1. Course Statement

a. Course description
This course is intended to prepare social work students for involvement in social development interventions in an international arena. This course will focus selectively on the challenges developing countries face in improving the lives of their citizens and the roles social workers can play in solving or successfully addressing them. Among the issues, some of the following are included: provision of basic life necessities, hunger and nutritional insufficiency, education, economic development, the strains related to urbanization and modernization, ethnic conflict, child protection, community and familial violence, environment and community health, organization and administration of human services, and citizen empowerment. Students will learn about strategies used by service providers, institutions, and self-help groups for the purposes of social transformation, community development, and enhancement of individual well-being. Central to the discourse will be an idiographic-nomothetic dialectic which counter-poses what is universal and what is culturally specific about social welfare issues and interventions across countries and regions. Course readings and discussion will begin with a focus on the globalization of selected social problems. An array of skills will be drawn from the traditional practice armamentarium of micro and macro social work methods to communicate to take collective action. Discourse will also focus on ways that these classic approaches must be adapted to increase their relevance for work in developing regions of the world, in international aid or relief organizations, and in programs for immigrants or refugees in this and other more technically developed countries. This course will also teach about newer models of social
development and the opportunities these countries have and may offer to social workers working with their people.

b. Course content
With increased global communication comes an awareness of the similarity of social problems faced by nations, both “developed” and “developing”, throughout the world. Urbanization, poverty, rising costs, and misdistribution of health care, teen pregnancy, family instability and violence, child abuse, alcohol and substance abuse, gender inequality, racial discrimination, and cultural conflicts are just a few commonly shared problems. The social work and social welfare models we have used in the United States represent only a subset of the large number of possible models that could respond to the diverse needs of communities and societies. This course will prepare students for international social work experiences by exposing them to emerging methods and training them to think more broadly and raise questions about the suitability of the social welfare models employed in the United States. The focus of the course will be on the enhancement of practice knowledge and skills in program design, development, and evaluation related to issues encountered in the human services. Among the challenges to be considered are: the provision of basic resources, such as food, shelter, potable water and sanitation; unemployment, sustainable economic development, disaster relief, ethnic identity and conflict, urbanization and the erosion of traditional family life, community and familial violence, cross-national adoptions, environment and community health, education, gender inequality, efficient organization and management of human services, and development of civic values. This course will examine how micro and macro skills can be integrated to address these problems in international settings. The course will also include development of programs built on interpersonal practice skills, community self-help, inauguration and management of such services and the development and evaluation of social policy. This course will utilize case studies of methods that other societies have employed to meet social welfare needs in such areas, as health, mental health, and social services for children, youth, elderly, and their families, and those in poverty. Examples will be selected so as to represent countries in early stages of industrial development; countries which are newly creating or recreating social welfare systems, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia; and countries in various parts of the world that have social welfare systems that sharply contrast in philosophy and scope with those found in the United States, such as Scandinavia, Canada, and Great Britain.

c. Course objectives and competencies
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate knowledge of a global perspective on social welfare problems, with particular appreciation of the role to be played by social workers in addressing them.
2. Enhance their skills in assessment of problems of developing countries and in design and implementation of interventions.
3. Demonstrate the ability to use assessment, development, and evaluation strategies which take into account differences based on class, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, spirituality, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, national origin, and gender.
4. Display an increase in a sophisticated awareness of the interplay among cultural, social, political, and economic factors in application of micro and macro social work practice.
5. Develop sensitivity and awareness to understand people with different cultural, economic, historical, political, and ideological backgrounds.
6. Explain the role of idiosyncratic culturally-specific factors and use them in shaping strategies to address critical problems that occur around the world.
7. Envision and gain new exposure to new and innovative models of social welfare approaches to domestic social problems used in different countries.
8. Demonstrate the capacity to take collective action and gain more influence as a body to make substantial and sustainable change.
9. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to practice in international social work.

