Social Work 611: Social Change Theories

Mondays, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM
Rm 1804 SSW
Winter 2014
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Office Hours by Appointment

Course Description
This course will review theories and research from the social sciences on social change, focusing especially at the societal level. Theories of social conflict, interest groups, and social movements, and such processes as consciousness-raising will be covered. Dynamics of the diffusion of innovations in society will also be addressed. Examples will be drawn from areas of practice in which social workers are involved, such as mental health and chemical dependency, child and family welfare, civil rights, health care, and consumer protection.

Course Content
The main goal of this course is to address the questions of why and how social change occurs. Students will compare and contrast different theoretical approaches to the understanding of social change. Comparative dimensions will include the theory's scope; the cultural contexts, societal arenas, and problem areas from which the theory was developed and in which it has been applied; and the assumptions of a theory about society and how social change occurs. Emphasis will be given to the types of empirical evidence available about each theoretical approach and the types of inquiry used to develop and critique different theories. Although the primary emphasis will be on societal level change, this course will also consider theories of change at the individual, group, community, and organizational levels, and in particular how changes at different system levels affect each other. Students will consider the extent to which different theories are, or are not, compatible with each other and the implications of these relationships for the usefulness of particular theories for different purposes. Change
theories will be selected from each of the social science disciplines, and students will consider how scholars and activists from different disciplinary perspectives have used and critiqued each other's work. Different bodies of thought about change will be critiqued for their relevance to the issues facing marginalized and oppressed groups within U.S. society and for their usefulness cross-culturally. Students will consider how different theories have been applied or could be applied and critique existing types of practice from particular theoretical perspectives and lenses that recognize the impact of privilege, oppression and social justice on the change process. Particular attention will be given to the impact of a diverse society on social change inclusive of diversity dimensions such as 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. Students will explore the theories that have been important within human service goal and problem areas of interest to them.

**Course Objectives and Guidelines for Learning**
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Describe, compare, and contrast several types of theories about social change.
2. Identify theories relevant to particular goal and problem areas, and critique their strengths and limitations.
3. Critique different theories as to their assumptions, origins, relevance for different social problems, and relevance for marginalized and oppressed groups inclusive of a broad range of intersecting diversity dimensions.
4. Apply particular theories to different areas of practice.
5. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to social change theories.

**Course Design**
This course may use a variety of pedagogical strategies, including readings, class exercises, case studies, and debates. Students will focus on cognitive and analytic tasks, skills in the use and application of theory, and identifying underlying value and attitudinal issues related to particular theories.

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:**
- *Multiculturalism and Diversity* will be addressed in this course by identifying theories espoused by and compatible with different cultural traditions, by critiquing theories from different cultural perspectives, and through course examples about the uses of theory in different interest and ontological groups.
- *Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed within the goals and assumptions of each theoretical approach. Most of the course will focus on social justice goals and conceptualizing and operationalizing social change.
Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be addressed by examining theories about social change for their relevance and applicability in each of these areas. Students will compare and contrast theories that focus on a positive vision of the future with theories focusing on existing problems.

Behavioral and Social Science Research will be addressed by examining the evidence used to build theory and test theory through its applications in practice.

**Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values**

Students will examine theories and explore the extent to which they aid social workers with their ethical responsibilities to the general welfare of society. In particular, theories and practice examples will be critiqued with respect to the following ethical principles: preventing and eliminating discrimination, ensuring access to resources and services, expanding choices for all persons, promoting conditions that encourage respect for diversity, advocating for changes in policy to improve social conditions and promote social justice, and encourage informed participation by citizens in shaping policies and institutions.

**Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS)**

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students to develop a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks, and strengthen critical consciousness, self knowledge and self awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

**Source Materials**

*Required Text*


**Grading/Course Requirements**

This is a graded, 3-credit, course. Students will be graded on the assignments described below. The guidelines and descriptions are intended to help you meet the expectations for the assignments.
A major part of your grade for written assignments is based on your clarity, thoroughness, and effort. All written assignments should be carefully proofread for typos and clarity of content. A paper with lots of errors is difficult to read and will be marked down. All assignments should be double spaced, using 12-point font, with 1-inch margins, and properly formatted references when needed, using the APA style. You should turn in all written assignments on time. Having assignments in on time will assist me in reading and grading them in a timely manner. On time is defined as turned in or uploaded into your C-tools drop box by the start of class on the due date. In general, a paper will be marked down 2 points for each day it is late. Exceptions will be made only for extreme circumstances. If you expect that you are going to be late turning in an assignment, let me know as soon as possible so I can plan accordingly.

Please try to anticipate your responsibilities and start your assignments well in advance of the due date. Be sure to have a back up copy on disk in case I misplace your work (which I hope never occurs!)

Your grades will be distributed along the following scale:

- 100 A+
- 99-94 A
- 93-90 A-
- 89-87 B+
- 86-83 B
- 82-80 B-
- 79-77 C+
- 76-73 C
- 69-60 D
- 59 and below E

**Course Requirements and Expectations**

- All work must be an original contribution (including not used for another course).
- All assignments must be a product of your own personal work—unless otherwise noted as a group project.
- You are responsible for always making and keeping a copy of each assignment prior to turning it in.
- All assignments are due at the BEGINNING of a class session or day indicated. Any late assignment will receive a two-point deduction per calendar day it is late. A late assignment must be submitted to the appropriate drop box online. Extensions will be considered if the student contacts the instructor ahead of time with good reason for making the request.
- Please note that NO INCOMPLETES will be given without prior approval of the instructor. Unless an extreme emergency situation arises, this should be planned in advance. Unless the instructor and student have agreed upon a plan for completion, a "zero" will be factored in for missing work.
- NASW Code of Ethics:
  All class members are expected to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics in their activities related to this class. Failure to abide by the Code of Ethics will be grounds for a grade of E. It is expected that all students have already read and understand the contents of this Code. If you have any questions please raise them with the instructor immediately. Should you need to refresh your memory of the content, you...
can reference the Code of Ethics online at: http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp.

• **Code of Conduct:**
  Classroom as Preparation for Professional Life after Graduation. In many ways, your experience in the classroom is a preparation for your future employment as social workers. Being in college or graduate school is similar to having a job. Your classmates are your colleagues. Your instructors are like your supervisors. Your “job” performance is evaluated. You are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times. Just as a place of employment has a mission statement and rules that govern behavior, so too does the classroom. It is the responsibility of the instructor to communicate and enforce reasonable expectations of classroom behavior via the syllabus and classroom discussion, and it is the responsibility of students to adhere to these expectations.

  Students are expected to abide by the **University Honor Code** and assist in creating an environment that is conducive to learning and protects the rights of all members of the University community.

• **Confidentiality:**
  Due to the topics covered in this class, as well as the format of the class, students may reveal sensitive personal information as it relates to the topic at hand. When personal information is revealed in class, all students and the instructor are expected to respect and maintain confidentiality. This will ensure that nobody’s identity is revealed in connection to subject matter in discussions with people not in the class.

• **Accommodations:**
  It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may affect their learning in this class. If you believe you may have trouble participating or effectively demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without an accommodation letter from the university disability office) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. You may also seek additional information and resources through our Health and Wellness team at the School of Social Work Office of Student Services and/or the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 763-3000.
Observance of Religious, Spiritual, and Cultural Holidays:

Although current university policy does not recognize religious holidays, I welcome the observance of religious holidays without penalty to the student. Students are asked to provide advance notice to the instructor in order to make up work, including examinations that they miss as a result of their absence from class due to observance of these holidays. Classes missed for religious observance may still impact participation grades if additional classes are missed.

