



SW 504: Social Justice and Diversity in Social Work

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Classroom: B798 SSWB
Wednesday 5:00pm – 8:00pm
Prerequisites: None
Foundation HBSE Course; Required for all
MSW students – 3 credits

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 these all 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 include 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 organization 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 are 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 discussion, lecture, video, and participation in experiential activities. Additionally, this course will provide a forum to critically examine how our multiple social locations, societal constructions, and social processes shape our beliefs, assumptions, behaviors, life experiences, and hinder our work with diverse populations. Special attention will also be given knowledge about justice and change, and principles of change towards justice.

Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity

Multiculturalism and diversity is addressed from the perspective of critically considering how diverse dimensions (such as ability, age, class, color, culture, race/ethnicity, family structure, gender—including gender identity and gender expression, marital status, national origin, 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

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

This theme 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

This theme 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

1. 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?
2. 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?
 3. 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.
 4. What creates and sustains inequalities, injustice, oppression, 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?
 5. 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)
 6. How do societies and institutions change? General theories, planned/steered change approaches? e.g., from the bottom up, one individual at a time - Collective behavior Changing consciousness, symbols - Natural selection - New technologies Because of external forces, crises, economic markets and forces (capitalism)
 7. What’s the role of government (the State) in funding and regulating behavior and social institutions, maintaining or reducing inequality?
 8. 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?
 9. 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 Materials

Required Texts

Mullaly, B. (2010). Challenging Oppression and Confronting Privilege, Second Edition. Oxford University Press.

(Readings from the text will be designated as “Mullaly” on the course schedule.)

In addition, there are assigned Modules via EdX.org. You will have to register to create a free account. Go to <http://www.edx.org> and click register and then search of the course titled

“Diversity and Social Justice.” This is an online course developed by Prof. Jamie Mitchell. You may view as much of the course as you like, but will only be required to view the modules on the course schedule. This account will also give you access to hundreds of other courses around the country.

Additional Readings and Media

The course calendar indicates what readings are due for each week. Additional readings and media are available on Canvas. We will be listening to many episodes from the NPR podcast, “Code Switch.” You may wish to subscribe to this podcast on iTunes, Google Play, Stitcher, or Spotify.

Assignments

Attendance and Participation: 25%

Attendance and how engaged you are will be monitored throughout the semester. Students are expected to attend and to be prepared to take part in each class session. This includes completing assigned reading, being prepared to facilitate discussion on reading(s) and/or assigned activities (such as survey's, self-reflection assessments, vignettes, etc) prior to class, to reference for informed class participation, attending class on time, and participating in all class discussions and activities and group assignments. Class attendance is important for you to keep up with course work. If, for any reason, I have concerns about your participation or attendance, I will discuss my concerns with you in a timely fashion.

It is expected that students will attend **all classes** unless legitimate and/or special reasons exist for absences or tardiness. Legitimate absences include those due to health problems that can be documented, unanticipated family emergencies and observance of religious holy days. Excused absences will only be granted with documentation (i.e. a doctor's note or other proof of an emergency situation and/or my *prior* approval). Missing three classes will reduce your final grade; one-half grade (e.g. an A would be reduced to an A-) and each additional absence will reduce your final grade an additional half grade. Excessive absences (more than 3) may result in failure of the course. If students miss more than 2 class sessions, they must schedule a meeting with the instructor to discuss their attendance and a plan of action to not miss anymore classes. Coming to or leaving class mid-way is considered an absence. As adult learners, I expect you to make appropriate decisions about attending class, this includes coming to class late and leaving class mid-way. Any absences or tardiness should be discussed directly with the instructor and it is the student's responsibility to obtain any notes, materials, handouts or exercises from the missed session from one of your classmates and make arrangements to complete class work, which is missed.

Please be cognizant of the disruptive nature of coming to class late. If you are delayed, please enter the classroom as quietly as possible and wait until break to catch up with what is going on. Your participation grade includes ability to discuss ideas with colleagues in a respectful manner, engage in reflective learning, and the sharing of your experiences, current events or literature specific to the material being discussed and demonstration that required readings,

modules and other out of class learning have been completed by sharing and asking relevant questions in class. I encourage you to be actively present during class, students not participating and/or who are using electronic devices not related to class activities will see the impact in this grade.

Assessment of your participation does not depend solely on the quantity of your involvement in class discussion and class exercises, but also on the quality of your contributions.

