



Course title:	Engaging Social Justice, Diversity, and Oppression in Social Work
Course #/term:	SW 505, Section 004; Fall, 2021
Time and place:	Monday, 9 AM - 11 AM; 1636 SSWB
Credit hours:	3
Prerequisites:	None
Instructor:	Vitalis Im, LLMSW
Pronouns:	he/him
Contact info:	Email: vitalis@umich.edu You may expect a response within 48 hours.
Office:	School of Social Work, B660
Office hours:	Mondays, 12 PM – 1 PM; by appointment on Zoom (See Canvas for link to a scheduling app and the Zoom link for office hours)

1. Course Statement

a. Course Description

This required essentials course is designed to increase students’ awareness, knowledge, and critical skills related to diversity, human rights, social and economic justice. The course focuses heavily on engaging diversity and differences in social work practice and advancing human rights and social and economic justice, through understanding power and oppression across micro, meso, and macro levels. 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 self reflexivity and developing skills in critical contextual thinking and analyses, as well as learning to use knowledge and theory to recognize critique, and engage underlying assumptions, and inform working for change. Multiple kinds of understanding 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

- Recognize the extent to which structures, policies, and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, create or enhance privilege and power (Essential 14, 30, 33, 44; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 5, 6).

- Explain the cumulative effect of structural discrimination on people with differing and multiple social identities and locations (Essentials 11, 14, 29, 33, 38, 45; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 6).
- Distinguish between health differences and health disparities, and provide relevant examples of each (Essential 5, 11, 15, 30; EPAS 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8).
- Discuss the policy reform sought by modern social justice movements in response to police brutality (Essential 6, 13, 14, 30, 32, 44; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7).
- Recognize how policy decisions at the local, state, and national level can exclude and endanger the environmental health of citizens when their voices are not heard or heeded (Essential 5, 13, 22, 29, 30; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9).
- Utilize strategies and resources to advocate for social, economic, and environmental justice and change, while protecting human rights (Essential 1, 11, 14, 29, 33, 43; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 6, 7).
- Define and apply your own positionalities and the importance of their intersections (Essential 38, 42, 45; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 6)
- Evaluate historical context and its current applications within the profession and practice as an ally (Essential 6, 11, 15, 29, 39, 44, 45; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8).

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 and impacts of their beliefs and perspectives. This course will work to create a climate that supports critical analyses, mutual learning, engaging within and across differences, examining sources of power and knowledge, and understanding more about identities. It involves lectures, video, discussion 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. 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. Specifically, this course centers entirely on engaging with, exploring, and better understanding PODS as related to social work practice on all levels. PODS is infused through this course and its assignments, which require self reflection, group work with practice of skills learned, and

application of key concepts to understand social justice issues and social work responses to the myriad of needs connected to PODS, both with clients/communities, and social workers themselves.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and Class Materials

There are no required texts or materials for this course. The weekly reading materials will be provided to you through Canvas.

Please note that the weekly reading assignments are subject to change. I will always attempt to provide at least a week's notice if these changes occur.

b. Class Schedule

Date/Time	Topic & Agenda	Required Readings & Assignments
Week 1 August 30, 2021	Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice (PODS) in Social Work 1. Introductions 2. Course Expectations 3. Discussion Guidelines 4. Group Discussion 5. Review of Syllabus/ Lecture 6. Reading Discussion	1. Miner — Body Ritual Among the Nacirema (pp. 503-507)
Week 2 September 6	Labor Day — No Class	<i>There are no required readings or Canvas posts this week.</i>
Week 3 September 13	"Uglyism" and the Politics of Belonging <i>Film: Hannah Gadsby: Nanette (69 minutes)</i>	1. Przybylo — Introduction: On the Politics of Ugliness (pp. 1-21) 2. The Body is Not an

		<p>Apology (Prologue, Chapter 1; pp. 3-21)</p> <p>3. Barnes (The Guardian) — I Am Ugly, and Proud of It (p. 1)</p>
<p>Week 4 September 20</p>	<p>The Politics of Drag and Gender — How Bodies Come to Matter</p> <p><i>Film: Paris is Burning</i> (78 minutes)</p>	<p>1. Butler — Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion (pp. 121-140)</p> <p>2. The Body is Not an Apology (Chapter 4)</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i> <i>Cheryl Chase — Hermaphrodites with Attitude</i> (pp. 145-156)</p>
<p>Week 5 September 27</p>	<p>The Politics of Policing and Thinking Beyond Punishment</p> <p><i>Film: Contrapoints on Justice</i> (40 minutes)</p>	<p>1. Siegel — Violence Work: Policing and Power (pp. 1-15)</p> <p>2. Davis & Rodriguez — The Challenge of Prison Abolition — A Conversation.pdf</p> <p>3. The Intercept — Portland’s Bizarre Experiment With Not Policing Proud Boys Rampage Ends in Gunfire (p. 1)</p> <p>4. NY Times — Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police</p>
<p>Week 6 October 4</p>	<p>Theatre, Social Change, and Social Work Practice</p>	<p><i>There are no required readings or Canvas posts this week.</i></p>

