



Course title:	Engaging Social Justice, Diversity, and Oppression in Social Work	
Course #/term:	505 Section 17, Fall 2021	
Time and place:	Monday, 6-9 p.m., 2752	
Credit hours:	3	
Instructor:	Trevor Bechtel	
Pronouns:	he/him	
Contact info:	Email: betrevor@umich.edu	
Contact info:	You may expect a response within	Phone: 734.615.2016
	12 hours on weekdays	
Office hours:	2740 SSW	
Office:	3-6 Mondays. I'll eat at some point in that time. An appointment is necessary to guarantee I'll be present.	
Office:	5115 Ford School	
Office hours:	Tuesday – Friday 10-4. I have an irregular meeting schedule and COVID continues. An appointment is necessary to guarantee I'll be present.	

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).
- 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. Relationship to Social Work Ethics and Values

The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to give students direction about ethical issues as they relate to the experience of marginalized groups. The course will focus on social workers' responsibility as professionals to promote general welfare by working toward the elimination of discrimination, expanding choices for all persons, encouraging respect for diversity, advocating for progressive changes in social policies, and encouraging informed participation by the public.

e. Intensive focus on PODS

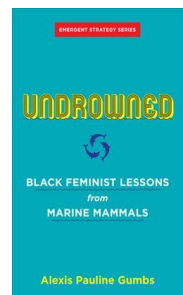
This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this 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

We'll begin each week with a time spent in reflection on Alex Pauline Gumbs, *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals*. Copies are available for loan or purchase from the instructor.



The main course text is the Poverty Solutions web site. We'll read a Poverty Solutions publication most weeks.

All other readings will be made available on Canvas at least three weeks before the class session. This will also for some flexibility in course direction, and allow some padding to plan for externalities; a number of present themselves at the beginning of this semester.

b. Optional Class Labs

There are two courses which would be excellent additions to the academic work in this course.

i. SWK 503 001 Real World Perspective on Poverty Solutions

This is the Poverty Solutions Speaker Series course featuring eight presentations by a variety of experts in alleviating and innovating around our understanding of poverty. The series begins on September 17. Students can enroll in this course for 1 credit.

ii. SWK 796 002 Anti-Racist Design Challenge

In partnership with Innovation in Action, the School of Social Work is engaging in a design challenge focused on the theme of anti-racism. All social work students can participate and learn about design thinking and engage in innovative anti-racist projects. The challenge begins at the end of September.

Students can enroll in this course for 1 or 2 credits.

c. Class schedule

Date/Time	Agenda	Required Readings & Assignments
Week 1 August 30	Introduction	Syllabus Creating Course Guildelines Menakem, <i>My Grandmother's Hands</i>
Week 2 September 6	No Class: Labour Day	
Week 3 September 13	Lesson 1: Solidarity	Gumbs, preface, introduction, breathe 1-27 hooks, Theory as Liberatory Practice Spencer, Insider Outsider Reflections Acevedo, The Wound Needs a Witness On Being, Toward a Framework for Repair Poverty Solutions (PS), About Us Optional: PS, Investing in Us
Week 4 September 20	Lesson 2: Ethics	NASW Code of Ethics Podcast: Doin' the Work: White Supremacy in Social Work Optional: Mother Forkin' Morals
Week 5 September 27	Lesson 3: Rights	Young, Five Faces of Oppression Kendi, "Class" in How to be an Anti-Racist Crenshaw, Intersectionality Young, Throwing Like a Girl
Week 6 October 4	Lesson 4: Capitalism	PS, Index of Deep Disadvantage Friedline, Banking on a Revolution 1619 Podcast
Week 7 October 11	Lesson 5: Housing	PS, Housing and Homelessness , PS, In Good Faith: Reimagining the Use of Land Contracts
Week 8 October 18	No Class: Fall Break	
Week 9 October 25	Lesson 6: Transportation	PS, Auto Insurance Brief

Week 10 November 1	Lesson 7: Education	
Week 11 November 8	Lesson 8: Justice	
Week 12 November 15	Lesson 9: Religion	
Week 13 November 22	Group Work (Optional Class Session)	
Week 14 November 29	Lesson 10: Basic Income Group Presentations	
Week 12 December 5	Lesson 11: Reparations Group Presentations	

d. Assignments

There are three assignments in this course and they constitute the entirety of the course grade. The main assignment is borrowed, gratefully, from Social Work Professor Terri Friedline.

i. Class Discussion (20 points)

Purpose: To thoughtfully reflect on course content and discussions and practice writing and dialogue about issues raised by the course.