d. Course design
Because this course will cover a wide range of practice methods and issues, readings and discussion of case studies will be emphasized. Generous use will be made of audiovisual materials and guest lecturers to expand the range of knowledge and expertise we currently have in the School on the social conditions, problems, and solutions in developing countries around the world. Moreover, this course will also draw on the extensive flow of foreign scholars and practitioners visiting from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe to participate in presenting and discussing their social welfare experiences.

e. Curricular themes
Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity
While this course will point to the striking similarities among social welfare issues around the globe, it will also take steps to emphasize the important differences. This course will challenge students to confront their own assumptions about what is normative and bring them face-to-face with social conditions that they have simply taken as a given. Many societies do not share the same dominant values and ideologies upon which U.S. social work models stand; and it becomes difficult to see differences and similarities from the other side when those values and ideologies are assumed in U.S. social work education and practice. This course will foster students' understanding of becoming "co-learners" in the field when faced with situations where their assumptions toward social workers' roles do not necessarily hold. Students will also be prepared for future interactions with people in and from other countries in terms of dealing with stereotypes cast on Americans as foreigners. Discussion of these issues will raise students' awareness of the complex nature of multiculturalism inherent in international social work.

Theme Relation to Social Justice
This course will advance student's understanding of the tensions that arise from global inequities between developed and developing countries and from the political and economic hegemony/exploitation of former colonial powers, such as Great Britain, Russia, France, and Spain, and current economic powers, such as the U.S., Japan, and Germany.

Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation
Many countries whose programs will be described in this course currently emphasize the use of prevention strategies and community empowerment in social service delivery to a much greater extent than we are used to in this country. Exposure to these approaches will expand the horizons of student's thinking about what is possible in the arena of prevention. Exposure to these approaches will expand the horizons of student's thinking about what is possible in the arena of prevention.

Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research
will serve as the foundation of methods related to advocacy, program development, community development, and policy formation and evaluation covered in this course. Knowledge will be drawn also from the fields of cultural psychology, anthropology, social psychology, economics, and political science.

f. Relationship to social work ethics and values
This course will challenge students' assumptions in social work ethics and values in critical ways. This course will involve examination of the ethical principles involved in efforts to accelerate modernization and the cost involved for traditional peoples. Moreover, the moral dilemma involved in the wide disparities in income and resource allocation among national groups will be explored. Students will also be introduced to the International Declaration of Ethical Principles of Social Work developed by the International Federation of Social Workers.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials
- No textbooks or reading materials need to be purchased prior to class
- Readings will be posted on Canvas, at least one week before the class session
- We are a classroom of professionals and seek to have a respectful learning environment. Each student is expected to prepare for (by reading) and attend class and participate in activities and discussions. Each person in the classroom is also expected to show professional courtesy for colleagues, including listening to the opinions and viewpoints of others and respectfully engaging in dialogue to explore differences.

b. Class schedule
Note: the current schedule is tentative and there will be ample notification and discussion of changes (at least a week in advance).
| Week 1  | September 7\(^{th}\) | What is international social work? | Readings: None  
Due: Nothing |
|---------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Week 2  | September 14\(^{th}\) | Sociocultural Work; Social development; Cultural Humility  
Choose group members for group project | Readings:  
|---------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Week 3  | September 21\(^{st}\) | Values and ethics  
Guest speaker: Dominican Republic | Readings:  
|---------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Week 4  | September 28\(^{th}\) | Globalization, contextualization, relativism, universals | Readings:  

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### Week 1: September 7th
**What is international social work?**

**Readings:** None  
**Due:** Nothing

### Week 2: September 14th
**Sociocultural Work; Social development; Cultural Humility**  
Choose group members for group project

