



Course title:	Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work	
Course #/term:	504-003, Fall 2019	
Time and place:	Tuesday 9am-12pm	
Credit hours:	3	
Prerequisites:	none	
Instructor:	Laura Yakas, PhD, MSW	
Pronouns:	She/her	
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Office hours:	By appointment	

General Course Statement for SW 504

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 all these 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 including 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 organizational work for social change.
- 2) Demonstrate knowledge and skills for working toward 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 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 lifelong 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 lectures, video, and participation in experiential activities. Additionally, this course will provide a forum to critically examine how our multiple status locations, societal constructions, and social processes shape our beliefs, assumptions, behaviors, and life experiences. Special attention will also be given knowledge about justice and change, and principles of change towards justice.

Social Work Curriculum Themes Addressed:

"Multiculturalism & Diversity" is addressed from the perspective of critically considering how diverse dimensions (such as ability; age; class; color; culture; ethnicity; family structure; gender - including gender identity and gender expression; marital status; national origin; race; 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.

"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.

“Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation” 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.

“Behavioral and Social Science Research” 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.

“Social Work 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.

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.

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Specific Course Information for SW 504 with Dr. Laura Yakas “Misanthropology 101: Exploring Oppression”

Course Description:

The purpose of this class is to explore the interconnected causes and manifestations of oppression, which I define as *cumulative dehumanization and unequal resource distribution based on identity*. Oppression is fundamental to humans (as well as related primates), but the characteristics of oppression in the world today are unique in scope and scale. Though more people are becoming ‘woke’ (experiencing *critical consciousness*), what we are ‘waking’ to is a mess of extremely complex truths with painfully real implications. It can be overwhelming; not only to wrap one’s head around, but to know what to *do* with this information. Therefore, our course will be divided into three sections. Section One explores the universal mechanics of oppression, and how it impacts our own lives. We will learn how oppression operates, and crucially, why it *continues* to operate in spite of expanding awareness of it. We will also engage in self-exploration to understand our experiences, pain, and attitudes more deeply. In Section Two we explore historical and contemporary manifestations of oppression in the US – such as anti-black and anti-immigrant racism, patriarchy, colonialism, classism, and ableism. Lastly, Section Three will be devoted to the question of *what now?* You will learn skills in ally/bystander intervention, conflict resolution, and self-care. Though oppression is not our fault, it *is* our responsibility. Becoming ‘woke’ is *wearying*, but if one establishes manageable goals for living an anti-oppressive life, weariness can transform into empowerment.

My Experience and Style:

As an anthropologist, the “thing” about humans I am most fascinated (and maddened) by is *oppression*. This explains my desire to bridge anthropology (an academic discipline that aims to deeply understand humanity) with social work (a profession that aims to *change* humanity). I have facilitated *critical consciousness* about oppression as well as the *skills* it takes to enact socially just change, and I have done this with many groups – undergraduates (with our office of Intergroup Relations), middle schoolers (at Camp Common Ground in California), international high schoolers (at the UWC USA Global Leadership Forum), and MSW students like yourselves (I taught this course last year).

I think and feel very deeply, and I practice radical authenticity, and this impacts my teaching style. I bring my full self into the classroom, and I invite and expect this from you. This is not normative in our culture (so it may feel uncomfortable), but it is necessary for a course like this in which the goal is for our full selves to be transformed.

Class Structure:

Each class will be three hours long, with a 15-minute break midway. This class demands active engagement and collaboration, and, most importantly, **authenticity** and vulnerability. This is not like high school, or college, or even other Master’s classes here. I will not be impressed with what society views as “good student” behavior, such as demonstrating how much you already know or your raw intelligence. I will be impressed by authenticity and emotional bravery. Secondly, ranking and evaluation are counterproductive in a consciousness-raising context, so we must work to minimize your prioritization of grades.

We will explore a variety of teaching/learning techniques:

- Lectures/presentations by the instructor and students
 - Whole-group discussions
 - ‘Pair share’ and small group discussions
 - Healing circles
 - Free-write thought papers (e.g. 10 minutes to write down whatever comes to mind when prompted by a concept such as “violence” or “human rights”)
 - Self-reflective journaling
 - Experiential learning (e.g. structured activities designed to impart lessons)
 - Collaborative “quote” lists (a list of meaningful quotes from readings and discussions)
 - I will also incorporate and invite art and humor – poetry, stand-up comedy, music.
- Oppression is not beautiful, nor is it funny, however, when people empower themselves and others through transforming pain into creative self-expression, *that* is beautiful, and possibly the only reason why I am still sane-ish.

There will be assigned readings (all available on our Canvas site [under “files”] or as a website link on the syllabus) as well as other material (videos, poetry, news articles, blog posts), **all to be taken seriously**. This is because; 1) peer-reviewed academic texts (i.e. traditional educational material) is *NOT* where the brunt of social justice thinking and expression is taking place (if anything, academic spaces, which are historically oppressive spaces, *stunt* that work rather than foster it); 2) there are many ways of learning and many ways of expressing, all of which is valid and useful, and in a group of diverse learners such as ourselves, it may be that some of us get everything we need from reading, whereas others need the TED talk or the song or the video in order to get what we need.

NOTE: If you find the material I offer elementary (because of the wide variety in your backgrounds, some of you may still be wrapping your heads around “privilege” while others are

eager for critical race theory), I ask that you **talk to me**. I won't be offended that you expect more. In fact, it would make me glad.

Grading and Assessment:

Though grades are not the objective or priority of a consciousness-raising program, this is still a Master's class, and hence I must create assignments and grade them. There will be three components to your overall grade: Attendance and participation (20%), post-Section (i.e. after Section One, Section Two, and Section Three) reflection papers (30%), a "Who am I?" paper (20%) and a final project with varying options (30%).

1. Attendance and participation – 20%

Because the material is all important and builds upon itself, no "unexcused absences" will be permitted. Should something prevent you coming to class (e.g. illness, a conference, a religious observance, personal emergency) please notify me (at least 24 hours before an *expected* absence, or within 24 hours of an *unexpected* absence) and when it is appropriate (e.g. with conferences), provide me with written documentation. We can strategize as to how to best keep you up with the rest of us on a case by case basis, but in the past my strategy has been to require a short paper dissecting that weeks' material.