Instructions: For each class beginning the week of September 13th there will be a discussion prompt posted to the canvas discussions tab by the Wednesday morning before class. These prompts will include: questions about the readings, questions arising from the previous weeks class, questions defining terms of art, and comments on current events.

Students should submit a response to one of the posted prompts, to a prompt they construct, or to a peer's response by Saturday evening at 11:59 p.m. **NOTE: Late work will NOT be accepted for this assignment.** All responses should be at least 150 words. Grades are based on completing the assignment not on the evaluation of the content. This assignment should be completed 10 times during the semester. **(10x2=20 points)**

ii. "Choose Your Own Adventure" Assignment (60 points)

Proposal Due Date: Saturday 09/25/2021, 11:59pm (20 points)

Read a Twitter thread from Terri Friedline [HERE \(Links to an external site.\)](#) about this assignment.

Background: Each of us enters this course with different experiences, backgrounds, and histories—and different ideas about the learnings they would like to take away from the course. This "choose your own adventure" assignment takes this uniqueness into consideration and lets students develop their own proposal for their learnings related to diversity and social justice.

Purpose(s): To engage in diversity and difference in social work practice and to advance human rights and social and economic justice

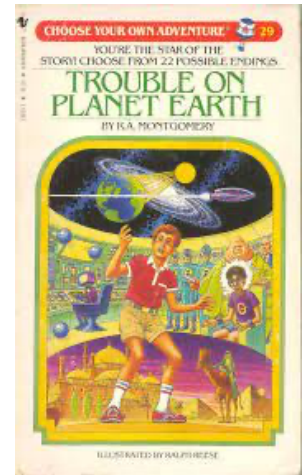
Instructions: Develop a proposal for your work throughout the semester that advances your learnings related to diversity, human rights, and social and economic justice. Your proposal should develop and describe 2 assignments that apply different frameworks, concepts, readings, etc. from the course in the formats of your choosing.

Submit a 1-page single-spaced proposal that describes your 2 assignments. Your proposal should include:

- An introductory paragraph that describes your interests and rationale for proposal
- A description of two assignments that include:
 - One learning goal for each assignment
 - A description of the content for each assignment
 - A description of the format for each assignment

Your proposal should describe what you are going to do and how you are going to do it. In other words, your proposal should describe the content and the format of your assignments. Examples of assignment content are provided below, and you can also propose something different!

- Analyze your social identities as they relate to your social work education and practice, such as in Spencer's Insider Outsider Reflections
- Identify different [levels \(Links to an external site.\)](#) of racism, sexism, ableism, etc. in a particular area of economic inequality (e.g., income inequality at the individual level compared to inequality at the macroeconomic or structural level)



- Examine power by creating a power map of corporation's or person's political and financial relationships with [LittleSis.org \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (you will need to create a free log-in, and instructions are provided on how to use their tools to create power maps)
- Conduct an [intersectional analysis \(Links to an external site.\)](#) of an aspect of extreme economic inequality (e.g., differences in how people with simultaneous socially-marginalized identities experience credit, wealth, student loan debt, etc.)
- Examples of community history, knowledge, and power, such as in Layli Long Soldier's poem "38" ([here \(Links to an external site.\)](#)) and [here \(Links to an external site.\)](#))
- Census of economic resources and opportunities in the community (e.g., identifying what exists, where is there knowledge and skills, where is there power), such as [#BankBlackUSA \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and Stockton Demonstration's [Stockton Tells the Story \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- Write a book report on our assigned text, *Undrowned*, a book from the Poverty Solutions Speaker Series, or on another book you've read that relates to the themes of the course
- Create an informational guide geared toward social workers that explain money, extreme economic inequality, the racial wealth gap, etc.
- Work with the instructor and other students to screen and accept entries to the School of [Social Work Social Justice Timeline](#), where members of our school community identify dates in history related to social justice as a way of engaging in anti-racist praxis.