Use the following criteria for assessing your participation in class

- Frequency of participation in class: Student initiates contributions more than once in each class session, however, quality of comments is weighted over quantity. Student responds actively when invited by the professor to contribute. Student does not comment overzealously or to the exclusion of other learners.
- Quality of comments: Comments are always insightful & constructive. Student uses appropriate terminology when referring to individuals, communities, and cultural contexts. Comments are balanced between general impressions, opinions & specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions. Evidence is used to support arguments when possible. Comments are informative and relevant to the discussion at hand.
- Listening Skills: Student listens attentively when others present materials and perspectives, and contribute comments that build on others' remarks. Student expresses disagreement in a professional and respectful manner.

Diversity and Social Justice in the News: 10% (5% each)

In meeting the objectives of the course, I think it is important to be healthy consumers of news, and recognize when stories of oppression and privilege appear in the headlines. Over the course of the semester you are to identify 2 articles in the news that touch on issues of oppression and privilege. These should come from reputable news sources such as The New York Times, ABC News, Politico, etc. (If you are unsure whether your news source is credible, ask me.) You are to offer a brief synopsis of the story, plus your interpretation of the significance of the story with respect to privilege, oppression, social justice, etc. Is this evidence for or against a particular theory we discussed? Included in your write up should be a live-link of the news article in question. **Last day to turn these in to Canvas December 5.**

Social Justice Interpretation: 5%

When you think of social justice, what image comes to mind? I ask that you find a visual representation of what you consider social justice, and offer a brief written interpretation. Your interpretation should also include a few lines of the social justice thinkers we read in class, and how yours is similar or different from their understanding of social justice. **Due October 3.**

Ride a Mile in Someone Else's Shoes: 10%

A complete description of this assignment is available on Canvas. The goal of this project is to be conscious of oppression and privilege in everyday activities, such as buying groceries. You

are to use the bus to buy groceries, pay with cash, and carry these home with you. My advice is to complete this assignment before it gets too cold outside, although that might add something to the experience. **Last day to turn this in to Canvas December 5.**

Digital Digest: 25%

A complete description of this assignment is available on Canvas. You are to put together a 10-15 page digital magazine on a social issue important to you. You may use any word processor you wish, but the project will work best with Microsoft Publisher or Adobe InDesign. We will look at some tutorial videos for InDesign in class, and the software is available on any University computer. **Due November 14.**

Conversation Across Lines of Privilege: 25%

A complete description of this assignment is available on Canvas. Over the course of the semester you are to interview an individual who has a different amount of privilege from you—higher or lower. The type of privilege is up to you (race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, ability-status, etc.). You are to record your interview(s) and edit them into a podcast episode, not unlike an episode of “This American Life.” We will spend time in class working with Audacity, an audio mixing and editing program available for free online and through the University. The end product should be a story of the individual’s life and how she has weathered experiences of discrimination, oppression, or been the beneficiary of privilege’s, and how these have shaped her life trajectory. **Due December 5.**

Course Assignment Table

Assignment	Points	%	Due Date
Attendance & Participation	100	25	N/A
Diversity and Social Justice in the News	40	10	By December 5
Social Justice Interpretation	20	5	October 3
Ride-a-Mile	40	10	By December 5
Digital Digest	100	25	November 14
Conversation	100	25	December 5

Grading Scale

(By Percentages)

97-100 A+	87-89 B+	77-79 C+
93-96 A	83-86 B	73-76 C
90-92 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-
		<70 D
		<60 F

Important Student Resources

Add/Drop Period

Students may drop/add via Wolverine Access any time after they initially register up until the drop/add deadline. Any time students make a change to their original registration, it is their responsibility to notify their advisor of these changes. Once the drop/add deadline is past, students must obtain the signature of the course instructor, their faculty advisor and then the SSW Registrar on a drop/add form, and then they will need to take the form to 1207 LSA building for processing as Web registration will not be possible beyond the drop/add deadline. It is the student's responsibility to register for the appropriate courses to fulfill the M.S.W. degree requirements.

Incompletes ("I"):

Students must finish incomplete coursework within two semesters of enrollment in the class in which they received their initial incomplete. Please see the current Student Guide.

