1. **COURSE STATEMENT**

*This syllabus is based on those of sw697 instructors Janet Ray, Desmond Patton and Maureen Okasinski.*

**a. Course Description**

This course will prepare students to engage in integrated practice focused on utilizing community and social systems to support and empower individuals, families, and communities and envision and work towards social justice goals. This will include skills for entering, assessing, and working collaboratively with client systems and their social networks, including assessment of power differences and building on diversity within the community. This course will build on practice methods presented in the foundation courses and give special attention to partnership, strengths based, and empowering models of practice and those that further social justice goals. Special emphasis will be placed on conducting this work in a multicultural context with vulnerable and oppressed populations and communities and to identify and reduce the consequences of unrecognized privilege.

**b. Course Content**

This course will cover practice methods for working with multiple social systems to promote well-being through the involvement of community and social systems. The primary focus will be on ways to work in partnership with the primary and secondary mediating structures in communities, such as schools, neighborhood associations, self-help organizations, community centers, and faith based organizations. Emphasis will be placed on ways in which different levels of practice, including interpersonal, organizational, community, and policy practice, can be involved in this kind of work. The focus of this practice will be on systems ranging in size from individuals to communities and national or international organizations. Specific practice methods will include feminist, multicultural, structural, and community
social work models of practice. These models will include techniques for group work of various kinds, crisis intervention, advocacy, and service coordination; consultation with community members, groups, and organizations; conducting community outreach and education; convening and working with community committees, coalitions, and planning boards; organizing and facilitating mutual aid and self-help groups; and collaborating with communities to develop local programs and services. Under girding all of these methods will be a focus on methods for encouraging community participation and empowerment and in reducing barriers to these activities for members of different subgroups and who are disempowered and marginalized by mechanisms of oppression. Topical issues will include: enhancing individual, family, and community safety and security; the mediation of community conflicts; the social integration of newcomers and returnees to communities; promoting positive intergroup relations; and the promotion and protection of human rights and environmental justice. Students will engage in activities that allow them to examine and expand their understanding of their own group memberships and identities and how they are relevant in different practice situations.

c. Course Objectives

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

1. Demonstrate an understanding of how community and social systems can play a role in improving the well-being of individuals, families, organizations, and communities and in promoting greater social justice. (Practice Behaviors 10.a.IP, 10.a.CO, 10.a.SPE, 10.a.MHS, 10.b.IP, 10.b.CO, 10.b.SPE, 10.b.MHS)
   a. To demonstrate several methods that engage, strengthen and build well-being and social justice, particularly at the community level. (Practice Behaviors 10.c.IP, 10.c.CO, 10.c.SPE, 10.c.MHS)
   b. To promote capacity building and preventive approaches via strengthening the student's knowledge, skills and resources so that they may assist individuals, groups, and communities to develop more socially just practice. (Practice Behaviors 10.a.IP, 10.a.CO, 10.a.SPE, 10.a.MHS)
   c. To apply analytical techniques to assess the strengths, needs and capacities of individuals, groups, organizations, and communities. (Practice Behaviors 10.b.IP, 10.b.CO, 10.b.SPE, 10.b.MHS)

2. Identify the critical primary and secondary structures in communities that can be mobilized for engaging in practice at all levels. (Practice Behaviors 10.b.IP, 10.b.CO, 10.b.SPE, 10.b.MHS)
   a. To demonstrate knowledge about how the structures and development of individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and social systems affect one another. (Practice Behaviors 10.a.IP, 10.a.CO, 10.a.SPE, 10.a.MHS, 10.b.IP, 10.b.CO, 10.b.SPE, 10.b.MHS)
   b. Demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to apply theories of social change, from the individual through societal levels. (Practice Behaviors 10.a.IP, 10.a.CO, 10.a.SPE, 10.a.MHS)

