

Social Work 504: Social Justice and Diversity in Social Work

AKA “Misanthropology 101: Exploring Oppression”

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Course Section: 009
Time: Tuesday 2pm-5pm
Office Hours: By appointment

***** The following three pages contain content generic to all 504 sections
(evidently copied from the “class description” on the website) *****

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 toward 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 lifelong 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.

Social Work Curriculum Themes Addressed:

“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.

“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.

“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.

“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.

“Social Work 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.

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.

***** From hence, you are reading your instructor’s own words*****

Course Description:

The purpose of this class is to explore the interconnected causes and manifestations of oppression, which I define as cumulative identity-based dehumanization and unequal resource distribution. Oppression is pervasive, and as a species, things have reached a point that may feel apocalyptic. Though more people are becoming woke (experiencing “critical consciousness”), what we are waking to is a mess of extremely complex truths with painfully real implications. It can be overwhelming; not only to wrap one’s head around, but to know what to *do* with this information. Therefore, our course will be divided into three sections. Section One explores the mechanics of oppression and how it impacts our own lives. We will learn how oppression operates, and crucially, why it *continues* to operate in spite of expanding awareness of it. We will also engage in self-exploration to understand our experiences, pain, and attitudes more deeply. In Section Two we explore historical and contemporary manifestations of oppression in the U.S – such as anti-black and anti-immigrant racism, patriarchy, colonialism, classism, and ableism. Lastly, Section Three will be devoted to the question of *what now?* You will learn skills in ally/bystander intervention, conflict resolution, and self-care. Though oppression is not our fault, it *is* our responsibility. Becoming woke is *warying*, but if one establishes manageable personal goals for living an anti-oppressive life, weariness can become empowerment.

Course Objectives:

Beyond understanding the material (i.e. *knowledge*), there are *skills* I hope you attain:

- Nonviolent-communication (i.e. communicating about sensitive and complex issues that make our palms sweaty and our brains reel), featuring;
 - o Vulnerable communication (i.e. allowing feelings to enter the conversation, because oppression is an inherently feelingsy issue. Alas, since US society hasn't traditionally viewed emotional vulnerability as a desirable or teachable skill [which it is], many of you will find communicating and witnessing emotional vulnerability challenging to begin with, and that's totally OK)
 - o Active listening (i.e. basic empathy... I wish this was not necessary, but given the world, it simply *is*)
 - o Dialogue (not and *never* "Debate" – who was it that thought competitive argument was a reasonable way to resolve conflict??)
- Setting and upholding community norms (for not all norms are oppressive!)
- Resourcefulness (i.e. the ability to ask the right questions and find the right information in order to understand what you need to understand)
- Creating a personalized plan for "next steps" in one's anti-oppressive journey

My Relevant Experience:

I just finished my PhD in this school's joint program in social work and anthropology. As an anthropologist, the "thing" about humans that I am most fascinated (and maddened) by is *oppression*, hence my desire to bridge both anthropology (an academic discipline that aims to deeply understand humanity) and social work (a profession that aims to *change* humanity).

In addition to exploring oppression from every known-to-me intellectual avenue, I have researched and worked in non-clinical strengths-based psychosocial rehabilitation programs (google "The Clubhouse Model"), and worked in many "anti-oppressive programming" contexts: I have taught and facilitated dialogue about identity, power, privilege, and the skills (such as conflict resolution and bystander intervention) it takes to enact just change in our communities, and I have done so with many audiences – incoming freshman at U of M (google our "office of Intergroup Relations"), middle schoolers (google "Camp Common Ground, Oakland CA"), and international high schoolers (google "UWC USA Global Leadership Forum").

This is all to say: I am experienced, but still young and with much room for growth. I have *not* done this work with people of your/my own age group, nor over the course of a full semester, nor with people taking a required course for a professional degree. I have not had to assume "no background" whilst at the same time accounting for group members with loads of background (due to unavoidable differences in life experience, I expect some of you to be more "beginner" with this material than the high schoolers I just left behind, and some of you to have more experience in social justice work than I have). In short, this is new for me, as it is for you, but I can assure you that I will – with your help – do whatever I can to make this a moving experience for all.

Class Structure:

Each class will be three hours long, and there will be a 15-minute break midway. **NOTE:** *Class begins right on the hour, not at 10 minutes past the hour (as it used to).*

This class depends on everyone's participation, and requires active engagement and collaboration, and, most importantly, authenticity and vulnerability. This is *not* like high school, *not* like a large seminar in a state university, and *not* even like other Master's classes here. In short, **this will not work like most formal education in the US.** Firstly, I will not be impressed

with what society views as “good student” behavior, such as demonstrating how much you already know or how intelligent you are. I will be impressed by *emotional bravery*. Secondly, ranking and evaluation are counterproductive in a consciousness-raising context, so we will have to work together on minimizing your prioritization of grades.

We will explore a variety of teaching/learning techniques:

- Lectures/presentations by the instructor (and students)
- Whole-group discussions
- Free-write thought papers (e.g. 10 minutes to write down whatever comes to mind when prompted by a concept such as “violence” or “human rights”)
- Self-reflective journaling
- Concept maps and brainstorms
- ‘Pair share’ and small group discussions
- Experiential learning (e.g. structured activities designed to impart lessons)
- Role play/modeling (e.g. practicing having tough conversations)
- Collaborative “quote” lists (i.e. a list of meaningful/illustrative quotes from readings)
- I will also incorporate art and humor into lectures and discussions – poetry, stand-up comedy, music. (Oppression is not beautiful, nor is it funny, however, when people empower themselves and others through transforming pain into creative self-expression, *that* is beautiful, and possibly the only reason why I am still sane-ish).

There will be assigned readings (all available on our Canvas site [under “files”] or as a website link on the syllabus – note: Safari doesn't read PDF links well, so you'll need to use another browser) as well as other material (e.g. videos, poetry, news articles, blog posts), **all to be taken equally seriously**. This is because; 1) peer-reviewed academic texts (i.e. traditional educational material) is *NOT* where the brunt of social justice thinking and expression is taking place (if anything, academic spaces, which are historically white/male/heteronormative/ableist spaces, *stunt* that work rather than foster it); 2) there are many ways of learning and many ways of expressing, all of which is valid and useful, and in a group of diverse learners such as ourselves, it may be that some of us get everything we need from reading, whereas others need the TED talk or the song or the video in order to get what we need.