	<p><i>Performance: Dr. Rogério Pinto's "Realm of the Dead" Installation in the SSW</i></p> <p><i>We will meet in the Lower Level/Atrium of the School of Social Work Building at 9 AM.</i></p>	<p><i>Suggested:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Art in Social Work: Do We Really Need It? (pp. 1-6)</i> <i>2. Gant et al. — Social Work Through Collaborative Autoethnography</i>
<p>Week 7 October 11</p>	<p>The Arts, Social Change, and Social Work Practice</p> <p><i>In-Class Activities</i></p>	<p><i>There are no required readings or Canvas posts this week.</i></p> <p>Please bring a piece of music that is meaningful to you and that you would like to share with the class.</p> <p><i>Suggested:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Aaron Fox — Real Country: Music and Language in Working-Class Culture (Introduction)</i>
<p>Week 8 October 18</p>	<p>Fall Break — No Class</p>	<p><i>There are no required readings or Canvas posts this week.</i></p>
<p>Week 9 October 25</p>	<p>The Afterlife of Mass Incarceration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Miller — Halfway Home: Race, Punishment, and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration (Selected chapters)</i>
<p>Week 10 November 1</p>	<p>Ugly Masculinities</p> <p><i>Contrapoints: Incels</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Nguyen Tan Hoang — A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation (pp. 1-28)</i>

	<i>Guest Lecturer: Christopher Mulvey, PhD Candidate in Sociocultural Anthropology</i>	<p>2. Fung — Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn (pp. 85-96)</p> <p>3. The Body is Not an Apology (Chapter 2)</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i></p> <p>1. Jackson — <i>Black Male: Advertising and the Cultural Politics of Masculinity</i> (pp. 49-57)</p> <p>2. <i>Donald Trump and Militant Evangelical Masculinity</i> (p. 1)</p>
Week 11 November 8	Anti-Black Racism and Alternative Possibilities to the Freedom Question	<p>1. Wilderson III — Afropessimism (Introduction [pp. 3-17] & Epilogue [pp. 309-339])</p> <p><i>Suggested:</i> Sharpe — Beyond the Wake (Chapter 4)</p>
Week 12 November 15	Anti-Asian Racism and the COVID-19 Pandemic	<p>1. USA Today — Asian Americans in San Francisco are dying at alarming rates from COVID-19: Racism is to blame"</p> <p>2. NPR — 'Model Minority' Myth Again Used As A Racial Wedge Between Asians And Blacks</p> <p>3. Harvard Business Review — To Dismantle Anti-Asian</p>

		Racism, We Must Understand Its Roots
Week 13 November 22	Spiritualism and the Biomedical in Social Work Practice <i>Guest Lecturer: Matthew Aaron Hiller, PhD Candidate in Social Work & Anthropology</i>	1. Fadiman — The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down (Selected chapters) 2. Dein & Illaiee — Jinn and Mental Health: Looking at Jinn Possession in Modern Psychiatric Practice (pp. 1-4)
Week 14 November 29	Presentations of Final Projects — Part I	<i>There are no required readings or Canvas posts this week.</i>
Week 15 December 6	Presentations of Final Projects — Part II	<i>There are no required readings or Canvas posts this week.</i>

c. Assignments

This class will have weekly Canvas discussion posts comprised of a “synthesis” and the submission of two discussion questions for the following week’s seminar. **Your weekly Canvas questions and synthesis submissions are due on Saturdays by 11:59 PM.** This is to ensure that the discussion facilitators for the week have ample time to prepare for class that following Monday.

Facilitators will be responsible for guiding class discussions on a week’s set of readings; facilitators are not expected to lecture or teach. Rather, every student will be assigned a week where they lead that day’s discussion based on the discussion questions submitted by the class via Canvas.

There is a final project for this course. It is a “choose your own adventure” project where students may choose from a pre-selected list of project ideas; alternatively, the student may choose to pursue a project of their own design. Students who choose to exercise this latter option will design a rubric for their projects; this rubric will be submitted to the instructor for discussion and review.

d. Attendance and Class Participation

In this class, attendance and class participation will make up a significant portion of your grade. **Three absences in this class will result in a failing grade.** Exceptions to this rule will be made for exceptional circumstances.

Please communicate with me in advance if you know that you will be missing a session. I will make accommodations wherever possible. I am only able to do this, however, if there is an established line of communication. I am always happy to answer any questions or concerns that you might have about the class so please feel free to reach out at any time!

e. Grading

Attendance — 25%

Canvas Questions and Syntheses — 25%

In-Class Participation (Includes Facilitation) — 25%

Final Projects — 25%

Links and Student Resources Related to Grading:

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

f. Class Recording and Course Materials

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.

g. COVID-19 Statement

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.

h. Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor's note) for medical excuses is *not* required.

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*