3. Describe how the gender, racial, religious, economic, or other diverse characteristics of a community affect the needs and assets to be mobilized in practice. (Practice Behaviors 10.b.IP, 10.b.CO, 10.b.SPE, 10.b.MHS)
   a. To be able to locate oneself as a practitioner incorporating multiple social positions, statuses, and cultures, and to understand the implications of these for worldview, values, and biases. (Practice Behaviors 10.a.IP, 10.a.CO, 10.a.SPE, 10.a.MHS)
4. Demonstrate skills for engaging community systems and encouraging the participation of community members with attention to their diversity and for reducing barriers to that participation. (Practice Behaviors 10.a.IP, 10.a.CO, 10.a.SPE, 10.a.MHS, 10.d.IP, 10.d.CO, 10.d.SPE, 10.d.MHS)
   a. To demonstrate skills in negotiating differences and conflicts at system interfaces. (Practice Behaviors 10.c.IP, 10.c.CO, 10.c.SPE, 10.c.MHS)
   b. To work across social system boundaries and apply multiple strategies for building linkages across boundaries. (Practice Behaviors 10.a.IP, 10.a.CO, 10.a.SPE, 10.a.MHS)
5. Identify how social work ethics and values can guide practice with community and social systems. (Practice Behaviors 2.IP, 2.CO, 2.SPE, 2.MHS, 10.b.IP, 10.b.CO, 10.b.SPE, 10.b.MHS)

d. Course Design

   In-class activities will include discussions, self-assessment activities, case presentations, and practice simulations. Videos and guest speakers will be utilized to provide examples of current and past practice. Students may also participate in field visits to community-based organizations. Course assignments will include readings, papers, group projects, case studies, and action projects that involve these methods.

e. Course Curricular themes

   Theme Relation to Multiculturalism & Diversity
   will be addressed throughout this course through a focus on the ways in which the characteristics of individuals, families, and communities drive the approach to practice. This will include attention to the following diversity dimensions: "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, as well community of residence."

   Theme Relation to Social Justice
   will be central to this course on multiple levels. Methods for increasing community participation and empowerment will be reviewed, and special attention will be given to developing methods that are democratic, participatory, and focused on equity and equality.

   Theme Relation to Promotion, Prevention, Treatment & Rehabilitation
   will be covered by considering how community and social systems can be mobilized toward promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation efforts. For example, community and social system involvement can be an integral element of the promotion of mental health, the prevention of mental illness, the treatment of mental distress, and the rehabilitation of the mentally disabled. This course will shed light on how these methods can be involved at these different types of practice focus.

   Theme Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research
   will form the basis of this course and will guide practice in working with community and social systems. For example, community and social systems practice is supported by research that suggests that well-being is enhanced by the involvement of social supports and social networks. In addition, social science methods will be introduced as a means for developing and evaluating specific practice methods.
f. **Relationship to SW Ethics and Values**

This course will address how social work ethics and values can guide practice with community and social systems. The NASW Code of Ethics 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. Also, please see objective 5 and the relationship to themes 1 and 2 above.

g. **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.

**CLASS REQUIREMENTS**

- **Recommended text**: Gamble, Dorothy & Weil, Marie (2009). Community Practice Skills: Local to Global. [available to read online for free through the UM library]

Students should complete text, audio and digital media consumption prior to the class for which they are assigned. Classroom discussion and activities are based on this expectation. The Canvas home page will contain the up-to-date requirements. Periodic handouts and additional required readings will be assigned during the term. All will either be distributed in class and/or posted on Canvas. Updates are posted at least one week ahead of time in Pages. Supplemental readings are also posted for student use. Students are encouraged to share new and useful material—I can upload these into our Canvas site.

**Tentative Schedule**

*Schedule and reading may change according to class interests and needs. Changes will be shared in announcements and updated in relevant Canvas section.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Out of Class Learning (readings, podcasts, etc)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Week 1 1/13 | Orientation and overview Just Practice | • Finn and Jacobson, Just Practice Framework  
• Reference chapters 1 & 2 Gamble and Weil |
| Week 2 1/20 | No class for MLK day | • Candid Conversations Across the Ages, Urban Consulate, Facebook video stream & reflection [https://www.facebook.com/UrbanConsulate/videos/592487294901132/](https://www.facebook.com/UrbanConsulate/videos/592487294901132/) |
| Week 3 1/27 | Delgado framework application | • Example: Diaspora in Dialogue |
| Week 4 2/3 | Partnership and Power | • Arnstein, Citizen Participation  
• Example: Participatory Mapping with Older Persons |
| Week 5 2/10 | Leadership & community healing | • Example: Diaspora in Dialogue |
| Week 6 2/17 | Trust & Leadership | • Example: Outreach & HIV prevention work in S. Africa  
• |
| Week 7 2/24 | Leadership and Trauma | • Example: Trauma Informed Model for Youth Empowerment |
| 3/2 | | • Spring break |
| Week 8 3/9 | Influencing policy and modifying approach | • Example: Modifying Photovoice in Indigenous Community |
| Week 9 3/16 | Organizing & arts-based engagement | • Example: Environmental Justice and Theater of the Oppressed |
| Week 10 3/23 | Evaluation | • Example: Evaluation of Police Training in LGBTQ issues  
• Example: Violence Prevention-Asian and Immigrant Youth |
| Week 11 3/30 | Challenges | • Example: Ambivalence Over Participatory Planning |
| Week 12 4/6 | Project Work Week | • Community Engagement Project Peer Review |
2.2 Assignments