Examples of assignment formats include—but are not limited to—the following:

- Timeline of events
- Academic paper (~ 5-7 pages)
- Reflection essay
- Public comments submitted to federal regulators
- Archival research (e.g., review of newspapers, flyers, public records, etc.)
- Opinion editorial (800-1200 word compelling article)
- Infographic or zine (e.g., combination of visual and text representations)
- ~ 10-15 minute classroom presentation (video submitted to the class on Canvas)
- Podcast
- Interview with a community member
- Mix tape (e.g., collection of songs, music, spoken word, etc.)

- Photos, maps, or other visuals
- Artwork: art, music, poetry, or other creative work.
- Craftwork: recipes, quilts, furniture, or other handcrafted work.
- Anti-Racist Design Challenge Project

If choosing an infographic, zine, artwork, craftwork, mix tape, photos, or other non-text based format, please provide a brief paragraph (~3-5 sentences) that identifies the assignment's learning goal and describes the content related to diversity, human rights, and/or social and economic justice.

You will receive feedback on your proposal to ensure that you have created an achievable plan that meets the requirements of the course and facilitates your learning.

EXAMPLES of the "Choose Your Own Adventure" proposal are available on Canvas, **BUT** please keep in mind that these examples were developed for a course on community development (meaning that the content is slightly different) and you only need to develop **TWO** assignments.

Your First Proposed Assignment

Due Date: Saturday 10/30/2021, 11:59pm (20 points)

Your Second Proposed Assignment

Due Date: Saturday 11/20/2021, 11:59pm (20 points)

iii. Group Presentation (20 points)

Purpose: To work collaboratively with other social work students to present relevant information.

Instructions: Students will be formed into groups of at least three people by October 4th and will work together to present on a topic related to reducing extreme economic inequality. The presentation will include a historical background, a description of the problem, and a response to the problem that seeks to alleviate poverty. These presentations can grow out of student individual work on the Choose your own Adventure project, participation in the Anti-Racist Design Challenge, or they can take another approach. Presentations can be video recorded or presented live, and can be

didactic or experiential but they should be of a high-quality and take between 9-15 minutes. Some examples of possible presentation could include:

- A Ted talk style presentation
- A group could develop a new anti-racist identity exercise and lead the class in the exercise.
- An interactive website could be built which could be experienced in the 9-15 minute timeframe.
- The group could form themselves into a rock and roll band and perform a 9-15 minute set of relevant original music.

A proposal should be submitted by October 23rd at 11:59 p.m.. Time is scheduled for presentation in the last two weeks of class, however earlier times can be negotiated.

e. Attendance and class participation

Students are encouraged to attend weekly classes where we will discuss course content, review materials, and push ourselves beyond our growing edges. I expect that students engage all aspects of this course from completing the viewing, listening, and reading from which we learn ahead of each class and attending and thoughtfully participating in class by paying attention, engaging, and finding ways to contribute to class discussions. Moreover, class sessions are an opportunity for us to develop a sense of community. During the semester, the instructor and students may have unexpected life events arise that prevent in- person class attendance. This class will strive to be understanding of these unexpected events and provide flexibility when possible. In this class attendance is not a part of your grade except in that you are except to participate in the Class Discussion assignment 10 times. The School of Social Work has this [Policy on Class Attendance](#)

f. Late Assignments

My policy on late assignments is to deduct 2 points per weekday that assignments are late. However I recognize that life happens and that more life is happening right now than at other times. Students may petition in writing for extensions to assignments other than the Discussions. Do this by writing an email before the deadline. I would rather grant an extension than have you work through a weekend to try and submit an assignment.