Attendance and participation accounts for 20% of your grade, but what does it mean? Attendance is obvious, but participation is broadly defined. It means showing up to class on time. It means asking questions of yourself and others, and applying course concepts to your own experiences. It means listening to others and contributing to their growth and learning. It means bringing emotional bravery. It means making an effort to get to know me and each other. It means providing feedback and criticism in useful ways. It means speaking in class, but it does *not* mean speaking to fill space (monopolizing space or speaking off topic is not participation).

2. Post-Section reflection papers – 30%

You will write a 3-5-page 'journal entry' style reflection paper *three times* (each worth 10%), after we have finished each section (due dates on the Course Schedule below). Papers should be self-reflective and written in first person (hence the metaphor of a journal entry), and citations are not required. **I want to see** you acknowledge your concerns, biases, privileges, fears, the moments that have made you feel angry/confused/guilty, the existential questions that have arisen as you realize how broken humanity is, etc. **I don't want to see** a summary of what you have learned. In short, I am interested in learning how this experience is impacting you *emotionally and existentially*, and am less interested in learning that you can repeat what you've read or heard. Papers should be submitted through Canvas, and only I will read them.

3. "Who am I?" – 20 % (Due September 17th)

You will write a 6-10-page paper in which you explore your own values, experiences, and biases, and demonstrate an understanding of how your identity impacts your worldview and access to privileges. For full details about this assignment, see our Canvas site.

4. Open-Ended Final project – 30% (Due on the last/second-to-last class)

We will discuss this more as the semester unfolds, but for your final project you will be exploring a facet or manifestation of oppression that interests and impacts you, and will present your work to the class. The final project will be your opportunity to practice several skills that this course aims to instill:

- Resisting oversimplification and vagueness: depth and clarity are crucial when one is wrestling with complex and ethically ambiguous issues.
- Communicating vulnerably: as we will learn, non-violent/anti-oppressive communication demands empathy, which in turn demands vulnerability and the ability to connect lived experiences to cold hard facts.
- Humility and open-mindedness: you are not communicating truth, you are communicating a truth. I will be looking for signs that you have genuinely sought to understand and empathize with alternative viewpoints, and that you are not creating monsters out of human beings (a common form of oversimplification).

You can examine more specific and currently discussed issues (e.g. police violence against black people in the US), or issues that are broader (e.g. what is up with genocide?). You can examine issues as a relative outsider (e.g. if you are white and writing about police violence against black people in the US) or address issues that have impacted you personally (e.g. exploring mainstream beauty ideals as a person with a history of disordered eating). You can present your work more conventionally, such as a poster, PowerPoint, conference paper. You can also present your work in an unconventional way, such as;

- One of the other professors of this course has assigned in the past a “social justice mixed tape” to her students. Pick 10-12 songs that have meaning to you with respect to social justice, and write a paragraph about why you chose each song.
- Autoethnography. That is what I do. It is a form of personal/academic hybrid writing, where you – as a social scientist (which I believe you must be in order to be a competent social worker) – write about your own experiences in testament to wider issues that you can also speak to as a scholar. You will see examples of this in reading assignments, and I will support anyone who wants to do this.
- Poetry, fiction, song, video, podcast, TED talk.
- Sharing your social justice journey and plan of action. This is something we will all be working on to some degree, as it is a part of Section Three, but some of you may wish to turn that work into a presentation.

Whatever you choose to do, I expect you to communicate with me about it in advance so that I am prepared to evaluate your work appropriately.

Another option for your final project is to participate in one of the **Social Work & Social Justice Dialogues** that in partnership with the Office of Intergroup Relations (IGR). This involves committing to attend 6 dialogues throughout the semester (there are two groups, one that explores mass incarceration, and one that explores immigration). If you participate in an IGR dialogue group, this will count as your final project. Please discuss this with me if you are pursuing this option. **You will need to make this decision promptly, as the first dialogues are scheduled in late September, and you must apply by September 9th.** Information about the dialogue groups, and the application, can be found at this link on the SSW website: <https://ssw.umich.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/social-work-social-justice-dialogues>

Course Policies:

1. Technology

In our first class, we will establish a “Positive Learning Environment Contract.” Therefore, I will not set rules about technology (phone, computer, recording devices), as we will decide this together as a community.

2. Office Hours

I will not mandate this, but I ask each of you to make at least one appointment to come and talk with me one on one over the semester. You can raise questions or concerns related to the material, the class, or we can discuss other ideas and goals. I ask this because I want to care about your learning and your life, and I can best do this if I get to know you one on one.

3. Email

I will do my best to respond to your email within 24 hours. If I do not respond to your email within 72 hours, please send a reminder. For substantive concerns about classroom dynamics, course content, or your performance, please make an office hours' appointment.

4. Late Submissions

Late assignments will be addressed on a case by case basis, in spite of the extra work that creates for me. This is because these assignments are super personal, and your reasons for doing or not doing them on time are also, therefore, likely going to be personal.

5. Parent and child policy

If you are a parent, and need to bring your child to class for whatever reason, please let me know and we can accommodate this.

University Policies:

1. Academic integrity

Though unlikely to be an issue in this course (due to the personal assignments), cheating and plagiarism are grave offenses, and I am required to direct you to the university policy: http://www.umich.edu/~hcouncil/home/LSA_Standards_of_Academic_Integrity.html

2. Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you require an accommodation for a disability/diff-ability, please let me know as soon as the semester starts. Many assignments, in-class activities, and teaching approaches can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work together, and include the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (SSD: 734-763-3000; <http://ssd.umich.edu>), to determine appropriate accommodations. SSD typically recommends accommodations using a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide there is confidential. If you are struggling and unsure whether SSD might be a good resource, please make an appointment with me and with their office, and we can figure out what your next steps should look like.

