada may not be used for assignments unless you were born and raised in nations other than these (or by specific permission of the instructor).

Group Assignments

There is a folder of readings on C-Tools for each group and you are expected to be familiar with their contents as you shape your final small group assignments. Please choose a scribe who will be responsible for submitting written portions of all assignments so that points are not reduced for late assignments. Note points will be deducted for those students who are not present for both presentation dates unless the absence is cleared with the instructor in advance.

Group-Led Reading Discussions (10 points)

At least once during the term, each small group will be in charge of leading a 30 minute discussion of the class readings for the week. Be prepared with discussion questions identifying the main points contained in the readings and their implications for global social work practice. Dates for these presentations will be determined along with group assignments during the second week of class. Discussion questions are due the Tuesday prior to our Thursday evening class via the Dropbox on C-Tools.

September 26 - Human Rights for all? United Nations Agreements and Conventions (Written for 10 points)

1. Identify the UN Agreements relevant to your topic area
2. Determine whether or not the country you have chosen for the term is a signatory
3. Determine whether or not the US is a signatory
4. List ways in which this knowledge may affect practice issues related to your group and/or individual topic?

October 24 - Codes of Ethics (Written for 10 points)

1. Identify potential areas of agreement and disagreement among the NASW, IFSW, and (if applicable) your specific country of interests’ codes of ethics pertaining to your topic area.
2. Identify at least two ethical dilemmas involved in the case given your group.
3. How are refugees and/or immigrants in the US affected by the lack of US participation in the agreements? Please be prepared to discuss the dilemmas identified by your group with the class.
4. What dilemmas do you face as a social worker from the U.S. in working within the IFSW Code of Ethics?

November 17th and 24th - Small Group Intervention Projects Presentations (Presented in class for 30 points)

1. Choose ONE overarching issue influencing your chosen countries, given your topic.
2. Operationalize (list and discuss) commonalities and differences in key demographics and target populations among the countries you’ve chosen.
3. Operationalize your group’s definition of the target issue and why you believe it is important.
4. What types of issues among your selected countries may impede enacting your intervention?
5. How do you identify and choose colleagues abroad? How do you coordinate your interests with theirs? In other words, what do you need to know about other professionals’ programs/initiatives in your country of interest?
6. What role does the economy of either country play in developing cooperative agreements?
7. Identify one goal for your respective interventions related to the topic you’ve chosen.
8. Reflect on a preferred position you would hold if you were a staff member at an NGO, consultant, or aid worker working on this intervention. Each group member must write a letter of intent for that position as a new graduate of the MSW program. Submit this to the C-Tools site via the Dropbox.
**Individual Assignments**

**Journal (10 points):** What happened in my part of the world this week? Each student will keep an online journal citing one news story or scholarly article per week about their country of interest. The journal entry should include a complete citation of the article, and your analysis of the ways the article reflects your individual project and/or group assignments. The journal notes should not exceed one page; and one or two paragraphs will usually suffice. The goal of the assignment is to give you opportunities to gather information for your final papers and presentations. To earn the full 10 points, at least five (5) journal entries should be made. Place your journal entries in the dropbox on the C-Tools site unless otherwise directed. All journal entries are due by November 17th.

**Executive Summary (30 points):** Create the Executive Summary for an intervention you wish to be involved in abroad. Your proposal should reflect your knowledge of the social, political and historical contexts of the country and region, along with recognition of current conflicts, economic and political issues. Your paper must also include one goal statement, one objective and one task analysis. Please operationalize your project using a Gantt Chart or Logic Model, identifying your role in the proposal. The proposal should be economically feasible and you are expected to determine how it would be funded. You may choose an existing program for this assignment. The Written Executive Summary is due November 30th via the dropbox on the C-Tools site.

**Grading**

This course uses the School of Social Work’s grading system approved by the Governing Faculty. Please refer to the “General Requirements for Class Papers in the School of Social Work” section of your student guide for assistance. All assignments will be graded for their comprehensiveness and clarity.

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Sessions

**Week One – September 5: Introduction to Course and Concepts**

Introduction
Course Overview
Definitions and Models
Jensen's three aspects of professional knowledge
Multidimensional Contextual Practice Model
Globalization
Millenium Development Goals: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReRx12QUv54](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReRx12QUv54)

**Week Two – September 12: Contextualizing Global Social Work Practice**

Groups Assigned
Social, political and historical contexts of practice models
Importance of Economics in Global Social Welfare
Understanding the host countries’ economics
Multiple levels of budgeting in global practice
Introduction to the Social Development Model
Readings
1. Healy, ch. 1-2, pp. 3-51
2. Joyce, ch. 1-2, pp. 1-74

**Week Three - September 19: Foundation Skills for Global Social Work Practice**

Reading Group 1 Discussion
Ethical Dilemmas
Building Blocks of Proposals
Goals, Objectives and Task Analyses
Logic Models
Program Monitoring/Journaling
Budgets (cont.)
Readings:
1. Healy, ch. 6-8, pp. 135-200
2. Joyce, ch. 3-4, pp. 75-174

**Week Three - September 19: Foundation Skills for Global Social Work Practice**

Google Presenting

Latin America Small Group-Led Reading Discussion

Ethical Dilemmas

Overview of UN treaty search process

Readings:
1. Healey, ch. 3-4, pp. 52-105.
2. Joyce, ch. 3-4, pp. 75-174.

**Week Four - September 26: Building Blocks of Proposals**

*Group Assignment Due: Human Rights for All?*

Goals, Objectives, and Task Analyses

Budgets

Program Monitoring/Journaling

Logic Models

Readings:
2. Joyce, ch. 5, pp. 175-212.

**Week Five - October 3: Entering as a Stranger, Emerging as an Ally**

Andrew Schroeder, Phd, Adrienne Call, and Natalie Romatz presenting

West Africa Small Group-Led Reading Discussion

Community Development

Mentoring Models

Participatory Needs Assessment Models

Readings:
2. Joyce, ch. 6-7, pp. 213-266.
6. Website for Participatory Needs Assessment Models at www.ids.ac.uk.
Week Six - October 10: International Adoption Ethics
North Africa Small Group-Led Reading Discussion
The Global Adoption Conundrum
Contrasting social work roles
Training for Activism
Readings:

Week Seven - October 17: Transnational Communities
Mira Sussman from Jewish Family Services Presenting
SE Asia Small Group-Led Reading Discussion
Readings:

Week Eight - October 24: Technology
John Barrie from Appropriate Technology Collaborative Presenting
Middle East Small Group-Led Reading Discussion
Group Assignment 2 Due: Codes of Ethics
Readings
1. Healy, ch. 9, pp. 239-259.

Week 9 - October 31: Film
Film, “Mercy Mercy” or “First Person Plural” with online discussion from each student on CTools.

**Week 10 - November 7: Immigration or Social Work “Over Here”**
1. Healy, ch. 11, pp. 286-316.
2. Joyce, ch. 8, pp. 267-290

**Week Eleven - November 14: Group Intervention Project Presentations**
*Latin America and West Africa*

**Week Twelve - November 21: Group Intervention Project Presentations**
*Middle East, Southeast Asia*

**Week Thirteen - November 28 and November 30**
No class, Thanksgiving Recess
*Individual Assignment: Executive Summary Due*

**Week Fourteen - December 5: Group Intervention Project Presentations**
*North Africa*
Dinner at Blue Nile
Review Term
Network with Local International Workers

**Week 15 - December 12**
No class, end of term

TBA: Jane Jeong Trenka and Kiva Detroit