Academic Honesty and Integrity:

Academic dishonesty, including all forms of cheating and/or plagiarism, will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarism refers to presenting another person’s work as your own, which is the case any time you use words that you did not write, without providing information about the source. Examples of such acts could include, but are not limited to, a student who copies parts or all of a paper from another source—including the internet, a journal article, a book, another student, etc. Penalties for an act of academic dishonesty may range from receiving a failing grade for a particular assignment to receiving a failing grade for the entire course. In addition, you may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for discipline that can result in either a suspension or permanent dismissal. The Student Conduct Code contains detailed definitions of what constitutes academic dishonesty, but if you are not sure about whether something you’re doing would be considered academic dishonesty, consult with the instructor immediately.

Climate:

Our class is structured around an adult learning philosophy that seeks to promote and integrate both classroom and community learning experiences. This style of learning relies on the full participation and contributions of everyone in order to reach our highest potential as a group. It is also imperative to the integrity of our classroom community to promote the exchange of ideas in a healthy way without fear of being attacked or put down.
### Assignments and Due Dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Products</th>
<th>Misc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
<td>Weekly contributions to Facebook, use of Twitter, in class active participation and attendance.</td>
<td>No excused or unexcused absences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary of Theory Terms</td>
<td>Jan. 27th</td>
<td>10 pts.</td>
<td>Glossary of definitions and examples</td>
<td>Can be completed in small groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Theory Intervention Paper</td>
<td>April 21st</td>
<td>40 pts.</td>
<td>15-21 page paper.</td>
<td>May be completed in small groups or on your own. Groups must be approved by me.</td>
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All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will be marked down 2 points per day late after the time due, including weekends, unless approved by the instructor ahead of time.

**Assignment 1 Participation (20%)**

Participation includes providing leadership in classroom discussion, class attendance & punctuality, participation during class activities, and consultation with colleagues on group projects. Participation will be assessed throughout the course from my observances of your interactions in small groups and in class discussions. Absences are neither excused nor unexcused, so no need to ask for them to be excused. If you are absent on a day that you are to present, the highest grade you can receive is a “C”. To encourage reading and preparation for classes, you will be asked to participate in a class Facebook Page, where you will discuss readings and current events through a theoretical lens, and raise questions that you have from class. You are not just expected to participate in discussions that I start, but encouraged to start your own discussions related to readings, current events, class dialogue, and personal reflection on a weekly basis. This is a great way for shyer group members to demonstrate class participation. My expectation is that you are on the Facebook page making a meaningful and thoughtful contribution to dialogue at least once a week, which implies more than a, “I agree with Jane on her perspective.” I am also inviting folks to participate via Twitter to the hash tag #SW611 for questions and insights. I am on Twitter @Dr_Pracademic and I...
invite you to follow my friends and colleagues, Dr. Jimmy Young from U. Nebraska at Kearney and Dr. Gary Holden of NYU, two of the most prominent twitter users in academia. You may also want to follow socialworkhelper for current discussions related to social work practice. Twitter questions, comments, or discussion will also count towards participation, so use the hash tag.

**Assignment 2 – Major Terms in Theorizing Glossary – 10% - Due – Jan. 27th**

In order to properly understand theory it is important to fully understand the various terms that are regularly utilized in theoretical based discussions. Please use your text, online resources, and any other source to develop working definitions for the following terms:

- Values:
- Ideology:
- Paradigm:
- Approach:
- Perspective:
- Framework:
- Informal Theory:
- Formal Theory:
- Grand Theories:
- Mid-Range Theories:
- Practice Theories:
- Practice Models:
- Conceptual Models:
- Linear Theories:
- Cyclical Theories:
- Dialectical Theories:
- Ontology:
- Epistemology:

In addition to defining the terms above, please provide an example of each term. I do not care how you format this as long as you meet the criteria set forth. You also need to submit a reference page in any format you want for the resources you used in this project. Please submit a copy of your project to C-Tools by the beginning of class on Jan. 27th.
**Grading Criteria**

- All terms defined – 5pts
- One example of each term provided with appropriate context – 3pts
- References documents – 2pts

