

Course Title: Social Change Theories

Course Number: 611, Section 001, Spring/Summer 2017

Time and Place: Mondays, 8am-12pm, May 8 - July 24, SSW B684

Credit Hours: 3

Instructor: John Doering-White

Contact Details: jadwhite@umich.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 12:30pm-1:30pm and by appointment

Course Description

We often talk about theories as standalone “things” that use to think about social problems, like tools in a toolbox. However, theories also emerge, surge, and fade away in the context of certain historical moments. In this course, theories will be approached as existing in relation to particular social contexts. This will allow us to think critically and creatively about how theories are mobilized for social change as well as how theories promote and constrain different forms of social action. We will engage with how academics, practitioners, and activists work within and against a wide array of theoretical framings. We will also hear from some of these folks as they visit class for guest lectures. And most importantly, we will also do our own theorizing through exploratory group research projects. Over ten class sessions we are going to cover a lot of ground, ranging from the metaphysics of queer imaginaries and the racial politics of urban farming to radical genealogies of “social justice” and the neoliberal subjectivities of prisoner re-entry programs.

This course is designed around the idea that teaching, listening, and consulting collectively as a community is the most powerful form of education. Each session, two members of the class will take charge of processing the readings by leading a lecture and discussion activities. The majority of class time will be organized around peer learning in order to promote the idea that learning and teaching should emerge concurrently.

The course is also designed around the idea that theory is best approached in conversation with practice. Throughout the semester, you will work in small groups to develop and enact an empirical “theory of change” research project. This project will involve identifying a feasible intervention around a particular problem, drawing on course materials to develop a change proposal, and mobilizing empirical evidence to enact change. While these projects will require a

substantial time commitment outside of class, we will reserve time to work on projects in class each week.

Along the same lines, I have also arranged for several guest speakers from communities I call home around Detroit and Ann Arbor to come and speak throughout the semester about how they frame their work theoretically, morally, and ethically. The readings for these weeks have been developed in conversation with these guest speakers in order to ground our conversations about theory in a wide array of local practice contexts.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will grow in their ability to:

- Describe, compare, and contrast the strengths and limitations of several theories about social change.
- Pose analytical questions about the implications of social change for vulnerable groups in society, as well as social work's ethical obligation to promoting the well being of vulnerable populations in light of its commitments to multiculturalism, diversity and social justice.
- Integrate social theory and empirical evidence to evaluate, enhance, and enact social work practice.
- Promote courteous and critical dialogue in an environment of collaborative learning, both within the classroom and in the community.

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS): This course will use a variety of pedagogical strategies, including readings, class exercises, case studies, and debates to address the CSWE Education Policy and Accreditation Standards.

- *Social Justice:* Social Justice and Social Change will be addressed within the goals and assumptions of each theoretical approach. Most of the course will focus on social justice goals and conceptualizing and operationalizing social change.
- *Multiculturalism & Diversity:* Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed in this course by identifying theories espoused by and compatible with different cultural traditions, by critiquing theories from different cultural perspectives, and through course examples about the uses of theory in different interest and ontological groups.
- *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation:* Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be addressed by examining theories about social change for their relevance and applicability in each of these areas. Students will compare and contrast theories that focus on a positive vision of the future with theories focusing on existing problems.
- *Behavioral and Social Science Research:* Behavioral and Social Science Research will be addressed by examining the evidence used to build theory and test theory through its applications in practice.

· *Social Work Ethics and Values*: Students will examine theories and explore the extent to which they aid social workers with their ethical responsibilities to the general welfare of society. In particular, theories and practice examples will be critiqued with respect to the following ethical principles: preventing and eliminating discrimination, ensuring access to resources and services, expanding choices for all persons, promoting conditions that encourage respect for diversity, advocating for changes in policy to improve social conditions and promote social justice, and encourage informed participation by citizens in shaping policies and institutions.

Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS)

Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS): This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice 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 to develop 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 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 accommodation for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. 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. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, 734-763-3000.

Religious Observances

Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Plagiarism

Don't let stress cause you to copy others' work or ideas, or to recycle your own work. Plagiarism includes taking credit for someone else's work (this includes paraphrasing their work) without citing them, or using text from their work without attributing it to them. It also includes turning in work you've submitted for a grade in another course. I am more interested in how *you* grapple with the ideas in this class than with regurgitating others' ideas. Plagiarizing (and detecting it) is all too easy with the wonders of the internet. If I detect you plagiarizing, you will fail this course. No exceptions. Please review the Student Guide Section on "Ethical Conduct in the University Environment" for more information, including the consequences for plagiarism.

Cell Phones, Laptops, Video and Voice Recorder Policy: I ask that you silence and store cell phone during class. Laptops are welcome for taking notes and for course-related work (looking up information that might contribute to discussion). Please avoid email and social media during class time. Video and voice recorders are not allowed except with express permission. No audio or video recordings are to be posted online.

