Course Info: SW 502- Organizational, Community and Societal Structures and Processes
Sections 004 and 005
Fall 2014

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Office Hours: Mondays, 9:30-12:00 noon or by appointment

Course Description
This course provides critical perspectives on theory, paradigms and research knowledge about political, economic and societal structures and processes that are related to communities, societal groups and organizations. It also explores how medium to large social systems have significant social, political, economic, and psychological impacts on the functioning of individuals, families and social groups, and provides a framework for understanding social justice goals and processes that includes the impacts of privilege, oppression and diversity. Students will engage in critiques of different bodies of knowledge to understand their histories, sources, strengths and biases. This knowledge is considered in relation to one’s own social locations and within a framework of social work values and ethics that support the general welfare of all inhabitants, especially those facing significant disadvantage.

Course Content
The course employs frameworks of social justice, intersectionality and other core social work values for the critical examination of theoretical perspectives of organizational, community, societal, and global structures and processes. Students will examine theories related to poverty, inequality, different forms of oppression and privilege, social change and social justice, theories of political economy and communities, organizational theory, social policy, critical approaches, and other key topics. In examining these theoretical foundations, students will explore the intersectionality of diverse structural and cultural 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], how these affect work towards justice, and barriers to this work. A range of approaches to theorizing will be employed, with an emphasis on those that enhance different types of analysis and illuminate many aspects of organizations, communities, and society. A central theme will be on factors that contribute to power inequities and can be mobilized for change.
Course Competencies and Practice Behaviors
This course addresses the following competencies and practice behaviors:

COMPETENCY 1—Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession’s history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession’s enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers

1.2 practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
1.3 attend to professional roles and boundaries;

COMPETENCY 2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers

2.4 apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

COMPETENCY 3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers

3.1 distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;
3.2 analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and
3.3 demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

COMPETENCY 4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers

4.1 recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
4.2 gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
4.3 recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences;

**COMPETENCY 5**—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers

5.1 understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
5.3 engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

**COMPETENCY 6**—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers

6.2 use research evidence to inform practice.

**COMPETENCY 7**—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers

7.1 utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and
7.2 critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

**COMPETENCY 8**—Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers
8.1 analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and

**COMPETENCY 9**—Respond to contexts that shape practice.
Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers

9.1 continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and

**COMPETENCY 10**—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

**COMPETENCY 10(a)**—Engagement
10.a.1 substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
10.a.3 develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

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

1) Identify, describe, and critique selected theoretical perspectives and/or paradigms (models) on organizational, community, societal and policy structures and processes. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 3.2, 6.2)

2) Describe and analyze how community, organizational, and societal structures and processes impact the client groups served by social agencies and also how communities, organizations and societal structures and processes influence each other. (Practice Behaviors 3.1, 3.3, 7.1, 7.2, 9.1)

3) Examine and critically analyze how factors related to privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice are manifested in the structures and processes of society, communities, and organizations. Examine especially how these change over time and contexts and impact different populations and settings, especially those at-risk. These include:
   a. Describing incentives and facilitators for organizational and community competence
   b. Analyzing barriers to organizational and community competence and what may reduce these.
c. Identifying sources of intragroup and intergroup conflict stemming from cultural group membership

d. Identifying the role of risk and protective social factors in relation to social problems and social/economic justice.

(Practice Behaviors 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 8.1, 9.1)

4) Analyze how the intersections of the diverse dimensions impact their own life experiences, their relationships with colleagues and supervisors, agency clientele, community groups and policy issues. (Practice Behaviors 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1)

5) 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.

(Practice Behaviors 2.4, 5.3, 10.1, 10.3)

Course Design:

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

Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity:

will be addressed through presentation of theory and research about privilege, oppressed and at-risk populations, how multiple social locations interact, and the impacts that community, organizational and societal functioning has on the well-being of these groups.

