

SW 701 Practice in International Social Work
University of Michigan School of Social Work
Fall 2015

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended to prepare social work students for involvement in social development interventions in an international arena. This course will focus selectively on the challenges developing countries face in improving the lives of their citizens and the roles social workers can play in solving or successfully addressing them. Among the issues, some of the following are included: provision of basic life necessities, hunger and nutritional insufficiency, education, economic development, the strains related to urbanization and modernization, ethnic conflict, child protection, community and familial violence, environment and community health, organization and administration of human services and citizen empowerment. Students will learn about strategies used by service providers, institutions, and self-help groups for the purposes of social transformation, community development, and enhancement of individual well-being. Central to the discourse will be an idiographic-nomothetic dialectic which counter-poses what is universal and what is culturally specific about social welfare issues and interventions across countries and regions. Course readings and discussion will begin with a focus on the globalization of selected social problems. An array of skills will be drawn from the traditional practice armamentarium of micro and macro social work methods to communicate to take collective action. Discourse will also focus on ways that these classic approaches must be adapted to increase their relevance for work in developing regions of the world, in international aid or relief organizations, and in programs for immigrants or refugees in this and other more technically developed countries. This course will also teach about newer models of social development and the opportunities these countries have and may offer to social workers working with their people.

FURTHER DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will examine human needs, social problems, the profession of social work, and social policy within the context of institutions and systems of power at the local (various world locales), national, and international levels. We will critically analyze theories of globalization and social development and broaden our global perspectives so that our understanding of social work in international settings is better informed. Finally, we will develop personal skills and attitudes needed in crossing cultures by examining our own values and assumptions, practicing cultural humility, and grappling with ethical issues that arise in international work. The course will include interaction with guests who have experience in various parts of the world with a variety of target populations and practice areas. This course includes components in macro and micro work, including community organizing, clinical work, advocacy, and social policy, and development.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Demonstrate knowledge of a global perspective on social welfare problems, with particular appreciation of the role to be played by social workers in addressing them.
2. Enhance their skills in assessment of problems of developing countries.
3. Demonstrate the ability to use assessment, development, and evaluation strategies which take into account differences based on class, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, spirituality, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, national origin, and gender.
4. Display an increased in sophisticated awareness of the interplay among cultural, social, political, and economic factors in application of micro and macro social work practice.
5. Develop sensitivity and awareness to understand people with different cultural, economic, historical, political, and ideological backgrounds.
6. Explain the role of idiosyncratic culturally-specific factors and use them in shaping strategies to address critical problems that occur around the world.
7. Envision and gain new exposure to new and innovative models of social welfare approaches to domestic social problems used in different countries.
8. Demonstrate the attitude and skills needed for lifelong development of intercultural competence and cultural humility.
9. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to practice in international social work.

COURSE DESIGN

This course will cover a wide range of practice methods and issues through readings, lectures, discussion, video, written work, and interactive learning activities. Guest lecturers will expand the range of knowledge and expertise on the social conditions, problems, and solutions in developing countries around the world.

Theme relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity

While this course will point to the striking similarities among social welfare issues around the globe, it will also take steps to emphasize the important differences. This course will challenge students to confront their own assumptions about what is normative and bring them face-to-face with social conditions that they have simply taken as a given. Many societies do not share the same dominant values and ideologies upon which U.S. social work models stand; and it becomes difficult to see differences and similarities from the other side when those values and ideologies are assumed in U.S. social work education and practice. This course will foster students' understanding of becoming "co-learners" in the field when faced with situations where their assumptions toward social workers' roles do not necessarily hold. Students will also be prepared for future interactions with people in and from other countries in terms of dealing with stereotypes cast on Americans as foreigners. Discussion of these issues will raise students' awareness of the complex nature of multiculturalism inherent in international social work.

Theme Relation to Social Justice

This course will advance student's understanding of the tensions that arise from global inequities between developed and developing countries and from the political and economic hegemony/exploitation of former colonial powers, such as Great Britain, Russia, France, and Spain, and current economic powers, such as the U.S., Japan, and Germany.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, & Rehabilitation

Many countries whose programs will be described in this course currently emphasize the use of prevention strategies and community empowerment in social service delivery to a much greater

extent than we are used to in this country. Exposure to these approaches will expand the horizons of student's thinking about what is possible in the arena of prevention. Exposure to these approaches will expand the horizons of student's thinking about what is possible in the arena of prevention.