3. Student mental health and wellbeing

Graduate school is a tumultuous experience. But this class in particular, because of the subject matter, can incite existential malaise, [weltschmerz](#), and other kinds of pain. I have had this quote by James Baldwin on my wall for years: *"The world is scarcely habitable for the conscious young."* This course is designed to raise your consciousness, and therefore make the world we inhabit feel uninhabitable. This is part of growing in depth, awareness, and strength, and *you need to do this work in order to be good at the profession you are attempting to join.* As we embark on this journey, I will be available for counseling and mentorship. Please come to me with any and everything. I don't rattle easily.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: If “HEADY” appears in parentheses, it means it is a headier (intellectually stimulating or demanding) piece. If OPTIONAL appears in parentheses, the piece is optional.

SECTION ONE: The What, How, and Why of Oppression

September 3: Introductions

Questions to consider:

- 1) What are our course objectives and norms?
- 2) What is oppression?
- 3) How can the social sciences help us wrap our heads around oppression?

Required Readings/Materials:

- Read this syllabus for our course.
- Arao and Clemens, 2013, *From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces*
(Describes the nuances in facilitating dialogue about social justice, reframing the idea of “safe spaces” to “brave spaces” in which discomfort, ambiguity, pain, etc. are accepted as necessary for authentic learning and growth.)
- TED Talk, Brené Brown, 2010, *The Power of Vulnerability*:
https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability
(A very well-known TED talk that reframes vulnerability as a strength and a source of healing – to individuals, communities, and societies – rather than as a weakness).

Overview:

This first class will be devoted to introductions, clarifying the objectives of the course, and agreeing upon community norms. The readings will help us to frame the objectives of the course, and our Positive Learning Environment Contract.

I will also introduce my “three truths about humans” that I have developed through teaching many anthropology classes: 1) There is more than one way to do/be human. 2) No way is inherently superior or inferior (though cultural relativism does not equal moral relativism). 3) Humans can learn to believe anything (including the reverse of the first two truths).

September 10: Terminology – The What of Oppression

Questions to consider:

- 1) Like, seriously though, what *is* oppression???
- 2) What language and terminology do we need in order to explore oppression?

Required Readings/Materials:

- DiAngelo, 2011, *White Fragility*
(This article conceptualizes a phenomenon – white fragility – that makes talking about race very difficult in a way that is specific to white people. It will help us name issues that we will certainly face together, given that this is a majority white institution.)
- Unlisted author, 2017, [How to Survive in Intersectional Feminist Spaces 101](#)
(An activist-written blog about how to navigate becoming an activist [which applies to becoming an anti-oppressive social worker as well], with advice about how to take

criticism and avoid some of the traps that early activists/anti-oppressive social workers fall into. Content warning: this author swears in their piece!).

- **Haimson and Airton, 2019, Making space for them, her, him, and ‘prefer not to disclose’ in group settings: Why pronoun-sharing is important but must remain optional:** <https://medium.com/national-center-for-institutional-diversity/making-space-for-them-her-him-and-prefer-not-to-disclose-in-group-settings-why-1deb8c3d6b86>
(Clear and constructive short essay on how to use pronoun-sharing in groups)
- **Gay, 2012, Peculiar Benefits** <http://therumpus.net/2012/05/peculiar-benefits/>
(Short creative essay defining and wrestling with the idea of “privilege”)
- **Charles, 2014, Ten counterproductive behaviors of social justice educators** <https://acpacsje.wordpress.com/2014/09/09/ten-counterproductive-behaviors-of-social-justice-educators-by-cody-charles/>
(Careful exploration of common traps that impede effective justice work)
- **Resistance to Social Justice Education**
(A short piece shared by Dr. Kattari which overviews some common ways that people experience resistance to “awakening”/developing critical consciousness and engage in counterproductive behaviors [usually unconsciously]. It works well alongside the “Charles” and “Diangelo” pieces)
- **Sensoy and Diangelo, 2014, Respect differences? Challenging the Common Guidelines in Social Justice Education**
(Describes how common “dialogue guidelines” in social justice education spaces can reinforce rather than improve inequities, and offers advice on how to set more anti-oppressive guidelines for dialogue)
- **Crenshaw, 2015, Why intersectionality can’t wait.** https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/09/24/why-intersectionality-cant-wait/?utm_term=.24e279cdc05a
(Describes how the term intersectionality was first coined, and why it is important)
(OPTIONAL) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality>

Recommended, not required materials:

This [glossary of contemporary social justice terminology](#)

Roxane Gay, 2014, The Politics of Respectability, from Bad Feminist (on Canvas)

[“White Fragility”](#) the book (for the sake of time, we are reading her first article)

This [interview](#) with White Fragility author Robin DiAngelo

Patricia Hill Collins, 2015, [Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas](#)

This [satirical website](#) which uses humor to demonstrate common ways that people resist social justice awakening via “derailing” conversations about oppression

Overview:

This class focuses on clarifying the language and terminology of oppression, such as: oppression, violence, identity politics, respectability politics, microaggressions, trigger warnings, “reverse” oppression, prejudice, power, justice, injustice, “woke”/critical consciousness, multiculturalism and diversity, social inertia, social change, and cultural/moral relativism.

Sept 17: The How and Why of Oppression Part 1 – Normalization and Social Inertia

**** “WHO AM I?” DUE BY MIDNIGHT ****

Questions to consider:

- 1) *Why* do humans oppress?
- 2) Why and how is oppression perpetuated?