I: (Incomplete) is used when illness or other compelling reasons prevent completion of work, and there is a definite plan and date for completion of course or field work approved by the instructor/liaison. An "I" may also be issued when a student fails to submit required field paperwork by the published deadline. Any "I" grade remaining on a student's record more than two terms after the conclusion of the term in which the grade was awarded reverts to a permanent incomplete, and credit can be earned only by retaking the course. This limit includes the Spring/Summer term and applies regardless of the student's subsequent enrollment. However, if at the time the instructor agreed to the "I", an earlier date of submission and/or completion of final work was agreed upon, then this date takes precedent over the two-term policy. A change in grade will not be accepted after two terms for any reason other than clerical error. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Associate Dean for Educational Programs.

Note: A grade of "I" stays on a student's academic record permanently. Even if the student makes up the course or field work according to the guidelines stated above, the grade for the course will appear on the academic record as, for example, IB+ or IS. If the "I" is not made up in the approved time frame the grade is changed to an IPL (Incomplete Permanent Lapse) and is final.

Academic Difficulty Procedure:

When a student fails to maintain good academic standing, she/he is automatically placed on probation. Failing to maintain good academic standing is defined as:

1. Having less than a B average
2. Having accumulated 9 credit hours of incomplete grades
3. Having a grade of U in Field Instruction

4. Having a grade of marginal in Foundation Field Instruction (515) or Advanced Field Instruction (691). A student is initially informed of automatic academic probation via a letter which informs the student of his/her responsibility to develop an academic plan with her/his academic advisor. For more information on academic difficulty and the procedures involved, please see the 2015-2016 Student Guide.

Services for Students with Disabilities:

The University's Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) provides assistance regarding academic, economic, social, and recreational activities to students who have documented disabilities. For more information, please visit their website at <http://www.umich.edu/~sswd/> or the SSWD Faculty Handbook at http://ssd.umich.edu/files/ssd/SSD_Faculty_Handbook.pdf.

Academic Conduct and Integrity:

Please visit the Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct at <http://ssw.umich.edu/studentguide/2012/page.html?section=12&volume=1> in the current *Student Guide to the Master's in Social Work Degree Program* for a discussion of student responsibilities for academic conduct and integrity. Students who are found responsible for academic misconduct are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the School of Social Work, revocation of degree, or any other sanction deemed appropriate to address the violation.

Special note about Plagiarism:

All students are expected to submit their own original work. The presentation of another's words or ideas as your own, without giving credit to the source is regarded as plagiarism. Plagiarism is the same as lying and stealing. Any work that is submitted in this class and found to contain portions that are plagiarized will receive a ZERO. All work submitted may be subject to submission to plagiarism detecting software. Policies governing plagiarism can be found in the latest Student Guide. Plagiarism is taken very seriously at the University of Michigan and is grounds for expulsion from the University. It is students' responsibility to become familiar with the information presented at <http://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity/resources-students>. Another helpful resource is <http://guides.lib.umich.edu/content.php?pid=43469&sid=338261>. It would be useful to discuss these issues with students in your classes to help prevent occurrences.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is representing someone else's ideas, words, statements or works as one's own without proper acknowledgment or citation. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

1. *Using or otherwise taking credit for someone else's work or ideas.*
2. *Using the language of another without full and proper quotation or source citation.*
3. *Implicitly presenting the appropriated words or ideas of another as one's own.*
4. *Using Internet source material, in whole or in part, without careful and specific reference to the source.*

5. *Borrowing facts, statistics, or other illustrative material without proper reference, unless the information is common knowledge or in common public use.*
6. *Self-plagiarism, this is, reusing one's own work without acknowledgment that the text appears elsewhere (e.g. in a paper for another current or previous class).*

Writing Help and Tutoring for Students:

Currently, Career Services is in the process of developing a writing assistance program for students who need remedial writing services. Graduate Student Assistants will be available to meet with students individually to help with writing problems. Tutoring in specific SSW courses is also available on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Michelle Woods at micwoods@umich.edu for details.

Advisors and instructors can also refer students to the Sweetland Writing Center, located at 1310 North Quad, 105 South State Street. Sweetland offers writing workshops, which are one-on-one meetings with Writing Workshop Faculty. They also offer services for non-native English speakers. For more information about Sweetland, please visit

<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/>, email them at sweetlandinfo@umich.edu, or call them at (734) 764-0429.

Another writing resource is the English Language Institute. For more information, please visit <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli>.

Safety & Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

All University of Michigan students, faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom. In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734)764-SSWB(7793) for up-to-date School closure information.

