This required foundation course is designed to increase students’ awareness, knowledge, and critical skills related to diversity, human rights, social and economic justice. The topics of this course include developing a framework for 1) engaging diversity and differences in social work practice and 2) advancing human rights and social and economic justice. We will explore the knowledge base that underlies skills needed to work towards justice. These include types and sources of power, multiple social locations, social constructions, social processes, social identities, conflicts, and how all these interact. A major emphasis is on developing skills in critical contextual thinking and analyses, and in praxis, learning to use knowledge and theory to recognize and critique underlying assumptions and paradigms, and inform working for change. Multiple kinds of boundaries are especially important—across groups, between organizations and system levels, and within and between people, related to intersecting social locations.

Course Content

Students will actively explore how societal power and diversity characterize and shape the human experience, and are critical to the formation of social structures, cultural understandings, group and organizational processes, and identities. 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. In this course, students will learn how current experiences of privilege and oppression are shaped by historical forces, societal structures, social constructions, group and interpersonal processes, and human understandings, including an understanding of the institutional, organizational, policy, and socio-cultural arrangements that contribute to them. Additionally, this foundation course will explore formulations of human rights, including positive rights, and negative conditions that need to be eradicated. This course also studies how social justice and injustice occur
in organizations, institutions, and society, relevant theories that can inform work for justice (e.g., critical race theory, and components of many theories), and how mechanisms of oppression and privilege work (e.g., marginalization, exploitation, violence, cultural hegemony, and powerlessness).

**Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be better able to:

1. Describe community and organizational work for social change.
2. Demonstrate knowledge and skills for working for justice, enacting critical consciousness, and engaging and addressing issues of power and diversity.
3. Describe the dynamics of difference and dominance/oppression are and how they impact human functioning and social relations within and across diverse groups.
4. Describe how structural differences in society are shaped by historical, psychological, social, and political factors.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of social locations, constructions, processes, and identities and the diversity within these. This includes increased knowledge about the forces that shape complex selves, relationships, and worldviews.
6. Demonstrate skills in critical contextual thinking, applying multiple theories and frameworks to illuminate underlying assumptions, biases and possible opportunities, and engaging in praxis.
7. Demonstrate awareness of the sources of power, how to mobilize power towards positive change, and ways to challenge oppressive assumptions, biases, and prejudices.
8. Describe methods for continuing a lifelong process of recognizing our biases, learning how to change oppressive behaviors and structures, and building a more socially just multicultural society.

**Course Design**

This class will strive to foster a learning environment where each student can reflect critically on sources of power and mechanisms of oppression and privilege, construct a framework for justice, and examine sources of their beliefs and perspectives. This course will work to create a climate that supports critical analyses, mutual learning, engaging within and across differences and examining sources of power and knowledge. It involves lectures, video, and participation in experiential activities. Additionally, this course will provide a forum to critically examine how our multiple status locations, societal constructions, and social processes shape our beliefs, assumptions, behaviors, and life experiences. Special attention will also be given to knowledge about justice and change, and principles of change towards justice.

**Course Text:** Mullaly, Bob (2010) Challenging oppression and privilege, 2nd Ed, Oxford University Press, 978-0-19-542970-1 *(All the readings not in the text are on Canvas)*

**Instructor Style:** This class is organized around principles of adragogy (adult learning), empowerment, and collaboration. We will develop a co-learning environment that will include presentations, skill building activities and exercises, speakers, and different media. *Experiential activities will be central to the structure and process of this course.*
**Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity:** is addressed from the perspective of critically considering how diverse dimensions (such as ability; age; class; color; culture; ethnicity; family structure; gender - including gender identity and gender expression; marital status; national origin; race; religion, spirituality or worldview; sex; and sexual orientation) are socially constructed, embedded in societal structures across system levels, and maintained through social processes and intra and interpersonal relationships and schemas.

**Theme Relation to Social Justice:** is addressed from the perspective of critically analyzing theories and conceptualizations of justice, current trends and ethical issues and their implications for promoting social justice and social change, by considering the influence of normative rules and conditions. Additional focus will be directed towards how structural and institutional conditions affect the opportunities and well-being of different populations (advantaged and disadvantaged groups) in society.

**Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation:** is addressed from the perspective of critically considering how varied ideological, theoretical and empirical perspectives influence the definition of social problems and, subsequently, the ways in which institutional policies and practices address access, promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

**Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:** will be reflected in the theory, social science literature and research covered characterizing and analyzing macro-level structures, processes and their bearing and implications for the well-being of different vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and populations in society, as well as how marginalized groups exert agency and influence society.

**Relationship to SW Ethics and Values**
The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to give students direction about ethical issues as they relate to the experience of marginalized groups. The course will focus on social workers’ responsibility as professionals to promote general welfare by working toward the elimination of discrimination, expanding choices for all persons, encouraging respect for diversity, advocating for progressive changes in social policies, and encouraging informed participation by the public.

**Intensive Focus on PODS [Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice**
This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of practice, theories 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 developing 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.

**Accommodations for students with disabilities**
If you need an accommodation for a disability please let me know as soon as possible. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in class activities, and teaching methods can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. I will make every effort to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. If you disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential. For more information and resources,
please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 7633000 or go to http://www.umich.edu/~sswd/

Health and Wellness Services
Health and wellness encompasses situations or circumstances that may impede your success within the program. The Office of Student Services offers health and wellness services that are directed to the MSW student body. Feel free to contact Health and Wellness Advocates Lauren Davis (laurdavi@umich.edu) or Nyshourn PriceReed(ndp@umich.edu); 734-936-0961, regarding any health, mental health or wellness issue. This could include need for advocacy and referral to University or community resources, financial resources or counseling. Also contact Health and Wellness using ssw.wellness@umich.edu. The MSW student Guide to Health and Wellness can be found at http://www.ssw.umich.edu/current/Health_Wellness_Guide.pdf

Dependent Care Resources
For students with child or parenting/elder care responsibilities, feel free to consult the Students with Children website (http://www.studentswithchildren.umich.edu). This site is dedicated to the needs of students at UM who juggle parenting/elder care, study, and work. Resources include child care, financial assistance, social support, housing, and health care information. The website was created by the former Committee on Student Parent Issues (COSPI). For additional information on work/life support please also visit the Work/Life Resource Center site (http://www.hr.umich.edu/worklife/) and the UM Child Care gateway (http://www.hr.umich.edu/childcare/).

Religious Observances
Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance, community participation or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct
All students should be familiar with the Student Code for Academic and Professional Conduct (http://archive.ssw.umich.edu/studentguide/2014/page.html?section=12&volume=1) which holds our students to the highest standards of academic and professional conduct. Unacceptable academic behavior refers to actions or behaviors that are contrary to maintaining the highest standards in course work and includes such actions as cheating, plagiarism, falsification of data, aiding and abetting dishonesty and impairment. Any suspected situations of academic misconduct will be discussed with the student and then reported to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, Jorge Delva.

Campus Commitment and "Expect Respect" campaign
A respectful, supportive, and welcoming environment are necessary for student learning. The University of Michigan has developed the Campus Commitment and Expect Respect campaign are a University wide educational program that "provides clear definitions of discrimination and harassment prohibited by University policy, as well as contact information for University resources and ways to report concerns. Its goal is to contribute to an environment of civility and respect in which all members of the University community can work and learn." For more information on this program please read http://hr.umich.edu/oie/cc/index.html. Please contact me if you have any concerns about these issues as they relate to our class or your experience at the UM in general.

Important Questions for SW 504
1. What comprises and defines social justice?
   - What theories and assumptions underlie different formulations of justice?
   - What do we know about what creates and sustains socially just situations, contexts, practices?
   - What makes for competent, resilient, and socially just communities, and institutions/organizations within those communities?
   - How is social justice related to such concepts as promotion of health and well-being, individual and community resilience, prevention of various social problems?

2. How is society possible? What defines society? What are important components of society? [e.g., class conflict, social solidarity, ideas, culture (symbols, rituals), social affiliations, Shared and conflicting values, social structures, coercion and constraint]. What factors within these levels and components of society keep recreating and sustaining inequality?

3. What explains social behavior? How are macro and meso level behaviors and forces embedded in and influenced by macro contexts, and vice versa? [e.g., early socialization, on-going socialization, statuses and roles, social structures, rewards and punishments, conformity, audience reaction,]

4. What creates and sustains inequalities, injustice, oppression, privilege? Why are some social locations and categories associated with unearned privilege and others with disadvantage? What are different types and consequences of [different forms of] oppression, and implications for working for justice?

