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| <b>Course title:</b>   | SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN SOCIAL WORK TODAY  |
| <b>Course #/term:</b>  | Winter '19, SW 400, Sect. 001   |
| <b>Time and place:</b> | Tu/Th 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM, RM 1804 SSWB   |
| <b>Credit hours:</b>   | 3   |
| <b>Prerequisites:</b>  | None  |
| <b>Instructor:</b>     | Jaclynn Hawkins, MSW PhD  |
| <b>Pronouns:</b>       | she/her/hers  |
| <b>Contact info:</b>   | <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:jachawk@umich.edu">jachawk@umich.edu</a><br>You may expect a response within 72 hours |
| <b>Office:</b>         | 4708 School of Social Work  |
| <b>Office hours:</b>   | Thursday 12-1 and by appointment  |

## 1. Course Statement

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### a. Course description

This course is considered an advanced, undergraduate elective which is

- designed to familiarize students with the profession of social work
- and also to recruit undergraduate students into the school's MSW program.

The particular social problems selected for discussion will change from year to year depending on faculty and student interest and the contemporary context. The opening sessions of the course will briefly overview the social context for the kinds of roles, interventions, and fields of service that the profession generally operates from, before exploring in depth the profession's response to each selected social problem.

Important professional themes like:

- multicultural sensitivity to various 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; empowerment;
- prevention;
- and value-based intervention will also be reviewed in this course.

Note: this course is distinguished from a more traditional course on social problems since

- it focuses specifically on a limited number of selected social problems
- and probes social work's professional involvement in preventing and assuaging each problem.

### b. Course objectives and competencies

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Articulate the various roles, levels of intervention, and fields of service from which social workers practice.

- Describe the various value dilemmas, political controversies, and societal challenges that the profession of social work faces when it approaches selected social problems.
- Explain why diversity, empowerment, and strengths-based perspectives are critical to the way social workers approach social problems.
- Critique the social work profession's response to selected social problems.

#### **c. Course structure**

- Most sessions begin with either a lecture or a peer-led small group discussion about the assigned out-of-class text/audio/video, move into large group discussion, practice activities, small group work, and end with time devoted to class assignments. This is a partial hybrid format course, please refer to the course calendar and Canvas for in-class session dates and online-only course materials.

#### **d. CASC minor mission statement**

The CASC minor is for students interested in developing knowledge, skills, and experiences in community action and social change. The multidisciplinary 16 credit minor will prepare students to:

- examine community action and social change using a multidisciplinary framework;
- address community action and social change in multilingual and multicultural communities;
- integrate social justice values into the community action and social change processes; and
- engage in service learning to promote community action and social change.

#### **e. CASC guiding principles**

The core values of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence) frames our interactions with students inside and outside the classroom.

- PODS: Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice are taught to similar degrees in every class.
- We represent Social Work – both the School and the profession – in our interactions with students, including academic and career advice.
- We strive to respond appropriately to student inquiries in a timely and personally engaging manner.

#### **f. Curricular themes**

- Multiculturalism and Diversity issues will be explored as students identify self-knowledge and skills for regularly monitoring their practice within the context of their work. The PODS (Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice) lens will be applied to practice situations and students will have an opportunity to discuss relevant field issues related to the diversity dimensions (ability, age, culture, economic class, ethnicity, family structure, gender, gender identity and expression, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation). Social Justice and Social Change issues will be addressed by helping students to critically assess their commitment to and skills for enacting change towards social justice goals. The role of the social worker will be discussed as reflected by their individual experiences and reflection.
- Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation approaches will be addressed within the context of the student's orientation to practice. Small group discussions will allow the student to

discuss, review, compare, and contrast alternative approaches and frameworks while reflecting on their individual work and experiences.

- Behavioral and Social Science research approaches will be addressed within the context of the student's orientation and method. Small group discussions will allow the student to discuss, review, compare, and contrast alternative approaches and frameworks while reflecting on their individual work and experiences.