Required Readings/Materials:

- **Rosenthal, 2002, Covert Communication in Classrooms, Clinics, Courtrooms and Cubicles**
(This article (from experimental psychology) describes and provides evidence for 'expectancy theory' – how interpersonal (and therefore social) expectations can become self-fulfilling prophecies. This is important in understanding how oppression operates, because *expectations* about identities contribute to the perpetuation of oppression.)
- **Ridgeway, 2009, Framed Before We Know It: How Gender Shapes Social Relations**
(Clear description of how cultural frames/schemas, such as gender, organize and shape social interactions and systems, and are generative and not fixed)
- **(HEADY) Sperber and Hirschfeld, 2004, The cognitive foundations of cultural stability and diversity (**feel free to skim this, I will review the key points in class**)**
(A dry but helpful article that describes the cognitive underpinnings of category formation, as well as cultural stability [how ideas get cemented/perpetuated])
- **Jessica Brown, 2017, The Powerful way that “Normalization” Shapes our World.**
<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20170314-how-do-we-determine-when-a-behaviour-is-normal>
(Defines normalization and connects this to society and politics, revealing how normalization can lead to oppression [i.e. how sexually aggressive behavior became normalized], as well as justice [i.e. how homosexuality became normalized])
- **Read these Wikipedia definitions:**
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_inertia
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internalized_oppression
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_norm (feel free to skim this one)
- **Ted Talk, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichi, 2009, The Dangers of a Single Story**
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en
(Well-known TED talk that addresses the issue of multiple truths and the importance of stories in perpetuating oppressive “single truths”)

Recommended, not required materials:

Fuentes, 2012, *Race, Monogamy and Other Lies They Told You: Busting Myths about Human Nature*

Hinton, 2000, *Introduction to Stereotypes, Cognition and Culture*

Documentary by Adam Curtis, 2016, “Hypernormalisation”

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2016/adam-curtis-hypernormalisation>

Overview:

This unit will involve digesting readings related to *why* humans oppress/*how* oppression works. I will frame this in terms of what I call the “other and oppress propensity”: humans notice human variation, make categories about these differences, and then take the leap toward reifying and hierarchizing the categories, leading to a very broken world.

Sperber and Hirschfeld help us understand the cognitive underpinnings: humans must form meaningful social categories/groups in order to make sense of social life. In-group and out-group categories (i.e. othering) are possibly inevitable, *but*, hatred of/dehumanizing out-group category members (i.e. oppression) need not be. Ridgeway and Rosenthal help us understand how social categories become cognitive frames, largely unconsciously learned and conveyed, and thus perpetuated (also unconsciously). I will also introduce the terms misrecognition,

normalization, and desensitization, to explain the process of how categories become reified and accepted as natural rather than social constructs, contributing to social inertia.

Sept 24: The How and Why of Oppression, Part 2 – Violence, Hate, and Trauma

Questions to consider:

- 1) What is violence? Who determines what counts as violence?
- 2) What is hate? Who determines what counts as hate?
- 3) Are violence and/or hate *necessary* elements of oppression, or can oppression exist without them? What distinguishes hateful violence from non-hateful violence?
- 4) How is hate created/learned?
- 5) What are the impacts of hatred and violence?

Required Readings/Materials:

- **Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2003, Making Sense of Violence**
(Moving piece which describes and digests violence through an anthropological and humanistic lens)
(OPTIONAL for those who want more) **Navarro et al, 2013, the Psychology of Hatred**
(Short article exploring the psychology of hatred, including how to combat it)
- **Hardy, 2015, The View from Black America**
<https://www.psychotherapynetworker.org/blog/details/684/the-view-from-black-america>
(Explores how social/collective issues such as racism and racial trauma contribute to mental health issues, written by a black therapist/activist).
- **Watch this clip (3.23) of a documentary with Dr. Robert Sapolsky**
(neurobiologist/anthropologist), which features his discovery that hierarchical violence amongst baboons was a learned/cultural, not innate/biologically determined, behavior.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZcTvFqzxA0>
- **Listen to this podcast (29 minutes) about Hannah Arendt's work on tyranny**
<https://player.fm/series/radical-philosophy-2421301/a-prof-serena-parekh-hannah-arendt>
And read this very short blog post by a science writer:
<https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/12/20/hannah-arendt-origins-of-totalitarianism-loneliness-isolation/>
And read this article by Masha Gessen about tyranny and Trump
<https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/one-year-after-trumps-election-revisiting-autocracy-rules-for-survival>
(Arendt is one of the most important theorists of hate-based violence to have walked this earth, but interestingly enough, the “banality of evil” is such that much of the world’s violence is the result of apathy, ignorance, and people doing what they believe is “normal” [because “normal” is often synonymous with “oppressive”], NOT from hate. Her discussion of human rights is also fascinating. The Gessen piece is beautiful in tandem because the “breeding grounds of terror” that Arendt talks about, the conditions that enable a tyrant to take power, can be easily applied to our current political climate).
- **Read these Wikipedia pages:**
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transgenerational_trauma
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_trauma
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_trauma
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adverse_Childhood_Experiences_Study

Overview:

This class will explore the role of violence, hatred, and trauma (especially intergenerational and collective trauma), in perpetuating oppression. I want you to understand that hate-based violence and oppression are not intrinsic qualities in humans, but are learned behaviors – at times learned actively (as in the case of Nazi propaganda), but more often learned passively. But due to the powerfully cyclical nature of hatred and violence, short of a dramatic accident (such as Sapolsky's baboons), hate-based violence seems to be here to stay.

SECTION TWO: Oppression Manifested

October 1: Xenophobia and Racism Part 1

**** FIRST JOURNAL-ENTRY DUE BY MIDNIGHT ****

Questions to consider:

- 1) What are xenophobia and racism?
- 2) How and why did they develop?
- 3) How does the concept of 'trauma' connect to the concepts of racism and xenophobia?

Required Readings/Materials:

- Choose ONE of the following (I will summarize the key points of both):
Bornstein, 2015, Institutional Racism, Numbers Management, and Zero-Tolerance Policing in New York City
(An ethnography that describes and explains institutional racism effectively, specifically the nuanced point that one participates in *institutional* racism even when one does not believe in racist *ideology*)
Burton, 2015, To Protect and Serve Whiteness
(An ethnography on policing in the US and how it is and has always been racialized)
- Read part 1 of this series about James Baldwin and Margaret Mead's "rap on race:"
<https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/03/19/a-rap-on-race-margaret-mead-and-james-baldwin/>
(Poignant and intellectually compelling article about race, immigration, surmounting the insurmountable, and most importantly, forgiveness and faith in humanity. It addresses the point I will reiterate constantly: isms are not our fault, but they are our responsibility.)
- Choose ONE of the following:
Ta-Nehisi Coates, 2015, "Letter to my Son"
<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/07/tanehisi-coates-between-the-world-and-me/397619/> or **James Baldwin's "Letter to my nephew"**
<http://progressive.org/magazine/letter-nephew/>
(Two well-known and beautiful accounts of the lived experience of blackness by important figures, past and present, in black liberation)
- **Baker, 2010, Notes on 'Post-Racial' Society**
(A very short piece by a well-known scholar of American racism)
- **Tucker, 2016, The Ultimate White Privilege Statistics (**feel free to skim**)**
http://www.jbwttucker.com/ultimate-white-privilege-statistics/?utm_campaign=shareaholic
(A well-researched blog post by a self-proclaimed white 'conservative' who sought to understand white privilege. It is an excellent resource in terms of statistical evidence of many disparities such as incarceration, employment, education, voting, etc.)

