



Course title:	Engaging Social Justice, Diversity, and Oppression in Social Work	
Course #/term:	SW 505, Section 005 [Fall 2021]	
Time and place:	Monday, 9 -12PM SSWB B780	
Credit hours:	3	
Prerequisites:	N/A	
Instructor:	Brittani Parham, MSW	
Pronouns:	She, her, hers	
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	You may expect a response within 9 – 7 pm M-F	
Office:	SSWB 2760	
Office hours:	Mondays 12-2 PM and by appointment	

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

- a. 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)
- b. 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).
- c. 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).
- d. 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).
- e. 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).
- f. 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).
- g. Define and apply your own positionalities and the importance of their intersections (Essential 38, 42, 45; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 6)
- h. 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 is no required text for this course. Any required readings (articles, book chapters, podcasts, etc.) will be posted to CANVAS. Readings are subject to change weekly based on current events. To fully engage in the course topic and become a competent and skilled social work practitioner, it is expected that students will complete all required readings. **Readings will be assigned at the end of every class.** Each week there will be a discussion post to go along with the readings worth 5 pts.

b. Class schedule

Week	Topic	Notes
Week 1 (Aug 30- 9/3)	Critical Race Theory/ Anti Racism Foundation	TBA – See Canvas
Week 2 (9/6-9/10)	LABOR DAY Access to Public Transportation and Socioeconomic Status	
Week 3 (9/13-9/17)	Environmental Health Impacts and Socioeconomic Status Housing Disparities & Discrimination	TBA – See Canvas
Week 4 (9/20-9/24)	Intersectionality of Education & Socioeconomic Status	TBA – See Canvas
Week 5 (9/27-10/1)	Race, Health & Socioeconomic Status	TBA – See Canvas
Week 6 (10/4-10/8)	Intersectionality of Mass Incarceration & Economic Inequality	TBA – See Canvas
Week 7 (10/11-	Lightning Talk Presentations	TBA – See Canvas

10/15)		
Week 8 (10/18-10/22)	FALL BREAK Barriers for Immigrant and Undocumented Populations	
Week 9 (10/25-10/29)	Impacts of COVID-19 on Indigenous Populations	TBA – See Canvas
Week 10 (11/1-11/5)	Racial Capitalism	TBA – See Canvas
Week 11 (11/8-11/12)	Disability & Financial Security	TBA – See Canvas
Week 12 (11/15-11/19)	Unemployment & Economic Impacts of COVID-19	TBA – See Canvas
Week 13 (11/22-11/26)	THANKSGIVING RECESS	
Week 14 (11/29-12/3)	Public Health Campaign Presentations	TBA – See Canvas
Week 15 (12/6-12/10)	LAST WEEK OF CLASSES Future Implications for Reversing Extreme Inequality & Social Work	

c. **Assignments**

Assignment	Due date	Percent of overall grade
Lightning Talks	October 11 at 9 am In Class Presentation See Rubric	40 Points
Public Health Campaign for Social Work Grand Challenges	November 28 at 11:59 pm In Class Presentation on November 29 Submit Presentation Online	60 Points
Discussion Post	Due Sunday before class at 11:59 pm	40 Points (5 points each)

d. Attendance and class participation

Attendance is expected at each class and is extremely important because the discussions that occur in class cannot easily be replicated outside of the classroom from simply reading the assigned materials. Participation in class discussions, in class exercises, and small group discussions is expected and will contribute to your final grade. Participation means grounding your comments and analysis in the readings and other class materials – not just offering your general opinion on a topic. If you experience difficulties in participating in discussions for linguistic, cultural, or other reasons, please meet with me to explore ways in which you can become a more active participant in class.

Participation is also graded in terms of a weekly response (no more than one half page) to the readings. This is not a summary of the reading (although you should be familiar with the main points/arguments). Rather what did you walk away with in terms of thoughts or connections or applications – perhaps to other readings – or current events – or policies or practices in the field? You should end your response with at least one discussion question for class. Post on canvas by midnight on the Sunday before class.

e. Grading

In this course there are five components to your final grade

- (a) Attendance and Participation (50 points)
- (b) Discussion Post (50 points)
- (c) Lightning Talks (40 points)
- (d) Public Health Campaign for Social Work Grand Challenges (60 points)

In this class, an “A+” = 100%; “A”= 95-99%; “A-”= 90-94%; “B+”= 87-89%; “B”=84-86%; “B-”= 83-86 pts.; “C+”= 77-79%; & “C”= 73-76%. Anything lower – we should talk in person.

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. Your participation in this course is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including properly wearing a face covering in class and compliance with the University COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Other applicable and additional safety measures may be described in the Campus Maize & Blueprint. Your ability to participate in this course 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 and those seeking an exemption related to the vaccination requirement should submit an exemption request through WolverineAccess. 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*