1. Course Description:

This course will explore the origins and development of selected social variables characterizing racial, ethnic, gender, religious, class, ability and other cultural groups in contemporary U.S. society. Social and behavioral science theories and research findings on the allocation of different roles, status, and opportunities to these populations will be studied. Students will use a multidimensional, social justice, and multicultural framework to examine power, privilege, discrimination, and oppression. This course will emphasize that effective social work practice with diverse cultural groups involves understanding professional ethics in the context of the values of both the dominant society and the ethnic community.

2. Course Content:

The course content will include an exploration of historical, social, and political contexts for the study of diverse cultural groups, as gleaned from contemporary social science theories and conceptual frameworks. The current status of these cultural groups will be reviewed, including constructs such as the family, economic and educational attainment, development of informal and formal institutions within the cultural community, and modes of spiritual expression. This course will also explore the impact of multiple social group memberships on social roles, help-seeking and coping behavior, attitudes, and values. In addition, this course will contain a review of the contemporary conceptual frameworks influencing social science knowledge about intergroup relations and conflict, including but not limited to, culturally sensitive practice. The relationships among privilege, discrimination, and oppression for selected cultural groups, and the implications of these forces for social work practice, the administration of human service organizations, and the formulation of public policies will be covered.

4. Course Design:

The course format will include lectures, discussion, individual assignments, and class presentations.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

*Multiculturalism and Diversity* issues will be central to this course. The course will cover non-Hispanic white ethnic groups, Muslims, African Americans, American Indians, Latinos, Asians, as well as women and gender issues.
Social Justice and Social Change issues will be discussed throughout this course. Discrimination and micro-aggressions are a major component of this course. The relationships among injustice, conflict, and social change will also be discussed.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation approaches will be addressed within the section examining selected social identity groups in the United States. Students will use a strengths approach which links professional human service delivery systems with those formal and informal systems historically and currently available to these diverse cultural groups.

Behavioral and Social Science Research will be used throughout this course and will provide a foundation for evaluating the knowledge base on ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality, and ability constructs in research and practice.

6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:

This course will operationalize the NASW Code of Ethics, as it applies to ethical responsibilities to service consumers (clients), colleagues, and organizations. Other social work codes of ethics will also be examined in the treatment of these ethical responsibilities for selected cultural groups nationally and internationally.

7. Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS): This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on diversity. In particular, the course investigates ethnic and cultural diversity with regards to racial and ethnic groups (African Americans, Black Caribbeans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Native Americans, Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans), as well as religious denominations (Muslims).

Class Schedule

September 17   Overview of Course and Disability, Religion, Aging, Gender and Families

Required:


Optional:


### September 24 LGBT Relationships and Families

#### Required:


#### Optional:


### October 1 American Indians

#### Required:


#### Optional:

October 8  American Indians 2

Required:


October 15  African Americans, Black Caribbeans and Racism and Health

Required:


Optional:


October 22  Racial Microagressions and African Americans, Black Caribbeans continued

Required:


Optional:


October 29  Latinos

Required:


Optional:


October 5  Latinos continued and Asian Americans

Required:


Optional:


November 12  Asian Americans Continued

Required:


November 19  No Class

November 27 Thanksgiving

Dec 3 Muslim Americans
Required:


Optional:


December 10  Immigration and Non-Hispanic White Ethnic Groups

Required:


Course Administrative Tasks

Attendance:

You are expected to attend and to be prepared to take part in each class session. Attendance is important for you to keep up with course work. Missing 2 unexcused classes will reduce your final grade (e.g. an A will be reduced to an B) and each additional absence will reduce your final grade an additional half grade. As adult learners, I expect you to make appropriate decisions about attending class. Please notify me as soon as possible if you must miss a class. It is your responsibility to get materials, handouts, or class notes from one of your classmates if you are unable to be in class. Please be aware of the disruptive nature of coming to class late; enter the classroom as quietly as possible and wait until break to catch up with what is going on. If you anticipate that you will be absent for religious observances, please let me know ahead of time so that we can plan accordingly.

Laptops and Electronic Devices:

This class is involves both lecture and discussion. As such, laptops, and tablets can only be used for taking notes. They cannot be used for e-mail, social media or other use during class time. Cell phones are not permitted in the classroom. Use of these devices can be a distraction to both the user and their fellow classmates. Students are asked to refrain from their use in order to promote a more engaged classroom environment.

Phones and Pagers:

In consideration of your classmates, and due to their disruptive nature, I request that all telephones and pagers are turned off while you are in class. This is your time and I want you to be able to protect it. If you are required to carry a pager, please set it to vibrate only.

Accommodations for Students With Disabilities:

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know early in the term. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified
Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. If there are any circumstances and/or adaptations that are required for instruction or the classroom situation, please consult me.

Religious Holidays and Academic Conflicts: From the Provost’s Office:

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 or examinations 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 classes, examinations, or other 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 examinations or 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. Should disagreement arise over any aspect of this policy, the parties involved should contact the Department Chair, the Dean of the School, or the Ombudsperson. Final appeals will be resolved by the provost.

Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.
SW 620, Section 1
Contemporary Cultures in the United States
Robert Joseph Taylor
Fall 2015

Assignments:

1. All students are expected to read the required articles prior to each class and to be prepared to discuss them. All articles (both required and optional) are available on C-Tools.

2. All students are expected to write 3 or more discussion points/questions per article and post them on C-Tools by 5:00 p.m. the day before class.

3. All students are required to write a 5-7 page Mid-term paper. The topic of the mid-term paper is discrimination/micro-aggression and an outcome such as: mental health, health, help-seeking, counseling, family/marital relationships, education/economic attainment. The paper can focus on one population (e.g., Arabs), the intersection of several populations (e.g., African American elderly women, Gay American Indians, immigrant Vietnamese elderly) or focus on an issue that is relevant to several populations (e.g., discrimination and birth outcomes among African American and Arab women). The Mid-term can heavily draw upon the course readings both optional and required. The Mid-term paper and final paper must be on different topics and populations. They can be on the same population if approved by the instructor.

4. All students will be responsible for making an oral presentation on a topic on race, ethnicity, immigrant, age, gender, LGBT, disability or religious groups. The topic must be approved by the instructor. Each presentation should be a professional power point presentation drawing upon evidence based research. The presentation should be 10 minutes with 10-15 minutes for question and answer.

5. All students are required to write a 6-8 page final paper.

6. The oral presentation and final paper are all on the same topic. Students are expected to incorporate reasonable feedback from their oral presentation in their final paper.

Attendance:

Two class absences without permission of instructor results in a letter grade reduction at the end of the term.

Midterm Due: Nov. 2
Final Due: Dec. 12

Grading:

20% Class readings, participation (attendance) and discussion questions/points, and Oral Presentation

30% Mid-Term

50% Final Paper