



Course title:	Theories of Change	
Course #/term:	SW873, Winter 2019	
Time and place:	Monday, 9:00am-12:00pm, SSWB Room 1794	
Credit hours:	3	
Prerequisites:	Doctoral standing or permission of instructor	
Instructor:	Daphne C. Watkins, PhD	
Pronouns:	She, her, hers	
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Office hours:	By appointment only	

1. Course Statement

a. Course Description

This course focuses on change, particularly social change, with an emphasis on examining its characterization, explanation and perpetration. The objectives of the course are to deepen and broaden theoretical and empirical understanding of change, and to enhance capacity to pose and address analytic questions about change as well as critically considering the viability of analyses for suggesting policy adjustments or initiatives, or plans for intervention.

b. Course Content

The course content will provide significant depth on developing well-refined and theoretically driven research questions, along with specific guidance on utilizing conceptual frameworks during data collection, fieldwork, and analyzing and presenting a methodologically diverse range of findings. This content will be enhanced by an overview of modern social work theory and its relation to practice. The course provides (1) an introduction to theory and theorizing as well as the social forces that influence both; (2) an examination of the philosophical assumptions underlying the various forms of theory; and (3) a context for examining the relationship between theory and practice. In addition, the course provides an overview of commonly used social work theories and a review of each one's key elements, primary focus, and implications for practice.

c. Course Objectives and Competencies

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Contextualize practice theories by locating them within a general theoretical perspective;
2. Articulate the primary benefits and challenges of theories;
3. Evaluate theories and the range of issues they address and do not address;
4. Articulate the potential social justice and social change implications of theories;
5. Develop research strategies that are theoretically grounded; and
6. Select theories appropriate for research topics and issues in context.

d. Course Design

The objectives will be achieved through readings, class discussions and presentations, and written work.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and Class Materials

Required Text

- Payne, M. (2014). Modern social work theory (4th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0190615246 ISBN-10: 0190615249

Other Readings

- *Other readings will be available through the course Canvas website, or will be provided.*

*Please note: My philosophy regarding course readings emphasizes quality over quantity. This simply means that I would rather you **thoroughly** review fewer readings as opposed to 'skimming' over more readings in preparation for each class. In other words, if you are short on time, read what you can (deeply and critically) rather than browsing through all of the required readings for that day. As you will see, I have only ONE required text for this course. This text was selected based on its relevance and applicability to the material we will cover this semester. Due to the limited readings for this course, my expectation is that you **will** stay up-to-date with the readings and critically interpret them from week to week.*

b. Participant Expectations

As adult learners, you bring experience and knowledge to the classroom setting. Approaches to adult education assume you will want to be proactive about defining and pursuing your own goals, and will need to link new knowledge and learning with what you already know (which may involve some unlearning). As adult learners, you will depend on one another to be up front about what is unclear, uncomfortable, or problematic. Class attendance and participation are crucial. Students are expected to: (1) Attend all classes, (2) Be on-time and prepared for class, (3) Participate in activities and discussions, and (4) Be engaged during class time.

In my doctoral seminars, I prefer to teach using the "Community of Truth" philosophy. This philosophy simply implies that you will join me as a "knower" of the subject and we will explore perspectives and interpretations of the subject together. Lectures will be minimized and we will spend more time discussing the readings, as well as our own interpretation of the concepts covered. We will spend some time during the course considering how the class will operate and getting to know each other's backgrounds and interests. Discussing social work theories and theories of social change through our own cultural lens can be intimidating, but also exciting and challenging. We are likely to differ in many aspects, but that will make the course beneficial to us as we learn and grow together.