Theme Relation to Social Justice:

will be covered in the empirical and theoretical literature that document socially just organizational, community, and societal structures and processes. Social change theories and strategies will be presented that demonstrate how we move toward a more socially just society.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation:

will be addressed through discussion of theorizing for planning, programs and systemic interventions to promote positive goals [e.g., social justice, quality of life, organizational and community competence and resilience] and address risk and protective factors to prevent problems, in different system levels, contexts, and populations.

Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:

will be reflected in the theories, knowledge base and scholarly methods that inform organizational, community, and societal analyses and interventions.
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 workplace, improving agency policies and procedures, and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations.

Required Texts


All journal articles assigned are available through the University of Michigan library system. Book chapters that are not available through the library will be posted in the resources section of the CTools website.

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, Video and Voice Recorder Policy
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 (15 points)- Due 10/3/2014 @ 11:59PM
2. Mid Term Exam (25 points)- Due by 10/17/2014 @ 11:59PM
3. Organizational Analysis and Presentation (20 points)- Due 11/23/2014 @ 11:59 pm
4. Final Exam (30 points)- Due 12/8/14 @ 1:30 PM
5. Attendance and Participation (10 points)
Grading: A 100 point system is used.

A 95-100  B- 81-83  D 65-69
A- 91-94   C+ 77-80  E 64 or fewer points
B+ 87-90  C  74-76
B  84-86  C- 70-73

“A” is awarded for exceptional performance and the mastery of the material
“B” is awarded for papers that 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 by no later than 11:59 pm on the days they are due. You must submit all assignments through 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.

- I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE ASSIGNMENTS

- 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.

- IF YOU PLAGIARISE IN THIS COURSE YOU WILL FAIL IT.
• Plagiarism includes:
  • Taking credit for someone else’s work (i.e. paraphrasing their work without citing them, or using text from their work without attributing it to them)
  • Turning in work you’ve submitted for a grade in another course
  • 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 )

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

This course has four assignments, with 10 points assigned for attendance and participation.
1. Book Review (15 points)- Due 10/3/2014 @ 11:59PM
2. Mid Term Exam (25 points)- Due by 10/17/2014 @ 11:59PM
3. Organizational Analysis and Presentation (20 points)- Due 11/23/2014 @ 11:59 pm
4. Final Exam (30 points)- Due 12/8/14 @ 1:30 PM
5. Attendance and Participation (10 points)

You are expected to attend each class. I do not assign incompletes or accept late papers. Details for each assignment are listed below:

Assignment 1: Book Review (15 points)
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). The book must be approved by week 3. When selecting your book, make sure that it includes empirical research and/or a review of empirical studies on its topic. Prepare a critical review (10 double spaced pages) of the book that includes the following:

• A statement of the issues being addressed
• The theoretical approach used by the author(s)
• The key findings and evidence supporting them
• Your critical assessment of the
  1) theoretical approach and 2) evidence supporting the author's conclusions.

The author, in most cases, will detail their theoretical approach. You should also refer to a theory or set of 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.

**Assignment 2: Mid Term Examination (25 points)**

A take home Mid Term Examination will be administered during week 7. Instructions will be provided at the time of the examination. Late papers will not be accepted under any circumstance, barring death, serious injury or a diagnosed medical condition.

**GROUP ASSIGNMENT: Organizational Analysis (20 points)**

You will work in groups of up to five students. You must select two similar human service agencies and write a report comparing their practices. For example, you could select two recreation centers, elementary schools, social service agencies, public libraries, etc. 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 must also 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 should conduct an observation of their activities. All students in a group will receive the same grade. No exceptions.

You must write a 20 page, double spaced report that addresses the following:

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 are 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**
What are the interactions like between clients and staff? 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 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?

VII. **Organizational issue**
Next, using the information you gathered in parts I through VI, 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 VII (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, movements, etc.).

Briefly describe the organizational issue (s) you are interested in understanding. Describe the organizational theory (ies) used to aid your analysis (e.g., human relations, political economy, institutional, critical, postmodern, etc). This section should have the following components:

- **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?