- **NPR Interview with Angela Saini, 2019, Is “Race Science” making a comeback?**
<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2019/07/10/416496218/is-race-science-making-a-comeback>
(Explains the roots of “scientific racism” and how they are still present today)
- **McIntosh, 1990, White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack**
(A foundational piece in the history of wrestling with privilege/oppression)
- **TED Talk, Theo Wilson, 2017, A Black Man Goes Undercover in the Alt-Right**
https://www.ted.com/talks/theo_e_j_wilson_a_black_man_goes_undercover_in_the_alt_right?language=en
(A fascinating talk by Theo Wilson, who went undercover in the alt-right online community and discovered a great level of compassion and understanding with the experience of the white supremacists he met, who feel hated/resented because of their “white man-ness” [something they can’t change, just as *he* can’t change his blackness]. The message he had for them was ‘if you aren’t down with diversity, you’re going against nature, and you’re on the losing team.’ I like this idea, and think it connects beautifully with the idea of Trump’s “wall,” which we will talk about next week)
- **Read this short summary of Dr. Ibram Kendi’s book “How to be an antiracist”:**
<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/15/751070344/theres-no-such-thing-as-not-racist-in-ibram-x-kendis-how-to-be-an-anitracist>
(OPTIONAL) **interview with Dr. Kendi:** <https://the1a.org/shows/2019-08-19/antiracism>
(Dr. Kendi defines racism and antiracism in constructive ways that help avoid the common trap of a) assuming that “racist” is an identity, when it is just a way to describe behavior, and b) assuming that to behave racistly means one is a “bad” person, when it just means one is an ordinary person in this society)

Recommended, not required readings:

Baker, 1998, *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954*
 Taylor, 2016, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (especially introduction)
 Highly recommended: Wyatt Cenac’s “Problem Areas!” a comedy show exploring policing in the US. <https://www.hbo.com/wyatt-cenacs-problem-areas>

Overview:

This will be the first of two units that address racism and xenophobia, this one focusing on anti-black racism. We will think about James Baldwin’s profound quote, “history casts a long shadow,” as we wrestle with the ways racism has baked into the foundations of our society.

October 8: Xenophobia and Racism Part 2

Questions to consider:

- 1) What is nationalism, and how does it contribute to oppression?

Required Readings/Materials:

- **Go to this website, and choose an article to read (you will be asked for a summary and meaningful quote):** <https://theintercept.com/collections/the-war-on-immigrants/>
(The Intercept is a radical journalism collective that do remarkable and brave work)
- **“What to do at an ICE checkpoint,” a one-page document that comes from one of my friend’s (an immigrant rights activist) social media**
(A combined “know your rights” and “tips” aimed at white US citizens)

- **Impact of the 2016 Election on the Health of Immigrant Families in Southeast Michigan:** <https://sph.umich.edu/news/2019posts/impact-of-the-2016-election-on-the-health-of-immigrant-families-in-southeast-michigan.html>
(One-page summary of U of M research into the health consequences of living in fear of deportation/family separation)
- **Anderson, 2006, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism (excerpt from introduction/pages 5-8)**
(Introduces and explains the idea of national identity as another socially constructed/oppression-laden category akin to gender, race, etc. This book is considered a foundational text in the study of nationalism)
- **Jose Cuervo, 1999, Latinos and Hispanics – a primer on terminology**
(a piece recommended by a fellow 504 instructor)
- **Warsan Shire’s “Home”** <https://genius.com/Warsan-shire-home-annotated>, also <https://qz.com/897871/warsan-shires-poem-captures-the-reality-of-life-for-refugees-no-one-leaves-home-unless-home-is-the-mouth-of-a-shark/>
(This poem has become emblematic of the refugee/migrant experience)
- **Read this speech by U of M researcher Dr. Bill Lopez at recent immigrant rights summit:** https://medium.com/@williamlopez_9697/la-lucha-sigue-keynote-speech-for-the-welcoming-michigan-statewide-convening-mcirr-summit-ce22a47b3a52
Read this poem by Washtenaw County activist Maria Ibarra, from the same summit: https://medium.com/@mariaibarra_91171/the-right-way-aff217a84ff8
Read the “about” page for the Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, a local organization that Bill and Maria are a part of: <http://wicir.org/about-wicir/>
- **TED talk, Taiye Selasi, 2014, Don't Ask Where I'm From, Ask Where I'm a Local** https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_don_t_ask_where_i_m_from_ask_where_i_m_a_local?language=en
(A talk that highlights key problems with national identification)

Recommended, not required materials:

This is a collection of Michigan-specific resources [“ICE raid preparedness”](#)

This is a [document](#) that details the immigration-related policy changes that have occurred in the first two years of Trump’s presidency.

This is a [26-minute documentary](#) about the story of “Lourdes,” the woman mentioned in Dr. Bill Lopez’ speech you read.

Check out this website for the [“undocumented migration project”](#) led by Dr. Jason De Leon. Trilling, 2018, [Five Myths about the Refugee Crisis](#)

Overview:

This will be the second of two units that address racism and xenophobia, this one focusing on anti-immigrant rhetoric. One key point will be that immigration is a human universal (humans have been moving from place to place in response to a variety of factors since *Homo erectus*, at least), and it is therefore a mark of (socialized) ignorance that a person arbitrarily born within a (human-drawn) national border should feel they have an inherent right to occupy that space over others. We will address problematic rhetoric around undocumented migration, and “deserving” and “undeserving” immigrants.