I will attempt to offer options that can cater to different levels of experience, and will note which materials are geared toward people closer to the beginning of their woke-ness journey, and which are for those further along. *NOTE: If you find the material I offer insufficient (as I said, because of the wide variety in your backgrounds, some of you may still be wrapping your heads around “privilege” while others are ready and eager for super heady critical race and queer theory), I ask that you take your learning seriously and talk to me. I won't be offended that you want/need more, in fact, that would make me glad, and also, I will go ahead and say you probably can't offend me, period.*

Grading and Assessment:

Though grades are not the objective or priority of a consciousness-raising program, this is still a Master's class in a US university, and hence I must create assignments and grade them. There will be three components to your overall grade: Attendance and participation (20%), post-Section (i.e. after Section One, Section Two, and Section Three) reflection/journal-entry-style papers (30%), a “Who am I?” paper (20%) and a final project with varying options (30%).

1. Attendance and participation – 20%

Because the material is all very important and builds upon itself, no “unexcused absences” will be permitted. Should something prevent you coming to class (i.e. illness, a conference, a religious observance, personal emergency) please notify me (at least 24 hours before an *expected* absence, or within 24 hours of an *unexpected* absence/emergency) and when it is appropriate (i.e. with conferences), provide me with written documentation. We can strategize as to how to best keep you up to speed with the rest of us on a case by case basis, but in the past my strategy has been to require a short paper dissecting that week’s material.

Attendance and participation accounts for 20% of your grade, but what does it mean? Attendance is obvious, but participation is broadly defined. It means showing up to class on time. It means asking questions of yourself and others, and applying course concepts to your own experiences. It means listening to others and contributing to their growth and learning. It means bringing emotional bravery. It means making an effort to get to know me and each other. It means providing feedback and criticism in useful ways. It means speaking in class, but it does *not* mean speaking to fill space (monopolizing space or speaking off topic is not participation).

2. Post-Section reflection papers – 30%

You will write a 3-5-page long journal entry style reflection paper three times (each worth 10%), after we have finished each section (due dates listed on the Course Schedule). Papers should be self-reflective and written in first person (hence the metaphor of a journal entry), and citations are not required. **I want to see** you acknowledge your own concerns, biases, privileges, fears, the moments that have made you feel angry/confused/guilty, the existential questions that have arisen as you realize how screwed humanity is, etc. **I don’t want to see** a summary of what you have learned. In short, I am interested in learning how this material/experience is impacting you *emotionally and existentially*, and am less interested in learning that you can repeat what you’ve read or heard.

Papers will be due before class begins on their due date and should be submitted through Canvas. Only I will read them.

3. “Who am I?” paper – 20 % (Due September 18th by midnight)

You will write a 6-10-page paper in which you explore your own values, experiences, and biases, and demonstrate an understanding of how your identity impacts your worldview and access to privileges. There will be a separate document about this assignment.

4. Open-Ended Final project – 30% (Due date TBD)

We will discuss this more as the semester unfolds, but for your final project you will be exploring a facet or manifestation of oppression that interests or impacts you, and will present your work to the class in a 20-minute presentation. The final project will be your opportunity to practice several skills that this course aims to instill:

- Resisting oversimplification and vagueness (i.e. the communicative traps Orwell describes in one of our readings): depth and clarity in communication are crucial when one is wrestling with extremely complex and ethically ambiguous issues.
- Communicating vulnerably: as we will learn, non-violent/anti-oppressive communication demands empathy, which in turn demands vulnerability and the ability to connect lived experiences to cold hard facts.

- Humility and open-mindedness: you are not communicating truth, you are communicating *a* truth. I will be looking for signs that you have genuinely sought to understand and empathize with alternative viewpoints, and crucially, that you are not creating monsters out of human beings (a form of oversimplification).

You can examine more specific and currently discussed issues (e.g. police violence against black people in the US), or issues that are broader (e.g. what is up with genocide?). You can examine issues as a relative outsider (e.g. if you are white and writing about police violence against black people in the US) or address issues that have impacted you personally (e.g. exploring mainstream beauty ideals as a person with a history of disordered eating). You can present your work more conventionally, such as a poster, PowerPoint, conference paper. You can also present your work in an unconventional way, such as;

- One of the other professors of this course has assigned in the past a “social justice mixed tape” to her students. Pick 10-12 songs that have meaning to you with respect to social justice ([Four Non Blondes’ “What’s Up?”](#) anyone?), and write a paragraph about why you chose each song. (We wouldn't have time to listen to all the songs in your 20 minutes, but we could hear you talk about them, and listen on our own time).
- Autoethnography. That is what I do. It is a form of personal/academic hybrid writing, where you – as a social scientist (which I believe you must be in order to be a competent social worker) – write about your own experiences in testament to wider issues that you can also speak to as a scholar. You will see examples of this in reading assignments, and I will happily work with anyone who wants to do this.
- Poetry, fiction, song, video, podcast, TED talk.
- Sharing your social justice journey and plan of action. This is something we will all be working on to some degree, as it is a part of Section Three, but some of you may wish to turn that work into a presentation, and I would be happy for that too.

Whatever you choose to do, I expect you to communicate with me about it in advance so that I am prepared to evaluate your work appropriately (especially if I myself know less about your topic or medium of expression).

Course Policies:

1. Technology

In our first class, we will spend time establishing what I call a “Positive Learning Environment Contract” (or PLE contract). Therefore, I will not set rules about technology (phone, computer, recording devices), as we will decide this together as a community.

2. Office Hours

I will not mandate this, but I expect each of you to make at least one appointment to come and talk with me one on one over the semester. You can raise questions or concerns related to the material, the class, or we can discuss other ideas and goals. I ask this because I wish to care about your learning and your life, and I can best do this if I get to know you one on one.

3. Email

I will do my best to respond to your email within 24 hours. If I do not respond to your email within 72 hours, please send me a reminder. For substantive concerns about classroom

dynamics, course expectations and content, or your performance, please make an office hours' appointment. Also, try not to ask me any questions over email (or in person) that are covered in this syllabus. I have labored heavily creating this manifesto, and I will likely interpret a syllabus-evident question as a sign that you did not read the document I invested so much effort in.

4. Extra Credit

Extra credit will not be offered.