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

c. Class schedule

Class #	Date	Topic	Readings	Discussant	
1	1/14/19	Intro, Course Overview, & Intro to Theory	Syllabus	Daphne	
2	1/21/19	NO CLASS -- Enjoy the many MLK events happening in the SSW and across campus!			
3	1/28/19	The social construction of social work theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payne – Chapter 1 • Peters (2008) <i>Theory, science, ideology, and ethics in social work.</i> 	Daphne	
4	2/4/19	Evaluating social work theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payne – Chapter 2 • Davis (2017). <i>Practice evaluation strategies among social workers...</i> • Fawcett (2005). <i>Criteria for evaluation of theory.</i> 	Daphne	
5	2/11/19	Connecting theory and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payne – Chapter 3 • Dotolo et al. (2018). <i>Expanding conceptualizations of social justice...</i> 	Daphne	
6	2/18/19	Theory 1: Empowerment Theory 2: Humanist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payne – Chapter 11 • Payne – Chapter 10 	1: [REDACTED] 2: [REDACTED]	
7	2/25/19	Theory 3: Systems Theory 4: Macro Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payne – Chapter 7 • Payne – Chapter 8 	3: [REDACTED] 4: [REDACTED]	
8	3/4/19	NO CLASS -- Have a safe and enjoyable break!			
9	3/11/19	Attend SSW Research Day! Theory 5: Psychodynamic	Attend Research Day for first ½ of class (ECC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payne – Chapter 4 	5: [REDACTED]	
10	3/18/19	Theory 6: Feminist Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payne – Chapter 13 	6: [REDACTED]	
11	3/25/19	* Theory at Work! Theory: Critical Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elliott-Groves 2018; Hartmann & Gone 2014; and Oetting et al. 2001 • Payne - Chapter 12 	[REDACTED] 7: [REDACTED]	
12	4/1/19	* Theory at Work!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gutierrez & Gant (2018). <i>Community practice in social work...</i> and Gutierrez, Gant, & Brady (2018). <i>Chapter 16: Using arts and culture...</i> 	[REDACTED]	
13	4/8/19	Apply theory to inspire social justice and social change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwyer & Minnegal (2010). <i>Theorizing social change.</i> • TBD 	[REDACTED]	
14	4/15/19	Anti-oppressive and multicultural sensitivity approaches to practice * Theory at Work!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payne – Chapter 14 and Sakamoto & Pitner (2005). <i>Use of critical consciousness in anti-oppressive social work...</i> • To be determined 	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]	
15	4/22/19	Presentations of Theory Application Papers			Everyone

3. Class Assignments

1. **Class Attendance, Preparation, and Participation** [20 points]

Since the success of a doctoral seminar is the mutual responsibility of all its members, it is expected that you will do the assigned readings each week and participate regularly, fully, and in a manner that demonstrates respect for your colleagues. This includes critically reading; coming prepared to class, taking responsibility for identifying key issues and questions to discuss; participating in class activities, and using class interactions to deepen your experience and knowledge.

2. **Theory Mini-Lecture/Discussion** [20 points]

Each student will be asked to lead a class discussion, guided by the reading(s) for the theory we plan to discuss that week (e.g., Payne chapter). Each student's mini-lectures should be approximately 1 hour long. Students must also prepare a one-page handout (see #3 below) based on the selected theory to guide the class discussion and distribute it to the class. For the theory mini-lecture/discussion, plan to critique of a theory relevant to social work/your field using the concepts and dimensions relevant for this course, and in the Payne textbook. Please confer with the instructor if you plan to select supplemental text readings or additional articles.

Presentations should include (may vary depending on your theory): (1) Goals, major assumptions, major concepts/constructs; (2) What is proposed by the theory; (3) Types and levels of "evidence" presented for theory; (4) Underlying epistemologies of the theory; (5) Principles and/or practice skills, steps, models included in the theory; (6) How the theory authors/developers handle identities, social categories, oppression, privilege, social justice, etc.; (7) Populations most represented by the theory; and (8) Strengths/ Limitations of the theory. Two students will present on separate theories during class sessions 6 through 11 (or February 18th through April 1st). These sessions will begin on February 18th and students will be asked to sign up for their seminar on the first few days of class.

3. **Theory Mini-Lecture/Discussion One-Page Handout** [15 points]

For the *Theory Mini-Lecture/Discussion* (described in #2 above), students must also prepare a *one-page handout* based on their selected theory to guide the class discussion. Be sure to make 10 copies prior to your presentation day. (Let me know if you need assistance with this). Students should prepare this one-page handout on their selected theory so classmates can understand the foundation of the theory, key elements, and potential implications. You may also want to include specific things (diagrams, models, frameworks) from what you reviewed that you think are especially useful, or problematic, as resources or illustrative examples for the class. These handouts are due the day of each student's theory presentation, which varies.

4. **Final Theory Application Paper** [30 points]

Each student will prepare a final class paper in which they present written material on their selected theory (e.g., material from the theory mini-lecture) and how that theory applies to practice (defined broadly). Each theory application paper should include details about the selected theory, including the origins and components of the theory, its underlying assumptions, and some implications for social justice and social change. This course provides a solid grounding in practice theory, and the purpose of the final theory application paper is to further explore and understand the many connections a theory has to your field on a practical level.

