Social Work 611: Social Change Theories
Mondays, 8:00 AM-12:00 PM
Room: 2752 SSWB
Spring/Summer 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!) Final grades go by points not percentages as indicated below.

Your grades will be distributed along the following scale:

- 100 A+  89-87 B+  79-77 C+  69-60 D
- 99-94 A  86-83 B  76-73 C  59 and below E
- 93-90 A-  82-80 B-  72-70 C

**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:

- **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.

**Inclement Weather Policy**

Although the university seldom closes down due to the weather conditions, I may make the call to hold class online in the case of bad weather. I will usually try and e-mail everyone early in the morning or the night before if weather conditions are bad. In lieu of class we will engage in a discussion board using our class FB Page related to the readings. I will post several questions and expect folks to engage in a discussion around
them. I may also post some YouTubes, Blogs, or other current events to discuss in a theoretical way. You are also encouraged to post questions to one another and I will chime in on them. I also encourage learning groups to meet during this time via Google Hangout to discuss group projects. I will expect everyone to participate in the discussion board and communicate with your project teams for participation credit.

**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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
<td>Weekly contributions through active class participation and attendance.</td>
<td>Students attending all classes with high participation will be eligible for five extra credit points. Absences will result in a decrease in participation for each absence beyond one for any reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary of Theory Terms</td>
<td>May 19th</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>July 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”. 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. Students attending and participating at a high level in all classes will be eligible for five extra credit points for the semester. Students missing more than one class or who repeatedly leave early and/or arrive late will be marked down. Students missing more than three classes will be asked to withdraw from the class or receive no higher than a “C” grade.

Assignment 2 – Major Terms in Theorizing Glossary – 10% - Due – May 19th
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:
Epsitemology:
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.
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 TBA depending on class size (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 45 minutes. You will prepare a resource guide and e-mail it to the class 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. **You should not only provide an overview of the theory, but application of the theory to a practice situation.** 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 – Includes coming to class prepared having completed the and posting the resource guide ahead of time for peers to read over and providing two readings or videos for peers at least 5 days ahead of time. You must also provide an overview of the theory and apply it to a practice situation. – 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 July 23rd**

During the course of this term, you will learn about a number of theories regarding social change and have an opportunity to apply your learning to a seminal project that
you create through consult with the instructor. Students are encouraged to be creative, but also must demonstrate that their projects meet the objectives for the course expressed in this outline. For students wanting to follow a more traditional approach to the final assignment, you may look to developing 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. Part of this assignment is developing a framework to use for this paper with few prescribed instructions from me. In many educational settings outside the U.S., educators will simply provide the topic for a paper, but students must develop their own framework. Here, my expectations are that the paper is research based and incorporates articles and resources. At this point in your education, you should know how to write a research paper and how to format it. APA format for the paper and references is my other requirement. Your paper must be grounded or focused on theory and provide enough information to the reader, but still concise enough that it isn’t redundant.

**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>Paper is research based and statistics and statements of fact are backed up by appropriate references.</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper is focused on and utilizes theory correctly.</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>Paper is written in proper APA format</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper is comprehensive enough to thoroughly cover the topic, but concise enough to avoid redundancy.</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</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></td>
<td><strong>/40</strong></td>
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Weekly Schedule & Course Outline –

Week 1 May 12th
Introductions and overview of course
Readings:
Chapter 1 H&L text.

Week 2 May 19th – Theory Terms Paper Due
Defining Terms Necessary for Understanding Theory
Readings:

No Class May 26th

Week 3 June 2nd
Theorizing about Social Justice and Social Change
Readings:


Week 4 June 9th
Theory and consciousness: Social identities, power, privilege, and oppression
Readings:


Week 5 June. 16th  
Education as a mechanism for creating social change  
Readings:


Week 6 June 23rd – Presentations 1 and 2  
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 send out your readings enough ahead of time to colleagues so that they have an opportunity to read or view them before class. Theory guides must be presented to group members on the day that you are presenting.

Week 7 – June 30th - Presentations 3 and 4  
Readings TBA

Week 8 July 7th – Presentations 5 and 6  
Readings TBA

Week 9 July 14th – Presentations 7 and 8 if needed  
Readings TBA

Week 10 July 21st – TBD  
Readings TBA

Week 11 July 28th – Wrap-Up