5. Late Submissions

I could decree a complex system of "X points will be deducted with each hour of assignment lateness," but the reality is that late assignments will be addressed on a case by case basis, in spite of the extra work that creates for me (professors create decrees in order to save themselves the time, understandably, of creating a new rule for each case). The reason I am doing this is because these assignments are super personal, and your reasons for doing or not doing them on time are also, therefore, likely going to be personal.

University Policies/Life:

1. Academic integrity:

Though unlikely to be an issue in this course (you can't really cheat on personal projects like this), cheating and plagiarism are grave offenses here, and I am required to mention it and direct you to the university policy:

http://www.umich.edu/~hcouncil/home/LSA_Standards_of_Academic_Integrity.html

2. Accommodations for students with disabilities:

If you require an accommodation for a disability/diff-ability, please let me know as soon as the semester starts. Many assignments, in-class activities, and teaching approaches can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work together, and include the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (SSD: 734-763-3000; <http://ssd.umich.edu>), to determine appropriate accommodations. SSD typically recommends accommodations using a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide there is confidential. If you are struggling and unsure whether SSD might be a good resource, please make an appointment with me and with their office, and we can figure out what your next steps should look like.

3. Student mental health and wellbeing:

Generally, graduate school is a tumultuous experience. But this class in particular, because of the subject matter and my approach, will likely incite confusion, existential malaise, and pain that may or may not be bearable. I have had this quote by poet/intellectual James Baldwin on my wall for years: *"The world is scarcely habitable for the conscious young."* This course is designed to raise your consciousness, and therefore make the world we inhabit feel less, well, *habitable*. This is part of growing in depth, awareness, and strength, and *you need to do this work in order to be good at the profession you are attempting to join*. As we embark on this journey, I intend to be hands-on and available for counseling and mentorship. Please come to me with any and everything. I don't rattle easily, and as you will learn throughout our time together,

madness/mental illness/the mental health system are my “thing” (oppression is my broad interest, but the oppression of the mad is the specific “bite” out of the broad thing that I have taken).

COURSE SCHEDULE

***** These readings/materials are tentative. That is, I have given them a lot of thought, but as we go along I may make changes based on our group *****

*Note: If “advanced” appears in parentheses, it means it is a headier/deeper piece that may be more challenging for someone earlier in their wokeness journey, compared to “beginner” resources. You can decide for yourself which to read, but you **all** must choose one or both.*

SECTION ONE: The What, How, and Why of Oppression

September 4: Introductions

Questions to consider:

- 1) What are our course objectives and norms?
- 2) What *is* oppression?
- 3) How can the social sciences help us wrap our heads around oppression?

Readings/Materials:

- **Arao and Clemens, From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces**
(Justification: describes the nuances in facilitating dialogue about social justice, reframing the idea of safe spaces [criticized for impeding freedom of speech] to brave spaces in which discomfort, ambiguity, pain, etc. are accepted as necessary for authentic learning and growth.)
- **Collected resources from the office of Intergroup Relations on the basics of dialogue**

Overview:

This first class will be devoted to introductions, clarifying the objectives of the course, and setting/agreeing upon community norms. I will model vulnerability and openness about my positionality as a way to set the tone and emphasize the fact that I will be presenting knowledge (observable facts and reputable analyses thereof) *and* conviction (my values, formed by my emotions and experiences). The readings will help us to frame the objectives of the course, and our Positive Learning Environment Contract.

I will also introduce my “three truths about humans” that I have developed through teaching many anthropology classes: 1) There is more than one way to do/be human. 2) No way is inherently superior or inferior (though cultural relativism does not equal moral relativism). 3) Humans can learn to believe anything (including the reverse of the first two truths).

September 11: Terminology – The What of Oppression

Questions to consider:

- 1) Like, seriously though, what *is* oppression???
- 2) What language and terminology do we need in order to explore oppression?
- 3) Is it useful to draw distinctions between oppression that occurs across “groups” (i.e. racism or xenophobia, which demand a system of classification that differentiates people into groups based on arbitrary characteristics like skin color or where one is born) and oppression that occurs within “groups” (i.e. sexism or ableism, which occur within other

meaningful categories and are based on characteristics that are not arbitrary, such as biological sex or a non-normative body)?

Readings/Materials:

- **Robin DiAngelo, White Fragility**
(Justification: because of where we are – in a country with much racial turmoil, in an institution that is majority white – racism and white supremacy will be huge topics that we talk about a lot, and it will be talked about in a majority white space. This article is helpful in conceptualizing a phenomenon – white fragility – that makes talking about race difficult in a way specific to white people, and will help us name issues that we will certainly face together).
- **The following glossaries (there will be repetition, this is OK) of contemporary social justice/oppression terminology**
 - <http://www.suffolk.edu/campuslife/27883.php>
 - <http://www.lclark.edu/live/files/18474-abcs-of-social-justice>
- **Gay, 2012, Peculiar Benefits** <http://therumpus.net/2012/05/peculiar-benefits/>
(Justification: excellent Roxane Gay essay defining and wrestling with the idea of “privilege”)
- **Gay, 2014, The Politics of Respectability, from Bad Feminist**
(Justification: succinct essay about respectability politics, asserting that “Racism doesn’t care about respectability”)
- **Charles, 2014, Ten counterproductive behaviors of social justice educators**
<https://acpacsje.wordpress.com/2014/09/09/ten-counterproductive-behaviors-of-social-justice-educators-by-cody-charles/>
(Justification: exploration of common traps that impede effective justice work)
- **(advanced) Collins, 2015, Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas**
<http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-soc-073014-112142>
(Justification: clear article about identity, intersectionality and social justice by renowned scholar Patricia Hill Collins).
(beginner) Crenshaw, 2015, Why intersectionality can't wait.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/09/24/why-intersectionality-cant-wait/?utm_term=.24e279cdc05a
Also see Wikipedia entry: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality>
- **Orwell, 1946, Politics and the English Language**
(Justification: Overviews many common linguistic traps that prevent clear communication and understanding, and facilitate the perpetuation of myths.)

Recommended, not required materials:

Abu-Lughod, 2002, Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?

Fraser, 1998, Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation

Overview:

This class focuses on clarifying the language/terminology of oppression, covering terms such as: oppression, violence, isms and phobias (e.g. racism/xenophobia), identity politics, respectability politics, microaggressions, trigger warnings, “reverse” isms, prejudice, power, justice/injustice, “woke”/critical consciousness/change agent, multiculturalism and diversity, social inertia/social change, and cultural/moral relativism.