5. How do societal institutions work? What is important for me as a social worker to know about different types of institutions in order to be effective in my workplace and in reaching justice and other practice goals, with or on behalf of clients and in working with others? (e.g. families, organizations and communities and their functions, government and “the state”, the global political-economy)

6. How do societies and institutions change? General theories, planned/steered change approaches? e.g., From the bottom up, one individual at a time- Collective behavior Changing consciousness, symbols - Natural selection- New technologies Because of external forces, crises, economic markets and forces (capitalism)

7. What’s the role of government (the State) in funding and regulating behavior and social institutions, maintaining or reducing inequality?

8. How have and do micro, meso, macro structures and processes shape and influence me? How can I use knowledge about these forces to increase my critical consciousness, and work with diversity?
9. What is the role of theory, theorizing, and knowledge about all the above, in improving my practice, and in creating more just situations and more effective human services and communities?

COURSE THEMES WE WILL REPEATEDLY DRAW UPON:
Difference between dialogue, discussion, debate & discourse.
Difference between equity, access & equality.
Difference between intent & impact.
Difference between action & service *AND* charity work & change work.
Difference between change & progress.
Difference between empowerment & agency.
Difference between activism, advocacy, allyhood & solidarity.
Difference between being a change agent & a “fixer”/”do-gooder”/helper/savior.
Difference between a riot, rebellion, revolt, uprising & chaos.
Difference between community organizing, (re)building & development.

**Four major and inter-related streams within 504**

- Social justice, barriers to that (privilege/oppression), what sustains and disrupts these, and how these operate differently in different groups and contexts.
- Skills for theorizing and critical contextual thinking; learning about and applying theories
- Social change, and what helps systems to change. Prevention and promotion of justice and well-being within this.
- Intersectionality in knowledge of self and for working with others who are similar and different.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**ASSIGNMENT ONE: SURVEY**
This survey is designed to introduce us to each other as class on day one. The information in the survey will be the first step of many in this course in which we seek to understanding our individual backgrounds, experiences and intersecting identities. This process will be vital to making connections between social justice, diversity, and social work.

**ASSIGNMENT TWO: AUDIO RECORDING SESSION PART ONE**
For this assignment you will conduct an initial assessment of your own ideas, experiences and expectations about intergroup dialogue work. In order to do this project you will need a voice audio recorder (i.e., Smart Phone, Computer, I-pad, or old fashioned voice recorder). This project builds on several elements that are important in understanding social justice and diversity. One, it allows you to tell your own story in relation to the questions provided. You can, therefore, keep a recorded entry of your initial thoughts and feelings at the beginning of this course. Which represents the capacity to access your thoughts and feelings from a particular moment in time. Two, it embraces the idea of praxis, that is continuous action and reflection which is needed as you advance in your social work education. In other words we are continually in the process of weaving more threads into our stories of ourselves, our identities. This process of integrating interactions, experiences, and reflections is the foundation for personal growth and development. Thus a recorded story at one
moment in time allows for reflecting back and charting your knowledge, skills and awareness development at other point in time. Hence the second part of this assignment to be completed at the end of our course. This second portion of the assignment with require you to reflect on your initial recording and allow you to chart your learning process with particular attention to growth and development factors in doing social justice-oriented work. Additions details, resources and a grading rubric will be provided.

MASTER ASSIGNMENT: INTEGRATING THEORY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (THREE-PART ASSIGNMENT)
The goal of this assignment is to challenge you to think, write, and apply social theories critically. You will consider how to learn a new theory, and how social theories are developed, evolve, and are applied to dynamic social contexts. You will identify how biases and ideologies inherent in theoretical assumptions are influenced by the socio-historical conditions and methodologies that informed the development of a theory over time. You will articulate key elements of a theory and its application, and demonstrate your understanding of these by creating resource materials, an in-depth analysis paper, and a 5-8 minute Theory Talk session for your classmates. A short post-group reflection summary will be submitted individually for this portion of the assignment. Additions details, resources and a grading rubric will be provided.

-PART ONE (GROUP RESEARCH AND OPEN DISCUSSION ON CHOSEN THEORY)
For part one you will meet in your chosen theory group. You will spend the first hour researching relevant articles, studies, examples of your group’s chosen theory. You will spend the next hour reading and reviewing the materials you’ve found. The last hour will be spent critically discussing how biases and ideologies inherent in theoretical assumptions are influenced by the socio-historical conditions and methodologies that inform the development of your chosen theory over time. You will also begin to reflect on how this theory may or may not be relevant to your experiences. This last part will help you begin to formulate your Theory Talk.

