



Course title:	Social Change Theories
Course #/term:	SW 611 Section 1, Fall 2018
Time and place:	Thursdays 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM, 3752 SSWB
Credit hours:	3
Prerequisites:	None
Instructor:	Justin D. Hodge, LMSW
Pronouns:	He, his, him
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Office:	2663 SSWB
Office hours:	By appointment

1. COURSE STATEMENT

Course description: This course will review theories and research from the social sciences on social change, focusing especially at the societal level. Theories of social conflict, interest groups, and social movements, and such processes as consciousness-raising will be covered. Dynamics of the diffusion of innovations in society will also be addressed. Examples will be drawn from areas of practice in which social workers are involved, such as mental health and chemical dependency, child and family welfare, civil rights, health care, and consumer protection.

Course content: The main goal of this course is to address the questions of why and how social change occurs. Students will compare and contrast different theoretical approaches to the understanding of social change. Comparative dimensions will include the theory's scope; the cultural contexts, societal arenas, and problem areas from which the theory was developed and in which it has been applied; and the assumptions of a theory about society and how social change occurs.

Emphasis will be given to the types of empirical evidence available about each theoretical approach and the types of inquiry used to develop and critique different theories. Although the primary emphasis will be on societal level change, this course will also consider theories of change at the individual, group, community, and organizational levels, and in particular how changes at different system levels affect each other. Students will consider the extent to which

different theories are, or are not, compatible with each other and the implications of these relationships for the usefulness of particular theories for different purposes. Change theories will be selected from each of the social science disciplines, and students will consider how scholars and activists from different disciplinary perspectives have used and critiqued each other's work. Different bodies of thought about change will be critiqued for their relevance to the issues facing marginalized and oppressed groups within U.S. society and for their usefulness cross-culturally.

Students will consider how different theories have been applied or could be applied and critique existing types of practice from particular theoretical perspectives and lenses that recognize the impact of privilege, oppression and social justice on the change process. Particular attention will be given to the impact of a diverse society on social change inclusive of diversity dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation. Students will explore the theories that have been important within human service goal and problem areas of interest to them.

Course objectives and competencies: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe, compare, and contrast several types of theories about social change. (Practice Behaviors 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS)
2. Identify theories relevant to particular goal and problem areas, and critique their strengths and limitations. (Practice Behaviors 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS)
3. Critique different theories as to their assumptions, origins, relevance for different social problems, and relevance for marginalized and oppressed groups inclusive of a broad range of intersecting diversity dimensions. (Practice Behaviors 4.IP, 4.SPE, 4.CO, 4.MHS, 5.IP, 5.SPE, 5.CO, 5.MHS)
4. Apply particular theories to different areas of practice. (Practice Behaviors 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS)
5. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to social change theories. (Practice Behaviors 2.IP, 2.SPE, 2.CO, 2.MHS)

Course design: This course may use a variety of pedagogical strategies, including readings, class exercises, case studies, and debates. Students will focus on cognitive and analytic tasks, skills in the use and application of theory, and identifying underlying value and attitudinal issues related to particular theories.

Curricular themes: Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity

Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed in this course by identifying theories espoused by and compatible with different cultural traditions, by critiquing theories from different cultural perspectives, and through course examples about the uses of theory in different interest and ontological groups.

Theme Relation to Social Justice

Social Justice and Social Change will be addressed within the goals and assumptions of each theoretical approach. Most of the course will focus on social justice goals and conceptualizing and operationalizing social change.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be addressed by examining theories about social change for their relevance and applicability in each of these areas. Students will compare and contrast theories that focus on a positive vision of the future with theories focusing on existing problems.

Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research

Behavioral and Social Science Research will be addressed by examining the evidence used to build theory and test theory through its applications in practice.

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

Intensive focus on PODS: This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students 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.

2. CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Text and class materials:

Required Reading

- Canvas- Required and recommended readings are posted on the Canvas website for the course under the “Files” section. Readings are organized by class session.

Class schedule:

Topics may be modified throughout the course, but ample notice will be provided. Refer to Canvas for the most updated class schedule.

Date	Topic
Week 1 (9/6/18)	Introductions
Week 2 (9/13/18)	NO CLASS - Documentary Viewing
Week 3 (9/20/18)	Documentary Discussion & Course Overview
Week 4 (9/27/18)	Social Change Theory Discussion
Week 5 (10/4/18)	Social Change Theory Discussion & Student Presentations
Week 6 (10/11/18)	Social Change Theory Discussion & Student Presentations
Week 7 (10/18/18)	Social Change Theory Discussion & Student Presentations
Week 8 (10/25/18)	Social Change Theory Discussion & Student Presentations
Week 9 (11/1/18)	NASW LEAD - NO CLASS
Week 10 (11/8/18)	Social Justice Definition Discussion
Week 11 (11/15/18)	Social Change Theory Discussion & Student Presentations
Week 12 (11/22/18)	THANKSGIVING RECESS - NO CLASS
Week 13 (11/29/18)	Theory of Change Discussion

Week 14 (12/6/18)	Debrief & Assignment Presentations
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a. Assignments:

Assignment	Due date	Percent of overall grade
Student-Led Lecture & Discussion	Various	20%
Defining Social Justice through Theory	10/28/18 by 11:59 PM	20%
Theory of Change Exploration	11/18/18 by 11:59 PM	20%
Social Change Application & Reflection	12/16/18 by 11:59 PM	40%

b. Grading:

Please review the MSW Student Guide policies on [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#) as well as [Student Grievance procedures](#).

Final grades will be determined on the basis of performance. Letter grades will be allocated as follows:

97-100	A+	77-79	C+
93-96	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
		<60	E

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources>. They include:

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Mental health and well-being
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns
- Accommodations for students with disabilities
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment

- Writing skills and expectations
- Academic integrity and plagiarism