We will go over the levels/types of oppression using the “5 Is”/tree metaphor (roots=Ideological, trunk=Institutional, leaves=Interpersonal and Intrapersonal/Internalized), and discuss Intersectionality (the 5th “I”), the concept that prevents a neat understanding of

oppression by suggesting that the interaction of different identities (with different levels of privilege and disadvantage at different times) complicates oppression further.

September 18: The How and Why of Oppression Part 1 – Normalization and Social Inertia

****WHO AM I? PAPER DUE BY MIDNIGHT****

Questions to consider:

- 1) Why do humans oppress?
- 2) Why and how is oppression perpetuated?

Readings/Materials:

- Rosenthal, 2002, *Covert Communication in Classrooms, Clinics, Courtrooms and Cubicles* (for some articles, including this one, I will attach my highlighted copy that points to key ideas in case that helps some of you, as well as a clean copy)
(Justification: This short article (from experimental psychology) describes and provides evidence for ‘expectancy theory’ – how interpersonal (and therefore social) expectations can become self-fulfilling prophecies. This is very important in understanding how oppression operates, because negative (and positive) stereotypes about identity contribute to the perpetuation of oppression.)
- Ridgeway, 2009, *Framed Before We Know It: How Gender Shapes Social Relations*
(Justification: clear description of how cultural frames/schemas, such as gender, organize and shape social interactions and systems, and are generative and not fixed)
- Sperber and Hirschfeld, 2004, *The cognitive foundations of cultural stability and diversity* (this is the kind of article where a skim plus intro/conclusion is sufficient)
(Justification: an albeit dry but helpful article that describes the cognitive underpinnings of category formation, as well as cultural stability [how ideas get cemented/perpetuated])
- Brown, 2017, *Desensitization of Terrorism* <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/towards-recovery/201705/desensitization-terrorism>
(Justification: describes and explains the phenomenon of desensitization, relating it to media and information, as well as trauma psychology). Also see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desensitization_\(psychology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desensitization_(psychology))
- Newell, 2017, *The Trump Administration and the Normalization of Deviance: Behavior that is deviant becomes more acceptable over time* http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-trump-administration-and-the-normalization-of-deviance_us_58ecb6c8e4b0ea028d568cb7
(Justification: provides a workable definition of normalization, connecting this to Trump).
- **Wikipedia page about social inertia** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_inertia

Recommended/not required materials:

Fuentes, 2012, *Race, Monogamy and Other Lies They Told You: Busting Myths about Human Nature*
Hinton, 2000, Introduction to *Stereotypes, Cognition and Culture*
Documentary by Adam Curtis, 2016, “Hypernormalisation”
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2016/adam-curtis-hypernormalisation>

Overview:

This unit will involve digesting readings related to why humans oppress/how oppression works. I will frame this in terms of what I call the “other and oppress propensity”: humans notice human variation, make categories about these differences, and then take the leap toward reifying and hierarchizing the categories, resulting in a totally screwed species.

Sperber and Hirschfeld help us understand the cognitive underpinnings: humans must form meaningful social categories/groups in order to make sense of social life. In-group and out-group categories (i.e. othering) are possibly inevitable, *but*, hatred of/dehumanizing out-group category members (i.e. oppression) need not be. Ridgeway and Rosenthal help us understand how social categories become cognitive frames, largely unconsciously learned and conveyed, and thus perpetuated (also unconsciously). (The non-required reading on stereotypes has more detail about this). I will also introduce the terms misrecognition, normalization/naturalization (especially desensitization/inurement) to explain the process of how categories become reified and accepted as natural rather than social constructs, contributing to social inertia.

September 25: The How and Why of Oppression, Part 2 – Violence, Hate, and Trauma

Questions to consider:

- 1) What is violence? Who determines what counts as violence?
- 2) What is hate? Who determines what counts as hate?
- 3) Are violence and/or hate *necessary* elements of oppression, or can oppression exist without violence and/or hate? What distinguishes hateful violence from non-hateful violence?
- 4) How is hate created/learned?
- 5) What are the impacts of hatred and violence?

Readings/Materials:

- **Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2003, Making Sense of Violence**
(Justification: excellent and moving piece which describes and digests violence through an anthropological and humanistic lens)
- **(optional for those who want more) Navarro et al, 2013, the Psychology of Hatred**
(Justification: short article exploring the psychology of hatred, including how to combat it)
- **Read through these websites on non-violent communication/Dr. King Junior's principles of non-violent resistance** <http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy> and <https://www.cnvc.org/learn/nvc-foundations>
(Justification: violence is caused by a) violence (i.e. violence begets violence) and b) communication deficits that prevent people from seeing each other's humanity, and understanding their own and each other's needs. Empathy and non-violent communication are key in counteracting this.)
- **Read this poem, "September 1, 1939" by W.H. Auden:**
<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/september-1-1939>
(Justification: beautiful poem that touches on how violence begets violence begets violence)
- **Hardy, 2015, The View from Black America**
<https://www.psychotherapynetworker.org/blog/details/684/the-view-from-black-america>
(Justification: explores how social/collective issues such as racism and racial trauma contribute to mental health issues, written by a black therapist/activist).
- **(optional) Read through the website "Why We're Afraid,"** a (now inactive) space for people to share their experiences with hate crimes related to the Trump presidency
<http://whywereafraid.com>
- **Watch this clip (3.23) of a documentary with Dr. Robert Sapolsky**
(neurobiologist/anthropologist), which features his discovery that hierarchical violence amongst baboons was a learned/cultural, not innate/biologically determined, behavior.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZcTvFqzxA0>

- Listen to this podcast (29 minutes) about Hannah Arendt's work on tyranny
<https://player.fm/series/radical-philosophy-2421301/a-prof-serena-parekh-hannah-arendt>
And read this short blog post by a science writer:
<https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/12/20/hannah-arendt-origins-of-totalitarianism-loneliness-isolation/>
And read this article by Masha Gessen about tyranny and Trump
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/one-year-after-trumps-election-revisiting-autocracy-rules-for-survival>
(Justification: Arendt is one of the most important theorists of hate-based violence to have walked this earth, but interestingly enough, the “banality of evil” (like the Lucifer Effect, see below) is such that much of the world’s violence is the result of apathy, ignorance, and people doing what they believe is “normal” [because “normal” is often synonymous with “oppressive”], NOT from hate. Her discussion of human rights is also fascinating. The Gessen piece is beautiful in tandem because the “breeding grounds of terror” that Arendt talks about, the conditions that enable a tyrant to take power, can be easily applied to our current political climate).
- Read these Wikipedia pages, which provide good and concise definitions of trauma
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transgenerational_trauma
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_trauma
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_trauma
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adverse_Childhood_Experiences_Study

