

M | SOCIAL WORK

Amber Williams M.A., LLMSW

Email: ambnicol@umich.edu

Phone: 7347635733

Office: SSWB 3833

Course Title: Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work

Course Section 015 | Monday's 6-9PM

Course Location: SSWB 1636

Office Hour: By appointment only

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

- 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? 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?
- 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]
- What creates and sustains inequalities, injustice, oppression, and 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?
- 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]
- How do societies and institutions change? General theories, planned change approaches? [e.g., From the bottom up, one individual at a time, collective behavior, changing consciousness, symbols, natural selection, new technologies, external forces, crises, economic markets and forces (capitalism)]
 - What’s the role of government (the State) in funding and regulating behavior and social institutions, maintaining or reducing inequality? How have and do micro, meso, macro structures and processes shape and influence me? How can I use knowledge about these forces to increase my critical consciousness, and work with diversity?
 - 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.

Course Policies

Late assignment policy: One point will be deducted for each day an assignment is late, including weekends. If an extension is needed, arrangements can be made with the instructor up to 24 hours before the assignment’s due date.

Accommodations: Please let me know of any accommodations that may help to enhance your learning experience, preferably at the beginning of the semester. For reference, the Office for Services for Students with Disabilities is located in G664 Haven Hall;
<http://www.umich.edu/~sswd/>

UM’s Code of Academic Conduct: Acts of plagiarism, cheating, double submission of essentially the same paper to different classes, paraphrasing from the internet, etc. are considered acts of dishonesty that violate the rights of other members of your community. Here are a few

definitions for reference: **Plagiarism:** Submitting a piece of work (for example, an essay, research paper, assignment, lab report) which in part or in whole is not entirely the student's own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source.

Double Submission of Papers: Submitting or resubmitting substantially the same paper for two or more classes in the same or different terms without the express approval of each instructor.

Critical Race Theory |

Conceptual Framework of Learning and Engagement for Section 015

This particular section of SW 504 will incorporate concepts of critical race theory as a lens by which to unpack societal constructions of inequality at the intersection of race, gender, sexual orientation, class, class, ability status, religion, and other social categories. Guided by Matsuda (1991)' synthesis of the core components of CRT, this class will strive

- To center race and racism at the intersection of power, privilege, and social domination
- To challenge dominant ideologies and master narratives
- To promote transformative change through social justice framework
- To center lived experience through experiential knowledge and inquiry
- To engage in revisionist scholarship through interdisciplinarity

Each week, students will integrate anti-oppressive social work concepts of power, privilege, and inequality to various elements of CRT through critical engagement, interactive activities, and course assignments.

COURSE OVERVIEW

*****Readings will be posted to CANVAS*****

<p>Week 1 9.11.17 Course Introduction Dialogue Conflict and Conflict What is CRT</p>	<p>Week 8 11.6.17 CRT Whiteness as Property and Racial Fragility <i>Antioppressive SW Practice</i></p>
<p>Week 2 9.19.17 Shared Language: Power, Privilege, Social Identity and Socialization <i>Antioppressive Social Work</i></p>	<p>Week 9 11.13.17 CRT Erasure of Identity: Understanding Social Binaries <i>Antioppressive SW Practice</i></p>
<p>Week 3 9.26.17 Ecology of Oppression <i>Understanding Inequality</i></p>	<p>Week 10 11.20.17 CRT Negotiating Power: Interest Convergence <i>SW Praxis toward “centering” approach</i></p>
<p>Week 4 10.2.17 CRT Unearthing Colorblind Rhetoric <i>Recognizing Individual Oppression</i></p>	<p>Week 11 11.27.17 CRT, Queer, and Feminist Theory <i>Interdisciplinary Constructions of Inequality</i> <i>SW Praxis toward “centering” approach</i> <i>*CRT Analytic Paper Due</i></p>
<p>Week 5 10.9.17 CRT The Meaning and Application of Intersectoinality <i>SW Critical Reflection</i></p>	<p>Week 12 12.4.17 CRT and CRIP Theory (Disabilities Studies) <i>Interdisciplinary Constructions of Inequality</i> <i>SW Praxis toward a “centering” approach</i></p>
<p>Week 6 10.23.17 CRT: Repercussions of Single Stories: Microaggressions, Racial Battle Fatigue, and Stereotype Threat <i>SW Critical Reflection</i></p>	<p>Week 13 12.11.17 CRT Empowerment as Praxis: Community Cultural Wealth, Counterspace and Counternarratives <i>SW Praxis for Strengths Based Analysis</i> <i>12.13.17 Generative Interview PT 2 Due</i></p>
<p>Week 7 10.30.17 CRT Identifying Dominant, Master, and Controlling Narratives <i>Understanding Structural Inequality</i> <i>*Generative Interview Part 1 Proposal Due</i></p>	

Assignments: (details will be posted to canvas)

Weekly Reflection 2 pages | Due 9/26/17 – 11.27.17

- Students must provide 9 submissions total on canvas

Course Presentation: Connecting Current Events and Course Concepts | Due 10.2.17 – 12.11.17

- Students are required to lead a 30 – 45 minute course presentation about a current event, social issue, or topic, and it's relationship to the CRT concept/ reading for the week. Assignment must be completed in groups of 2-3 individuals max
- Sign up sheet will be posted on the canvas page

CRT Analytic of Structural Inequality Paper | Due 11.27.17

Students must complete a 5 -7 page paper, and record a 3-5 minute video or audio file, summarizing your analysis. If either the video or audio submission presents any specific limitations, please email, or discuss with faculty member. Your submissions are due on CANVAS.

Unpacking embedded behaviors/practices/norms of social inequality: *Generative Interview Assignment*

The following exercise explores the embedded behaviors, norms, socialized practices, and other manifestations of privilege, oppression, and power in our lived experience. In pairs, identify a sociocultural behavior, norm, or practice that you are either (a) affected by or (b) engage, and it's relationship to CRT concepts. The interview must be dialogic in nature, and grounded by concepts and theory presented in class.

- **Proposal Part 1: DUE 10.30.17**
 - Submit proposal w/ partner
- **Generative Interview and Paper PT 2 | 12.13.17**
 - Submit generative interview, annotated transcript, and critical reflection paper.
 - Generative Interview must be either in audio or video format: 15 – 30 minutes in length. Assignment must be conducted with another member of class