-PART TWO (THEORY PAPER)
For part two you will investigate a social justice issue that is meaningful and relevant to you using theories of justice to identity justice goals and processes for this issue. You will identify types of oppression and privilege that operate to perpetuate injustice, considering social processes and structural, cultural and biopsychosocial mechanisms. In addition to the theory researched in your group you will use several other social theories to consider how to analyze and create change towards justice in this social issue area. You are expected to identify, succinctly summarize, and meaningfully integrate recent extant scholarly literature to support your analysis of your group researched theory, the additional supporting or contradicting theories, and how these theories serve to perpetuate or change the identified justice goals and processes related to the issue. Additional details and a paper grading rubric will be provided. This paper can serve as an artifact for your final portfolio project.

-PART THREE (THEORY TALK)
For part three of this assignment you will give a 5-12 minute talk to the class on the results of your investigation into your chosen social justice issue. You will share about your experience, what you discovered, and how your analysis relates to you as a professional social worker working in a framework of social justice. Think of this assignment as an opportunity to tell a story about your experience. This is meant to be a cross between a TED Talk and Moth Radio Hour. Which means humor is encouraged and truthfulness and a connection to real-life experience is required. Examples of both a TED Talk and Moth Radio Hour will be shared in class. The aim is to move away from
regurgitated PowerPoint sharing of written material towards a meaningful expression of learning. You may choose to have your talk video-recorded though that is not required. PowerPoints may be used, but that is also not required. A video recording of your Theory Talk can serve as an artifact for your final portfolio project. Additions details, resources and a grading rubric will be provided.

ASSIGNMENT THREE DUE: AUDIO RECORDING SESSION PART TWO
This second portion of the audio recording assignment will require you to reflect on your initial recording and allow you to chart your learning process with particular attention to growth and development factors in doing social justice-oriented work. Additions details, resources and a grading rubric will be provided.

ASSIGNMENT FOUR DUE: PRESENTATION OF PORTFOLIOS
Throughout this semester you will begin building your e-portfolio. There will be several opportunities throughout the semester to create artifacts from this course for your e-portfolio. Additions details, resources and a grading rubric will be provided.

Grading:

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<td>- Part Three Theory Talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment Four: E-portfolio Presentation</td>
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Grading Scale

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**Course Outline**

Session #1 (**Tuesday September 15**th): Who are we? Class Norms, Community Building, Overview of topics

- Why are you here? What are our motivations
- Who are we as a class?
- Activity – Calling In/Calling Out
- Activity – Developing Norms and Expectations
  - How will we celebrate our joys?
  - How will we navigate, acknowledge, heal & move forward from our challenges?
- Review of syllabus, schedule & assignments

Handouts:
- Info Sheet 504
- Forward Space Guidelines
- Important Questions for SW 504

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Session #2 (**Tuesday September 22**nd): Social Work Standards and Competencies related to Social Justice and Diversity in Social Work – Building off of Session #1

**ASSIGNMENT TWO DUE: AUDIO RECORDING SESSION PART ONE**

**READINGS:**

- Areo, B., & Clemens, K. (2013). *From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces*. From the Art of Effective Facilitation
- **CSWE Core Competencies-PDF on CTools**
- **NASW Standards of Cultural Competency-PDF on CTools**
- **UM Mission Statement-**Follow this link: [http://president.umich.edu/mission.php](http://president.umich.edu/mission.php)
- **SSW Mission statement-**Follow this link: [http://ssw.umich.edu/about/mission.html](http://ssw.umich.edu/about/mission.html)

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Session #3 (**Tuesday September 29**th): Theoretical and Conceptual Considerations - Review of potential theories for Theory Talk/Paper
Intro to conflict and multiple types and levels of analysis
- What is the difference between a theory & a perspective/framework?
- What is the Strengths Perspective?
- What is Generalist practice?
- What is social justice?
- Who are the oppressed/marginalized? Reviewing POC & People of different cultures/religious & spiritual beliefs, women & LGBTQ communities)
- What are social identities?
- What is intersectionality?
- Who are the target groups (aka minorities)?
- Who are the agent groups (aka majorities)?
- Review of major social “isms” (classism, racism, heterosexism & ageism)