Recommended, not required material:

Read about the Milgram experiment: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milgram_experiment

Listen to this Sam Harris’ episode of Waking Up, with Masha Gessen as guest:

<https://samharris.org/podcasts/131-dictators-immigration-metoo-imponderables/>

Overview:

This class will explore the role of violence, hatred, and trauma (especially intergenerational/collective trauma), in perpetuating oppression. I want you to understand that I do not believe hate-based violence and oppression to be intrinsic qualities in humans, but rather learned behaviors – at times taught/learned actively (as in the case of Nazi propaganda), at times taught/learned passively. At the same time, due to the powerfully cyclical nature of hatred and violence, short of a dramatic accident such as was witnessed by Sapolsky, hate-based violence seems to be here to stay.

Important note: I will not be explicitly looking at violence with respect to psychopathology or criminology (e.g. ‘serial killers’), because I am focusing more on the routine/widely accepted and practiced violence associated with oppression.

SECTION TWO: Oppression Manifested

October 2: Xenophobia and Racism Part 1

FIRST JOURNAL-ENTRY ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY BY 2PM

Questions to consider:

- 1) What are xenophobia and racism?
- 2) How and why did they develop?
- 3) How does the concept of ‘trauma’ connect to the concepts of racism and xenophobia?

Readings/Materials:

- **Bornstein, 2015, Institutional Racism, Numbers Management, and Zero-Tolerance Policing in New York City**
(Justification: readable ethnography that describes and explains institutional racism effectively, specifically the nuanced point that one participates in *institutional* racism even when one does not harbor or believe in racist *ideology*)
- **Burton, 2015, To Protect and Serve Whiteness**
(Justification: ethnography on policing in the US and how it is and has always been racialized)
- **Four short articles summarizing James Baldwin and Margaret Mead’s “rap on race” (read parts 1 and 2, OK to skim 3 and 4) <https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/03/19/a-rap-on-race-margaret-mead-and-james-baldwin/>**
(Justification: poignant and intellectually compelling article about race, immigration, surmounting the insurmountable, and most importantly, forgiveness and faith in humanity. Also addresses the point I will reiterate constantly: isms are not our fault, but they are our responsibility.)
- **Ta-Nehisi Coates, 2015, “Letter to my Son” <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/07/tanehisi-coates-between-the-world-and-me/397619/> and James Baldwin’s “Letter to my nephew” <http://progressive.org/magazine/letter-nephew/>**
(Justification: two well-known and beautiful accounts of the lived experience of blackness by important figures, past and present, in black liberation)
- **Baker, 2010, Notes on ‘Post-Racial’ Society**
(Justification: Lee Baker is an excellent race scholar/anthropologist, and this article is good, short, and to the point: that the US is still racist, but it also has a hopeful and resilience-focused tone)
- **Tucker, 2016, The Ultimate White Privilege Statistics (Ok to skim) http://www.jbwttucker.com/ultimate-white-privilege-statistics/?utm_campaign=shareaholic**
(Justification: this is a well-researched blog post by a self-proclaimed white ‘conservative’ who sought to understand, statistically, white privilege. It is an excellent resource in terms of statistical evidence of many disparities such as incarceration, employment, education, voting, etc.)
- **McIntosh, 1990, White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack**
(Justification: a foundational piece in the history of wrestling with privilege/oppression)

Recommended, not required readings:

Baker, 1998, *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954*

Taylor, 2016, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (especially introduction)

Highly recommended: Wyatt Cenac’s “Problem Areas!” a new comedy show exploring policing in the US.

<https://www.hbo.com/wyatt-cenacs-problem-areas>

Overview:

This will be the first of two units that address racism and xenophobia, this one focusing more on the experience of black Americans. I will weave in James Baldwin’s profound quote, “history casts a long shadow,” to wrestle with the way/s race and racism have baked into our world (i.e. institutional racism, white privilege/invisibility and normalization of inequality).

October 9: Xenophobia and Racism Part 2

Questions to consider:

- 1) What is nationalism, and how does it contribute to oppression?

Readings/Materials:

- **Read through these websites detailing U of M's undocumented migration project**, led by Dr. Jason De Leon: <http://undocumentedmigrationproject.com> and <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/12/151206-immigration-border-migrant-mexico-desert-ngbooktalk/>
- **Go to this website, and choose two articles to read (the latest posts pertain to the recent family separation crisis, but keep scrolling to see the extent of the research):** <https://theintercept.com/collections/the-war-on-immigrants/>
(Justification: The Intercept is a radical journalism collective that do remarkable and brave work)
- **Anderson, 2006, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism (excerpt from introduction/pages 5-8)**
(Justification: introduces and explains the idea of national identity as another socially constructed/oppression-laden category akin to gender, race, etc. This book is considered a foundational text in the study of nationalism)
- **Warsan Shire's "Home"** <https://genius.com/Warsan-shire-home-annotated>, also <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/sep/16/poets-speak-out-for-refugees-> and <https://qz.com/897871/warsan-shires-poem-captures-the-reality-of-life-for-refugees-no-one-leaves-home-unless-home-is-the-mouth-of-a-shark/>
(Justification: this poem has become emblematic of the refugee experience)
- **Trilling, 2018, Five Myths about the Refugee Crisis** <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jun/05/five-myths-about-the-refugee-crisis>
(Justification: thought-provoking article about the European Union, xenophobia, and refugees)
- **Watch this TED Talk (18 minutes) "A Black Man Goes Undercover in the Alt-Right"** <https://www.facebook.com/TED/videos/10159197316605652/>
(Justification: This is a fascinating talk by a talented artist/intellectual named Theo Wilson, who went undercover in the alt-right online community and discovered, unexpectedly, a great level of compassion and understanding with the experience of the white supremacists he met, who are feeling hated/resented because of their "white man-ness" (something they can't change, just as *he* can't change his blackness). The beautiful message he had for them was 'if you aren't down with diversity, you're going against nature, and you're on the losing team.' I love this idea, and think it connects beautifully with the idea of Trump's "wall.")
- **Watch this video I made called "Bad (hombres)" (3.30)** which satirizes Donald Trump's anti-immigrant/Mexico speeches (though now already very dated...)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNuzIcCD6i8>
(Justification: an example of how humor can help process painful issues. I am sharing my own art as a way to be more vulnerable with you, and show that anyone – even nonprofessional artists – can and should express themselves artistically without inhibition).