The final theory application paper will consist of a detailed analysis of a practice theory of your choice, though it is strongly recommended that you use the theory from your theory mini-lecture/discussion (see #2 above). Course readings provide several to choose from. In this analysis, you will tie your chosen theory to a discipline or field of practice.

As you prepare your *Final Theory Application Paper*, make sure you address the following:

1. An introduction to the theory, complete with its purpose, a description of its concepts, constructs, etc.
2. The historical development of the chosen theory (i.e., Its roots, key people in its development, what they were trying to explain; implications of this history for the current relevance of the theory; etc.)
3. The major assumptions posited by the theory and the scope and the problem areas addressed by the theory.
4. How the field of practice adopted the theory and how it has influenced the problem areas it addresses.
5. The processes for how the theory was generated, validated, and incorporated into the discipline.
6. The scientific base of the intervention strategies and applications of the theory.
7. The underlying philosophical paradigm of the theory: (a) Link the major assumptions of the theory and how they go about testing or building theory to the assumptions of the philosophical paradigm, (b) Summarize the major assumptions of this philosophical paradigm and tie them back to the historical evolution of this theory.
8. The scope of the theory and its appropriateness for explaining phenomenon.
9. The strengths and limitations of the theory and its application to change.
10. Ways the theory can inform social justice and social change.

Papers should be written using the *American Psychological Association Publication Manual* (6th edition) and be 15 to 20 pages, NOT including references. Make sure papers are double-spaced with Arial, size 11 font, and 1-inch margins. The final paper should be submitted via Canvas "Assignments" feature by 11:59pm no later than April 22nd.

5. Theory Application Presentation [15 points]

On the last day of class, each student will give a 10-15 minute presentation on their Final Theory Application paper. PowerPoint is encouraged. Use this time to orally present on what you write in your Theory Application Paper. If there are ideas or concepts that are still crystalizing by the last day of class, you may raise them during your presentation. Please note, however, you are not to use the entire presentation to pose questions to the class. The time should be dedicated to presenting what you have learned about your theory and its implications (and examples) for application.

b. Grading

The following criteria will be used to grade assignments:

- 1) The *quality* of the analysis and depth of understanding of the concepts, ideas, and information.
- 2) The *clarity* of expression and organization of the paper – i.e., a logical order of its major themes.
- 3) The *appropriate use* of references and resources, and the *variety/range* of resources referenced.
- 4) The use of *proper grammar* and the overall *professional presentation* of the paper. (Note: Please take time to proofread your writing and make sure you submit a 2nd or 3rd draft.)

Each assignment will be given points that correspond with a numerical grade:

A+ = 99 - 100	B+ = 87 - 89	C+ = 77 - 79
A = 95 - 98	B = 84 - 86	C = 74 - 76
A- = 90 - 94	B- = 80 - 83	C- = 70 - 73

Each grade will be determined by:

Grade	Description
A+	The grade of A+ signifies work that goes beyond the content of the course and the expertise students are expected to master. An A+ is rare to obtain, but not impossible.
A or A-	Grades of A or A- are reserved for student work which not only demonstrates very good mastery of content but which also shows that the student has undertaken a complex task, has applied critical thinking skills to the assignment, and/or has demonstrated creativity in his or her approach to the assignment. The difference between these two grades is determined by the degree to which the student has demonstrated these skills.
B+	A grade of B+ is given to work, which is judged to be very good. This grade denotes that a student has demonstrated a more-than competent understanding of the material.
B	A grade of B is given to student work that meets the basic requirements of the assignment. It denotes that the student has done adequate work and meets basic course expectations.
B-	A grade of B- denotes that a student's performance was less than adequate on an assignment, reflecting only moderate grasp of content and/or expectations.
C+ or C	The grade of C reflect a minimal grasp of the assignment, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement.
C- to F	Grades between C- and F are applied to denote a failure to meet minimum standards, reflecting serious deficiencies in all aspects of a student's performance on the assignment.

Summary of Written Assignments and Grading

Class Attendance, Preparation, & Participation	20
Theory Mini-Lecture	20
Theory Mini-Lecture One-page Handout	15
Final Theory Application Paper	30
Theory Application Presentation	+ 15
	100 Total Points