

Course title: Engaging Social Justice, Diversity, and Oppression in Social Work.
Course #/term: SW505, Fall 2021-Section 006
Time and place: Mondays, 9am Room B760 SSWB
Credit hours: 3
Prerequisites: --
Instructor: Osvaldo Rivera
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You may expect a response within 48 hours
Office hours: 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 content

Students will actively explore how societal power and diversity characterize and shape the human experience, and are critical to the formation of social structures, cultural understandings, group and organizational processes, and identities. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. In this course, students will learn how current experiences of privilege and oppression are shaped by historical forces, societal structures, social constructions, group

and interpersonal processes, and human understandings, including an understanding of the institutional, organizational, policy, and socio-cultural arrangements that contribute to them. Additionally, this foundation course will explore formulations of human rights, including positive rights, and negative conditions that need to be eradicated. This course also studies how social justice and injustice occur in organizations, institutions, and society, relevant theories that can inform work for justice (e.g., critical race theory, and components of many theories), and how mechanisms of oppression and privilege work (e.g., marginalization, exploitation, violence, cultural hegemony, and powerlessness).

c. 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).

d. 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.

e. Curricular theme








Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (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.

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](#).

2. Class Requirements

Required Texts

Kendi, Ibram X. *How to Be An Antiracist*. 2019 One World/Random Press. New York

Sue, Derald Wing. Rasheed, Janice Matthews, and Rasheed, Mikal N. *Multicultural Social Work Practice: A Competency-Based Approach to Diversity and Social Justice*. (2016) John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated

Additional readings, media, and handouts from journals and pertinent news articles and other sources **will be posted** on a regular basis to Canvas. These additional readings will be put under the “Files”s section in separate folders titled “Articles” numbered by class session date. On occasion within these folders you will find a separate folder entitled “Reference Articles and Materials”. Though not required readings you may find them helpful for your research and submission of assignments. All items will be posted in advance. Current events will be discussed regularly in class so please stay up to date on local, state and national issues related to subject matter. It is expected that students will complete all required readings. In Canvas under “Pages” you will find links to some general resources and a number of case studies noted in the schedule section of this syllabus.

Class schedule

Exploration of the subject matter **will by necessity be a dynamic process**. Thus, the schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the professor and will be updated as warranted. Updated schedules will be posted on Canvas.

Session	Topics Covered	Items DUE	Readings – To be read prior to class
Session 1 (Aug 30)	Critical Race Theory/ Anti Racism Foundation Grand Challenges Themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Decarceration • Economics 		Syllabus <u>In Canvas “Files”-Articles #1</u> Chapters:1-4 <u>How to Be An Antiracist</u> . Kendi, Ibram X. 2019
Sept 6	<i>Labor Day-No Class</i>		<i>Chapters 1 & 2</i> Multicultural Social Work Practice: A Competency-Based Approach to Diversity and Social Justice, Sue & Rasheed <u>In Canvas “Files”-Articles #2</u>
Session 2 Sept 13 th	Oppression, Marginalization, and Appropriation Documentary-Palante Siempre Palante Themes: a-Economic Inequality b-Colonialism		Chapter 4 Multicultural Social Work Practice: A Competency-Based Approach to Diversity and Social Justice, Sue & Rasheed <u>In Canvas “Files”-Articles #3</u>
Session 3 Sept. 20th	Diversity, Social Justice and Implications for Social Work Practice	1st Journal Due	Chapters 5-7 <u>How to Be An Antiracist</u> . Kendi, Ibram X. 2019 Chapter 6 Multicultural Social Work Practice: A Competency-Based Approach to Diversity and Social Justice, Sue & Rasheed <u>In Canvas “Files”-Articles #4</u>
Session 4 Sept 27th	Some theoretical considerations for Social Work Practice		<u>In Canvas “Files”-Articles #5</u>
Session 5 Oct. 4th	Theme: Health Speaker-Ricardo Guzman “Working with Latino and Immigrant Populations”		Chapters 3 Multicultural Social Work Practice: A Competency-Based Approach to Diversity and Social Justice, Sue & Rasheed