Overview:

This will be the second of two units that address racism and xenophobia, this one focusing more on anti-immigrant rhetoric, especially toward Latinx (gender neutral term for Latino/Latina). One of my key arcs/frames will be the fact that immigration is a human universal (humans have been moving from place to place in response to a variety of factors since *H. erectus*, at least), and it is therefore a mark of (understandable) ignorance that a person arbitrarily born within a (human-drawn) national border should feel they have an inherent right to occupy that space over others. Also, *colonialism*, so pot/kettle/black. I hope to address problematic rhetoric around undocumented migration, and "deserving" and "undeserving" immigrants.

October 23: The Patriarchy! – sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and malignant male supremacy

Questions to consider:

- 1) What is gender, sexism, and patriarchy?
- 2) How and why did it/they develop?
- 3) How does this relate to our current lived experiences?

Readings/Materials:

- (advanced/optional) Butler, 1988, *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: an essay in phenomenology and feminist theory*
(Justification: foundational feminist essay in which Butler proposes the theory of gender as performative/non-essential. Butler writes in a heady and obtuse fashion, but it is such a crucial piece for all of post-modernism and identity studies that I must include it!)
- Fraser, 2013, *How feminism became capitalism's handmaiden, and how to reclaim it*
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/14/feminism-capitalist-handmaiden-neoliberal>
(Justification: feminist/political scientist Nancy Fraser's short interesting article that connects feminism to labor politics)
- Collins, 2000, *Towards a Politics of Empowerment (from Black Feminist Thought)*
(Justification: excellent piece that addresses intersectionality and the power of critical consciousness for empowerment and justice-seeking).
- Gay, 2014, *Bad feminist Take Two, from Bad Feminist*
(Justification: points to the fact that feminism is diverse and contradictory)
- Prum, 2017, *Queering Homo Sapiens (chapter 11 in The Evolution of Beauty)* – use your umich login info to access this ebook version, scroll down and click on chapter 11
<http://proxy.lib.umich.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1339645&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
(Justification: a fascinating book about aesthetic preference/beauty that challenges the common idea that *reproduction [i.e. natural selection]* is the primary motivation of animal behavior by showing how the subjective experiences of beauty/pleasure are equally motivating. This chapter explains from an evolutionary perspective why fluidity in sexual preference is totally expected in an animal like us, and posits that the relative rarity of queerness in humans is more to do with patriarchy (page 314) than nature. Generally, the book points to the very deep issue of male dominance and violence amongst primates [it is NOT just human males that oppress females], and theorizes that patriarchies create monsters because male supremacy unchecked in the primate world = stress hormone soup life for everyone, even the powerful males. Terminology note: since this chapter is a ways in, I should clarify that “aesthetic remodeling” means “selection for beauty not function,” that is, that animals make mate choices based on arbitrary beauty *all* the time).
- **A selection of non-academic pieces surrounding toxic masculinity and rape culture**
 - <http://www.doctornerdlove.com/what-is-toxic-masculinity/>
 - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Femicide>
 - <http://www.shakesville.com/2009/10/rape-culture-101.html>
 - https://www.buzzfeed.com/katiejmbaker/heres-the-powerful-letter-the-stanford-victim-read-to-her-ra?utm_term=.hhn782gOq#.srMl4qNWB this is the beautiful letter written by the woman (One could say “victim,” but the whole point of the letter is her empowerment) involved in the highly publicized Stanford Rape Trial. This piece/case enables us to also discuss white privilege, as well as the power of vulnerability and ownership of one's story when it comes to empowerment.
 - <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/4/25/17277496/incel-toronto-attack-alek-minassian>
A disturbing piece about the “incel” movement, a misogynist hate group in the US.

Recommended, not required readings:

Kerstein, 2017, Considering the normalization of catcalling in popular culture: <http://www.5027mac.org/2017/06/26/considering-normalization-street-harassment-popular-culture/>
The rest of *Angry White Men*, and Kimmel's *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*

Overview:

In this unit we will discuss patriarchy, or “a society with male supremacy” – not a phenomenon unique to humans by a long shot. But, in humans, it is very different, because unlike any other animal, we create institutions and ideologies that make “power” a whole new game. We will talk about the many facets of patriarchy alive and well around us: rape culture, gender-based violence/femicide/the incel movement, transphobia and homophobia.

October 30: Disability and Madness

Questions to consider:

- 1) How does illness and disability complicate identity politics?
- 2) What is disability, and what is madness, and *who decides this*?

Readings/Materials:

- **Hedva, 2016, Sick Woman Theory** <http://www.maskmagazine.com/not-again/struggle/sick-woman-theory>
(Justification: this is scholarship and art, a critical disability studies piece in which the author, a chronically ill woman, muses about how the ill/disabled are often depoliticized (“How do you throw a brick through the window of a bank if you can’t get out of bed?”), and envisions the ‘sick woman’ as a kind of universal oppressed subject that anyone can connect to. She politicizes illness, especially madness/mental illness)
- **Laudo, 2015, Why person first language doesn't always put the person first:** <https://www.thinkinclusive.us/why-person-first-language-doesnt-always-put-the-person-first/#sthash.obqDTcGa.dpbs>
(Justification: helpful article about the language we use to talk about disability)
- **Read this Wikipedia page:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dispossession,_oppression_and_depression
(Justification: Ann Cvetkovich, who this page references, is a kindred spirit in theorizing madness [in her case, specifically depression] in a wide, social, collective, and oppressive-focused way)
- **(optional for those who want more feelings) Johnson, 2013, Unspeakable Conversations** <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/16/magazine/unspeakable-conversations.html> or a PDF version http://courses.washington.edu/intro2ds/Readings/24_Johnson-unspeakable.pdf
(Justification: beautiful piece written by lawyer/activist and woman with a disability, Harriet McBride Johnson, known for a famous debate with pseudo-eugenicist Peter Singer [a philosopher who advocated for euthanasia of people/children with disabilities] which she describes in this piece. One important point it raises is the Dumbdore-like [fictional or not, he is my hero] *refusal to make monsters out of oppressors*, instead humanizing and approaching them with compassion)
- **Yakas 2017/2018 – this article I published in the Disability Studies Quarterly** <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/6096/4826> and Chapter Two of my dissertation
(Justification: I have worked very hard to digest the literature on madness so that others have less intellectual heavy-lifting to do. Chapter Two is the part of my dissertation where I review the oppressive conditions by which the categories of “mental illness” and “psychiatric disability” were created and continue, and you will also see an example of autoethnography in the “monologue” that falls at the end of the chapter [my dissertation was stylistically unique in that I fragmented the work with different voices so that my scholar, activist, ex-patient, and artist selves could all speak on the topic]. The article explains more about my field site, the Clubhouse, and

the importance of the human social needs of purpose and belonging in healing and harnessing madness [the title of my dissertation is “Love in a Time of Madness: the importance of purpose and belonging in healing and harnessing Madness”]).