Grading and Requirements

1. Class Participation (20)
2. Class Leadership (20)
3. Theorizing Change Group Project (50)
4. Self-Evaluation (10)

Grading Scale:

A 95-100	B- 81-83	D 65-69
A- 91-94	C+ 77-80	E 64 or fewer points
B+ 87-90	C 74-76	
B 84-86	C- 70-73	

“A” is awarded for exceptional mastery of the material

“B” is awarded for 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: Written assignments should be submitted via Canvas by 11:59 on the day it is due.

Assignments:

Student-Led Lecture and Discussion (20 points)

Each session, two-three students will collaborate to lead 30 minutes of lecture followed by 60 minutes of group discussion activities. The lecture/discussion breakdown is flexible and I

welcome you to organize things as you see fit according to the week's readings. I strongly encourage presenters to make time to meet with me the week before they will present in order to help prepare.

- The lecture portion is not intended to be a summary of the readings. I have tried to schedule a manageable number of readings each week to prioritize quality of discussion over breadth. The lecture portion should critically engage with the assigned readings by synthesizing key arguments and raising possible points of contention. Student leaders are encouraged to integrate contemporary or historical case studies into their lectures, making sure to include sufficient background information for fellow class members.

- During the discussion section, class leaders should focus on fostering critical conversation around the week's readings. This is the time to clarify things that might remain unclear and to consider how the readings might translate into practice. While class leaders should come prepared with issues to discuss, students will provide class leaders with a note card including three ideas for discussion at the beginning of class (see class participation below). Class leaders are encouraged to integrate these ideas to prompt discussion.

Class Participation (20 points)

I will evaluate participation based on attendance, preparation, punctuality, engagement in class activities, contributing to the learning of others, consultation and collaboration on assignments and papers, and sharing your work with the class. Additionally, students should come to each class with at least three ideas on a note card (or a sheet of paper) that you plan to share during discussion. While these can be questions of clarification, they should be framed in a way that generates critical discussion and creative synthesis of the readings. These ideas will be shared with the week's student leaders to help guide discussion. I will collect the note cards at the end of each class as a way to help document and assess your participation grade at the end of the course. Grading will be based on how well you make use of the readings, how well your ideas generate critical discussion, and how well you engage in considerate and generous critical discussion (this includes both speaking *and* listening) with your fellow students.

Each student is allowed one absence (outside of religious or medical exceptions) without loss of participation points. However, you must notify me in advance as soon as possible and complete a one-page reading response, due no later than the next class period.

Enacting Theory for Change Project (50 points)

In groups of two or three, you will study and contribute to a local social change initiative. The project will involve four phases:

1. Preliminary Plan (5 points): Identify an organization or social change initiative, preferably one with which someone in the group has already developed rapport, such as a field placement,

former employer, or volunteer activity. Write a preliminary work plan that outlines goals, an outreach plan, and group member responsibilities (1 page).

2. Project Proposal (15 points) Develop a research plan in conversation with the initiative and submit a report that includes:

- a. Organization overview (1 page)
- b. Prior change effort description (1 page)
- c. Target problem description (1 page)
- d. Justification of research methods and data collection (2 pages)
- e. Critical analysis of how theory will guide your research (3 pages)
- f. Feasibility of project deliverables justification (1 page)
- g. In-class project workshop (10 minute group presentation)

Total length: (9 pages and a 10 minute oral presentation)

3. Proposal Enactment/Check-ins (15 points). In collaboration with each other and with the organizers of a local initiative, take initial steps to enact the change proposal. This could involve identifying and drafting a proposal for a small grant, filming and editing a video, conducting a survey, protest, or letter-writing campaign, interviewing those involved with the organization, etc. Throughout the term, we will make time for in-class project check-ins to receive feedback from the class and strategize working through challenges. Each group will have the opportunity for two, 15-minute check-ins.

4. Final Report (15 points) Present research progress, preliminary results, and recommendations. Based on your change project proposal, and in conversation with the organizers of that initiative, make an innovative recommendation for future work. This recommendation should synthesize evidence collected during the research process and it should build on what people are already doing. Data analysis should integrate and critically engage with theoretical perspectives discussed throughout the course.

- a. Change project overview (1/2 page)
- b. Data analysis (3 pages)
- c. Recommendations (1 page)
- d. In-class change project presentation (10 minutes)

Self-Evaluation (10 points)

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Written assignments due by 11:59PM on the day they are due.

Friday, May 19 - Submit Preliminary Proposal

Friday, June 2 - Submit Project Proposal

Monday, June 5 - Project Check-in #1
Monday, June 26 - Project Check-in #2
Friday, July 21 - Submit Final Report
Monday, July 24 - Final Presentation
Friday, July 28 - Submit Self-Evaluation

COURSE SCHEDULE

May 8 - Theorizing Theory

Fook, Jan. 2002. "Theorizing from Practice." *Qualitative Social Work* 1 (1): 79–95.

Glover Reed, Beth. 2005. "Theorizing in Community Practice: Essential Tools for Building Community, Promoting Social Justice, and Implementing Social Change." In *The Handbook of Community Practice*, 84–102. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Staller, Karen. 2012. "Epistemological Bootcamp: The Politics of Science and What Every Qualitative Researcher Needs to Survive in the Academy." *Qualitative Social Work* 12 (4): 394–413.