READINGS:
- Chapter 1: Theoretical Perspectives on Social Problems


READINGS:
- Ch. 10-Unpacking Our Knapsack of Invisible Privilege
- Ch. 2- Oppression: An Overview
- Confessions of a Christian Supremacist by Julie Todd

Session #5 (Tuesday October 13th): MASTER ASSIGNMENT PART ONE (Group Research and Discussion Day for Theory Talk/ Paper) OUTSIDE OF CLASS

Session #6 (Tuesday October 20th): (FALL BREAK) NO CLASS

Session #7 (Tuesday October 27): Seelio Portfolio Overview/Instruction Day-Continue Discussion of Privilege, Oppression, Power, Tacit Assumptions, and Social Constructions. Parking Lot Catch-up Day

ASSIGNMENT DUE: PART ONE GROUP RESEARCH AND OPEN DISCUSSION ON CHOSEN THEORY REFLECTION PAPER

Session #8 (Tuesday November 3rd): Oppression at Personal and Cultural Level

GROUP ASSIGNMENT DUE: THEORY TALK GROUP #1
READINGS:
• Ch. 3-Oppression at the Personal Level
• Ch. 4-Oppression at the Cultural Level
• *Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy* (Rethinking Women of Color Organizing) by Andrea Smith

Session #9 (Tuesday November 10th): Oppression at Structural Level and Internalized Oppression and Domination,

GROUP ASSIGNMENT DUE: THEORY TALK GROUP #2

READINGS:
• Ch. 5 Oppression at Structural Level
• Ch. 6 Internalized Oppression and Domination
• *From Plessy to Ferguson*, by George Lipsitz
• *Greening the Urban Frontier: Race, Property, and Resettlement of Detroit*, by Sarah Safransky

Session #10 (Tuesday November 17th): Intersectionality: Personal, Cultural, Structural

GROUP ASSIGNMENT DUE: THEORY TALK GROUP #3

ASSIGNMENT THREE DUE: THEORY PAPER

READINGS:
• Ch. 7-The ‘Web’: The Multiplicity, Intersectionality, and Heterogeneity of Oppression

Session #11 (Tuesday November 24th): Working for Change: Addressing Oppression

GROUP ASSIGNMENT DUE: THEORY TALK GROUP #4

READINGS:
• Ch.8-Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice at the Personal and Cultural Levels

Session #12 (Tuesday December 1st): Social Justice, Implications for Practice and Policy

GROUP ASSIGNMENT DUE: THEORY TALK GROUP #5

  • What theories and assumptions underlie different formulations of justice?
○ What do we know about what creates and sustains socially just situations, contexts, practices?

○ What makes for competent, resilient, and socially just communities, and institutions/organizations within those communities?

○ How do societal institutions work? What is important for me as a social worker to know about different types of institutions in order to be effective in my workplace and in reaching justice and other practice goals, with or on behalf of clients and in working with others? (e.g. families, organizations and communities and their functions, government and “the state”, the global political-economy)

○ How do societies and institutions change? General theories, planned/steered change approaches? (e.g., From the bottom up, one individual at a time, collective behavior, changing consciousness, symbols, natural selection, new technologies, because of external forces, crises, economic markets and forces (capitalism) etc?)

○ How is social justice related to such concepts as promotion of health and well-being, individual and community resilience, prevention of various social problems?

READINGS:

• Chapter 6, “We are the leaders we’ve been looking for,” from The Next American Revolution, By Grace Lee Boggs


Session #13 (Tuesday December 8th): Working for Change: Dynamic System Approaches and Anti-Oppressive Social Work at Structural Level

GROUP ASSIGNMENT DUE: THEORY TALK GROUP #6

ASSIGNMENT THREE DUE: AUDIO RECORDING SESSION PART TWO

READINGS:

• Ch. 9-Anti-Oppressive Social Work at the Structural Level and Selected Principles of Anti-Oppressive Social Work

Session #14 (Tuesday December 15th): Continued Forward Movement / Celebrating Hard Work and Closing Session

ASSIGNMENT FOUR DUE: PRESENTATION OF PORTFOLIOS

Describe methods for continuing a lifelong process of recognizing our biases, learning how to change oppressive behaviors and structures, and building a more socially just multicultural society.