

SW Services and Supports to Transgender Clients and Communities

SW707, Section 001

Winter 2022

Dates: April 8th and 9th Time: 9:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: TBD

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Office Hours: Before or After class (*or by appointment, upon request*).

Preferred contact is email: skrrad@umich.edu

I will make every effort to respond to your emails within 36 hours – Please let me know your matter is urgent by stating: “URGENT” in the subject line.

Phone: 248 943 2089 – My cell phone is on for text messages and phone calls from 8am – 8pm daily.

Course Design and Content:

This course will increase students’ capacity to understand the issues faced by gender diverse people and communities, including but not limited to trans and nonbinary persons across the life span, including adolescents and pre-pubescent children and their families. This course will increase students’ capacity to provide gender-affirming social work support to transgender clients and to be an advocate and ally including within one’s own community and agency.

To achieve these goals, this course will 1) offer a working definition of terms, including (but not limited to): Transgender, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Gender Expansive, Gender Diverse, Intersex, Nonbinary, Cisgender, and Accomplice; 2) examine multiple risk factors that impact trans and gender diverse people across the life span from a strength based lens (e.g., mental health issues, economic insecurity, violence); 3) examine protective factors (e.g., social support, community connections, family support); 3) consider how these experiences are differentially experienced across

intersections of race, class, and disability status, among other facets of identity/experience; and, 4) educate students about resources for trans and gender diverse individuals and communities and where/how to access these resources. Of particular importance, the concept of gender affirmation will be introduced, including mechanisms for social, legal, and medical gender affirmation, with examination of the role of the Social Worker in each of these domains.

Course Objectives :

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe common issues facing trans and gender diverse people and communities.
2. Analyze how these issues are influenced by larger oppressive structures and individual biases.
3. Understand the concept of gender affirmation and how it applies to social work practice.
4. Identify social work strategies for working with trans and gender diverse individuals and communities at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
5. Understand and articulate the role of the family as a protective factor for transgender youth and children.
6. Recognize the impact of age, race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, power, and privilege on interpersonal practice by (a) Demonstrating self-awareness of their own privilege, identity, positionality, and life experiences impact on their capacity to relate to others with different personal privilege, identity, sociopolitical and life experiences. (b) Describing how others who are very different may perceive them and how status and power issues impact professional relationships with clients, colleagues, and other professions.

Relation to Social Justice:

Social Justice theme will be an intrinsic and central focus of this class. While the focus of the course is on small system change (transgender youth, children, families, schools, and groups) the larger social context and implications for advocacy and social change will be embedded in person in the environment (PIE), ecological assessment, and in the experience of transgender persons and their families as they enter and/or engage with social agencies. These themes will be integrated into this course through a combination of lecture, guest

speakers, and case examples and case scenarios that will be selected by the instructor to exemplify skills in practice.

Relation to Behavioral and Social Science Research:

Behavioral and Social Science Research will be presented in this course to support practice methods, skills and assessment procedures. Planning, decision-making and intervention procedures will be directly borrowed from the behavioral and social sciences.

Relationship to SW Ethics and Values:

Social work ethics and values will be addressed within the course as they pertain to issues related to working with transgender children and their families individually, within the context of the family and within systems. The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to give students direction about these ethical issues.

In particular, this course will focus on the following social work principles, ethics, and values.

Value: *Social Justice*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers challenge social injustice.* Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.* Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Value: *Importance of Human Relationships*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.* Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Competency Practice Behaviors:

Competency #3 - Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers

- Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom;
- Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation;
- Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

Competency #4 - Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers

- Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power
- Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups including transgender children and youth
- Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences
- View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants in a respectful, non-exploitative manner.

Competency #6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Social workers

- Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
- Use research evidence to inform practice.

Competency #7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

Use conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation

- Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

Competency #10 (a)–(d)—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Assessment

Social workers engage in assessment relative to the following:

- Collect, organize, and interpret client data;
- Assess client strengths and limitations;
- Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives;
- Select appropriate intervention strategies.

Accommodation:

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, student performance evaluations (e.g., exams) and the way the course is taught can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. The earlier you make me aware of your needs the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, Sweetland Writing Center, and the like. If you do decide 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.

Also, please notify me if religious observances conflict with course expectations in any way.

Safety & Emergency Preparedness:

In the event of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 from any cell phone or campus phone. 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.

Familiarize yourself with the emergency card posted next to the phone in every classroom/meeting room. Review the information on the emergency evacuation

sign (located nearest the door) and locate at least (2) emergency exits nearest the classroom.

