Speaker Series - Our Once and Future Selves: Student Conversations with Social Work Faculty

“...education affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming” – Paulo Freire

Course Description

7 two-hour sessions, featuring student conversations with faculty, who will begin the conversation by responding to these prompts:

- How would you describe yourself today, professionally?
- What are a few highlights of your work?
- Identify two or three key turning points as you transitioned from college to your current work.
- What advice would you give to today’s students?

After each conversation with faculty, students will write a 1-page reflection. At the closing, students will share a final draft, synthesizing the earlier documents.

CASC Minor Mission Statement

The CASC minor is for students interested in developing knowledge, skills, and experiences in community action and social change. The multidisciplinary 16 credit minor will prepare students to:

1. examine community action and social change using a multidisciplinary framework;

2. address community action and social change in multilingual and multicultural communities;

3. integrate social justice values into the community action and social change processes; and

4. engage in service learning to promote community action and social change.

CASC Guiding Principles

1. The core values of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence) frames our interactions with students inside and outside the classroom.
2. PODS: Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice are taught to similar degrees in every class.

3. We represent Social Work – both the School and the Profession – in our interactions with students, including academic and career advice.

4. We strive to respond appropriately to student inquiries in a timely and personally engaging manner.

5. We structure courses with student participation in mind throughout the term, notably by some conversation about ground rules at the start of the term and some identifiable closure activity at the end.

6. We see curricular and co-curricular opportunities as intersecting and complementary. We seek to find more opportunities for high touch, high impact work with students.

**A Note on the Learning Environment**

While all of us come to this course with various experiences, skill sets and values, it is important that we respect diverse opinions and perspectives. The class is designed as a co-learning environment and one where class members are encouraged to try new skills and take risks. Your contribution as a “teacher and a learner” in the class will enhance the learning for all class members.

To facilitate the co-learning environment, the instructor will facilitate a constructive forum for discussion and learning, and be responsive to students’ questions both in and out of class. Students are expected to be on time, be prepared with any questions related to assignments, and complete assignments on time. Students are also expected to be respectful of diverse perspectives, be open to learning and challenging themselves beyond their comfort zones.

**A Note on Technology**

This is not a course in which you will often be asked to take notes or to access materials online. Therefore, students should not use laptops, cellphones, iPads, etc. during class, except when indicated by the instructor. Your Facebooking/tweeting/intstagraming/buzzfeed quiz taking/upworthy video watching/CASC newsletter reading distracts your learning, your peers’ learning, and the guest speakers. Students who frequently use technology during class will be given one warning, and then will receive significant reductions in their participation grade. Any student who requires the use of technology for health or other reasons should contact the instructor at the beginning of class.

**Grading**

Grading for this course is determined by two core components:
1) active participation in all seven classes
2) thoughtful reflection on your learning and experiences as demonstrated by the satisfactory and timely completion of all assignments (seven 1-page reflections, final draft synthesizing earlier reflections)

**Incompletes**

Incompletes are given only when it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the stated time limits of the course. The Student Guide, Vol. 1, Sec. 8.01 states that an “I” grade is used when illness or other compelling reasons prevent completion of work, and there is a definite plan and date for completion of course work approved by the instructor. The student must formally request an incomplete from the instructor prior to the final week of classes.

**Students in Need of Accommodations**

If you have a documented disability or condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please schedule a private appointment with the instructor 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. Also, if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments, please notify the instructor so we can discuss appropriate arrangements.

**Student Mental Health and Wellbeing**

University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and https://caps.umich.edu/ during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320 and https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources.

**Calendar**

25 Jan - Tony Alvarez
1 Feb - Laura Lein
8 Feb - John Tropman
15 Feb - Jorge Delva
22 Feb - Shawna Lee
First Assignment (due 26 Jan)

Before class, please jot down some notes to guide your participation in the conversation with faculty and shape your first assignment.

How do you relate to Social Work as a Profession?

- Review the NASW Code of Ethics. Which of the Core Values (service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence) resonates with you most – and why?
- Is there an area where you see yourself practicing – and why?

The first session in the Speaker Series will be with Tony Alvarez. Please review his online bio prior to class. He has been given the below prompts to initiate our conversation. What additional questions would you be interested in having our speaker address – and why?

- How would you describe yourself today, professionally?
- What are a few highlights of your work?
- Identify two or three key turning points as you transitioned from college to your current work.
- What advice would you give to today’s students?

http://ssw.umich.edu/faculty/profiles/leo/aalvarez

Your first assignment, due by midnight the day following this class, is a 1-page reflection, at least partially based on your notes. Please include in this assignment, double-spaced and uploaded to CTools, any takeaways you have from the conversation with faculty regarding Social Work and/or your future in that Profession.

Final Draft (due 21 Mar)

Review your seven 1-page reflections. What major themes emerge? Are there connections between the takeaways and how might they be integrated or synthesized? How do you now relate to Social Work as a Profession? Please compare and contrast this 2-3 page response, double-spaced and uploaded to CTools, with your notes and/or First Assignment.