**Readings:**  

**Due:** Reading reflections due September 13th

### Week 3: September 21st
**Values and ethics**  
**Guest speaker: Dominican Republic**

**Readings:**  

**Due:** Reading reflections due September 20th

### Week 4: September 28th
**Globalization, contextualization, relativism, universals**

**Readings:**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>October 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Poverty</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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Due: Reading reflections and Country background information due October 4<sup>th</sup>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>October 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Migration &amp; refugees</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James, L., Sovcik, A., Garoff, F., &amp; R.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>October 19th</td>
<td>Aging</td>
<td>Readings:</td>
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<td>Due: Reading reflections and issue overview for your country due October 18th,</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>October 26th</th>
<th>Environment &amp; disasters</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
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</table>
| Week 9  November 2nd | Children, child welfare | Readings:  
Due: Reading reflections due October 25th |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Week 10 November 9th | International adoption | Readings:  
Skim the Bartholet & Smolin articles for main points (though they are VERY interesting, they're long.) The last two articles are just a couple of paragraphs each.  
Due: Reading reflections due November 1st |
| Week 11  | November 16<sup>th</sup> | The 5 R’s of Cultural Adaption | doi:10.1177/2158244011428160
Due: Reading reflections and social work in the country, power, and culture, value, and ethics due November 8<sup>th</sup>

| Week 12  | November 23<sup>rd</sup> | THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY | Readings:
Due: Reading reflections due November 15<sup>th</sup>

| Week 13  | November 30<sup>th</sup> | Catchup week, additional topics as appropriate | Readings:
- TBD
Due: Reading reflections and collaborating with an organization due November 29<sup>th</sup>

| Week 14  | December 7<sup>th</sup> | Group presentations | Readings: None
Due: Presentations

**c. Assignments**

**Important Notes**
- All written assignments MUST be submitted through the CANVAS site.
• In the event that you are unable to submit an assignment by its due date, you must have the instructor’s permission to do so. Without this permission, one point per day will be subtracted from your grade for that assignment.

**Individual assignments: Reading reflections**

There are 11 weeks for which reading is assigned. Each week you are to write a short summary of the readings as a single document, keeping in mind that YOU MAY CHOOSE ONE WEEK NOT TO WRITE A REFLECTION, although you should still read the articles. For the readings, write a 4 to 7 sentence summary of main points. Then, choosing any of the theme(s) from the readings, write a short (5 to 7 sentence) personal reflection on how this/these theme/s relate to your knowledge of social work practice, or how it will influence your approach to working across cultures, or how it relates to other things you are learning in your social work courses or practice. Finally, write one question that the class could use in discussion (question could pertain to a specific reading or to ideas in the readings overall).

Sample outline for reading reflections:

1. Reading summaries
   a. 4-7 sentence summary of reading 1
   b. 4-7 sentence summary of reading 2
   c. 4-7 sentence summary of each additional reading
2. One 5 – 7 sentence personal reflection
3. One discussion question for class.

Assignments should be uploaded to Canvas no later than 24 hours before the class.

**Group Written Project**

Over the course of the semester, you will work in pairs to complete a written project. If you strongly prefer to do this project on your own, you have the choice to do so, though you will find yourself doing more work. By the end of week 2 we will have our pairs/groups set up.

- You will choose a country or indigenous population of a country other than the United States.
- Choose a particular issue or population that you would like to investigate in that country. Examples are health, family/child welfare, immigration/migration including refugees, children, women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and minorities.
- Each section of the project should be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced, using one inch margins. You should write using APA style for citations. Cite your sources.
- Try to stick to the page limits – these are maximums, so you’re ok if your work is a little shorter.
- As you turn in each section, it will be assessed and graded. Your group may choose to revise that section when you turn in the final project to improve your grade. Grades are based on clarity of writing and quality of information.
SECTION 1: Country background information, DUE OCTOBER 4\textsuperscript{TH} AT 2:00 PM
- Name of country
- Briefly discuss the country’s recent history and political situation. Include human rights issues and conflict in the country (armed insurgency, civil war, war with other countries), and other issues in the country’s region that are influencing the country - \textbf{3 pages}.
- A chart showing major ethnic/racial groups.
- A table incorporating the following three profiles (two columns, name of indicator on left, percent or rate or info on right).
  - A demographic profile - total population, population growth rate, age structure, percent of urban population, life expectancy, infant mortality rates, HIV rates
  - Poverty profile – income inequality, poverty levels (total and broken by ethnic/racial categories), access to clean water, adult literacy rate, global poverty ranking, ranking on the human development index.
  - Economic profile – major industries, major agricultural products, military expenditures as a percent of total government expenditures.