	--"Prevention" Work as an Empowerment Tool		<u>In Canvas "Files"-Articles #6</u>
Session 6 Oct 11th	<u>Theme: Health</u> --Race & Socioeconomic Factors --COVID-19 & HIV/AIDS(history) --Gender Considerations --LGBTQ Considerations	Assignment #1 DUE: Life Trajectory Rubric	Chapters 8,12, and 15-17 <u>How to Be An Antiracist.</u> Kendi, Ibram X. 2019 <u>In Canvas "Files"-Articles #7</u> In "Pages" #1CASE STUDY: LGBTQ+ & Discrimination #2 CASE STUDY: Sickle Cell Disease
Oct 18th	NO CLASS – FALL BREAK		<u>In Canvas "Files"-Articles #8</u>
Session 7 Oct 25th	<u>Theme: Decarceration</u> ---Understanding the History of Incarceration Viewing of Documentary Film-13th		<u>In Canvas "Files"-Articles #9-</u> <u>Chapter 5: The New Jim Crow in The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the age of Color Blindness (2012). NY: The New Press.</u>
Session 8 Nov 1st	<u>Theme: Decarceration</u> --Community Based Practices --Economic Reforms --"Restorative Practices"	Assignment #2 DUE: Public Health Campaign	<u>In Canvas "Files"-Articles #10</u>
Session 9 Nov 8th	Is It Just "Culture"?: A discussion on Alternative World Views Part 1 Viewing of Film: <u>Blossoms of Flowers</u>		Chapters 14 Multicultural Social Work Practice: A Competency-Based Approach to Diversity and Social Justice, Sue & Rasheed <u>In Canvas "Files"-Articles #11</u>
Session 11 Nov 15th	Is It Just "Culture"?: A discussion on Alternative World Views Part 2 Non traditional (non European leadership styles)	2nd Journal Due	<u>In Canvas "Files"-Articles #12</u> In "Pages" CASE STUDY: Barriers & Hardships of Immigration
Session 12 Nov 22nd	<u>Theme Economic Inequality</u> Social Class as Location What Next?	Assignment #3 Lightning Talk Presentations	<u>In Canvas "Files"-Articles #13</u> In "Pages" CASE STUDY and JOURNAL: Ta-Nehisi Coates on The Case For Reparations and Discrimination in Housing and Land Contracts

Session 13 Nov 29th	Organizational Change Processes YouTube clips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bayard Rustin- • Alicia Garza-Black Lives Matter • From “Decade of Fire”(Bronx) 	Assignment #3 Lightning Talk Presentations	Chapter 12 Multicultural Social Work Practice: A Competency-Based Approach to Diversity and Social Justice, Sue & Rasheed Readings Forthcoming <u>In Canvas “Files”-Articles #14</u>
Session 14 Dec 6th	LAST WEEK OF CLASSES Wrap Up/ Reflect	Assignment #3 Lightning Talk Final Presentations	<u>In Canvas “Files”-Articles #15</u>

Assignments

All course assignments are to be submitted in class by the due date as reflected in the above schedule (please review in Canvas for any updates). Hard copies would be beneficial as they provide me an opportunity to provide feedback with specific comments at certain sections on your returned copy. Points will be deducted from late assignments.

Attendance & Participation: 20%

Self-Reflexive Journals (2): 15%

Life Trajectory Rubric 20%

Public Health Campaign: 20%

Lightning Talk: 25%

Attendance and Participation-20%

Your class attendance, active and focused participation in class discussion and activities are **paramount** for the successful completion of this course. Thus, this will amount to 20% of the final grade. Asking questions, applying course concepts to questions about your own experiences, how you contribute to the learning and the provision of accurate and respectful feedback to others, and utilizing office hours/email communication when necessary to ask for clarification or assistance in fulfilling course expectations and assignments are important. Please note I value your identification of any unique learning needs or problems. Monopolizing space or contributing off topic is not considered participation. It is necessary that students attend each class and attend class for the entire time period. Simply attending class alone is not enough for a successful participation grade.

Self-Reflexive Journals (2) – 15% of grade

Due – Sept 20th and Nov 15th

You will write 2-4 page long journal entries **two times** this semester in response to the readings, activities, videos, course content, & guest speakers reflecting on personal values, ethics, perspectives, biases and reactions to engaging with different identity groups, individuals, and potential clients, as well as different frameworks, interventions, and theories. Be self-reflective and write in the first person. Points will not be deducted for acknowledging concerns, biases, privileges, apprehensions, etc. Rather, you are asked to be honest and forthright about your

response to the class and its content. If readings are mentioned, they should be cited – additional citations are not required. These are to be handed in when class begins on their due date (but can be submitted early). Only I will be reading these journal entries (they will not be shared with the class).