Theme Relation to Behavioral & Social Science Research

The course will serve as the foundation of methods related to advocacy, program development, community development, and policy formation and evaluation. Knowledge will be drawn also from the fields of cultural psychology, anthropology, social psychology, economics, and political science.

Relationship to Social Work Ethics & Values

This course will challenge students' assumptions in social work ethics and values in critical ways. This course will involve examination of the ethical principles involved in efforts to accelerate modernization and the cost involved for traditional peoples. Moreover, the moral dilemma involved in the wide disparities in income and resource allocation among national groups will be explored. Students will also be introduced to the International Declaration of Ethical Principles of Social Work developed by the International Federation of Social Workers.

EXPECTATIONS:

We are a classroom of professionals and seek to have a respectful learning environment. Each student is expected to prepare for (by reading) and attend class and participate in activities and discussions. Each person in the classroom is also expected to show professional courtesy for colleagues, including listening to the opinions and viewpoints of others and respectfully engaging in dialogue to explore differences.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Links to required readings are found on CANVAS.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Important Notes

- **All written assignments MUST be submitted through the CANVAS site.**
- **In the event that you are unable to submit an assignment by its due date, you must have the instructor's permission to do so. Without this permission, one point per day will be subtracted from your grade for that assignment.**

Individual assignments: Reading reflections

There are 11 weeks for which reading is assigned (do NOT include week 1). Each week you are to write a short summary of the readings as a single document, keeping in mind that **YOU MAY CHOOSE ONE WEEK NOT TO WRITE A REFLECTION**(free pass), although you should still read the articles. For each reading, write a 4 to 7 sentence summary of main points. Then, choosing any of the theme(s) from the readings, write a short (5 to 7 sentence) personal reflection on how this/these theme/s relate to your knowledge of social work practice, or how it will influence your approach to working across cultures, or how it relates to other things you are learning in your social work courses or practice. Finally, write one question that the class could use in discussion (question could pertain to a specific reading or to ideas in the readings overall). Sample outline for reading reflections:

I. Reading summaries

- A. 4-7 sentence summary of reading 1
- B. 4-7 sentence summary of reading 2
- C. etc. for each reading

II. One 5 – 7 sentence personal reflection

III. One discussion question for class.

Please name your files “Lastname reflections week number.” For example, “Wathen reflections week 2.” **Submit using CANVAS by 8pm on the Tuesday before each class session.**

Group Written Project

Over the course of the semester, you will work in pairs or in a group of 3 to complete a written project. If you strongly prefer to do this project on your own, you have the choice to do so, though you will find yourself doing more work. By the end of week 2 we will have our pairs/groups set up.

1. You will choose a country or indigenous population of a country other than the United States.
2. Choose a particular issue or population that you would like to investigate in that country. Examples are health, family/child welfare, immigration/migration including refugees, children, women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and minorities.
3. Each section of the project should be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced, using one-inch margins. You should write using APA style for citations. Cite your sources.
4. Try to stick to the page limits – these are maximums, so you’re ok if your work is a little shorter.
5. As you turn in each section, it will be assessed and graded. Your group may choose to revise that section when you turn in the final project to improve your grade. Grades are based on clarity of writing and quality of information .

SECTION 1: Country background information, DUE OCTOBER 1 AT 2:00 PM

Name of country

Briefly discuss the country’s recent history and political situation. Include human rights issues and conflict in the country (armed insurgency, civil war, war with other countries), and other issues in the country’s region that are influencing the country - 3 pages.

A chart showing major ethnic/racial groups.

A table incorporating the following three profiles (two columns, name of indicator on left, percent or rate or info on right).

- A demographic profile - total population, population growth rate, age structure, percent of urban population, life expectancy, infant mortality rates, HIV rates
- Poverty profile – income inequality, poverty levels (total and broken by ethnic/racial categories), access to clean water, adult literacy rate, global poverty ranking, ranking on the human development index.
- Economic profile – major industries, major agricultural products, military expenditures as a percent of total government expenditures.

