

**SW 709: 001**  
**Affirmative Counseling and Advocacy with TGLBQ People**

Winter 2022, Fri. Jan. 14, and Sat. Jan 15, 9:00-5:00

COURSE NUMBER: SW 790 sec 1

Classroom: 3816

CREDIT HOURS:

INSTRUCTOR: Laura Sanders, LMSW, ACSW

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**Method Area:** Interpersonal Practice

**Course Description:**

This course will introduce and address issues of concern to interpersonal practice clients that identify as Transgender, Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Queer or questioning, focusing on the basic knowledge, interpersonal practice and advocacy skills it takes to become increasingly competent in providing counseling and advocacy for people who are members of these marginalized, yet highly resilient, groups. From a strength-based and trauma-informed perspective, grounded in Affirmative Practice Principles, this course will focus on basic social work knowledge and understanding of these groups, the social injustice and stigma they face; but ultimately, how to effectively engage, assess and intervene with current, associated issues through therapy and advocacy. This course will also address self-exploration and ethical dilemmas for social work students and providers with TBLGQ people, and include real practice experiences with people from our local community. Students will be encouraged to actively engage with the instructor, guests and other students in the course. Class participation is critical to the success of the course.

**Significance of the class and its relationship to social work goals:**

This class is based on current social work knowledge emerging from social science research and the experiences of TBLGQ people within the United States. TBLGQ identities in our society are often stigmatized, misunderstood and exploited in the

controversies of a divisive socio-political climate, and yet TBGLQ people demonstrate incredible resourcefulness, resilience and strength as individuals, families and communities. This course teaches social workers to ground social work interactions in relational-cultural approaches to affirmative interventions with TBLGQ clients that consider the unique intersections of ethnicity and culture, race, religion, development, age, health, ability, etc., reflecting the respect and value of every person fundamental to the goals of social work. As the course provides real case examples and practice experiences that expand the critical interpersonal skills and ethical considerations necessary to engage effectively with TBLGQ clients, focus on advocacy within systems associated with social work, especially schools, and community organizations reflect important goals of social work as well. Nearly all social workers, no matter what their concentration, will work with TBLGQ people. The problems and resiliencies associated with being TBLGQ provide an overarching context to nearly every issue that social workers address and yet are often overlooked or misunderstood as we attempt intervention. Affirmative practice principles in engagement, assessment, intervention and advocacy draw on the resourcefulness of this community toward effective social work practice.

### **Course Objectives:**

Students will:

- become conversant in Affirmative Practice Principles with TBLGQ people and communities.
- understand basic social work knowledge to engage with TBLGQ clients effectively, especially in checking our assumptions and growing the relational-cultural skills in questioning and commenting of joining, empathy, mutuality, and use of self.
- learn the history and progress of the TBLGQ civil rights movement.
- be able to identify and assess the stresses and the strengths of TBLGQ individuals, families and groups toward resolution of presenting issues and problems of concern to social work.
- gain basic knowledge to analyze the economic, social, and health issues associated with the current socio-political impacts and health policy on TBLGQ populations
- understand TBLGQ issues and practice engagement skills over the life-span
- be able to assess ethical and culturally sensitive responses to TBLGQ people with specific awareness of the unique intersections of identity.
- be able to use current information about TBLGQ people to effectively advocate for clients.
- learn some basics of empowering community organization models with TBLGQ people from examples provided in the class.

### **Requirement for Academic Credit:**

**You can choose from these two assignments:**

**Option 1:** Students must turn in a completed paper within two weeks of the course and upload it onto canvas.

Write a five-page reflection on your learning from the course that integrates core course concepts, including the asynchronous components, your most significant learning and how you intend to integrate this learning into your work as a professional social worker. ***Integrate at least three readings from the required reading list for the course.*** Feel free to include and optional readings if you would like. Think about the questions you had and assumptions you were making about TBLGQ populations before you came into the course, and what has shifted for you resulting from the course. What content had the most impact on your learning and why? What, if anything, has surprised or inspired you? What would you like to know more about? Use specific quotes from the readings in your paper and provide a list of your sources at the end.

**Option 2:** Seize an opportunity to expand on what you have learned in class. Engage with the TBLGQ community. Attend an TBLGQ event, action, business, organizing effort, agency, or interview an activist, advocate, or therapist, who works with LGBTQ people. This should be a new experience for you that takes you out of your comfort zone in some way. Write a two- to three-page reflection on this experience and ***integrate two readings from the course.*** Provide a list of your sources at the end.