g. Grading

The total number of points earned based on your completion of the below assignments and the number of total available points will be used to determine your letter grade at the end of the semester. Please review the MSW Student Guide for policies on Grades in Academic Courses (<http://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/chapter/1.08/grades-in-academic-courses-and-in-field-instruction>) and in Field Instruction (<http://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/chapter/1.18/student-grievances>) as well as Student Grievance procedures (<http://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/chapter/1.18/student-grievances>) and the policy for grading in special circumstances (<https://ssw.umich.edu/msw-student-guide/section/1.08.01/15/grades-for-special-circumstances>).

Assignment	Points	Total Points	Due Dates Deadlines are Saturday 11:59 p.m.
Discussions	2 points each	20	10 times throughout the semester
Choose Your Own Adventure	Proposal: 20 points 1 st Assignment: 20 points 2 nd Assignment: 20 points	60	September 25 October 30 November 20
Group Presentation	Groups formed by: Proposal: 5 points Presentation: 15 points	20	October 4 October 23 As assigned
Total		100	

GRADING SCALE

A 94-100	C+ 77-79
A- 90-93	C 74-78
B+ 87-89	C- 70-73
B 84-86	D 60-69
B- 80-83	F < 60

h. 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.

i. 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.

j. 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

3. Resources for Students

Basic Needs: There is a large incidence of food, housing, transportation, and economic insecurity among university students; University of Michigan students experience these insecurities at comparable levels to students generally. The Maize and Blue Cupboard is the on campus food pantry <https://mbc.studentlife.umich.edu/>. It is open to the entire U-M community and staff can connect students to a variety of wrap around services. The address for the cupboard is the Betsy Barbour Hall at 420 S State St Ann Arbor, MI 48109; to access the pantry enter on Maynard. Poverty Solutions has assembled a basic needs sheet which is the most comprehensive listing of resources students can access: <https://basicneeds.umich.edu>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: This course is intended for all U-M students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other such condition that tends to negatively affect one's equal access to education. If, at any point in the term, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are welcome (and not required) to contact me by email, phone, or during office hours to discuss your specific needs. I also encourage you to contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office at <http://ssd.umich.edu>. If you have a diagnosis, SSD can help you document your needs and create an accommodation plan. By making a plan through SSD, you can ensure appropriate accommodations without disclosing your condition or diagnosis to course instructors. For more information and resources, the University's Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD), located at G664 Haven Hall and available via phone (734) 763-3000 or website <http://www.umich.edu/~sswd/>

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing: The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and <https://caps.umich.edu/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselor physically located in the School of Social Work, (Megan Shaughnessy-Mogill) at (734) 763-7894 or by email mshaughm@umich.edu. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320 and <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs>, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources. The MSW student Guide to Health and Wellness can be found at http://www.ssw.umich.edu/current/Health_Wellness_Guide.pdf

Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness. The University of Michigan's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) promotes healthy relationships, teaches non-violence and equality, supports survivor healing, and fosters a respectful and safe environment for all members of the

university community. All services are free and confidential. Visit SAPAC's website <https://sapac.umich.edu/> and contact them via their 24-hour crisis line at (734) 936-3333 or office phone at (734) 764-7771.

Safety & Emergency Preparedness: All University of Michigan students, faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with emergency procedures and protocols for both inside and outside of the classroom. In the event of possible building closure (i.e. severe weather conditions, public health notices, etc.) you may contact (734) 764-SSWB (7793) for up-to-date School closure information. For more information view the annual Campus Safety Statement at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/>. Register for UM Emergency Alerts at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergencymanagement/alert/>. In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone.

Dependent Care Resources: For students with child or parenting/elder care responsibilities, please 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 child care, 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/>).

Student Code of Academic and Professional Conduct: All students should be familiar with the Student Code for Academic and Professional Conduct (<http://archive.ssw.umich.edu/studentguide/2014/page.html?section=12&volume=1>) which holds 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.