- **Identify the theory used to analyze the issue?**

- **Describe the aspects of the organization are highlighted by this theory** (e.g., power dynamics, organizational culture, stakeholder demands, policy environment, etc.)?

- **Use the theory to address the question you pose about the organizational issue of interest.**

**Final Examination (30 points)**
A take home Final Examination will be administered during the final week of class. Instructions will be provided at the time of the examination. Late papers will not be accepted under any circumstance, barring death, serious injury or a diagnosed medical condition.

**Attendance and Class Participation (10 Points)**
Students are expected to attend and participate in all classes and classroom activities.

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

**Session 1: September 8: Introductions**

**Guiding Questions**
- What is social work?
- What is social theory and why is it important to the practice of social work?
- What are the different ways to think about the relationship between the individual, communities, and society?
- What happens when those relationships are strained? When they break down? And what of social exclusion?
- What role do social workers play? What role should they play?

**Readings**


Hill, Lauren (2014). Black Rage (Lyrics handed out in class)
Session II: September 15: It all Falls Down

Guiding questions
- How can theory help us understand the relationship between the individual and society?
- What is “class” and what do we mean when we say it?
- Who are the poor? Who are the working class?
- What are the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality?
- How is poverty experienced and by whom?

Readings
Saez, Emmanuel. 2010. Striking it richer: the evolution of top incomes in the United States. (Posted in Ctools)
Hurst, Chapter 7: The polarization of economic resources. (Posted in Ctools)

Note: 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 Readings
Session III: September 22: Leviathan Turns

Guiding Questions

- How do political, institutional, and cultural processes shape the relationship between the state, society, community, and the individual?
- How can the critical examination of poor people’s interactions with the “state” help us rethink social work and social policy practice?
- What’s race got to do with it?

Readings


Recommended Readings


***You must tell me which book you have selected for the book review. I must approve the book before you review it for the class***
Session IV: September 29: Bringing the State Back In

Guiding Question
- How do competing social paradigms relate to social work practice and the experiences of the people we serve?

Readings [Bring the Book with you to class]
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
Mullaly Chapter 7: Feminist, Anti-Racist, and Postmodern Critiques

Recommended Readings

Session V: October 6: “Doing” Sexuality

Guiding Question
- How can critical theories help us reframe social work in the current age?
- How can rethinking sexuality (not just “gender”) improve the social situations of the groups we’re accountable to?

Readings

Recommended Readings

***Book Review Due October 3, 2014 @ 11:59PM***

**Session VI: October 13:** Study Break—no class:

**Session VII: October 20:** A Social Autopsy of City and Community

**Guiding Questions**

- How should we define community and neighborhood?
- Why are these concepts important to social work practice?
- What are the societal forces (i.e. politics, economy, culture, demography) that impact them?
- How do historical trends in employment, education, and residential composition impact neighborhood and community level processes?

**Readings**


**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*

***Mid Term Examination Due: October 17, 2014 By 11:59PM***

Session VIII: October 27

Guiding Questions
- What is the relationship between culture and structure in impoverished neighborhoods?
- What is the relationship between the ways in which cultural categories are understood and the distribution of resources?
- What is the relationship between culture and oppression?

Readings

Recommended

Session IX: November 3

Guiding Question
- What is the role of social institutions in the building of community and social capital?

Readings
Session X: November 10: Examining Ourselves

Guiding Question
- What can a critical examination of social work practice tell us about our craft?

Readings

Session XI: November 17: The Organizational Imperative

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

Readings

***Organizational Analysis Papers due by 11:59 pm on November 23, 2014***

Session XII: November 24: Getting our Hands Dirty

***ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS PRESENTATIONS***

Session XIII: December 1: Movements Matter

Guiding Questions
How do social movements contribute to social change?
What role should social work play in social movements?

Readings

Session XIV: December 8: Social Work and Social Change: What can be done?
Guiding Question
What can we do to affect social change?

Readings

***Final Examination Due by 1:30 PM on December 8, 2014***