



Course title:	Engaging Social Justice, Diversity, and Oppression in Social Work
Course #/term:	SW 505, Section 04, Fall 2022
Time & place:	Monday, 9am - Noon, In-Person, Room 1636 SSWB
Credit hours:	3
Prerequisites:	None
Instructor:	Elizabeth González, LMSW- Clinical (please call me Liz or Eli)
Pronouns:	She/They/Ella
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Office hours:	Virtual by appointment, email to schedule

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).
- 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).

c. Course design

This class will strive to foster a learning environment where each student can reflect critically on sources of power and mechanisms of oppression and privilege, construct a framework for justice, and examine sources and impacts of their beliefs and perspectives. This course will work to create a climate that supports critical analyses, mutual learning, engaging within and across differences, examining sources of power and knowledge, and understanding more about identities. It involves lectures, video, discussion and participation in experiential activities. Additionally, this course will provide a forum to critically examine how our multiple status locations, societal constructions, and social processes shape our beliefs, assumptions, behaviors, and life experiences. Special attention will also be given knowledge about justice and change, and principles of change towards justice.

d. Intensive focus on 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.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

There is no textbook for this class. All required class materials will be posted to Canvas in the form of links to external sites (e.g. news, video, podcast), or PDFs. Please utilize the [U-M online library](#) for access to restricted content such as New York Times articles.

PLEASE NOTE: readings and resources are subject to change based on rapidly changing news. see canvas weekly modules for final assigned readings and resources.

b. Class schedule

The Course Schedule that follows is **tentative and is subject to change**. All changes will be discussed/announced at least 1 week in advance so that you will have sufficient time to make adjustments in your reading and assignments.

Week/Date	Topic	Required Readings & Assignments
Week 1 8/29	Course Overview, Community Building, Values & Ethics in SW Practice. Critical Race Theory/ Anti Racism Foundation	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 2 9/5	LABOR DAY - NO CLASS Access to Public Transportation and Socioeconomic Status	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content

Week 3 9/12	Environmental Health Impacts and Socioeconomic Status	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 4 9/19	Housing Disparities & Discrimination	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 5 9/26	Intersectionality of Education & Socioeconomic Status	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 6 10/3	Race, Health & Socioeconomic Status	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 7 10/10	Intersectionality of Mass Incarceration & Economic Inequality	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 8 10/17	FALL BREAK - NO CLASS Barriers for Immigrant and Undocumented Populations	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 9 10/24	Impacts of COVID-19 on Indigenous Populations	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 10 10/31	Racial Capitalism	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 11 11/7	Disability & Financial Security	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 12 11/14	Unemployment & Economic Impacts of COVID-19	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 13 11/21	THANKSGIVING RECESS	
Week 14 11/28	Economic Inequality Gap Widening: Rich vs Poor	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content
Week 15 12/5	LAST WEEK OF CLASSES Future Implications for Reversing Extreme Inequality & Social Work	Please See Weekly Canvas Modules for Session Content Module (linked at the top of page)

c. Assignments

This course has 3 assignments (the assignments are **tentative and are subject to change**). Combined, these assignments are designed to facilitate your critical understandings of engaging social justice, diversity, and oppression in Social Work within the context of the [Social Work Grand Challenges](#), specifically focused on [Reducing Extreme Economic Inequality](#) and [Close the Health Gap](#)

Assignment grading rubrics for each assignment as well its point or percentage value for the overall course grade can be found on Canvas. Below is an abbreviated overview of what to expect for assignment requirements for the term.

Assignment	Date & Time Due	Percent of overall grade
Participation & Engagement	Due dates vary	30%
QCCQ Facilitated Discussion & Reflection Essay	As scheduled	30%
Life Trajectory	12/4/22 by 11:59pm	40%

d. Attendance and class participation

Please refer to the MSW Student Guide [Policy on Class Attendance](#). Specific to this course, participation and engagement is a critical component of this class. Students are expected to attend weekly sessions and be prepared to participate and engage with colleagues and the topic material. This includes completing assigned reading, being prepared to facilitate and participate in discussions on reading(s), homework and/or assigned activities (such as exercise handouts, assessments/tools, case studies, etc.) prior to class.

Please be considerate to the instructor, guest speakers, and your colleagues by limiting the use of laptops, phones and other forms of technology for classroom purposes only. Misuse of these devices during class time will be reflected in your participation score.

Should something prevent you coming to class (i.e. illness, a conference, a religious observance, personal emergency) **please notify the instructor as soon as possible** by email. **Please Note:** If you are absent from class, you are still responsible for any assignments due that day.

e. 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 the instructor by email** about your absence as soon as possible, so that accommodations can be made. **Please Note:** documentation (*a doctor's note*) for medical excuses is not required.

f. Grading

Please refer to the MSW Student Guide policies on [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#) as well as [Student Grievance procedures](#) and the policy [for grading in special circumstances](#). Here are some resources around [testing and grading from CRLT](#).

Late assignments will undergo a one point deduction for each day past the assignment deadline. Requests for an extension and rescheduled presentations will only be considered for dire and unusual circumstances.

Grading Scale (by percentage)

97-100 = A+	93-96 = A	90-92 = A-
87-89 = B+	83-86 = B	80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+	73-76 = C	70-72 = C-
67-69 = D+	63-66 = D	60-62 = D-

g. 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. **Additional information** on class recordings can be found the [Recording and Privacy Concerns FAQ](#)

h. COVID-19 Statement

[UM Face Covering Policy, Effective 5/2/22](#) - Masks are optional for indoor spaces on the University of Michigan campuses with the exception that masks remain required in patient care areas (e.g Michigan Medicine, University Health Service and the Dental School clinical areas), and at U-M Covid-19 testing sites. The policy is in line with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Covid-19 community level guidance which provides a measure of the impact of COVID-19 illness on health and healthcare systems in addition to current case activity to allow communities to make decisions on mitigation measures as appropriate for their area.

Mask use is still suggested as an effective strategy for enhanced personal protection, especially for those with compromised immune status, those who are not vaccinated or up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations, and anyone with a perceived increased situational risk. **NOTE:** Positive or exposed individuals are still required to mask while around others through Day 10 of their isolation or self-monitoring period. For updates related to COVID-19, please visit the [U-M COVID-19 response website](#)

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*