Course Info:

Title:   SW 611- Theories of Social Change
Section(s):  001 and 002
Term:   Spring/Summer 2015
Times/Dates:  Mon 8:00 am to 12 noon, May 11- July 27, 2015

Instructor:   Reuben Miller, PhD, AM
Assistant Professor, School of Social Work
University of Michigan

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mreuben@umich.edu

Office Hours:  Mondays, 12:30 to 2:30 pm by appointment only

Course Description:  This is a course on theory and research on social change. The course is guided by four lines of inquiry: 1) What is social change?  2) Why should we enact social change? 3) For whom What do we think we know about the processes, catalysts, and consequences of change on a societal level? 4) Change for whom?

Course Content:  The course employs frameworks of social justice, intersectionality and other core social work values for the critical examination of theoretical perspectives on social change. 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.
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS): This course will use a variety of pedagogical strategies, including readings, class exercises, case studies, and debates to address the CSWE Education Policy and Accreditation Standards.

- **Social Justice**: 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.

- **Multiculturalism & Diversity**: 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.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation**: 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**: Behavioral and Social Science Research will be addressed by examining the evidence used to build theory and test theory through its applications in practice.

- **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.

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.

**Course Design:** Required readings will be selected by the instructor. Suggested references will be included for each session, along with a list of references related to this course. Class room activities may include lectures, discussion, simulations, videos/films, group projects, case analyses, etc. The format is a mix of lecture and seminar, including student-facilitated discussions of the assigned readings and in-class presentations.

All journal articles assigned are available through the University of Michigan library system. Book chapters not available through the library will be posted in the CANVAS website or a link will be provided for ease of access.

**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. Class participation (20%)
2. Book review OR review of ten research studies (30%)
3. In class presentations (10% of grade)
4. Social change toolkit (40% of final grade)

Grading: A 100 point system is used:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-94</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-90</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>64 or fewer points</td>
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“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 8:00 am on the day it is due. You must submit all assignments through the course website and turn in a hard copy to me on the day the assignment is due.

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 “guidelines 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**

**Class Participation (10 points):**
Students are expected to come to class prepared and to participate in class discussion each week. We will take attendance at the beginning of each class beginning in week 3.

**Group Class Presentations (20 points)**
You will work in small groups to present the weekly readings and the case study of the day for the course.

**Book Review (30 points)**
Select a book on a social justice 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). 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 (5 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.
  • A discussion of opportunities for change presented in or missed by the author in the book
**Toolkit for Change (40 points)**
You will work in small groups to craft a social change toolkit. Details will be provided in subsequent class discussions and posted on the course website.
CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

SECTION 1: ON THEORY AND METHOD

Week 1: May 11, 2015: Whither social change?


Week 2: May 18, 2015: Change for whom? …or… Change for what?


*Case Study:* The New Oilmen

Week 3: May 25, 2015: ***MEMORIAL DAY: NO CLASS***
SECTION II: ON POLITICS, ECONOMY, AND CULTURE

Week 4: June 1, 2015: Neoliberal newspeak


*Case study:* After the storm

Week 5: June 8, 2015: Fighting the culture wars


*Case study:* Respectability and the politics of protest

SECTION III: MOVEMENTS MATTER

Week 6: June 15, 2015: What social movements do


*Case study: Tahir Square*

***Book Review Due Today by 8am***
***Put hard copy in my mailbox on my office door and turn in electronic copy via CANVAS***

**Week 7: June 22, 2015: Burning down the city… or… does violence work?**


*Case study: Stonewall*

**Week 8: June 29, 2015: Digital Youth: Toward an analytic of the new social movements**


*Case study: #Blacklivesmatter*

**SECTION IV: ORGANIZATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE**

**Week 9: July 6, 2015: The Organizational Dimensions of Social Change**


*Case Study: Social entrepreneurship*

**Week 10: July 13, 2015: A New Peculiar Institution**


Miller, R.J. (Under Review). “You’re in a room full of addicts! Prisoner reentry as a social institution and the “making up” of the ex-offender. (Posted on CANVAS)

*Case Study: Fighting to Overcome Records and Create Equality (FORCE)*

**Week 11: July 20, 2015: Course wrap up**

**Week 12: July 27, 2015: NO CLASS, TURN IN FINALS**

***Social change toolkits are due***