### **Biographical Sketch of the Instructor:**

This course is developed and instructed by Laura Sanders, LMSW:

With a master's degree in social work from the University of Michigan, Laura Sanders has been an instructor in U of M's graduate School of Social Work for 26 years, and has practiced for over 33 years as a family therapist in the area. She is a long-time community activist for human rights including those of children, women, TGLBQ people and immigrants, etc. In the mid-80's she was the Co-director of the TGLBQ office at U of M which is now called the Spectrum Center. She specializes in interpersonal work with trauma and attachment difficulties as well as issues of gender and sexual identity. Her work with people is eclectic and creative including advocacy and community organizing. Most recently, she is a co-founder of the *Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights*, a current and active grassroots organization responding to local ICE raids, detainments and deportations of our immigrant community members, and advocating for immigration reform, supporting TGLBQ undocumented immigrants in campaigns, as well. She also has begun partnering with animals in therapy at her farm office in animal assisted interventions. Awareness of intersections of identity is key to all of her social work.

### **TRAUMA REMINDER WARNING:**

Because this course examines injustice, some of the material is painful in nature, and encourages students to explore and share issues of identity, focusing on imbalances

of power, privilege, oppression, and discrimination. It is likely to bring up painful material for some students and very new information for others. Please know that all feelings are acceptable and invited, but students are expected to be respectful to others and able to manage their emotions. As well, personal stories are invited but students should not feel pressured to share painful personal material unless they feel prepared and compelled to do so. There will not be sufficient follow-up for processing painful memories or severe anxiety that might get triggered. In general, it is important that students who expect to struggle seek support and/or therapeutic assistance to work through their own feelings, and/or recovery during their graduate education in order to be present and effective in working with struggling clients. Wounded healers who have worked toward recovery, resilience and empowerment make some of the best therapists and organizers. See resources for this below.

**Electronics:**

In the era of iPhones, iPads, laptops and wireless networks, some students may wish to spend class time reading email, texting, surfing the web, or doing work for other classes. Please don't do this. If you need a computer as a resource for note-taking please let me know, but I would prefer that they not be open at all and phones be put away. I find that they interfere with discussion and active listening to me and other students. Thank you very much.

**Accommodations:**

If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know soon. The earlier that 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 and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will treat that information as private and confidential. Also, please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements. Also all preferred name and gender pronoun uses will be honored.

**Health and Wellness:**

Health and wellness situations or circumstances may impede student success within the program. Students should feel free to contact the School's Health and Wellness Advocates at [ssw.wellness@umich.edu](mailto:ssw.wellness@umich.edu). Students may also visit/call the University's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). CAPS offers a variety of clinical services, referrals, and workshops. CAPS, Hours: 8am-5pm, 530 S State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109. [caps.umich.edu](http://caps.umich.edu)

**Other important policies and procedures 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*

### **COVID-19 Statement - Required**

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](#).

### **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.

### **Recording Class**

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 in advance that a recording will occur and be provided with

an option to opt-out. 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.

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

### **Mini-Course Readings:**

We only have two days for this course so there are a limited number of required readings. Supplementary readings are included on the Canvas site under “files” and then in “optional readings”. I realize that this is a lot of reading to cram into weekend, so if you need more time, do read those that include an\* before class to be adequately prepared for interacting with community members in class.

### **Required Readings before first day of class:**

\*Freeberg, Sharon: “**Re-examining Empathy: A Relational-Feminist Point of View**”, *Social Work*, 52(3), pgs. 251-259, 2007.

Grzanka, P., Adler, J., & Blazer, J. (2015). **Making Up Allies: The Identity Choreography of Straight LGBT Activism**. *Sex Res Soc Policy* 2015(12). 165-81. DOI: 10.1007/s13178-014-0179-0

\*Messinger, L. (2013). **Reflections on LGBT Students in Social Work Field Education**. *Field Scholar*. 3(1). 1-16.

\*Nichols, Margaret, **The Great Escape: Welcome to the World of Gender Fluidity**, *Psychotherapy Networker*, March-April 2016 (7 pgs.)

\*Shulman, M. (2013, January 09). **Generation LGBTQIA**. *The New York Times*. Retrieved July 06, 2016, from <http://nyti.ms/RGv4Tz>

**The Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People, 7<sup>th</sup> version**, from [www.wpath.org](http://www.wpath.org). (Read these for readiness and eligibility standards for hormones and surgeries. See the children and adolescent section) skim this document for basic knowledge of what is in it.

### **Suggested Optional Readings for first day of class:**

**Advancing LGBT Health and Well-being**, US Dept. of Health and Human Services. 2014 Report.

Diamond, L., (2007?) “**Was it A Phase? “Young Women’s Relinquishment of Lesbian/Bisexual Identities Over a 5-Year Period”**”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 84, No. 2.