If you are concerned about your ability to exit the building in the case of an emergency, contact the Office of Student Services and/or email ssw-ADAcompliance@umich.edu.

Office of Student Services School of Social Work | Room 1748 [734-936-0961](tel:734-936-0961)

Register for UM Emergency Alerts at <http://www.dpss.umich.edu/emergency-management/alert/>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class attendance and participation:

Students are expected to attend all classes for the full period, complete assigned reading for each day, participate fully in class activities and discussions, and complete all assignments on time. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class using a sign in sheet.

Your attendance and participation also reflects the basic ingredient of any social work relationship – your presence, “**showing up**” or “**being there**”. For this reason, I ask you to adhere to the following guidelines concerning the use of computers or cell phones in class:

- Using electronic devices to assist in note taking and specifically directed class activities is permitted for those who find this beneficial.
- Checking email, texting, searching the net for non-class related activities, reading non-class materials, etc. equate to talking/interrupting while someone else is talking and are not acceptable during class.**
- Students who feel they must monitor email and texts are asked to do so during breaks and/or to leave the room to do so.*
- Use of non-class related computer/phone/electronic devices/reading materials will be considered as the equivalent of being absent from class and will result in deductions in class participation grades.

Updated 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.

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.

REQUIRED READING:

There is no required textbook for this course. All other required reading materials for this class are available in the "Files" section of the canvas site for this class or on the Internet.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS (Due dates are highlighted)

Assignment 1. Self-awareness paper on gender identity Due date 4 15 22 11:59pm

This paper should be approximately 2-4 double-spaced pages (12 pt. font) and should discuss your personal experiences, history, reflections, identity, positionality, and questions regarding your own gender-identity and expression and your personal experiences with the compounding complexities of race, class, culture, ethnicity, religion, ability/disability, etc. Include a description of your intersecting identities, including all of the above.

Questions that will help your thinking for the paper include:

1. How do you identify regarding your gender identity, and how do you know who, you are? When did you first develop an awareness of your gender identity?
2. What internal and external factors have shaped your gender identity?
3. What was your first awareness of transgender people?
4. How has your gender and/or gender identity, culture, ethnicity, class, race, religion, ability/disability, environment, etc. helped to shape your identity and affected your biases?

5. What are your biases and assumptions about gender and where do they come from?

Assignment 2. Case Study – Choose One of the Available Options tbd

Please refer to Assignment Tab on Canvas.

Course Schedule: There will be two breaks each day as well as a one-hour lunch each day.

Day 1	9am	Welcome! Course Introduction and Overview
Day 1	10am	Using affirming language: Brief review of terms Short video on nonbinary identities and Intersex identities Language Training Worksheet
Day 1	11:30 am	Role of the social worker in working trans and gender creative clients across the life span WPATH Standards of Care
Day 1	12noon	Lunch
Day 1	1pm	Role of the SW Working with youth and families
Day 1	2pm	What is Gender Affirming Care? Creating a safe and welcoming clinical space Practitioner Values, Attitudes, Bias and Ethics
Day 1	3:00pm	Social, Medical, and Legal Transition - Risks and Benefits Dysphoria, Depression, and Anxiety and other mental health concerns The Importance of Names and Pronouns
Day 1	3:55pm	Desistance – Myth, Facts and Scare Tactics Video and Discussion
Day 1	4:30pm	Wrap Up
Day 2	9am	Conversion therapy: View/Discuss “Sissy Boy” video FAP research

Day 2	9:45am	Dr. Shumer – Michigan Medicine Transgender Services: Collaboration with Physicians in Gender Affirming Care – Focus on Hormones and Blockers
Day 2	11am	Letter writing for Surgery Letter writing for Hormones In Class Practice Overview of Risk Factors and Protective Factors
Day 2	12 noon	Lunch
Day 2	1pm	Conducting a gender interview Gender expression or gender Identity? Questions concerning fertility Role play
Day 2	2pm	Guest Speaker
Day 2	3:30pm	Working with Parents “Coming Out” for Parents What are accepting parent behaviors? Rejecting? Behaviors or Beliefs? Impact of parent response on the child and family Are parents “allowed” to grieve when their child transitions? Debi Jackson Video Safe Folder
Day 2	4pm	Lucas Case Study
Day 2	4:30pm	Wrap Up

***Please be advised that the syllabus and daily agenda may be subject to modification by the instructor or may be changed to accommodate guest speakers.**

Readings: All required readings are posted to Canvas.

Course Grading

Attendance & Participation	Ongoing	25 Points
Assignment One	Due 4/15 11:59pm	25 points
Assignment Two	Due Date tbd	50 points