October 22: The Patriarchy – sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and malignant male supremacy

Questions to consider:

- 1) What is patriarchy and how did it happen?
- 2) How does it shape our current lived experiences?

Required Readings/Materials:

- (HEADY/OPTIONAL) Butler, 1988, *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: an essay in phenomenology and feminist theory*
(Foundational feminist essay in which Butler proposes the theory of gender as performative and non-essential. Butler writes in a heady and obtuse fashion, but it is such a crucial piece for all of post-modernism and identity studies that I must include it!)
- Fraser, 2013, *How feminism became capitalism's handmaiden, and how to reclaim it* <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/14/feminism-capitalist-handmaiden-neoliberal>
(A brief opinion piece by a feminist political scientist connecting feminism to capitalism)
- Pasulka, 2015, *The Case of CeCe McDonald: Murder—or Self-Defense Against a Hate Crime?* <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/05/cece-mcdonald-transgender-hate-crime-murder/>
(a news article that addresses transphobic violence and the law)
- Collins, 2000, *Towards a Politics of Empowerment (from Black Feminist Thought)*
(Well-known piece that addresses intersectionality and the power of critical consciousness for empowerment and justice-seeking).
- Gay, 2014, *Bad feminist Take Two, from Bad Feminist*
(Points to the fact that feminism/feminists is/are diverse and imperfect and contradictory)
- Prum, 2017, *Queering Homo Sapiens (chapter 11 in The Evolution of Beauty)* – use your umich login info to access this ebook version, scroll down and click on chapter 11 <http://proxy.lib.umich.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1339645&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
(A book that challenges the common idea that *reproduction [i.e. natural selection]* is the primary motivation of animal behavior by showing how the subjective experiences of beauty/pleasure are equally motivating. This chapter explains from an evolutionary perspective why fluidity in sexual preference is totally *expected* in an animal like us, and posits that the relative rarity of queerness in humans is more to do with patriarchy (page 314) than nature. Generally, the book points to the very deep issue of male dominance and violence amongst primates [it is NOT just human males that oppress females], and theorizes that patriarchies create monsters because male supremacy unchecked in the primate world = stress hormone soup life for everyone, even the powerful males. Terminology note: since this chapter is a ways in, I should clarify that “aesthetic remodeling” means “selection for beauty not function,” that is, that animals make mate choices based on arbitrary beauty *all* the time).
- A selection of non-academic pieces surrounding toxic masculinity and rape culture
 - <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/what-we-mean-when-we-say-toxic-masculinity>
 - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Femicide> (**feel free to skim**)
 - <http://www.shakesville.com/2009/10/rape-culture-101.html> (content warning – a lot of content about rape/sexual assault, and swearing)
 - https://www.buzzfeed.com/katiejimbaker/heres-the-powerful-letter-the-stanford-victim-read-to-her-ra?utm_term=.hnh782gOq#.srMI4qNWB (content warning – graphic, and vulnerable – feel free to skim, or to treat this as optional, if needed)

This is the letter written by the woman involved in the highly publicized Stanford Rape Trial. This piece/case enables us to also discuss white privilege, as well as the power of vulnerability and ownership of one's story when it comes to empowerment.

- <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/4/25/17277496/incel-toronto-attack-alek-minassian>

A piece about the "incel" movement, a misogynist/femicidal hate group in the US.

Recommended, not required materials:

Kerstein, 2017, [Considering the normalization of catcalling in popular culture](#)

This [article about Chimamanda Adichie's work on how to raise a feminist](#)

This [U of M series on non-binary identities in the academy](#)

A recent Atlantic piece: [The problem with a fight against toxic masculinity: The popular term points toward very real problems of male violence and sexism. But it risks misrepresenting what actually causes them.](#)

[Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men](#), by Michael Kimmel

[Women and Power](#), by Mary Beard

Overview:

In this unit we will discuss patriarchy, or "a society with male supremacy" – not a phenomenon unique to humans by a long shot. But, in humans, it is very different, because unlike any other animal, we create institutions and ideologies that make "power" a whole new game. We will talk about the many facets of patriarchy alive and well around us: rape culture, toxic masculinity, gender-based violence, femicide, transphobia and homophobia.

October 25: 1pm-8pm: I encourage you to attend the conference "Building Power Against White Supremacy," organized by fellow MSW students

October 29: Disability and Madness

Questions to consider:

- 1) How does illness and disability complicate identity politics?
- 2) What is disability, and what is madness, and *who decides this*?

Required Readings/Materials:

- Hedva, 2016, [Sick Woman Theory](http://www.maskmagazine.com/not-again/struggle/sick-woman-theory) <http://www.maskmagazine.com/not-again/struggle/sick-woman-theory>
(This is scholarship and art, a critical disability studies piece in which the author, a chronically ill woman, muses about how the ill/disabled are often depoliticized ["How do you throw a brick through the window of a bank if you can't get out of bed?"], and envisions the 'sick woman' as a semi-universal oppressed subject that anyone can connect to, and "caring" for the self and others as a political/anti-capitalist act)
- Read this Wikipedia page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dispossession,_oppression_and_depression
(Ann Cvetkovich, who this page references, is a kindred spirit in theorizing madness [in her case, depression] in a wide, social, collective, and oppressive-focused way)
- (OPTIONAL for those who want more feelings) Johnson, 2013, [Unspeakable Conversations](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/16/magazine/unspeakable-conversations.html) <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/16/magazine/unspeakable-conversations.html> or a PDF version http://courses.washington.edu/intro2ds/Readings/24_Johnson-unspeakable.pdf

(Piece written by disabled lawyer/activist Harriet McBride Johnson, known for a famous debate with pseudo-eugenicist Peter Singer [a philosopher who advocated for selective abortion of disabled people] which she describes. One important point it raises is the *refusal to make monsters out of oppressors*, instead humanizing them).