The assignment description in the syllabus is a general overview. Details, formats and rubrics are found in Canvas. Following the rubrics leads to good scores on assignments, as does beginning your assignments early. I expect your work to demonstrate concise yet thoughtful, evidence-based, integrative and deep work. The course uses individual and group project, as consistent with social work practice. In the structure and grading of these, I seek to balance accountability and professional performance expectations. Sometimes, based on your interests, skill level and time availability, a group project is an undue burden for you. If you think your learning would be best served by working alone on a designated group project, schedule a meeting with me and I will consider this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date, submission type</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and Participation</td>
<td>Weekly, observed</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and Discussion Group</td>
<td>1/27-3/30, Canvas</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Practice Interview</td>
<td>Jan-February, Canvas</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly practice applications</td>
<td>1/13-3/30, in-class</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Practice Project</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Project Management Plan</td>
<td>1) 3/16, Canvas</td>
<td>1) 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Draft CPP</td>
<td>2) 4/6, bring to class</td>
<td>2) 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Final CPP</td>
<td>3) 4/20, Canvas</td>
<td>3) 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) CPP class presentation</td>
<td>4) 4/20, in class</td>
<td>4) 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Team assessment of your efforts on CPP</td>
<td>5) 4/24, Canvas</td>
<td>5) 5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment Descriptions (see Canvas for details and grading rubrics)
1. **Preparation, Participation & Attendance, 10%**

   Student engagement in the course through preparation and participation and leadership contribute to a meaningful learning community and are essential to learning. Class activities and discussion are founded in students completing assigned materials prior to each class. Students are expected to attend every class session, come on time and remain for the entire class period. The SSW Policy on Class Attendance is found in the MSW Student Guide. Students who miss more than two sessions will find their overall grade dropped by ½ grade for each additional session missed. If you are unable to attend a session, please communicate with me in advance if possible, contact a peer to ask about what you missed and review the readings, handouts and materials from that session. Students who are using electronic devices not related to class activities will see the impact in this grade.

2. **Reading and Discussion Group, 20%**

   Each week students read assigned chapters or journal article on community practice that highlights different stages of and complexities within community practice. These were selected to represent complexity in community practice and diversity in issues, communities and practices. In assigned small groups over 10 weeks, you will discuss the articles. Each person in the group is assigned a role: discussion leader, passage keeper, creative connector, devil’s advocate, or reporter, and completes the worksheet for that role. Roles rotate each week. Worksheets are uploaded to the discussion group shared page each week prior to class. The reporter completes this after class.

   Team Assessment of your effort (5% of the 20%): Team members will rate your contribution to the discussion group using a prescribed form.

3. **Weekly Practice Applications, 10%**

   In class students will complete worksheets and practice activities individually and in small group applying the approaches and key considerations to communities of interest to them.

4. **Candid Conversations Across the Ages, 5%**

   To create a foundation for our understanding of community practice in Detroit, listen to the Urban Consulate’s recording of their December convening, Candid Conversations Across the Ages and write a two-page reflection on this. Details in Canvas assignment.

5. **Community Practice Group Project (group project) 55%**

   In groups of three to four, students will develop a community practice project that contributes to meeting a need for community well-being or social justice that engages one or more community or social system. The project should maximize level of engagement, participation, ownership and power for the affected community and targeted system(s). The team will complete research about previous, similar community practice responses and develop their own project. The project may include but is not limited to: outreach and communications for events or organizations, event planning/facilitation, development of training materials/manuals or evaluation tools, research designed to provide feasible options for furthering organizational objectives. See the assignment details and rubrics in Canvas.
For this project we will use projects at organizations we visit in February. Beginning in March, time is allocated in class to work on this project.

