



<b>Course title:</b>	Social Work and Social Justice: Grand Challenges Edition	
<b>Course #/term:</b>	SW504, Section 5,* Fall 2020	
<b>Time and place:</b>	Online – Asynchronous/Synchronous (Required Live Zoom Class Discussion: Tuesdays, 10-11:30am)	
<b>Credit hours:</b>	3	
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	None	
<b>Instructor:</b>	Grace Helms Kotre, MSW	
<b>Pronouns:</b>	She/Her/Hers	
<b>Contact info:</b>	<b>Email:</b> gpaige@umich.edu	<b>Phone:</b> 734-255-0090
	You may expect a response within 24 hours	
<b>Office hours:</b>	Online – Mondays and by appointment	

\*Each of the SW 504 sections is focusing on a theme this semester – one of the [Social Work Grand Challenges](#). The theme for this section is “Reversing Extreme Inequality.” Feel free to read more about this theme [here](#).

## 1. Course Statement

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### a. 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.

## b. Course objectives and competencies

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 for 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 life long 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)

## c. 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.

d. Course Relationship to P.O.D.S.

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.

## 2. Class Requirements

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a. Text and class materials

We will not be using one primary text for this course. Instead, various resources will be provided on Canvas. Resources will include scholarly and popular articles, book chapters, podcasts, videos, interviews, etc. In order to fully engage in this course, it is expected that students read/watch/listen to all required resources prior to the class period for which they are assigned. Live Zoom class discussions will integrate content from all required resources. Please come prepared to fully engage in these discussions.

b. Class schedule

Please keep this weekly schedule for our course in mind:

<b>WED</b> (Day 1)	<b>THURS</b> (Day 2)	<b>FRI</b> (Day 3)	<b>SAT/SUN</b> (Days 4-5)	<b>MON</b> (Day 6)	<b>TUES</b> (Day 7)
12pm Weekly content posted in Canvas		9-10am Office Hours (or by appt.)		12pm Due: Journal post in Canvas	10-11:30am Live Zoom Class Disc.

Below is the course schedule by topic, subject to change. It is the students' responsibility to keep up with changes posted or announced. Weekly resources will be accessible in Canvas two weeks in advance of the class discussion date.

Date	“Reversing Extreme Inequality” Topic	Due
<b>Week 1:</b> 9/2 – 9/8	Course Overview, Contemplative Practices for Critical Social Justice Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources in Canvas</li> <li>• Journal #1</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2:</b> 9/9 – 9/15	Race, Class, Gender... Intersectionality & Positionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources in Canvas</li> <li>• Journal #2</li> <li>• <b><i>DUE 9/15: QCCQ Discussion Sign-up</i></b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 3:</b> 9/16 – 9/22	Race, Health, & Socioeconomic Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources in Canvas</li> <li>• Journal #3</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4:</b> 9/23 – 9/29	Intersectionality of Education & Socioeconomic Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources in Canvas</li> <li>• Journal #4</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5:</b> 9/30 – 10/6	Barriers for Immigrant and Undocumented Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources in Canvas</li> <li>• Journal #5</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6:</b> 10/7 – 10/13	Access to Public Transportation and Socioeconomic Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources in Canvas</li> <li>• Journal #6</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7:</b> 10/14 – 10/20	Environmental Health Impacts and Socioeconomic Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources in Canvas</li> <li>• Journal #7</li> <li>• Mid-Term Survey</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8:</b> 10/21 – 10/27	Policing, Mass Incarceration, & Economic Inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources in Canvas</li> <li>• Journal #8</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9:</b> 10/28 – 11/3 11/3 NO CLASS*	Implications of Socioeconomic Status for Voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources in Canvas</li> <li>• Journal #9</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10:</b> 11/4 – 11/10	Housing Disparities & Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources in Canvas</li> <li>• Journal #10</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11:</b> 11/11 – 11/17	COVID-19 Impact on Indigenous Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources in Canvas</li> <li>• Journal #11</li> </ul>

<b>Week 12-13:</b> <b>11/18 – 12/1</b> <b>INCLUDES</b> <b>BREAK**</b>	COVID-19 Impact on Essential Workers & Unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources in Canvas</li> <li>Journal #12</li> </ul>
<b>Week 14:</b> <b>12/2 – 12/8</b> <b>(Classes end on 12/8)</b>	Future Implications for Reversing Extreme Inequality & Social Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources in Canvas</li> <li>Journal #13</li> <li><b><i>DUE 12/9: Final Project</i></b></li> </ul>

**\*Live Zoom Class Discussion will not be held on Nov. 3, 2020 to facilitate your active participation in the election.** In a democracy, a government is chosen by voting to elect representatives to make policy and enforce laws while representing the citizens. The University of Michigan encourages eligible students to exercise their right to vote, and students of all citizenship backgrounds to actively engage in issues of public concern. When more people participate, a broader array of perspectives is represented in policies and laws that impact our country, society, and the world. Find more information and register to vote at [govote.umich.edu](http://govote.umich.edu).