## 2. Class Requirements

- a. Text and class materials
- b. **Tentative Schedule:** *Schedule and reading may change according to class interests and needs; required text/audio/video materials found in Canvas Module titles by week/topic.*

| Date/Time               | Agenda   | Special Notes & Assignments   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Week 1<br>1/10          | Introductions, Course Overview and Q&A   | No readings   |
| Week 2<br>1/15 and 1/17 | Guest Speaker<br>Module 1 - Social Work Today:<br>Introduction to SW                     | 1/17 will be online, instructions posted on canvas<br>**Review the syllabus and browse the Social Work Helper web site <a href="http://www.socialworkhelper.com">www.socialworkhelper.com</a><br>**What questions does the site's content raise for you about what professional Social Workers do?                      |
| Week 3<br>1/22 and 1/24 | 1/22 Guest Speaker Erin Zimmer<br>Introduction to SW                                     | <b>Due: Journal #1</b><br>Read Reamer (2006) (on canvas) and browse the UM Social Work Web site <a href="http://ssw.umich.edu/admissions/msw/concentrations">http://ssw.umich.edu/admissions/msw/concentrations</a><br>**If you applied to this MSW program, what would be your Method Concentration and Practice Area? |
| Week 4<br>1/29 and 1/31 | 1/29 Guest Speaker Lauren Davis<br><i>Toxic Inequality:</i><br>Chapter 1: Wealth Matters |   |
| Week 5<br>2/5 and 2/7   | Module 2: Theoretical Perspectives on Culture  | <b>Due: Journal #2</b>  |
| Week 6<br>2/12 and 2/14 | <i>Toxic Inequality:</i> Chapter 2:<br>Inequality at Home                                |   |
| Week 7<br>2/19 and 2/21 | Module 3: Unpacking Intersectionality  | <b>Due: Journal #3</b>  |
| Week 8<br>2/26 and 2/28 | Module 4: Social & Cultural Determinants of Health                                       |   |

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| Week 9<br>3/5-3/7<br>(Spring Break<br>No Class) |   |   |
| Week 10<br>3/12 and 3/14                        | <i>Toxic Inequality:</i><br>Chapter 3: Inequality at<br>Work<br>Chapter 4: The Inheritance<br>Advantage | <b>Due: Journal #4</b>                        |
| Week 11<br>3/19 and 3/21                        | Module 5: Criminal<br>Justice   | <b>Due: Digital Digest</b>                    |
| Week 12<br>3/26 and 3/28                        | <i>Toxic Inequality:</i><br>Chapter 5: The Hidden Hand of<br>Government                                 |   |
| Week 13<br>4/2 and 4/4                          | Module 6: Environmental Justice   | <b>Due: Journal #5</b>                        |
| Week 14<br>4/9 and 4/11                         | Module 7: Being a<br>Culturally Grounded Ally   | <b>Due:<br/>Comprehensive Life Trajectory</b> |
| Week 15<br>4/23                                 | <i>Toxic Inequality:</i><br>Chapter 6: Forward to Equity  |   |

c. Assignments

| Assignment                              | Points                    | %   | Details   |
|---|---------------------------|-----|---|
| 5 Journals                              | 5 x 20 points= 100 points | 25% | Topics assigned-see calendar for due dates and rubric |
| 1 Comprehensive Life Trajectory         | 100 points                | 25% | See rubric and templates                              |
| 1 Digital Digest (10 page min, 15 max ) | 100 points                | 25% | See description, rubric, and templates                |
| Attendance & participation              | 100 points                | 15% | See rubric  |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>400 points</b>         |     |   |

\*\*Note: Assignments are due on the Thursday during the week they are listed in the course calendar. They are due to our canvas site by midnight.

**Journal Assignments Rubric** (submitted via Canvas only)

Students will construct a journal on a specific topic related to the course readings or discussion as assigned by Dr. Hawkins. Students will select and cite an external source of information on the assigned topic and critically analyze the issue, including questions and concerns that you have about the issue and possible next steps. Sources may include: News articles, scholarly journal articles, newspapers, Internet blog/opinion posts, and similar resources. Students should include a copy/live link of the source at the bottom of the journal in a “references” section. Students are expected to draw relevant, cohesive, and logical linkages between the topic, source, and course readings and/or discussions. **Students are**

**expected to write in “first person”**, and supply personal reactions/insights regarding the assigned topic. The word count **maximum** will be noted in journal instructions on Canvas.