SECTION 2: Issue overview for your country, DUE OCTOBER 18\textsuperscript{TH} AT 2:00 PM
- Discuss the roots or causes of the issue you have chosen (as well as you can given that this is a limited project) and the social impact of the problem in your country – \textbf{2-3 pages}.
- Social welfare profile – describe what types of social assistance and social insurance programs the country offers for the population/issue that you have chosen – \textbf{2 pages}.
- A description of World Bank, World Health Organization, UNICEF, UNDP, or other international organization activity going on in the country related to your issue – \textbf{1-2 pages} depending on how many programs you find.
- Ways in which U.S. policy or practice could learn from this country’s approach to your issue/population. \textbf{1-2 paragraphs}.

SECTION 3 Social work in the country, power, and culture, value, and ethics DUE NOVEMBER 8\textsuperscript{TH} AT 2:00 PM
- Describe social work in the country in general – history of social work, schools of social work, type of social work practiced – \textbf{2 pages}.
- Referring to the social work ethics statement from your country and other things you have learned, discuss cultural, value, or ethical conflicts that international workers might experience in engaging with the local community on your focus issue in this country and implications for social work practice – \textbf{1 page}.
- Finally, discuss your issue focus in terms of power and stakeholders: who are the stakeholders in the system and what relative level of power/influence do they hold (government, organizations, practitioners, communities, families, individuals)? Who gains or loses if a change is made (think of how money and other resource flows might change, who would gain or lose power/influence in the system) – \textbf{1 page}. 
SECTION 4: Collaborating with an organization, DUE NOVEMBER 29TH AT 2:00 PM

- Identify an organization in the country (either local or international) with which you would like to work, why you chose this organization, and what specific problem and population you would like to work with in collaboration with this organization. Explore how your collaboration with this organization might be influenced by your being a “foreigner” — 1-2 pages.

Group presentation: DECEMBER 7TH CLASS

- Each member of the group must present a portion of the material.
- Your group should prepare a 30-minute presentation based on your project this semester.
- Introduce your country (use a world map, show where it is located), tell us what issue you are focused on, and provide a summary of the background information you have gathered (for the presentation, choose that info that is most relevant to the issue you are focused on).
- Discuss the roots or causes of the issue you have chosen (as well as you can given that this is a limited project) and the social impact of the problem.
- Explain what types of social assistance and social insurance programs the country offers for the population/issue that you have chosen. Include overview of what international organizations are doing.
- Discuss your issue in terms of power and stakeholders: who are the stakeholders in the system and what relative level of power/influence do they hold (government, organizations, practitioners, communities, families, individuals)? Who gains or loses if a change is made (think of how money and other resource flows might change, who would gain or lose power/influence in the system).
- Identify an organization in the country (either local or international) with which you would like to work, why you chose this organization, and what specific problem and population you would like to work with in collaboration with this organization.
- Discuss cultural, value, or ethical conflicts that international workers might experience in engaging with the local community on this issue and implications for social work practice.

d. Attendance and class participation

- Attendance is expected for each class, with the understanding that unanticipated or unavoidable situations arise. More than one missed class (with or without notification of the instructor) will result in a deduction in the class participation grade.
- As this is a small class and is designed to be engaging and participatory, a large portion of the class participation grade will be based on student input and engagement.
e. Grading

- Reading reflections (5 points each x10 = 50 points)
- Class participation attendance, engagement in group and individual exercises (50 points)
- Group presentation (40 points)
- Group final paper (60 points)

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = 200 points

This course uses the School of Social Work’s grading system approved by the Governing Faculty. Please refer to the “General Requirements for Class Papers in the School of Social Work” section of your student guide for assistance. All assignments will be graded for their comprehensiveness and clarity.

100-98% A+
97-94% A
93-90% A-
89-86% B+
85-83% B
82-79% B-
78-75% C+
74-70% C

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