



**Course title:** Policies and Services for Social Participation and Community Well Being

**Course #/term:** SW 647 004, Winter 2020

**Time and place:** Tuesdays, 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM, Room #1636 SSWB

**Credit hours:** 3

**Prerequisites:** SW 530

**Instructor:** Professor Justin Hodge

**Pronouns:** *He/Him/His*

**Contact info:** **E-mail:** hodjusti@umich.edu

You may expect a response within 48-72 hours

**Office:** 3743 SSWB

**Office hours:** By appointment

## 1. COURSE STATEMENT

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**Course description:** This course will survey the policies and services that promote a civil society and enhance human rights in the framework of American democracy. Emphasis will be placed on those policies and services which serve to enhance social participation, economic security, respect for diversity, voluntary action, and community and corporate responsibility. Students will learn to describe and analyze how complex and emerging social problems arise within society, and how social problems impact individuals, groups, organizations, and communities. Programs within various units of government, nonprofit and social service organizations, and corporations will be reviewed. Various partnerships and collaborations among funders and service providers will be examined.

**Course content:** SW 647 Students will learn that community well-being is enhanced when social problems are managed, human needs are met, and social opportunities and human rights are optimized. Students will learn to utilize social work values, methods, and skills to challenge individual, group, organizational, and community differences in power, privilege, and oppression; and to promote social justice. These interactions will be examined, with special attention given to those leading to policies and programs that enhance opportunities for social participation, economic security, respect for diversity, voluntary action, and community and corporate responsibility.

Selected public laws, programs, and structures that enhance citizen participation, rights, and responsibilities will be described and compared within diverse populations (e.g. the diversity dimensions including 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). Emphasis will be placed on those that address participation of diverse and socially excluded populations and on the social worker's responsibility for facilitating such social and political participation and engagement. Examples will include the use of mediating structures, such as citizen boards, advisory groups, commissions, and the involvement of citizens and other in promoting and guiding positive social change. In many of these structures, participation is intended to enhance citizen capacity to initiate and oversee action.

However, participatory structures are also intended to assure the responsiveness of programs of a promotional, service, or preventive nature. These programs are designed to: 1) diminish poverty and economic insecurity; 2) address personal crises and community emergencies (such as those brought about by violence against persons and property, natural and environmental disasters, or economic dislocation); 3) resettle and integrate refugees and other immigrant and migrant populations; and 4) respond to the needs of social identity groups seeking social justice (e.g., feminist, faith-based, ethnic, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender, and other discriminated against groups). Students will also gain and apply knowledge about social group memberships and identities, their histories and meanings, how they intersect with each other in people's lives and the larger society, and how they are affected by particular social contexts. In addition, the participatory opportunities provided via self-help, grass roots associations and informal networks, and congregationally- based service providers will be considered.

**Course objectives and competencies:** On completion of this course, students using a generalist social work practice framework will be able to:

1. Develop the skills in critical consciousness and reflective professional practice.
2. Access and use traditional and non-traditional sectors that engage, strengthen, and build well-being and social justice at all levels of social systems.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of social policies that social workers use to effectively interface with individuals, families, communities, and other social systems.
4. Recognize key aspects of the structures, legal standing, and roles of the nonprofit sector in providing human services, advocating for human rights, and promoting well-being.
5. Identify and apply commonly used indicators of social, economic, and other measures of community well-being.
6. Compare the levels and types of participation for members or representatives of groups experiencing discrimination in mediating structures that are intended to promote well-being.
7. Gain skills for engagement with relevant systems and communities needed to work together for desired goals in both traditional and nontraditional settings for social work.

8. Develop skills for interaction, collaboration, and communication between different types of social care systems, including government, voluntary and nonprofit organizations, and private-pay systems.
9. Identify the factors that lead to or detract from such participation (from the perspectives of socially excluded groups and the social work practitioners who bear some responsibility for promoting participation.)

**Course design:** In-class activities, readings, and course assignments will be coordinated so as to enhance course objectives. For example, simulations of real-work processes, films, and videos presented in the classroom will provide the contextual background for student observation and interview assignments in the community. Lectures by the instructor will be complemented by student presentations and by panels of guests representing consumers, providers, professionals, and volunteers involved in advocacy and community education as well as in service delivery

### **Curricular Themes**

*Relation to Social Justice:* Social Justice underlies the creation of mediating structures, programs, and policies expressly designed to enhance community well-being. Students will examine these issues, as well as Social Work's historic commitment to social justice and engagement in planned change.

*Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:* This course will be based on the twin assumptions that the programs and policies to be studied can be understood through social scientific methods and that scientific concepts can also be used in the design of effective programs and policies. Students will learn to apply advanced analytical techniques to assess the strengths, needs, and capacities of individuals, groups, organizations and communities. However, even this assumption needs analysis. Scientific perspectives can lead to very different understandings and policies. For example, much of sociology can be divided into two perspectives:

1. structuralist/functionalist perspectives advocate for eliminating the cultural and behavioral skill differences between groups and the legal, economic, and other barriers to full participation, whereas
2. conflict perspectives assume that societies tend towards conflict because power and resources are inequitably distributed, and that conflict is, in the long run, positive because it increases the likelihood of expanding access to social goods.

These perspectives infuse many of the readings and analyses presented in this course. Applying one or the other can lead to different interpretations of events and social processes and to very different social agendas and programs for social change. For this reason, even the social science knowledge base of this course will itself be subject to examination.

*Relationship to social work ethics and values:* This course will address ethical and value issues related to policies and services for social participation and community well-being. The NASW Code of Ethics and other professional and organizational codes (e.g. IFSW) will be used to inform practice in this area. Special emphasis will be placed on the social worker's responsibility to promote the general welfare of society by preventing and eliminating discrimination, ensuring equal access to resources, expanding choices and opportunities for all persons, encouraging respect for diversity, advocating for changes in social policies, and encouraging informed participation by the public. In addition, ethical issues related to working with various client systems will be reviewed, such as confidentiality, privacy, rights and prerogatives of clients, the client's best interest, proper and improper relationships with clients, interruption of services, and termination.

*Intensive focus on PODS:* This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

## **2. CLASS REQUIREMENTS**

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### **Text and class materials:**

I will place required readings in the "Modules" section on Canvas arranged by date. Students are expected to have completed all assigned readings prior to class.

Readings may be changed due to visits by guest lecturers, special circumstances, and student needs. I will aim to make any changes to readings two weeks in advance.

In addition to Canvas Readings, we will regularly discuss current events. I encourage you to stay up to date on local, state, and federal issues. I will also share articles that we will discuss in detail in class. Readings may be changed due to visits by guest lecturers, special circumstances, and student needs. I will aim to make any changes to readings two weeks in advance.

### **Class schedule:**

Refer to the "Modules" section on Canvas for the class schedule. Readings, assignments, and other activities are organized by class session in that section.

**Assignments:**

Assignment instructions and rubrics will be posted on Canvas. All assignments are due by 11:59 PM on the dates listed.

Assignment	Due date
Community Engagement Project	Plan: 2/9/20 Reflection: By 4/19/20
Legislative History Document	By 4/19/20
Final Learning Assessment	24 Hours Before Learning Assessment Discussion

Both class attendance and active purposeful participation in class discussion and activities are paramount for the successful completion of this course. This course covers a content domain that is extensive, and given the timeframe of the course each class moves quickly in discussing information.

**Grading:**

To keep your focus on learning and growing throughout the semester, rather than on a grade, your final grade will be determined through a collaborative process. You will receive thorough feedback on your assignments throughout the semester with recommendations on how to improve your work. At the end of the semester, you will complete a self-assessment of your performance and meet with me to discuss it and determine your final grade.

[Section 1.07.00: Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Education](#) from the MSW Student Guide will be used in making the final determination:

*Letter grades from A through E are given for class performance.*

- *Grades of A are given for exceptional individual performance and mastery of the material. The use of A+, A, and A– distinguishes degrees of superior mastery.*
- *B grades are given to students who demonstrate mastery of the material: B+ is used for students who perform just above the mastery level but not in an exceptional manner; B– is used for students just below the mastery level.*
- *C grades are given when mastery of the material is minimal. A C– is the lowest grade which carries credit.*
- *D grades indicate deficiency and carry no credit.*
- *E grades indicate failure and carry no credit. Due to the brief length of time a mini-course meets, partial attendance will likely result in a grade of E.*

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

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