Criteria	Exemplary Performance
Accuracy	Journal entry represents the author’s ideas, thoughts, or conclusions accurately, fairly, and eloquently. It shows a firm understanding of the implications of each author’s argument(s), or asks questions when there is not a firm conclusion. It is authentic to the author, and not regurgitating thoughts already shared in the class or from others.
Argument	Journal entry fully meets the requirements of the assignment. It explores implications of chosen ideas for the assigned topic in thoughtful and/or original ways. It makes convincing and personalized case for why selected key ideas connect and/or uses texts, class discussions, and/or lectures to support.
Clarity and Presentation	Journal entry consistently uses precise and unambiguous wording. It has clear and lucid sentence structure. It has minimal use of quotations and effectively frames first-person perspective in the text. It is clean, correctly formatted in APA style (12-point font, Times New Roman or Arial, 1” margins), and written in full sentences. All citations (if there are any) are properly attributed and cited in a consistent style. There are virtually no spelling or grammatical errors.

***Modified from Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence**

Assignment #1 Life Trajectory Rubric 20% of grade

The purpose of this assignment is to engage with someone for an in-depth conversation (preferably over time) as fully as possible, to understand and document their life experiences. This trajectory should include life factors such as economic stability or instability, generational disadvantages, societal structures, health, wealth, and/or racial and cultural discriminations that have impacted their life. Use examples to emphasize the importance of the Social Work Grand Challenges discussed in this course (closing the health gap, end homelessness, and reverse extreme inequality). As well as use the power of storytelling to bring their journey to life. Finally, the assignment must include an audio-visual component in the form of artwork, graphics, images, film, timelines, powerpoints slides, or podcast clips (with permission of the interviewee).

Word maximum: 1500 words and 1 Visual Component

Component	Criteria	Points
Introduction	Introduce your interviewee and lead with a compelling quote, statement, story, or other feature from your conversation.	/10
Contextual setup	Clearly establish where the story begins (early, middle, late-life, etc.) and set your interviewee’s experiences in a socio-historical context.	/10

Conceptual integration from “SW Grand Challenges”, online material or other course discussions	This trajectory should include the ways that economic stability or instability, generational disadvantages, societal structures, health, wealth, and/or racial and cultural discriminations have shaped their opportunities for personal and professional growth and fulfillment.	/40
Life Lessons	What lessons, experiences, or new ways of thinking around your interviewee’s life story can readers learn from? What specific aspects of your interviewee’s experiences might have relevant implications for practice and policy?	/10
Grammar and Tone	Language should be professional but genuine/authentic. The storytelling should be engaging, clear, and coherent. Complex topics should be communicated sensitively, protecting the identity of interviewees, and using language that the general public can understand.	/10
Visual Component	Up to 3 PowerPoint slides of images, art, timelines, clips, or other forms of real or representative visuals depicting themes or events of the interviewee’s life. Provide a brief description in the “notes” section of slides describing items.	/20
Total		/100

**Assignment #2 Public Health Campaign for Social Work Grand Challenges
20% of grade**

ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVES:

- Identify a population and key health or economic disparity affecting this population. (e.g. Closing the Health Gap, End Homelessness, Reverse Extreme Inequality)
- Develop a multi-part health equity campaign to bring awareness and layout interdisciplinary steps for closing the health gap identified.
- Can be completed with a group or individual-***if so, must notify instructor in advance with a written plan outline re: specifics on group management, each person’s role in completing the project, etc.***

Criteria	Slides	Points	Comments
Title Slide with a catchy campaign title	1	/5	
1 Creative FAQ sheet or infographic designed for mass dissemination (based on a thorough literature review)	1	/5	
1-3 Strategies for engaging the public through a social media campaign relevant to the population	1	/15	

1 Discussion of existing, pending or needed health policy	1	/10	
1 Overview of existing clinical, educational and or behavioral interventions to address the issue, or a draft for a potential intervention based on best available evidence	2	/20	
1 Community engagement plan that includes relevant stakeholders	1	/20	
Top takeaway points for public health and social work clinicians	1	/15	
References	1	/10	
Total			/100 Points

**Assignment #3 Grand Challenges “Lightning Talk”
(10 minutes maximum) -25% of grade**

ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVES:

- Identify a social justice issue or topic in line from one of the Grand Challenges themes (Closing the Health Gap, End Homelessness, Reverse Extreme Inequality).
- Articulate one clear central message from the issue/topic identified live or via a pre-recorded video **(will be presented during the last 3 sessions to classmates)**
- Share a meaningful story or personal narrative
- Engage the audience and close in a dynamic way
- Reference the TED “commandments” that inspire this lightning talk (<https://collectivehub.com/2017/04/the-10-commandments-given-to-ted-talk-speakers/>)