Be Prepared. Familiarize yourself with the emergency card posted next to the phone in every classroom/meeting room. Review the information on the emergency evacuation sign (located nearest the door) and locate at least (2) emergency exits nearest the classroom.

If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services and/or email ssw-ADAcpliance@umich.edu.

Office of Student Services School of Social Work | Room 1748

[734-936-0961](tel:734-936-0961)

For more information view the annual Campus Safety Statement at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/>.

Register for UM Emergency Alerts at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergency-management/alert/>.

Course Schedule

Week & Date	Class Content/Topic & Assignments	Readings & Podcasts (To be finished prior to class)
1 9/5/18	Course introduction and overview. Icebreakers—welcome to social work! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What interests you about the degree and the profession. • Things about yourself that you're proud of. Introduction to theory in social work practice and the social sciences. Ways of identifying difference.	1. Warning! This Episode May Trigger Debate
2 9/12/18	In-depth on theory Different kinds of theories to understand society and human behavior Which theory is best? Which theory do you like the most? Using theory in practice	1. Mullaly: Chapter 1 2. Module 2 3. Theories for Clinical Social Work Practice: Interview with Joe Walsh, PhD
3 9/19/18	Theories on Social Justice What is it? What should it be? And why? Social Work and Social Justice	1. Rawls: Justice as Fairness 2. Taylor: The Politics of Recognition 3. Morris: Capabilities Perspective 4. Social Justice Initiatives (Podcast) 5. Empowered Millenials (Podcast)
4 9/26/18	Oppression & Privilege Identity and meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you find your identity? Forms of oppression Privilege – recognizing it Social work practice across lines of privilege	1. “Mullaly”: Chapters 2 & 10 2. Can We Talk About Whiteness? 3. White Liberal Racism 4. 46 Stops: The Driving Life and Death of Philando Castile
5 10/3/18	Oppression at the personal level Acts of oppression at the personal level Responses of oppressed people at the personal level Due: Social Justice Interpretation	1. Mullaly: Chapter 3 2. The Code Switch Guide to Handling Casual Racism 3. It's Bigger Than the Ban 4. Being Black in Public 5. The Unequal Battle
6	Oppression at the cultural level	1. Mullaly: Chapter 4

10/10/18	<p>Meaning and value of culture Dominant/popular/mass culture Cultural relativism? Who polices cultural boundaries?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Module 1 3. Members of Whose Tribe? 4. What We Inherit 5. It's Not Just About the Blood
7 10/17/18	<p>Oppression at the structural level Politics of difference/identity politics Historical trends in oppression Social determinants of health</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mullaly: Chapter 5 2. Shapiro: Hidden Hand of Government 3. The U.S. Census and Our Sense of Us 4. Location! Location! Location!
8 10/24/18	<p>Oppression at the economic level Importance of wealth over income Wealth inequality in the US Structures that exacerbate economic inequality</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shapiro: Wealth Matters 2. Black Women's Equal Pay Day 3. The Madness of March 4. A Weed Boom, but for Whom?
9 10/31/18	<p>Criminal Justice and Education Education and equal opportunity in the US Significance of early literacy Oppression and criminal justice Criminalization of poverty Differing attitudes toward police Felony disenfranchisement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Module 5 2. To Fail or Not to Fail: The Fierce Debate Over High Standards 3. Word Up 4. End of Cash Bail 5. Calling the Cops
10 11/7/18	<p>Internalized oppression and domination Child mortality for black women Psychology of oppression Psychology of liberation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mullaly: Chapter 6 2. A Life-or-Death Crisis for Black Mothers (Podcast)
11 11/14/18	<p>Intersectionality Multiple identities at the same time Variation within communities Multiple oppressions Due: Digital Digest</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mullaly: Chapter 7 2. How LGBTQ People of Color Are Dealing with Orlando 3. A Prescription for "Racial Imposter Syndrome" 4. Black and Blue 5. Colorism Among Latinas
12 11/28/18	<p>Anti-oppressive social work practice at the personal and cultural levels</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mullaly: Chapter 8 2. Epple: Professional Differences 3. White Allies
13 12/5/18	<p>Anti-oppressive social work practice at the structural level Due: Conversation Across Lines of Privilege, all other outstanding assignments (News, Ride-a-Mile)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mullaly: Chapter 9 2. Module 7 3. Safety Pin Solidarity