When required, properly cite and reference external sources using APA style, 6th edition. References listed at the end of the Journal are not included in the word count. No title page is required.

| <b>Criteria</b>            | <b>Exemplary Performance</b>  | <b>Points</b> |
|----------------------------|---|---------------|
| Accuracy                   | Paper represents the authors’ ideas, evidence or conclusions accurately, fairly and eloquently. Shows a firm understanding of the implications of each author’s argument(s).  | <b>5</b>      |
| Argument                   | Paper fully meets requirements of assignment. Explores implications of chosen ideas for the assigned topic in thoughtful and/or original ways. Makes convincing and personalized case for why selected key ideas connect and/or contradict texts, class discussions, and/or lectures.   | <b>10</b>     |
| Clarity and Presentation   | Consistently precise and unambiguous wording, clear and lucid sentence structure. Minimal use of quotations, first- person perspective is effectively framed in the text and explicated where necessary. Paper is clean, correctly formatted in APA style 6 edition (12-point font, Times New Roman or Arial, normal margins), and written in full sentences. All citations are properly attributed and cited in a consistent style. Virtually no spelling or grammatical errors. | <b>5</b>      |
| <b>Total (per journal)</b> |   | <b>20</b>     |

\*Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence

### **Digital Digest: Integrating Theory and Perspectives on Social Justice (100 Points)**

Students will select one theoretical perspective as a lens through which to analyze an issue of social justice or the conditions of a marginalized population or community. Students will design a digital magazine with 10-15 pages of content (excluding front and back cover) that includes:

- A dynamic visual front cover and a table of contents
- A textual introduction to the issue in the form of a “letter from the editor”
- Live-linked resources for further information or services
- Relevant images (appropriately curated and placed), including screenshots of social media (i.e. Tweets/IG) to capture the essence of public dialogue on the issue
- A “playlist” of 5-7 songs that provide a fitting musical soundtrack AND a list of 5-7 movies/documentaries that provide context (with attributions)
- A list of at least 5 fiction or non-fiction works and or recent news articles or “think pieces” that provide socio-historical context on the topic with citations/attribution
- A Feature Story on your theory of choice and how it is applied to the issue
- A “must listen” feature on podcasts (series or episodes) that capture this issue or related concepts.

At minimum, each digest will be created off-line and saved as a fully “clickable” PDF with

live links. Students wishing to “go the extra mile” are welcome to upload to a digital publishing platform, and share via link for grading and separately, with the class. A rubric and samples/templates/ or class demonstrations will be available by February 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Comprehensive Life Trajectory Rubric (100 points)**

The purpose of this assignment is to engage with someone for an in-depth conversation (preferably over time) to as fully as possible, understand and document their life experiences. This trajectory should include the ways that economic stability or instability, broader social structures, policies, and institutions, discrimination and/or privilege, generational disadvantage or wealth, health or disability, social and cultural networks and capital, and all manner of challenges and opportunities have shaped their opportunities for personal and professional growth and fulfillment. Use examples to highlight the importance of resonant concepts from *Toxic Inequality* and provide a clear perspective from the interviewee’s point of view. Use the power of storytelling to bring their journey to life and add polish. Finally, include an audio-visual component in the form of artwork or graphics, images, timelines, power point slides, or mini-podcast audio clips (with permission of the interviewee). **Word Maximum: 1000 words (Let the visuals/audio tell the rest of the story)**

Rubric In Progress: Will be available on or before Feb 15th.

d. Attendance and class participation 15% of overall grade

Students contribute to developing a climate in the classroom in which everyone can

- ⇒ 1. experiment with new skills
- ⇒ 2. explore their own multicultural competence and the implications of one's own background for developing and implementing social and political action strategies
- ⇒ 3. consult with each other on action projects and assignments
- ⇒ 4. generate plans and strategies for future learning and development.

Attendance will be recorded in this course and is part of the participation grade. Absences, late arrivals and early departures, depending on their length and frequency will affect your grade. Participation and class attendance are professional responsibilities. They are critical elements of this class and essential to its effectiveness. Students are expected to attend every class session, come on time, remain for the entire class period, complete the required out of class learning: readings, film, podcasts, and participate in class discussions and exercises. It is important to be prepared to discuss assigned readings and to share experiential knowledge. If you are unable to attend a session, please communicate with me in advance if possible, contact a peer to ask about what you missed and review the readings, handouts and materials from that session. Students who are using electronic devices not related to class activities will see the impact in this grade. See rubric in below.