May 15 - Intersections and Justice

Guest Speaker: Hanan Yahya

Readings:

Lee, Eunjung, and Rupaleem Bhuyan. 2013. "Negotiating Within Whiteness in Cross-Cultural Encounters." *Social Service Review* 87 (1): 98–130.

Dobbie, David, and Katie Richards-Schuster. 2008. "Building Solidarity Through Difference: A Practice Model for Critical Multicultural Organizing." *Journal of Community Practice* 16 (3): 317–37.

Morgaine, Karen. 2014. "Conceptualizing Social Justice in Social Work: Are Social Workers 'Too Boggled Down in the Trees?'" *Journal of Social Justice* 4: 1–18.

May 22 - Colonialisms

Guest Speaker: Antonio Cosme

Readings:

Galeano, Eduardo. 1973. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.
(selections TBA)

Safransky, Sara. 2016. "Rethinking Land Struggle in the Postindustrial City." *Antipode* 0 (0): 1–22.

Stone, Nomi. 2017. "Living the Laughscream: Human Technology and Affective Maneuvers in the Iraq War." *Cultural Anthropology* 32 (1): 149–74.

May 29 – Memorial Day – NO CLASS

June 5 – Caring Exchanges

Readings:

Mauss, Marcel. 1954. *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London: Routledge.
(selections TBA)

Mol, AnneMarie. 2008. *The Logic of Care: Health and the Problem of Patient Choice*. New York: Routledge.

Buch, Elana. 2013. "Senses of Care: Embodying Inequality and Sustaining Personhood in the Home Care of Older Adults in Chicago." *American Ethnologist* 40 (4): 737–650.

June 12 – Organizations and Institutions, Personhood and Punishment

Guest Speaker: Karen Brown

Readings:

Miller, Reuben J. 2014. "Devolving the Carceral State: Race, Prisoner Reentry, and the Micro-Politics of Urban Poverty Management." *Punishment & Society* 16: 305–35.

Fairbanks II, Robert P. 2009. *How It Works: Recovering Citizens in Post-Welfare Philadelphia*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
(Read chapter 3 - available online through UM library)

Hasenfeld, Yeheskel. Thousand Oaks, CA. "Organizational Forms as Moral Practices." In *Human Services as Complex Organizations*, 97–114. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA.

June 19 - Development and Destruction

Guest Speaker: Michele Oberholtzer

Readings:

Benson and Kirsch. 2010. Capitalism and the Politics of Resignation. *Current Anthropology*.

DeFillippis et al. 2009. "Community Organizing Theory and Practice: Conservative Trends, Oppositional Alternatives." In *The People Shall Rule: ACORN, Community Organizing and the Struggle for Economic Justice*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Klein. N. 2001. Reclaiming the Commons. *New Left Review*.

Oberholtzer Select Readings (choose 2)

Silent Auction: <https://oberdoit.com/2016/09/06/silent-auction/>

Reparations 313: <https://oberdoit.com/2017/02/01/reparations313/>

Taking Advantage of Detroit: <http://www.metrotimes.com/news-hits/archives/2015/11/06/taking-advantage-of-detroit/>

June 26 - Evidencing Practice

Readings:

De Certeau, Michel. 1980. "On the Oppositional Practices of Everyday Life." *Social Text* 3 (autumn): 3–43.

Smith, Yvonne. 2014. "Rethinking Decision-Making: An Ethnographic Study of Worker Agency in Crisis Intervention." *Social Service Review* 88 (3): 407–42.

Adams, Vincanne. 2013. "Evidence-Based Global Public Health." In *When People Come First: Critical Studies in Global Health*, 54–90. Princeton University Press.
(available online through UM library)

July 3 – Independence Day - NO CLASS

July 10 – Health and Harm

Guest Speakers: William Lopez and Nicole Novak

Readings:

Novak, Nicole L, Arlene T Geronimus, and Aresha M Martinez-Cardoso. 2017. “Change in Birth Outcomes Among Infants Born to Latina Mothers After a Major Immigration Raid.” *International Journal of Epidemiological Advance*, 1–11.

Lopez, William D, Daniel J Kruger, Jorge Delva, Mikel Llanes, Charo Ledón, Adreanne Waller, Melanie Harner, et al. 2017. “Health Implications of an Immigration Raid: Findings from A Latino Community in the Midwestern United States.” *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 19 (3): 702–8.

Lopez, William. 2016. ICE Raid Narratives.

Luis Argueta. 2010. “AbUSed: The Postville Raid.” New Day Films
(watch the film - available online through UM library)

July 17 – Whose Theories? Whose Change?

Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York, NY: Routledge.

(read Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion)

Freire, Paulo. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder.
(Read Preface and Chapter 1)

hooks, b. 1992. “Is Paris Burning?” in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

July 24 – Change Project Presentations, Course Reflections

Readings: None – Prepare Final Project Presentations