- (OPTIONAL for those who want more theory) Goodley, 2017, *Four approaches and three key themes of critical disability studies* (an easy-to-read review of 'critical disability studies' theory)
- Yakas, 2018, *Tackling Timelessness* – an short piece I wrote about madness and capitalism: <http://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2018/11/29/tackling-timelessness/>
- Mia Mingus, 2017: *Access intimacy, interdependence, and disability justice*: <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2017/04/12/access-intimacy-interdependence-and-disability-justice/> (Mia articulates the importance of an intersectional liberation movement).
- DeWolfe et al. 2019 *28 Ways to Make the World Less Hostile to Mad, Neurodivergent, and Psychiatrically Disabled People*. <https://www.radicalabolitionist.org/radical-abolitionist/2019/2/15/26-ways-to-make-the-world-less-hostile-to-mad-neurodivergent-and-psychiatrically-disabled-people> (A piece that describes ways that we, as people as well as social workers, can adopt practices that make the world less sanist)
- This page about sanism: <https://simmons.libguides.com/anti-oppression/anti-sanism>
- Watch this TED Talk: *I'm Not Your Inspiration, Thank You Very Much!* By Stella Young: https://www.ted.com/talks/stella_young_i_m_not_your_inspiration_thank_you_very_much?language=en

Recommended, not required materials:

Yakas, 2017, "[Work is Love Made Visible](#)": *Purpose and Community in Clubhouses* – this is a longer article I published

This piece by Kacie Otto about dismantling fat-phobia/sizism: [10 Vital Ways to Support Fat Students on Campus](#).

Emily Laudo, 2015, [Why person first language doesn't always put the person first](#)

This interview with Mia Mingus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cJkUazW-jw>

These are two pieces that have been healing and validating as I have come to terms with life as a madwoman who frequently wants to die:

[Living with suicidal feelings](#)

[I am not always very attached to being alive: Chronic, passive suicidal ideation is like living in the ocean. Let's start talking about how to tread water.](#)

Overview:

Disability/Mad studies complicates the idea of disability and madness, moving it away from the medical model (and even the biopsychosocial model) and toward a complex understanding of disability/Madness as oppressed identity, lived experience, community, and the “destabilizer” of identity politics because it touches everyone (i.e. every human breaks down and dies eventually). This unit introduces the idea that disability and illness are, like race, not things in the world, but perspectives on it.

November 5: Class and Poverty

Questions to consider:

- 1) What is class, and what is classism?
- 2) What is poverty?
- 3) How does class connect to/complicate identity politics?

Required Readings/Materials:

- Kimmel, 2015, *Intro to Angry White Men: American masculinity at the end of an era* (This is a helpful piece for understanding the role of *entitlement* in anger/hate. The reason why I include it in the “class” unit is because Kimmel points to a common criticism of identity politics – where is class?)
- Graeber, 2013, *On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs* <https://libcom.org/library/phenomenon-bullshit-jobs-david-graeber> (anthropologist David Graeber theorizing about the economy and the transition from an economic system where most people actually make/do something of social value, to a system where a lot of ‘work’ is pointless, and people *know* it).
- Luce, 2015, *Time is Political* <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/07/luce-eight-hour-day-obama-overtime> (easy to read article by labor studies scholar describing trends in work hours, such as overwork/underwork, structure and stability versus instability/flexibility, and power)
- Crosley-Corcoran, 2014, *Explaining white privilege to a broke white person* http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gina-crosleycorcoran/explaining-white-privilege-to-a-broke-white-person_b_5269255.html (ties intersectionality and class into the discussion of white privilege)
- Farmer, 2004, *On Suffering and Structural Violence: a view from below* (foundational article on structural violence, a similar concept to institutional oppression. Farmer foregrounds poverty (and intersectionality, though that term is more recent) in his brutal and beautiful piece about poverty and suffering)
- Sapolsky, 2004, *Social Status and Health in Humans and Other Animals* (an excellent review article which describes how social inequality contributes to stress and illness, and an especially beautiful point about human poverty – especially poverty amidst plenty – as a deeply traumatic/oppressive/damaging experience distinct from social inequality seen in other animals)
OR: “When the Bough Breaks” <https://login.proxy.lib.umich.edu/login?url=https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/2677862/clip/135775> (A television episode that demonstrates the linkage between race/racism and infant and maternal health, revealing that racism is enough of a stressor to have serious health consequences, even in cases of wealthy and well-educated black women)

Overview:

This will be a tricky topic because, as many critics believe, class is often left out of identity politics, especially of the “recognition” kind (i.e. the difference between identity politics that strive for *recognition* of an oppressed identity as valid, i.e. transgender/homosexuality, versus *redistribution* of resources). However, though *recognition* is important – the LGBTQ community should be recognized as valid, not pathological – an overemphasis on recognition to the detriment of discussing redistribution (i.e. class) will not further social justice. One of the major issues of our time is the gross injustice of poverty.

November 12: Colonialism (I wish we could do this Thanksgiving week, but it would disrupt the “three sections” structure)

Questions to consider:

- 1) Is decolonization possible?
- 2) How does colonialism complicate contemporary understandings of citizenship and immigration rights? (i.e. why was it OK 400 years ago for people to relocate and displace others, but today it isn't OK anymore?)

Required Readings/Materials:

- Tuck & Yang, 2012, *Decolonization is not a metaphor (you can read until page 28) “Incommensurability is unsettling,” and then skip ahead to the conclusion* (criticizes US-based social justice efforts that coopt the term “decolonization,” and argues for *literal* decolonization - land repatriation. Succinctly explains various kinds of colonialism that exist.)
- Watch Winona Linn’s spoken work poem “Knock-Off Native” a moving piece about indigeneity, racism, and pride in identity: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_zFOsd_pgA
- Teresa Evans-Campbell, 2008, *Historical trauma in American Indian/Native Alaska communities*. (Clearly defines and explains historical trauma and its impacts)
- Hummel, 2016, *Historical Trauma: The Confluence of Mental Health and History in Native American Communities* <https://medium.com/@bradyhummel/historical-trauma-the-confluence-of-mental-health-and-history-in-native-american-communities-5513985836c5> (Explores the relationship between colonialism, economic inequality, historical trauma, hopelessness, and suicide in Native Americans)
- *The gap won't close until we address intergenerational trauma* <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/12/the-gap-wont-close-until-we-address-intergenerational-trauma> (An Australian aboriginal activist makes a plea for the government to address the root issue of intergenerational trauma in its attempts at reparations)

Recommended, not required materials:

[Our society is broken': what can stop Canada's First Nations suicide epidemic?](#)

[What's behind high Aboriginal youth suicide rates?](#)

Overview:

The pieces we read for this week help contextualize some of the “what/how of oppression” issues we examine earlier in the semester: specifically, trauma. We will discuss what colonialism is, why it happened (because of the “other and oppress” propensity plus greed/economic exploitation, etc.), and its far-reaching consequences (cultural appropriation/racism, media stereotypes, suicide rates, reservation life, cultural erasure and historical trauma, boarding schools, etc.).