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 0 – 5<br>Poor Participation     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Frequent Absences, late arrivals and/or early departures</li> <li>•No effort, disruptive, and disrespectful</li> <li>•Uses harmful language in class and does not respect other students’ identities</li> </ul>  |
| 6 - 9<br>Marginal Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Often late</li> <li>•Little effort, texting or web surfing (irrelevant to course)</li> <li>•Demonstrates infrequent involvement in class or class discussions</li> <li>•Uses harmful language at times in class and sometimes does not respect other students’ identities</li> </ul> |

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| <p>10 - 12<br/>Moderate Participation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sometimes late or early departure</li> <li>•Knows basic case or reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them</li> <li>•Rarely offers to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on May seem occasionally distracted or uninterested</li> <li>•Demonstrates sporadic involvement</li> <li>•Uses inclusive language at times and respects other students' identities to an extent</li> </ul>   |
| <p>13 - 14<br/>Strong Participation</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Rarely late/early departure and 1-2 absences</li> <li>•Has clearly read and asks pertinent questions about course material</li> <li>•Offers interpretations or analysis of course material (more than just facts) to class</li> <li>•Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion</li> <li>•Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement by active visual and /or verbal engagement</li> <li>•Uses inclusive language in class and respects other students' identities</li> </ul>  |
| <p>15<br/>Excellent Participation</p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•On time and 1-2 absences</li> <li>•Has analyzed course material exceptionally well, relating it to readings and other material (readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.)</li> <li>•Participates actively and equally in class discussion, class assignments, and group activities</li> <li>•Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps discussion focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to the cooperative dialogue-building, suggest alternative ways of approaching material</li> <li>•Demonstrates ongoing active involvement and active visual and/or verbal engagement</li> <li>•Always uses inclusive language in class and respects other students' identities</li> </ul> |

e. Grading

Course grades will be calculated based on the following percentages (note these are percentages not points). The percentage is calculated by dividing your total number of points by 100:

- A 100-94/A- 93-90
- B+ 89-87/B 86-84/B- 83-80
- C+ 79-77/C 76-74/C- 73-70

- D+ 69-67/D 66-64/D- 63-60

⇒ **Incompletes**

- a. Incompletes are given only when it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the stated time limits of the course. The Student Guide, Vol. 1, Sec. 8.01 states that an “I” grade is used when illness or other compelling reasons prevent completion of work, and there is a definite plan and date for completion of course work approved by the instructor. The student must formally request an incomplete from the instructor prior to the final week of classes.

⇒ **Technology**

- a. This is not a course in which you will often be asked to take notes or to access materials online. Out of courtesy to me and other students, please do not use laptops, cellphones, iPads, etc. during class, except when instructed. Students who frequently use technology during class will be given one warning, and then will receive significant reductions in their participation grade. Any student who requires the use of technology for health or other reasons should contact the instructor at the beginning of class.

⇒ **Assignment Practices**

- a. **Drafts:** students may submit a draft of their assignment for review in advance of its due date. I will provide ungraded feedback based on the rubric. The latest you may submit a draft to me is one week before its due date-this provides me with the time necessary to provide quality feedback and you with time to respond to it. Most students have found this helpful in producing a quality paper that earns the grade they desire.
  - b. **Due dates:** Most assignments are due by midnight on the date listed in Canvas. However, I will grant a grace period of one week in which you can submit your assignment. I will not accept a draft for review during the grace time. While I will accept the assignment, the points awarded will be reduced by the equivalent of ½ letter grade. Assignments submitted after the one-week grace period will be accepted and have their points reduced by the equivalent of ½ letter grade for each day beyond the grace period. Exceptions to this will need permission of the instructor one week prior to the due date and will only be made in extenuating circumstances.
  - c. **Resubmission:** Sometimes despite your best effort, the peer review, and/or your submission of a draft to me for review, your assignment misses the mark. You may choose to resubmit one assignment (note: you must have submitted an assignment in the first place). If you would like to resubmit, you will let me know prior to the last scheduled date of class. To resubmit, you must meet with me or have received significant written feedback about the needed improvements to the assignment. A resubmitted assignment will be accepted up until one week past the last class date.
  - d. **Submission format:** all assignments are submitted via Canvas assignments. Documents should be 11/12-point font, single spaced and the narrative portion within 2pages of the recommended length. Cover pages, executive summaries, extensive use of graphic elements, references and appendix are not part of the length of the paper. The principles of good design are expected in assignments and accounted for in the rubrics. Additionally, well-written, error free narrative using professional language and tone are expected. Beyond traditional document formats, you can use more creative media formats for your assignments –I will use the same grading rubric regardless. A less traditional format may require a bit of conversation about length and submission format.
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Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources>. They include:

**f. Safety and emergency preparedness:**

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)764-7793 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 two emergency exits nearest the classroom. Each MSU classroom is equipped with door locks. Pressing the button (located on the door handle) to lock the door from within the room.