**Assignment 3 - Theory Learning Sessions Dyad or Small Groups TBD (20%)**

**Overview**

In groups of 3-4, depending on class size, you will be asked to come together around common areas of interest. Presentation time limits will be determined based on class size and number of groups, but are typically around 60 minutes. You will prepare a resource guide and post it to the class Facebook group page or a link to if using Google Docs. You should share your resource guide at least a few days before you present and preferably a week ahead of time. You will also assign two readings of your choosing one week ahead of time for peers to read before your learning session. The presentation should include dialogue, information sharing, and audience engagement. Whenever possible, activity components are highly encouraged. This is not a presentation, but a learning session. You will teach us about a theory and help us to feel comfortable with utilizing it. The following criteria will be graded.

**Preparation of the group** – Indicates coming to class prepared having completed the and posting the resource guide ahead of time for peers to read over, being prepared with all materials and technology when you arrive to class. It should be evident that you have both knowledge of the theory and are prepared to present and teach. – 10pts

**Audience Engagement** – Did you properly engage the audience using a variety of approaches? Did you facilitate a learning activity with the class? Did you ask for questions? – 10pts

**Resource Guide** – Please provide a resource guide using the class Facebook group for peers. Your resource guide should provide a history of the theory, major theorists, major tenets of the theory, and how it is applicable to social work practice. You should provide additional media, web links, and references for us to learn from. Your resource guide should not look the same as the corresponding Wikipedia page or you will be marked down. – 10pts

**Assignment 4 - Social Change Project: Linking Theory to Practice (40%) – Due April 21st**

During the course of this term, you will learn about a number of theories regarding social change and have an opportunity to apply that learning to a case study from the news, your internship, work, or life experience. You will analyze the problem using the major tenets of one or two major theories discussed this semester. Additionally, you will develop an intervention guided by theory(s) to address the problem that you analyzed.
My preference is for you to try and use one theory to analyze the problem and for developing an intervention because it will fit better together; however, some theories are better at explaining issues and others at guiding intervention, so if needed you can use one theory for the analysis and another for the intervention. This project can be completed in small groups or on your own. If working in small groups you must work collaboratively with everyone contributing to the entire paper. All members should be taking the lead on writing some sections, everyone should be researching, and everyone should be editing and revising each section. Use Google docs or drop box to help facilitate the collaborative process.

I. **Title Page**

II. **Problem Statement (2-3 Pages)** – Identify and describe what the social problem or issue is that you are analyzing. Provide statistics, reference, and evidence of the existence of the problem. Speak to why you are interested in this issue from a personal, practice, and/or social work position. Cite all resources using APA format. Should have at least 6 references in this section.

III. **Consequences to Social Justice (1 Page)** – How does this issue relate to social justice in your opinion? Define what social justice means to you and discuss how it is threatened, how people are marginalized, how it perpetuates injustice, or other relevant discussion. Think also about whether different people or groups are affected differently by the problem.

IV. **Overview of Theoretical Framework for Analysis (2-3 Pages)** – Define and describe the theory that you have chosen to use for the analysis of the problem. Justify why you are choosing the theory and how it is useful for understanding the problem. Briefly explain the historical roots or origins of the theory, what kind of theory it is (Refer back to the theory glossary), and describe the major tenets of the theory.

V. **Theory Analysis (2-3 Pages)** – Using the major tenets identified in the previous section; explain how each tenet speaks to the causes of the problem that you have identified. For example: One of the major tenets of all strands of feminist theory is that socialized gender norms perpetuate patriarchy and the marginalization of women. Therefore if I am seeking to understand a social problem such as domestic violence, I would speak to how socialized gender norms objectify women, how the media shows women in submissive or secondary roles to men, and how women are often portrayed being the objects of violence in television, music, and film, leading some individuals to grow up thinking violence against women is justifiable.

VI. **Power Analysis (2 Pages including Diagram)** – Using force field analysis you will identify the major forces working to perpetuate the problem as well as
critically think about potential forces working to prevent or minimize it. This power analysis can be a useful tool in informing your intervention to affect change. You will provide a force field diagram and briefly discuss what it conveys and how it will inform your intervention.