Project Components:
1. **Workplan (10%)**: Using a project management tool such as a GANNT chart, create your team’s plan for carrying out the assignment, planned action steps, timelines, estimated hours, who is responsible for what. The plan will include the communities and the social justice or well-being issue to be addressed and information about the organization that will lead the effort.

2. **Draft Plan & Feedback Solicitation (10%)**: The team will submit a draft of their community practice project that includes each aspect of their project such as the stakeholders to be engaged, the goals and objectives of the project and how it fits within a larger program/project of the organizations, tactics, resources needed and ways that power and inclusion are addressed within their project. The draft will be shared with the organization and peers in class to gather feedback for additional development of the final project.

3. **Community Practice Project (25%)**: Using peer and organizational feedback, revise the draft plan and complete a final professional version. The format options include: infographic, presentation, podcast or document—whichever best meets the organization’s needs. You will share your project to the class.

4. **Team Assessment of your effort (5%)**: Team members will rate your contribution to the project using a prescribed form at the end of the semester. [Individual grade]

**Grading**

This is a 100-point system. The final letter grade is assigned according to the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>99%-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>&lt;69% (no credit)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94%-98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91%-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81-83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignment Practices**

a. **Drafts**: students may submit a draft of their assignment for review in advance of its due date. I will provide ungraded feedback based on the rubric. The latest you may submit a draft to me is one week before its due date—this provides me with the time necessary to provide quality feedback and you with time to respond to it.

b. **Peer review**: Bring a paper copy of the assignment to class on the day of peer review. Done in a supportive environment, peer review is an intentional learning strategy that aids in critical thinking, further development of thoughts and ideas and feedback skills.

c. **Due dates**: All assignments are due by the start of class on the date listed in Canvas. However, I will grant a grace period of one week in which you can submit your assignment if you request this prior to the day it is due. I will not accept a draft for review during the grace time. While I will accept the assignment, the points awarded will be reduced by the equivalent of ½ letter grade. Exceptions to
this will need permission of the instructor one week prior to the due date and will only be made in extenuating circumstances.

d. **Resubmission:** Sometimes despite your best effort, the peer review, and/or your submission of a draft to me for review, your assignment misses the mark. You may choose to resubmit one assignment (note: you must have submitted an assignment in the first place). If you would like to resubmit, let me know prior to the last scheduled date of class. To resubmit, you must meet with me or have received significant written feedback about the needed improvements to the assignment. A resubmitted assignment will be accepted up until one week past the last class date.

e. **Submission format:** Documents will be professional in style, 11/12-point font, single spaced and citations will follow APA. Principles of good design are expected in assignments and accounted for in the rubrics. Additionally, well-written, error free narrative using professional language and tone are expected.

### 3. ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

a. **Teaching philosophy:** This classroom is a learning community, an integration of knowledge, skills and the School of Social designated expectations. Project-based learning and dialogic development are the centerpiece of my approach and the course is a collaboration between instructor and students. My selection of structures, processes, assignments and readings are meant to provide the space for you to meet your learning goals. What you gain from the course is a direct result of your own effort as well as that of your peers. We use active and cooperative learning each week. I believe the process of planning, doing and reflection and then trying again are essential to learning. It’s important for all of us to be able to make mistakes, ask questions and receive feedback throughout the semester.

b. **Learning Environment:** Everyone should feel safe and respected throughout the semester. Each of us has a responsibility to listen, ask questions and reflect so we can provide this. Communication can be complicated and easily misunderstood. Please take time to understand what others are saying in spirit and word. Student represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:
   - share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
   - be open to the views of others
   - honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
   - appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
   - value each other’s opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
   - keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
   - use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the department
   - experiment with new skills
   - explore implications of one's own background in macro practice
   - consult with each other on projects and assignments
   - generate plans and strategies for future learning and development.

c. **Electronic Devices:** Mute all devices during class. If you must be on call for personal or work reasons, set to vibrate. Personal communications are fine during breaks and are not acceptable during class
time. Interruptions, no matter how brief, affect your ability to focus. Computer use during class time that supports the mission of the course (e.g. taking notes) is encouraged. There will be times that I ask for screens down during some parts of the class. Your final grade will be affected by your use of electronics during class time for activities not relevant to the course as commensurate with my observed frequency of these activities.

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

LEO Lecturers’ Employee Organization, Local 6244, AFL-CIO