SECTION 2: Issue overview for your country, DUE OCTOBER 15 AT 2:00 PM

Discuss the roots or causes of the issue you have chosen (as well as you can given that this is a limited project) and the social impact of the problem in your country – 2-3 pages

Social welfare profile – describe what types of social assistance and social insurance programs the country offers for the population/issue that you have chosen – 2 pages.

A description of World Bank, World Health Organization, UNICEF, UNDP, or other international organization activity going on in the country related to your issue – 1-2 pages depending on how many programs you find.

Ways in which U.S. policy or practice could learn from this country’s approach to your issue/population. – 1-2 paragraphs.

SECTION 3 Social work in the country, power, and culture, value, and ethics

DUE NOVEMBER 5 AT 2:00 PM

Describe social work in the country in general – history of social work, schools of social work, type of social work practiced – 2 pages.

Referring to the social work ethics statement from your country and other things you have learned, discuss cultural, value, or ethical conflicts that international workers might experience in engaging with the local community on your focus issue in this country and implications for social work practice – 1 page.

Finally, discuss your issue focus in terms of power and stakeholders: who are the stakeholders in the system and what relative level of power/influence do they hold (government, organizations, practitioners, communities, families, individuals)? Who gains or loses if a change is made (think of how money and other resource flows might change, who would gain or lose power/influence in the system) – 1 page.

SECTION 4: Collaborating with an organization, DUE DECEMBER 3 AT 2:00 PM

Identify an organization in the country (either local or international) with which you would like to work, why you chose this organization, and what specific problem and population you would like to work with in collaboration with this organization. Explore how your collaboration with this organization might be influenced by your being a “foreigner” – 1-2 pages.

Group presentation:

Each member of the group must present a portion of the material.

Your group should prepare a 30-minute presentation based on your project this semester.

Introduce your country (use a world map, show where it is located), tell us what issue you are focused on, and provide a summary of the background information you have gathered (for the presentation, choose that info that is most relevant to the issue you are focused on).

Discuss the roots or causes of the issue you have chosen (as well as you can given that this is a limited project) and the social impact of the problem.

Explain what types of social assistance and social insurance programs the country offers for the population/issue that you have chosen. Include overview of what international organizations are doing.

Discuss your issue in terms of power and stakeholders: who are the stakeholders in the system and what relative level of power/influence do they hold (government, organizations, practitioners, communities, families, individuals)? Who gains or loses if a change is made (think of how money and other resource flows might change, who would gain or lose power/influence in the system).

Identify an organization in the country (either local or international) with which you would like to work, why you chose this organization, and what specific problem and population you would like to work with in collaboration with this organization.

Discuss cultural, value, or ethical conflicts that international workers might experience in engaging with the local community on this issue and implications for social work practice.

GRADING:

Reading reflections (5 points each x10)	=	50 points
Class participation (attendance, engagement in group and individual exercises)	=	50 points
Group presentation	=	40 points
<u>Group final paper</u>	=	<u>60 points</u>
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	=	200 points

This course uses the School of Social Work’s grading system approved by the Governing Faculty. Please refer to the “General Requirements for Class Papers in the School of Social Work” section of your student guide for assistance. All assignments will be graded for their comprehensiveness and clarity.

100-98%	A+	85-83%	B
97- 94%	A	82-79%	B-
93-90%	A-	78-75%	C+
89-86%	B+	74-70%	C

SEE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS

SESSION THEMES, READING ASSIGNMENTS, AND DUE DATES:

NOTE: Reading reflections are due on the Tuesday at 8pm before each class session.

Week 1 September 17

What is international social work?
Developing intercultural skills.

Assigned readings:

none

DUE: Just you :)

Week 2 September 24

Social development
Cultural Humility

Assigned readings:

- Midgley, J., & Conley, A. (2010). *Social work and social development: Theories and skills for developmental social work*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1
- Brinkerhoff, D. W., & Brinkerhoff, J. M. (2005). *Working for change: making a career in international public service*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press. Chapter 2
- Brinkerhoff, D. W., & Brinkerhoff, J. M. (2005). *Working for change: making a career in international public service*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press. Chapter 5
- Ortega, RM & KC Faller. (2011). Training Child Welfare Workers from an Intersectional Cultural Humility Perspective: A paradigm shift. *Child Welfare*, 90(5), 27-49.
- Gawande, A. (July 29, 2013) Slow ideas. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved on September 10, 2015 from <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/07/29/slow-ideas>.

