



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Course Info: Course no: SW 504-004
Title: Diversity and Social Justice
Term: Fall 2015
Times/Dates: Tues 9:00 am to 12 noon, Sept. 14- Dec. 14, 2015
Room: 2816 SSWB

Instructor: Reuben Jonathan Miller, PhD, AM
Assistant Professor of Social Work

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

Course Description

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. (4.2, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7)
3. Describe the dynamics of difference and dominance/oppression and how they impact human functioning and social relations within and across diverse groups. (4.1, 4.5)
4. Describe how structural differences in society are shaped by historical, psychological, social, and political factors. (4.1, 4.5)
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.. (4.2, 4.3)
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 (4.2, 4.3)
8. Describe methods for continuing a life long process of recognizing our biases, learning how to change oppressive behaviors and structures, and building a more socially just multicultural society. (4.2, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

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 knowledge about justice and change, and principles of change towards justice.

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.

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?
 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?
 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 justice (privilege/oppression), what sustains and disrupts these barriers, and how they 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.

Course Requirements

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. Participation and Attendance (20%)

Students are expected to read all materials before each week. The readings are subtle. They will take time to digest. Give yourself enough time to read and sit with the course content. If you do not, you will not be able to contribute, in a meaningful way, to course discussions and will not get much out of the class.

2. Reflection Exercise (20%): DUE 10/13

You will complete a self-reflection exercise. Instructions will be posted on Canvas.

3. Book Review (30%): DUE 11/3

You will read and review *No Way Out*, by Waverly Duck. Instructions will be posted on Canvas.

4. Final Exam (30%) DUE 12/15

You will complete a take home final exam. It will cover materials from the course readings and lectures. The exam will be posted on Canvas 1 week before the due date.

Grading: A 100 point system is used:

A 95-100
A- 91-94

B+ 87-90
B 84-86

B- 81-83
C+ 77-80

C 74-76
C- 70-73

D 65-69
E 64 or fewer points

“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: I require that you turn in a hard copy of all assignments, placing them in the mail folder on my office door, by the due date. All assignments must also be turned in via CANVAS.

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 the guidelines of their respective disciplines when writing assignments. While these guidelines may vary, 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.
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 have 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>)

Required Books

The following books are required for this course. You may order them from your favorite sites. I will also place an order for them at the Barnes and noble bookstore in the student union for your convenience.

- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. *Between the world and me*. Spiegel & Grau
- Duck, Waverly. 2015. *No way out: Precarious living in the shadows of poverty and drug dealing*. University of Chicago Press
- Edin, Katheryn J. and Shafer, H. Luke. 2015. *2.00 a day: Living on almost nothing in America*. Houghton and Mifflin Harcourt

Class Schedule and Readings

September 15, 2015: Getting to know each other

Course introduction, No required readings

September 22, 2015: A Theory of Everything: Pt 1. Race and Justice

- Coates, T. 2015. The black family in the age of mass incarceration. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/10/the-black-family-in-the-age-of-mass-incarceration/403246/>
- Reisch, M. (2002) Defining Social Justice in a Socially Unjust World. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services* 83 (4): 343-354.
- Rawls, J. (1972). *A Theory of Justice*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Read 207-221. Retrieved from <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/c/chalmersk/ECON184SP09/JohnRawls.pdf>

September 29, 2015: A Theory of everything Pt. 2. Gender and Justice

- Friedan, B. (1963). The Problem that has no name. In *the Feminine Mystique*, B. Friedan. W.W. Norton and Co. Retrieved from <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/ows/seminars/tcentury/FeminineMystique.pdf>
- Lorde, A. (1984). “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” in A. Lorde, *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Ed. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press. 110-114. Retrieved from <http://www.transart.org/wp-content/uploads/group->

[documents/50/1361996038-AUDRELORDEWOMENREDEFININGDIFFERENCE.pdf](#)

- West, C. and D.H. Zimmerman. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender and Society* 1(2): 125-151.
- Pateman, C. (1988). Feminism and the marriage contract. In Pateman (1988) *The Sexual Contract*. Polity Press. Retrieved from <http://www.westga.edu/~dmaccomb/Pateman,%20The%20Sexual%20Contract.pdf>

October 6, 2015: A Theory of Everything Pt. 3. Class and Justice

- Edin and Shaefer, 2.00 a day (entire)

October 13, 2015: Beyond Identity: Understanding Intersectionality

- Crenshaw, Kimberle (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43 (6): 1241-1299.
- Cho, S., K. W. Crenshaw, & L. McCall. (2013). Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis, *Signs* 38 (4), summer, 785-810.
- Hill Collins, P. 2004. "Prisons for our bodies, closets for our minds: Racism, Heterosexism, and Black Sexuality. In Hill Collins, P. *Black Sexual Politics*. Routledge (PDF posted on Canvas).