If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services (Room 1748) at (734) 936-0961 or via email at [SSW-ADA.compliance@umich.edu](mailto:SSW-ADA.compliance@umich.edu).

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. Click here to read more about the School of Social Work's emergency policies and procedures.

*Additional resources:*

- Report a hate crime or bias-related incident
- Register for UM Emergency Alerts
- View the annual Campus Safety Statement

**g. Mental health and well-being:**

The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of all students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact:

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312. The SSW embedded CAPS Counselor is Meghan Shaughnessy-Mogill, LLMSW. She is dedicated to supporting the wellbeing of social work students and the SSW community and offers short-term, solution-focused individual therapy. All services are free and confidential. Contact her at (734) 763-7894 or via email [atmshaughm@umich.edu](mailto:atmshaughm@umich.edu).
- University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320
- Additional campus health and wellness resources

The Office of Student Services' Health and Wellness Program provides supportive services to MSW students which promote wellness, self care and maintenance of a healthy academic and mental health balance, as well as to increase disability awareness.

- SSW Health and Wellness Guide
- Contact the Health and Wellness Program at [ssw.wellness@umich.edu](mailto:ssw.wellness@umich.edu)

**h. Teaching evaluations:**

Students are strongly encouraged to complete teaching evaluations at the end of each term. Teaching evaluations are administered via Canvas and will be emailed to students during the last week of classes.

Student identity is completely anonymous, and instructors cannot view evaluation reports until after grades are submitted.

**i. Proper use of names and pronouns:**

All students will be referred to by the names and pronouns they use (e.g. she, they, ze, he). If you have a name that differs from the one that appears on the roster, please inform the instructor before the 2nd class period so that they use your correct name and pronouns. Students can designate their personal pronouns on the class roster via Wolverine Access: Student Business > Campus Personal Information > Gender Identity.

**j. Accommodations for students with disabilities:**

If you are in need of an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. Additional information about accommodations for students with disabilities, as well as a list of appropriate accommodation forms, is available here. Please present the appropriate paperwork at least two weeks prior to the need for the accommodation (test, project, etc.).

For more information, contact:  
Services for Students with Disabilities  
G-664 Haven Hall | 505 South State St.  
(734)763-3000 [ssdoffice@umich.edu](mailto:ssdoffice@umich.edu)

**k. Religious/spiritual observances:**

An overview of the process for students who have conflicts with religious observances:

- Students are responsible for work acquired during their absence
- Students will have a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete any academic work
- Reasonable notice must be given to faculty before drop/add deadline of term
- Any concerns or conflicts should be brought to the Dean or Ombudsperson

Please click [here](#) to find more information about the University's policy concerning religious holidays as well as a non-exhaustive list of religious holidays.

**l. Military deployment:**

Please click [here](#) for more information and resources for students called to Active Duty status while enrolled at the University of Michigan.

**m. Writing skills and expectations:**

Strong writing and communication skills are essential to students' academic success and professional career. The Writing Coordinator for the School of Social Work is open to meeting with students during any phase of the writing process. The Writing Coordinator's office is housed within the Career Services Office. The Career Services Office also offers workshops, resources and individual assistance to help improve skills and confidence in written communication.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact:  
SSW Writing Assistance Career Services (Room 1696; (734) 763-6259; [ssw-cso@umich.edu](mailto:ssw-cso@umich.edu))

*APA formatting:*

Any social work assignments presented as professional papers or presentations should utilize APA formatting. Review the MLibrary APA Citation Guide as needed. The Purdue Owl website is another helpful resource for assistance with APA formatting.

**n. Academic integrity and plagiarism**

Plagiarism is prohibited in any academic writing at the University of Michigan. More information on academic integrity policies can be found in the MSW Student Guide.

**o. Inclusivity Statement**

Students represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can



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