- (optional for those who want more theory) Goodley, 2017, *Four approaches and three key themes of critical disability studies*

(Justification: an easy-to-read review of ‘critical disability studies’ theory)

- Watch/listen to this interview with Mia Mingus, a champion of the contemporary disability justice movement <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cJkUazW-jw> and read this piece she wrote in 2017 <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2017/04/12/access-intimacy-interdependence-and-disability-justice/>

(Mia articulates the importance of an intersectional liberation movement in a way that is moving and beautiful. Personally, I think and write about “access intimacy” often, and have found it so helpful in understanding my relationships).

Overview:

Disability/Mad studies complicates the idea of disability and madness, moving it away from the medical model (and even the biopsychosocial model) and toward a complex understanding of disability/Madness as oppressed identity, lived experience, community, and the “destabilizer” of identity politics because it touches everyone (i.e. every human breaks down and dies eventually). This unit introduces the idea that disability and illness are, like race, not things in the world, but perspectives on it.

November 6: Class and Poverty

Questions to consider:

- 1) What is class, and what is classism?
- 2) What is poverty?
- 3) How does class connect to/complicate identity politics?

Readings/Materials:

- Kimmel, 2015, *Introduction to Angry White Men: American masculinity at the end of an era* (Justification: this works well building off the last unit on gender. It is a very helpful piece for understanding the role of *entitlement* in anger/hate (and it also connects to the TED talk we watch earlier, because many of Kimmel’s informants are racist/xenophobic/white supremacists). The reason why I include it in the “class” unit is because Kimmel points to a common criticism of identity politics – where is class?)
- Graeber, 2013, *On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs* <https://libcom.org/library/phenomenon-bullshit-jobs-david-graeber> (Justification: anthropologist David Graeber theorizing (for a non-academic audience) about the economy and the transition from an economic system where most people actually make/do something of social value, to a system where a lot of ‘work’ is pointless, and people *know* it).
- Luce, 2015, *Time is Political* <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/07/luce-eight-hour-day-obama-overtime> (Justification: easy to read article by labor studies scholar describing trends in work hours, such as overwork/underwork, structure and stability versus instability/flexibility, and power)
- Crosley-Corcoran, 2014, *Explaining white privilege to a broke white person* http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gina-crosleycorcoran/explaining-white-privilege-to-a-broke-white-person_b_5269255.html (Justification: ties intersectionality and class into the discussion of white privilege)
- Farmer, 2004, *On Suffering and Structural Violence: a view from below*

(Justification: foundational article on structural violence, a similar concept to institutional oppression. Farmer foregrounds poverty (and intersectionality, though that term is more recent) in his brutal and beautiful piece about poverty and suffering)

- **Sapolsky, 2004, Social Status and Health in Humans and Other Animals**

(Justification: an excellent review article which describes how social inequality contributes to stress and illness, and an especially beautiful point about human poverty – especially poverty amidst plenty – as a deeply traumatic/oppressive/damaging experience distinct from social inequality seen in other animals)

Overview:

This will be a tricky topic because, as many critics believe, class is often left out of identity politics, especially of the “recognition” kind (i.e. the difference between identity politics that strive for *recognition* of an oppressed identity as valid (i.e. transgender, homosexuality) versus *redistribution* of resources). However, though *recognition* is important – the LGBTQ community should be recognized as valid, not pathological – an overemphasis on recognition to the detriment of discussing redistribution (i.e. class) will not further social justice enough. One of the major issues of our time is the gross injustice of poverty (the 99%/1% idea).

The readings for this week serve to show how poverty/class inequality is a powerful stressor that weakens the body and spirit, that it connects with other isms (i.e. oppressed racial minorities are more likely to be poor than white Americans) and in fact is, I believe, the most significant means by which oppression manifests: “the system” – whoever or whatever that is – needn’t do much more than routinize poverty in order to oppress people, no matter their category of identity (race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, etc.).

November 13: Colonialism (I wish we could do this Thanksgiving week, but it would disrupt the three sections structure!)

Questions to consider:

- 1) Is decolonization possible?
- 2) How does colonialism complicate contemporary understandings of citizenship and immigration rights? (i.e. why was it OK 400 years ago for people to relocate and displace others, but today it isn’t OK anymore?)

Readings/Materials:

- **Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, Decolonizing Methodologies (Chapter One)**
(Justification: provides a framework and language for decolonization – written/edited by a New Zealand Maori scholar)
- **(optional if the term/process is still unclear) read the Wikipedia page:**
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decolonization>
- **Weston, 2018, The gap won't close until we address intergenerational trauma:**
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/12/the-gap-wont-close-until-we-address-intergenerational-trauma>
(Justification: An Australian aboriginal activist makes a plea for the government to address the root issue of intergenerational trauma in its attempts at reparations)
- **“What's behind high Aboriginal youth suicide rates?”**
<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/high-aboriginal-youth-suicide-rates-180607100149404.html>
(Justification: interview with aboriginal Australian psychologist about the impacts of colonialism on indigenous people’s mental health)

- **Our society is broken!: what can stop Canada's First Nations suicide epidemic?**
<https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/aug/30/our-society-is-broken-what-can-stop-canadas-first-nations-suicide-epidemic>
(Justification: explores the relationship between colonialism, economic inequality, historical trauma, hopelessness, and suicide in Canadian First Nations people)
- **Hummel, 2016, Historical Trauma: The Confluence of Mental Health and History in Native American Communities** <https://medium.com/@bradyhummel/historical-trauma-the-confluence-of-mental-health-and-history-in-native-american-communities-5513985836c5>
(Justification: explores the relationship between colonialism, economic inequality, historical trauma, hopelessness, and suicide in Native Americans)
- **Watch Winona Linn's spoken work poem "Knock-Off Native" a moving piece about indigeneity, racism, and pride in identity:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_zFOsd_pqA

Overview:

What would a class on oppression be without a look at colonialism? The pieces we read for this week help contextualize some of the "what/how of oppression" issues we examine earlier in the semester: specifically, trauma. We will discuss what colonialism is, why it happened (because of the "other and oppress" propensity plus greed/economic exploitation, etc.), and its far-reaching consequences (cultural appropriation/racism, media stereotypes, suicide rates, reservation life, cultural erasure and historical trauma, boarding schools, etc.).