DUE: nothing but reading reflections due two days prior.

Week 3 October 1

Values and Ethics

Guest Speaker: Thomas "TJ" Rogers, Program Manager, Freedom House, 2PM

Assigned readings:

- Healy, L. M., & Ebook Library. (2008). *International social work: Professional action in an interdependent world*. Oxford ;New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 9
- Al-Makhamreh, S., & Sullivan, M. P. (2013). Professionalising social work in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: processes and implications. *European Journal of Social Work*, 16(4), 536-550. doi:10.1080/13691457.2012.724385
- Gao, J. G., & Yan, M. C. (2015). Social work in the making: The state and social work development in China. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 24(1), 93-101. doi:10.1111/ijsw.12089
- Chopp, Ortega, Vandervort. (2014). Arguing on the Side of Culture. *Litig. J.* Fall 2014: 10-3
- Jönsson, J. (2014). Local Reactions to Global Problems: Undocumented immigrants and social

work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 44, Supplement 1, i35-i52. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcu042

DUE: Section 1 of group project by 1:00 pm, reading reflections due two days prior.

Week 4
October 8

Globalization, contextualization, relativism, universals

Guest Speaker: Elizabeth Koomson, Ghana 4PM

Assigned readings:

- Payne, M., & Askeland, G. A. (2008). *Globalization and international social work: Postmodern change and challenge*. Aldershot, England ;Burlington, VT: Ashgate. Chapters 1 & 2
- Healy, L. M., & Link, R. J. (2012). *Handbook of international social work: Human rights, development, and the global profession*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chapter 49
- Gray, M., Coates, J., Yellow Bird, M., & Hetherington, T. (2013). *Decolonizing social work*. Farnham, Surrey ;Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company. Chapter 5
- Gray, M., Coates, J., Yellow Bird, M., & Hetherington, T. (2013). *Decolonizing social work*. Farnham, Surrey ;Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company. Chapter 8
- Jani, JS, & BR Deforge. (2015). Contextually Appropriate Measurement as the Basis for Culturally Appropriate Interventions: A case study in Managua, Nicaragua. *Social Work in Public Health*, 30, 157-174.

DUE: nothing but reading reflections due two days prior.

Week 5
October 15

Poverty

Guest Speaker: Claudia Reyes Quilodran, Chile, 3:30 PM

Assigned readings:

- Healy, L. M., & Link, R. J. (2012). *Handbook of international social work: Human rights, development, and the global profession*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chapter 6
- Thurow, R., Kilman, S., & Chicago Council on Global Affairs. (2009). *Enough: Why the world's poorest starve in an age of plenty*. New York: PublicAffairs. Chapter 12
- Healy, L. M., & Link, R. J. (2012). *Handbook of international social work: Human rights, development, and the global profession*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chapter 7 social justice

DUE: Section 2 of group project, reading reflections due two days prior.

Week 6
October 22

Migration & refugees,

Guest Speaker: John Mathias, India, 3:45 PM

Assigned readings:

- *Working with Refugees: A guide for social workers*. (2004) NSW Refugee Health Service, Sydney, Australia.

- James, L., Sovcik, A., Garoff, F., & R. Abbasi. (2014) The Mental Health of Syrian refugee children and adolescents. Retrieved on September 11, 2015 from <http://www.fmreview.org/syria/james-sovcik-garoff-abbasi>.
- Birman et al. (2008). International Family, Adult, and Child Enhancement Services (FACES): A community-based comprehensive services model for refugee children in resettlement. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 78(1), 121-132.

DUE: nothing but reading reflections due two days prior.

Week 7
October 29

Aging

Guest Speaker: Berit Ingersoll-Dayton, Thailand, 4 PM

Assigned readings:

- Forssell, E., & Torres, S. (2012). Social work, older people and migration: An overview of the situation in Sweden. *European Journal of Social Work*, 15(1), 115-130. doi:10.1080/13691457.2011.573911
- Kinsella, K. & H. Wan. (2009). An Aging World: 2008. U.S. Census Bureau, International Population Reports, P95/09-1, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC.
- Hokenstad, MC & AR Roberts. (2011). International Policy on Ageing and older persons: Implications for social work practice. *International Social Work*, 54(3), 330-343.