Criteria	Points	Comments
The topic is appropriately well-defined	/25	
The topic is seamlessly and clearly integrated throughout the presentation		
Your “idea worth sharing” and validate your message with information that is clear, concise, memorable, and suited to your audience	/25	
Use current or recent events, personal experiences, or shared values to frame the significance of the topic	/15	
Humor is integrated where appropriate	/15	

Curiosity and passion for the topic is evident		
Skillfully move on from mistakes		
Be authentic and exciting!		
Surprise the audience with honesty or vulnerability		
Stick to the time limit	/20	
Understand who is the audience		
Delivery and style		
Pacing/timing		
Structure/organization		
Giving meaning to data		
Take away message		
Significance or "so what"		
Creating a meaningful experience for listeners		
Total	/100	

Grading

a. 97-100 = A+	73-76.9= C
b. 93-96.9= A	70-72.9= C-
c. 90-92.9= A-	67-69.9= D+
d. 87-89.9= B+	63-66.9= D
e. 83-86.9= B	60-62.9= D-
f. 80-82.9= B-	
g. 77-79.9= C+	

"A" grades are given for exceptional individual performance and mastery of the material.

The use of "A+", "A", and "A-" distinguishes the degree of superiority.

"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 that carries credit.

"D" grades indicate deficiency and carry no credit.

Inclusivity Policy

Social and economic justice is one of the key themes of social work practice, research, and education. We must encourage each other to critically examine issues related to power, privilege, and oppression. As a result, there will be class discussions, activities, or assignments that may be difficult or challenging. In order to have the most supportive environment possible, we must all commit ourselves to fostering an inclusive, anti-oppressive space in which each person takes responsibility for their own language, actions and interactions. This class will engage us in a community of learning, through systematic exploration of knowledge about different levels and segments of society, theorizing about justice issues, and reflecting on ourselves in interaction with others. This requires developing a climate in the classroom in which we can learn from each other's different perspectives and experiences. These are not just intellectual tasks, but often generate emotions, and require us to surface and engage with our values and what may be tacit (not articulated) assumptions. Learning new ways of thinking can be very exciting and empowering, but we may also feel confused, anxious, overwhelmed, and even angry at different points in this process. These emotions usually are markers that you are being challenged and are learning, as long as they do not overwhelm you and we can navigate through them. It is important that we actively listen to each other about how our words and actions are affecting one another and the learning environment, knowing the impact is more important than intent. I recognize that microaggressions happen (by all of us, to all of us); however, overt slurs in relation to race, sex, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion/world view, immigration status, size, nationality, dis/ability status, marital status, political affiliation, or any other identities, will be addressed directly. Throughout the course, we will negotiate other guidelines about class discussions. Please bring your best selves to our classroom space.

Electronics Policy

Laptops and phones may be used for legitimate classroom purposes only such as the use of such as taking notes or looking up readings on Canvas. Email, Facebook, instant messaging, online shopping, surfing the Internet, and playing games are not considered legitimate classroom purposes. Such use is distracting to those seated around you, and if I see you using your computer for these purposes, I may ask you to turn off your computer and take notes by hand.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and teaching methods can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. If you chose to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 7633000 or go to <https://ssd.umich.edu/>.

Health and Wellness Services

Health and wellness encompasses situations or circumstances that may impede your success within the program. The Office of Student Services offers health and wellness services that are directed to the MSW student body. Feel free to visit the [SSW Health and Wellness website](#) regarding any health, mental health or wellness issue. This could include need for advocacy and referral to University or community resources, financial resources or counseling.

Dependent Care Resources

For students with child or parenting/elder care responsibilities, feel free to consult the Students with Children website (<http://www.studentswithchildren.umich.edu>). This site is dedicated to the needs of students at UM who juggle parenting/elder care, study, and work. Resources include childcare, financial assistance, social support, housing, and health care information. The website was created by the former Committee on Student Parent Issues (COSPI). For additional information on work/life support please also visit the Work/Life Resource Center site (<http://www.hr.umich.edu/worklife/>) and the UM Child Care gateway (<http://www.hr.umich.edu/childcare/>).

Religious Observances

Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance, community participation or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct

All students should be familiar with the Student Code for Academic and Professional Conduct (<https://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide>) which holds our students to the highest standards of academic and professional conduct. Unacceptable academic behavior refers to actions or behaviors that are contrary to maintaining the highest standards in course work and includes such actions as cheating, plagiarism, falsification of data, aiding and abetting dishonesty and impairment. Any suspected situations of academic misconduct will be discussed with the student and then reported to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs. .

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*