Krueger, Megan, **Kids Born with Disorders of Sex Development**, Special Needs Resources, Sept. 29, 2014

Stacey and Biblarz, "**Does Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?** *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 66 (April:159-183), 200

Yan, M.C. & Wong, Y.R. (2005). "**Rethinking Self Awareness in Cultural Competence: Toward a Dialogic Self in Cross Cultural Social Work**". *Families in Society*, 86(2), 181-188.

### Required Readings for the second day of class:

Beck, J. (2014, November 05). **What Doctors Don't Know About LGBT Health. The Atlantic**. Retrieved July 25, 2016, from <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/11wh/what-doctors-dont-know-about-lgbt-health/382792>

Morrow, "**Older Gays and Lesbians: Surviving a Generation of Hate and Violence**", From Hate Crimes to Human Rights: A Tribute to Matthew Shepard, Hawthorn Press, 2001.

\*Ryan, Caitlin, et.al., **Family Acceptance in Adolescence and the Health of LGBT Young Adults**, JCAPN Volume 23, Number 4, November 2010

\*Sandmaier, Marian, **It Takes a Tribe: What It's Like to Raise (or Be) a Transgender Child**, Psychotherapy Networker, March/April, 2016

Savin-Williams, Diamond, L. "**Sexual Trajectories Among Sexual-Minority Youths: Gender Comparisons**", *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, Vol. 29, No 6.

\*Snapp, S., Hoenig, J., Fields, A., Russell, S. (2015). **Messy, Butch, and Queer: LGBTQ Youth and the School to Prison Pipeline**. *Journal of Adolescent Research*. 30(1). 57-82. DOI: 10.1177/0743558414557625

Williams, D. & Prior, E. (2015). **Contemporary Polyamory- A Call for Awareness and Sensitivity in Social Work**. *Social Work*. 60(3). 268-70. DOI: 10.1093/SW/swv012

### Optional Readings for the second day of class:

Albeld, **Poverty in the LGB Community**, The Williams Institute, University of Mass, Boston, 2009.

Grossman, A, and D'Augelli, A. (2007) **Transgender Youth and Life-Threatening Behaviors**, *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behaviors*, 32(5), Oct. (working on accessing this reading)

Munson, "**Partners Interfacing with Healthcare Professionals**", *FORGE* (For Ourselves Reworking Gender Expression, Milwaukee, WI.

Pillai-Friedman, S., Pollitt, J., & Castaldo, A. (2014). **Becoming Kink-Aware- A Necessity for Sexuality Professionals**. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*. 30(2). 196-210. DOI: 10.1080/14681994.2014.975681

**Power and Control Wheel for Lesbian and Gay Relationships, Battering in Lesbian and Gay Relationships** – a brochure by the Lesbian Task Force of the Texas Council on Family Violence.

**Unjust: How the Broken Criminal Justice System Fails LGBT People of Color**. Center for American Progress & Movement Advancement Project (2016).1-48

White, Tonya and Ettner Randy, Disclosure, **Risks and Protective Factors for Children Whose Parents Are Undergoing a Gender Transition**, *Transgender Subjectivities: A Clinician's Guide*, Hawthorn Press Inc., 2004

**Youth in the Margins: A Report on the Unmet Needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Adolescents in Foster Care**. Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (2001). (<http://www.lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/news/publications.html?record+899>) (browse this; it's long.)  
King, M, **Your Mother Liked It Bareback**, *The Body*, June, 2013

## **Organization of the Course Content (Subject to changes)**

### **Day 1**

Day one starts with interactive experiences that introduce current issues, identity definitions, fluency and knowledge of the TBLGQ community. Concentration on a detailed list of Affirmative Practice Principles that reflect what social workers need to know about working with TGBLQ people will be addressed. Learning to notice and check our own assumptions, and relational-cultural skills for effective engagement will be directly practiced in class. A brief discussion of understanding models of identity awareness, the history of the TBLGQ civil rights movement and understanding intersections of identity will be explored through guest presentation and student interaction. Discussion of advocacy and community organization with TBLGQ people are themes woven throughout both days of the course.



## Day 2

Day two is strongly focused on acting upon the knowledge gained in the first day through practice exercises with TBLGQ people from the local community. We will also explore ethical dilemmas that are common in working with the TBLGQ population. Life-span, and life-course issues through engagement with TBLGQ youth, and an aging person from the community is a primary focus for this day. Exploration and learning to address the unique intersections of identity of each person and family will be highlighted. Student participation through voluntarily joining practice experiences from a Relational-Cultural and Affirmative Practice perspectives, which will include students' sharing of themselves, is encouraged and expected.