DUE: nothing but reading reflections due two days prior.

Week 8
November 5

Environment & disasters

Guest Speaker: Maybe Lamia Moghnieh in town from Lebanon

Assigned readings

- Schmitz, C. L., Matyók, T., Sloan, L. M., & James, C. (2012). The relationship between social work and environmental sustainability: Implications for interdisciplinary practice. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 21(3), 278-286. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2397.2011.00855.x
- Libal, K. (2014). *Advancing human rights in social work education*. Alexandria, Virginia: Council on Social Work Education. Chapter 24
- Wangari, Maathai - Nobel Lecture text. Retrieved on September 13, 2015 from http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2004/maathai-lecture-text.html.
- Dominelli, L. (2013). Empowering Disaster-Affected Communities for Long-Term Reconstruction: Intervening in Sri Lanka After the Tsunami. *Journal of Social Work in Disability and Rehabilitation*, 12(1-2), 48-66. doi:10.1080/1536710X.2013.784175
- James, Leah. (June 16, 2010). Relief for the Spirit: A lay mental health worker project in Post-Earthquake Haiti. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved on September 12, 2015 from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/leah-james/relief-for-the-spirit-a-l_b_613720.html.

DUE: Section 3 of group project, reading reflections due two days prior.

Week 9
November 12

Children, child welfare,
Speaker: Maria Wathen, Russia

Assigned readings:

- Shlonsky, A., & Benbenishty, R. (2014). *From evidence to outcomes in child welfare: An international reader*. Oxford ;New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1
- The Leiden Conference on the Development and Care of Children without Permanent Parents. (2012). The Development & Care of Institutionally Reared Children. *Child Development Perspectives*, 6(2), 174-180.
- Spitzer, H., & Twikirize, J. M. (2013). War-affected children in northern Uganda: No easy path to normality. *International Social Work*, 56(1), 67-79.
doi:10.1177/0020872812459067
- Healy, L. M., & Link, R. J. (2012). *Handbook of international social work: Human rights, development, and the global profession*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chapters 20, 21, & 22

DUE: nothing but reading reflections due two days prior.

Week 10
November 19

International Adoption
Guest Speaker: still confirming

Assigned readings:

Skim the Bartholet & Smolin articles for main points (though they are VERY interesting, they're long.) The last two articles are just a couple of paragraphs each.

- Rotabi, K. S., & Bunkers, K. M. (2011). In an era of reform: A review of social work literature on intercountry adoption. *SAGE Open*, 1(3), 1-16. doi:10.1177/2158244011428160
- Bartholet, E. (2007). International Adoption: The child's story. *Georgia State University Law Review*, 24, 333-379.
- Smolin, D.M. (2006). Child Laundering: How the intercountry adoption system legitimizes and incentivizes the practices of buying, trafficking, kidnapping, and stealing children. *Wayne Law Review*, 52, 113 – 200.
- Pakhrin, P. (December 12, 2013). Successful Russian Adoption. Retrieved from <http://www.kidsave.org/kolyas-story/>
- Pakhrin, P. (December 4, 2013). Jeimmy Grande's Story. Retrieved from <http://www.kidsave.org/jeimmy-grandes-story/>

DUE: nothing but reading reflections due two days prior.

Week 11
November 26

NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 12
December 3

The 5 Rs of Cultural Adaptation, Group presentations

Guest Speaker: maybe Leah James, works in multiple countries, trauma & refugees (might be moved to another date)

Assigned readings: None

DUE: All sections of the Group project as one document

Week 13
December 10

Careers in international social work, Finish presentations

Assigned readings:

- Healy, L. M., & Link, R. J. (2012). *Handbook of international social work: Human rights, development, and the global profession*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chapter 62
- Brinkerhoff, D. W., & Brinkerhoff, J. M. (2005). *Working for change: making a career in international public service*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press. Story of Aaron Williams
- Healy, L. M., & Link, R. J. (2012). *Handbook of international social work: Human rights, development, and the global profession*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chapter 71
- Healy, L. M., & Ebook Library. (2008). *International social work: Professional action in an interdependent world*. Oxford ;New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 8

DUE: A sigh of relief, reading reflections due two days prior.