SECTION THREE: What Now?

SECOND JOURNAL-ENTRY ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY BY 2PM

November 20: Oppression and the academy/social work

Questions to consider:

- 1) How does oppression present itself in academia, and what is being/can be done?
- 2) Are institutional "diversity initiatives" actually going to save us?
- 3) In what ways are helping professions (like social work) a part of the problem?

Readings/Materials:

- **Ulysse, 2016, Pedagogies of Belonging** http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gina-athena-ulysse/pedagogies-of-belonging_1_b_8693286.html
(Justification: a black woman anthropology professor reflects on belonging, and barriers to belonging, in academia)
- **Read the following short pieces about diversity initiatives:**
 - <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/docview/1775664996?pq-origsite=summon&accountid=14667> (read this one though umich access)
 - <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/minds-business/workplace-diversity-initiatives-may-mask-discrimination.html>
 - <https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/02/dismantling-oppression-at-work/>
 - <https://hbr.org/2012/03/diversity-training-doesnt-work.html>

(Justification: pieces with different perspectives about diversity workshops. My take home is that "this work, done poorly, can actually make things worse").

- **Read the Wikipedia entry on Pedagogy of the Oppressed:**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedagogy_of_the_Oppressed

(Justification: it is a good description of the work. This is where Paolo Freire describes how critical pedagogy can be used to instill critical consciousness – through ‘conscientization’ – in oppressed peoples and provoke social change)

- **Gay, 2012, The Illusion of Safety/The Safety of Illusion** <http://therumpus.net/2012/08/the-illusion-of-safetythe-safety-of-illusion/>
(Justification: a thought-provoking piece about trigger warnings)
- **Scientific American Blog: When It Comes to Sexual Harassment, Academia Is Fundamentally Broken:** <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/voices/when-it-comes-to-sexual-harassment-academia-is-fundamentally-broken/>
- **Park, 2008, Facilitating Injustice: Tracing the Role of Social Workers in the World War II Internment of Japanese Americans.**
(justification: super thoughtful article with a specific case study to highlight the fact that social workers have often been willing followers of unjust systems – a great link back to the work of Hannah Arendt, the banality of evil, and the idea that people just “doing their jobs” and “following rules” can be tantamount to evil)

Highly Recommended Reading:

The Road Not Taken: A History of Radical Social Work in the United States, by Reisch and Andrews

Overview:

In this unit we will come closer to home, and think about our experiences as university students and social workers. If oppression is woven into the whole social fabric, it is true that it is in these spaces, too. We hear criticisms that universities are corporate, steeped in tradition and status quo (white/ableist/male), inaccessible, and prohibitively expensive, and we hear criticisms about social work not being radical (how can a system-recognized profession be anti-system?) enough to dismantle systemic oppression. We will think through these issues together, and talk about people within academia and social work that strive to be anti-oppressive.

November 27: Ally Politics

Questions to consider:

- 1) How does one witness and become conscious of oppression and remain, for lack of a better word, sane?
- 2) What can we do about oppression in our everyday lives?
- 3) What can be done about oppression at a wider scale?
- 4) Is it possible, necessary, or desirable, to forgive the kinds of atrocities we have digested this semester?

Readings/Materials:

- **Milstein, 2016, A critique of ally politics** <https://radicalwashtenaw.org/2015/02/07/a-critique-of-ally-politics/>
(Justification: interesting complication of the idea of ‘allies,’ arguing that there is no unified target for you to be a generic ally to and that many allies are merely patting themselves on the back with the title)
- **McKenzie, 2015, How to Tell the Difference Between Real Solidarity and ‘Ally Theater’** <http://www.blackgirldangerous.com/2015/11/ally-theater/>
(Justification: a funny and interesting take on the performative side of allyship)
- **Penny, 2016, Life-Hacks of the Poor and Aimless: On negotiating the false idols of neoliberal self-care** <https://thebaffler.com/war-of-nerve/laurie-penny-self-care>

(Justification: explores the self-care rhetoric, as well as the criticisms thereof)

- Yakas, 2018, *Accommodating Madness: Tools for Building a World to Belong to* (chapter six of dissertation)

(Justification: the chapter in which I discuss self-care and ally politics, being an ally in clinical settings, and steps one can take to accommodate their Mads into the world)

- (optional, highly recommended) Coates, 2014, *The case for reparations*
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
(Justification: well researched and heartfelt examination of reparations in the US)
- Read about transitional justice here: <https://www.ictj.org/about/transitional-justice> and/or https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transitional_justice
- Read about restorative justice here: <http://restorativejustice.org/restorative-justice/about-restorative-justice/tutorial-intro-to-restorative-justice/#sthash.Y6CuU3cH.dpbs>
- Read about the Creative Community Interventions of Huron Valley, a local organization advocating for transformative justice practices (specifically, read the items in the “about” link) <https://www.ccihuronvalley.org>
- Read about the recent Prisoner’s Strike, a huge indicator that the criminal justice system is fundamentally unjust: <https://www.vox.com/2018/8/17/17664048/national-prison-strike-2018>

Overview:

We will discuss what it means to be an ally, we will explore forgiveness, reparations, and the controversies surrounding *who* should/can forgive/be forgiven. We will also discuss the politicized notion of ‘self-care,’ because somehow we must fortify ourselves so that we are OK in spite of being awake to how profoundly *not* OK the world is. Beyond discussing ways of keeping ourselves safe/sane/OK in the face of what we know about humanity, this week will we will dedicate time to workshopping our personal “social justice plans” – our ways of solidifying our own values and strengths and committing to actionable steps for an anti-oppressive life.

December 4: Student Presentations

Students will share their final projects with the class

THIRD JOURNAL-ENTRY ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY BY 2PM

December 11: Student Presentations and Farewell

Students will share their final projects with the class.