VII. **Theory Informed Intervention (3-4 Pages) —** Explain the context for your macro level intervention (organizations, policy, communities) as specifically as possible. You may not for this assignment focus at an individual, family, or small group level, but must focus at the macro level. For example, will this intervention take place in a neighborhood in Detroit, a not-for-profit organization, or through larger scale policy development? Describe your proposed intervention and how you are using theory to inform it. If using a different theory than in your analysis, please describe the theory, origins, and major tenets that you are using for the intervention (If using the same theory as in the analysis, no need to duplicate this again). Describe the goals of your intervention, what steps, stages, or activities it will undergo, and what the expected outcomes will be (These should relate back to addressing your originally identified social problem). Briefly discuss how you used your theory to inform the intervention.

VIII. **Evaluation of Theory Intervention (1-2 Pages) —** In this section describe how you will evaluate the effectiveness of your intervention in addressing the social problem that you identified within the context outlined; evaluation of theoretical based interventions are essential for refining and improving them for future use.

IX. **Critical Thinking Summary (2-3 Pages) —** In this section discuss how feasible you believe your intervention would be to implement in practice. What resources, supports, and environmental factors would you need in order to implement this intervention? What are the potential barriers or challenges that could hinder or prevent the intervention from being successfully implemented? What other considerations related to ethics, cultural humility, or cultural sensitivity might you need to consider?

X. **References** — Whenever you make a claim of fact in your paper, you should be providing one or more references to back it up. In a paper of this magnitude, you should have a minimum of 7-10 references to properly frame the social problem and another 4-5 references to explain and apply your chosen theory. Use APA format for citation and references.
Grading Criteria for Assessment Report

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Major sections properly covered in the paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper identification and use of theory explicit in paper, including major tenets of the theory.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper is well written with proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, and style</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 References used in the paper with proper APA reference page</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force Field Analysis utilized in problem identification stage</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper is between 15-25 pages long not including title page and references.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper defines major terms properly</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points Awarded</strong></td>
<td><strong>/40</strong></td>
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Weekly Schedule & Course Outline –

Week 1 Jan. 13th
Introductions and overview of course
Readings:
Chapter 1 H&L text.

NO CLASS JANUARY 20th for celebration of Martin Luther King Junior’s legacy
**Week 2 Jan. 27th – Theory Terms Paper Due**
Defining Terms Necessary for Understanding Theory
Readings:

**Week 3 Feb. 3rd**
Theorizing about Social Justice and Social Change
Readings:


**Week 4 Feb. 10th**
Theory and consciousness: Social identities, power, privilege, and oppression
Readings:


**Week 5 Feb. 17th**
Education as a mechanism for creating social change
Readings:


(Eds.) *We make the road by walking: Conversations on education and social change* (pp. 227-248). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

**Week 6 Feb. 24th –**  
Readings for this week onward in the semester will be determined by your interest areas, theory groups, and where we are as a group. The readings will be posted one week prior to the class that they are assigned for. For weeks where groups are presenting, please look for communication from the presenting group about assigned readings prior to the class. Groups, please have most of your resource guides prepared on the Facebook group page one week prior to the class session that you are facilitating. If I assign anything, I will post the article or link on the Group FB page.

NO CLASS MARCH 3RD SPRING BREAK  
Week 7 – Mar. 10th Theory Presentation Brady  
Readings TBA  
Week 8 Mar. 17th – Presentations 1 and 2 – Theories Guided by Positivism  
Readings TBA  
Week 9 Mar. 24th – Presentations 3 and 4 – Interpretive Theories  
Readings TBA  
Week 10 Mar. 31st – Presentations 5 and 6 – Critical Theories  
Readings TBA  
Week 11 Apr. 7th – Post-Modern Theories  
Week 12 Apr. 14th – Globalization and Social theory  
Chapter 12, 13, 14 in H&L Text  
**Week 13 Apr. 21st**  
Final applied theory project papers due.  
Final Class Praxis