SECTION THREE: What Now?

***** SECOND JOURNAL-ENTRY ASSIGNMENT DUE *****

November 19: Oppression and the academy/social work

Questions to consider:

- 1) How does oppression present in academia, and what is being/can be done?
- 2) What do institutional “diversity initiatives” do?
- 3) In what ways are helping professions (like social work) a part of the problem?

Required Readings/Materials:

- Read the following short pieces that are critical of diversity initiatives:
 - <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/minds-business/workplace-diversity-initiatives-may-mask-discrimination.html>
 - <https://hbr.org/2012/03/diversity-training-doesnt-work.html>
- Diaz et al. 2019 “Woke to Weary” (I am one of the co-authors)
(an article about diversity initiatives and “being diverse” in academic spaces)
- Gay, 2012, *The Illusion of Safety/The Safety of Illusion* <http://therumpus.net/2012/08/the-illusion-of-safetythe-safety-of-illusion/>
(a thought-provoking piece about trigger warnings)
- Park, 2008, *Facilitating Injustice: Tracing the Role of Social Workers in the World War II Internment of Japanese Americans*.
(Thoughtful article with a specific case study to highlight the fact that social workers have often been willing followers of unjust systems – a great link back to the work of Hannah Arendt, the banality of evil, and the idea that people just “doing their jobs” and “following rules” can be tantamount to evil)
- Abrams & Moio, 2009, *Critical race theory and the cultural competence dilemma in social work education*
(Provides a thoughtful criticism of the idea of “cultural competence” within social work, and uses critical race theory to describe ways that social work/ers can practice antioppression)

Recommended, not required material:

Scientific American Blog: [When It Comes to Sexual Harassment, Academia Is Fundamentally Broken](#)

[The Road Not Taken: A History of Radical Social Work in the United States](#)

Overview:

In this unit we will come closer to home, and think about our experiences as university students and social workers. If oppression is woven into the whole social fabric, it is true that it is in these spaces, too. We hear criticisms that universities are corporate, steeped in tradition and status quo (white/ableist/male), inaccessible, and prohibitively expensive, and we hear criticisms about social work not being radical (how can a system-recognized profession be anti-system?) enough to dismantle systemic oppression. We will think through these issues together, and talk about people within academia and social work that strive to be anti-oppressive.

November 26: Ally Politics

Questions to consider:

- 1) How does one witness oppression and remain sane?
- 2) What can we do about oppression in our everyday lives?
- 3) What can be done about oppression at a wider scale?

Required Readings/Materials:

- **Milstein, 2016, A critique of ally politics** <https://radicalwashtenaw.org/2015/02/07/a-critique-of-ally-politics/>
(interesting complication of the idea of ‘allies,’ arguing that there is no unified target for you to be a generic ally to and that self-defining as “an ally” is problematic)
- **McKenzie, 2015, How to Tell the Difference Between Real Solidarity and ‘Ally Theater’** <http://www.blackgirldangerous.com/2015/11/ally-theater/>
(a funny and interesting take on performative allyship)
- **Penny, 2016, Life-Hacks of the Poor and Aimless: On negotiating the false idols of neoliberal self-care** <https://thebaffler.com/war-of-nerves/laurie-penny-self-care>
(explores the self-care rhetoric, as well as the criticisms thereof)
- **Laura Vandernoot and Connie Burke, 2009, Intro to Trauma Stewardship**
([Trauma Stewardship](#) is a phenomenal and supportive book for anyone who is a “trauma steward” – someone whose work involves tending to trauma)
- **Mounk, 2018, Americans Strongly Dislike PC Culture:** <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/10/large-majorities-dislike-political-correctness/572581/>
(Summarizes recent US-based research on the topic of political correctness, and describes “social justice elitism” and “callout culture”)
OPTIONAL complementary piece which defines calling in and calling out more explicitly: <https://www.dictionary.com/e/calling-in-vs-calling-out/>
- **Read about transitional justice here:** <https://www.ictj.org/about/transitional-justice> **OR** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transitional_justice
- **Read about restorative justice here:** <http://restorativejustice.org/restorative-justice/about-restorative-justice/tutorial-intro-to-restorative-justice/#sthash.Y6CuU3cH.dpbs>
- **Read this summary of Dr. King Jr’s philosophies and principles of nonviolent resistance (you can stop at “beloved community”)** <http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy>
- **Read about nonviolent communication here:** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolent_Communication
- **Read this infographic about romanticizing poverty:** <https://www.socialworkdegreecenter.com/romanticizing-poverty/>

Recommended, not required materials:

Coates, 2014, [The case for reparations](#)

Overview:

This week will focus on how to engage in healing social justice work, and be aware of/avoid the many common traps that well-intentioned woke people fall into to become harmful rather than healing activists (such as romanticizing social problems, performative allyship, toxic callout culture, social justice elitism). We will also discuss the politicized notion of ‘self-care,’ because somehow we must fortify ourselves so that we are OK in spite of being awake to how profoundly *not* OK the world is.

December 3 and 10: Student Presentations and farewell

***** THIRD JOURNAL-ENTRY ASSIGNMENT AND FINAL PROJECT SUBMISSION DUE
MIDNIGHT December 11th *****