\*\*Due to the November Break (11/21-11/29), content for Weeks 12-13 will be posted on 11/18, but your weekly Journal post won't be due until 11/30, and the next live Zoom class discussion will be held on 12/1.)

### c. Assignments

Assignments must be submitted in Canvas by the date and time specified below. A late penalty of 10% will be applied immediately after the assignment due date/time. Please be in touch with the instructor directly if you are having any problems completing or submitting the assignment *before* it is due.

	<b>Assignment/Course Component</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>% of grade</b>
<b>1</b>	Participation in Live Zoom Class Discussions	Weekly	144	48%
<b>2</b>	Weekly Journal	Weekly	52	17%
<b>3</b>	Lead a QCCQ-Based Discussion	Various	35	12%
<b>4</b>	Final Project (2 options)	12/9/20	69	23%
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>300</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Assignment Descriptions:

**1. Participation in Live Zoom Class Discussions:** See “Attendance and class participation” below.

**2. Weekly Journal:** Critical self-reflection is central to the objectives of this course. You will be asked to regularly explore your inner experience related to weekly resources in a brief (one-page) journal entry. There will be 13 required journal posts each worth 4 points. See Canvas for more information.

**3. Lead a QCCQ-Based Discussion:** In small groups, you will have the opportunity to practice inquiry-based learning and critical reflection skills by leading one in-class discussion utilizing the QCCQ (Quotation, Concept, Comparison, Questions) method. See Canvas for more information.

### **4. Final Project Options (choose one) –**

- **Option A. Life Trajectory Profile** (69 points): Conduct an in-depth interview with a family member, friend, or colleague to document their lived experience related to socioeconomic privilege and oppression. Write a creative profile article (think e-magazine feature) to thoughtfully share their story. See Canvas for more information.
- **Option B. Lightening Talk** (69 points): Prepare and record yourself giving a “lightening talk” (15-18 mins, TEDx style) on a course topic that is of particular interest to you. Tell the story of your topic in a compelling, personal way. See Canvas for more information.

#### d. Attendance and class participation

**Participation:** Students are expected to attend class (see [Policy on Class Attendance](#)). You will notice in the assignments chart above that participation is weighted heavily in this course. Each of our 12 live Zoom class discussions is worth 12 participation points. Full points will be awarded for being present for the entire class period, active participation in small and large group discussions, and engagement in all activities. Completing the assigned weekly resources (including articles, podcasts, videos, activities, etc.) is required for successful participation in class discussions. Plan to sign into Zoom a few minutes before the start of class so that we can begin on time. Please have your **video on** to facilitate connection in our classroom community (if this poses a problem for you, please let the instructor know). If you need to leave class early or arrive late, alert the instructor ahead of time.

**Recording of Live Sessions:** Live Zoom Class Discussions **will not be recorded.** (See Make-Ups below for what to do about missing a class.) Students **may not record** or distribute any class activity without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

**Make-Ups:** If you are not able to participate in our live Zoom class discussions for any reason, please be in touch with the instructor ahead of the class period you will miss (unless it is an emergency in which case you should contact the instructor ASAP). If the absence is excused, you'll be invited to submit a supplementary assignment to make up participation points for the week. An unexcused absence results in a grade of 0/12 participation points for that week. (Communication is key! I am committed to supporting each student's success in this class. Let's work together to make sure everything goes smoothly.)

**Feedback:** As your active participation is required for a successful learning experience in this course, it is critical that you share any barriers to your engagement. You are a co-creator of this course – your ideas and feedback will help to shape the course as it is unfolding. Please share feedback with the instructor directly (via email, in Canvas messages, during live class or in office hours) at any point in the semester. Additionally, you will be invited to submit a mid-term survey to share your feedback more formally and anonymously.

e. Grading

A rubric for each assignment is available in Canvas. I do my best to update your grades in Canvas so you can regularly track your own success. Canvas has limitations and may not always reflect your current course grade. You should always use the grading scale provided in this syllabus to help you estimate your final course grade.

**Grading Distributions:**

97-100%	A+	84-86%	B	70-73%	C-
94-96%	A	80-83%	B-	67-69%	D+
90-93%	A-	77-79%	C+	64-66%	D
87-89%	B+	74-76%	C	60-63%	D-

**Late Assignments:** All assignments must be turned in on time. Late submissions to Canvas will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day – and that penalty is incurred immediately following the specific day/time the assignment was due. Alternate due dates without loss of points may be considered when you talk to me about extenuating circumstances in advance or, in the event of serious illness, injury, or life event, as soon as possible.

In addition, please review the following MSW Student Guide policies:

- [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#)
- [Policy for Grading in Special Circumstances](#)
- [Student Grievance Procedures](#)

f. COVID-19 Statement

*FYI – the following statement is required in every syllabus, but it does not pertain to this course directly because we are meeting entirely online.*

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person/hybrid may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. I also encourage you to review the [Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the [COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

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

- *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*