*****Reflection Due*****

October 20, 2015: FALL BREAK, NO CLASS

October 27, 2015: The body

- Coates, T. 2015. Between the world and me (entire)

November 3, 2015: Income inequality

- Stiglitz, Joseph E. *The price of inequality: How today's divided society endangers our future*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. Chapter 1: America's 1 percent problem. (Posted in Canvas)
- Saez, Emmanuel. 2010. *Striking it richer: the evolution of top incomes in the United States*. (Posted in Canvas)
- Hoopes-Halpin, Stephanie, Jeff Backstrand, Joanne Dick, Quintus Jett, Cynthia Stein Lessick, Jyoti Punjab, Kelly Robinson, Minglu Wang, Jonathan Woolley and Marc Holzer. (2014) Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed: Study of Financial Hardship. *United Way of Michigan*. Retrieved from http://www.unitedwayalice.org/documents/14UW%20ALICE%20Report_MI_Lowres_8.27.14.pdf

*****Book Review Due: No Way Out*****

November 10, 2015: Bringing the state back in

- Mullaly chp 3: The Neo-Conservative Paradigm (Posted on Canvas)
- Mullaly chp 4: The Liberal and Neo-Liberal Paradigms (Posted on Canvas)

- Schram, Sanford and Basha Silverman. (2012). The end of social work: Neoliberal Paternalism in Social Policy Implementation. *Critical Policy Studies* 6 (2): 128-47.

November 17, 2015: Examining ourselves

- Mullaly Chapter 7: Feminist, Anti-Racist, and Postmodern Critiques
- Carr, E Summerson. (2009). Anticipating and Inhabiting Institutional Identities. *American Ethnologist* 36 (2): 317-36.
- Miller, Reuben Jonathan. (2014). Devolving the Carceral State: Race, Prisoner Reentry and the Micro-politics of Urban Poverty Management. *Punishment and Society* 16 (3): 305-335.

November 24, 2015: Addressing Oppression

- Anderson, P. (2011). Explosion in the Arab World. *New Left Review* 68: 5-15.
- Miller, R.J. and F.F. Piven. (2012). Poor people's movements and the power to disrupt. *Journal of Poverty*, 16 (3):363-373.
- Sotiris, P. (2010). Rebels with a Cause: The December 2008 Greek Youth Movement as the Condensation of Deeper Social and Political Contradictions. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 34 (1): 203-209

December 8, 2015: What can be done?

- Allen-Meares, P., L. Gant, and T. Shanks. (2010). Embedded foundations: Advancing community change and empowerment. *The Foundation Review* 2 (3) 61-78. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-10-00010>
- Checkoway, B. (2013). Education for democracy by young people in community-based organizations. *Youth and Society*, 45, 389-403.
- Dawson, M.C. (2012). The Future of Black Politics: Forum: *Boston Review*. Retrieved from <http://www.bostonreview.net/forum/future-black-politics-dawson>
 - Guinier, L. and G. Torres (2012). Don't go it alone. A response to Dawson: *Boston Review*. Retrieved from <http://www.bostonreview.net/dont-go-it-alone>
 - Kelly, RDG. (2012). Neoliberalism's Challenge. *Boston Review* January 11, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.bostonreview.net/challenge-neoliberalism>
- Hasenfeld, Yeheskel, and Garrow, Eve. 2012. Nonprofit human service organizations, social rights, and advocacy in a neoliberal welfare state. *Social Service Review*, 86(2), 295-322.
- Thompson, Neil (2002). Social Movements, Social Justice and Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work* 32 (6): 711-722.

December 15: Final exams are due