



Course title:	Engaging Social Justice, Diversity, and Oppression in Social Work
Course #/term:	SW 505, Section 009, Fall 2022
Time and place:	Monday, 9am – 12pm, Room #B780 SSWB
Credit hours:	3
Prerequisites:	None
Instructor:	Linda Edwards-Brown, MSW, LMSW
Pronouns:	She/her/hers
Contact info:	Email: lgeb@umich.edu via Canvas You may expect a response within 48 hours
Office:	2798 SSWB
Office hours:	By appointment

*Each of the SW 505 sections is focusing on one of the Social Work Grand Challenges. The theme for this section is “Reducing Extreme Inequality.” Feel free to read more about this theme here <https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/reduce-extreme-economic-inequality/>.

1. Course Statement

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.

Objectives

- 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).

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.

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

Requirements may change at the discretion of the instructor and will be posted to Canvas, at least a week in advance.

a. Text and class materials

There is no textbook for this class. All reading materials, podcasts, and videos will be posted to Canvas. To fully engage in the course topic and become a competent and skilled social work practitioner, it is expected that students will complete all required assignments. Required assignments may be discussed on Canvas via discussion threads, in class or as part of graded assignments. If additional readings and media are assigned, they will be posted on Canvas.

b. Class schedule

Week	Agenda	Read/Watch/Listen
Week 1 (8/29)	Introductions and Course Overview Critical Race Theory/Anti-Racism Foundation	Listen: What is Critical Race Theory, Anyway? Listen: Unlocking Us—I’m Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness Read: What do Terms like Systemic Racism, Microaggression and White Fragility Mean?
Week 2 (9/5) LABOR DAY	Access to Public Transportation and Socioeconomic Status	Read: These Detroit Workers Have to Ride the Bus During the Coronavirus Pandemic Read: Barriers, Stereotypes Block Transit Options in Metro Detroit
Week 3 (9/12)	Environmental Health Impacts and Socioeconomic Status	Read: Transportation emissions generate air pollution that has a large death toll Read: Cities Are Not Only Tackling Covid, But Its Pollution, Too. Read: Detroit’s first new assembly line in 30 years will compound pollution in Black Neighborhoods
Week 4 (9/19)	Housing Disparities & Discrimination	Watch: Explained Racial Wealth Gap Read: The Eviction Machine – Neighborhood Instability and Blight in Detroit’s Neighborhoods

		<p>Watch: Why Cities are Still So Segregated</p> <p>CASE STUDY: Ta-Nehisi Coates on the Case for Reparations and Discrimination in Housing and Land Contracts</p> <p>Watch and Read: The Black Homeownership Gap Is Larger Than It was 60 Years Ago. COVID-19 Made It Worse.</p>
Week 5 (9/26)	Intersectionality of Education & Socioeconomic Status	<p>Read: Why Students Are Choosing HBCU's: "4 Years Being Seen as Family"</p> <p>Read: Two States. Eight Textbooks. Two American Stories.</p> <p>Read: This is how much childcare costs in 2022</p> <p>CASE STUDY: Addressing Inequities Within the Education System</p>
Week 6 (10/3)	Race, Health & Socioeconomic Status	<p>Read: Racism's Hidden Toll</p> <p>Read: About one-in-four Americans say they've had fewer advantages in life than others their age</p> <p>Listen: Podcast: Zip Codes Matter</p> <p>Read: Black Lives are Shorter in Chicago. My Family's History Shows Why: The Health Issue</p>
Week 7 (10/10)	Intersectionality of Mass Incarceration & Economic Inequality	<p>Read: Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people</p> <p>Read: It Is Expensive to Be Poor</p> <p>Listen: Podcast: Ear Hustle: Nobody Comes Back</p> <p>Watch: 13th</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krfcq5pF8u8&t=14s</p>
Week 8 (10/17)	FALL BREAK – No class Barriers for Immigrant and Undocumented Populations	<p>Read: Health Coverage of Immigrants</p> <p>Listen: Podcast: Reveal: Detained and Exposed</p> <p>Read: 2 Immigrant Paths: One Lead to Wealth, the Other Ended in Death in Atlanta</p>

Week 9 (10/24)	Impacts of COVID-19 on Indigenous Populations	<p>Read: A Hospital's Secret Coronavirus Policy Separated Native American Mothers From Their Newborns</p> <p>Read: Native American tribes struggle with coronavirus crisis</p> <p>Listen: Podcast: AMERICA DISSECTED: COVID in Indian Country</p>
Week 10 (10/31)	Racial Capitalism	<p>Read: America's Enduring Caste System</p> <p>Read: Banking on a Revolution: Calibrating the Financial System</p> <p>Listen: Podcast: 1619: The Economy That Slavery Built</p> <p>Read: 'I Had to Go Back' Over 55 and Not Retired After All</p>
Week 11 (11/7)	Disability & Financial Security	<p>Read: Disability 101: Employment Policies and Etiquette</p> <p>Read: Financial Stability of People with Disabilities</p> <p>Read: Advancing Economic Security for People With Disabilities</p> <p>Read: 'We Have Lost It All': The Shock Felt by Millions of Unemployed Americans</p> <p>Read: Financial Inequality: Disability, Race and Poverty in America</p>
Week 12 (11/14)	Unemployment & Economic Impacts of COVID-19	<p>Read: Coronavirus reopening older workers can't telecommute, raising risks</p> <p>Read: A Gloomy Prediction on How Much Poverty Could Rise</p> <p>Read: For Families Already Stretched to the Limit, the Pandemic Is a Disaster</p>
Week 13 (11/21)	THANKSGIVING RECESS	
Week 14 (11/28)	Economic Inequality Gap Widening: Rich vs Poor	<p>Read: Inflation is making homelessness worse</p> <p>Read: U.S. Income Inequality Worsens, Widening to a New Gap</p> <p>Read: African Americans Are Highly Visible in the Military, but Almost Invisible at the Top</p> <p>Read: It's Been Another Decade of</p>

		Income Inequality in the U.S.
Week 15 (12/5)	Future Implications for Reversing Extreme Inequality & Social Work Final Presentations	Read: Building a New Normal: Strategic Actions for Health Equity in a Post Pandemic World Read: Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Reduce Extreme Economic Inequality

c. Assignments

Assignments are due the Sunday prior to class on the due date unless otherwise stated. There will be no opportunities for extra credit. Professional social workers keep case records; write treatment reports for referral sources and managed care companies; correspond with judges and other professionals; develop policies and advocate for their clients. All these tasks require excellent writing skills. Therefore, proper grammar, syntax, spelling, and appropriate referencing (APA style) are expected for all assignments. Credit will be deducted from a paper's grade for gross and repeated writing, spelling, and referencing errors.

- All written assignments must be typed and double-spaced.
- Page number on each page.
- Be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise indicated.
- Be submitted on/before the due date/time; late papers will result in the deduction of 1/2 a letter grade.
- Follow an established academic convention for organization, pagination, footnoting, and bibliographic references (APA style).
- Review: <https://guides.lib.umich.edu/citationhelp> . Papers that do not comply with an established convention will be returned, and a penalty for late submission will apply. Consult the Student Guide to make sure you are citing others' work appropriately and not plagiarizing.

Assignment	Due date	Points/Percent of overall grade
Attendance and class participation (engagement)	Ongoing	75/25%
Case Study: Ta-Nehisi Coates on the Case For Reparations and Discrimination in Housing and Land Contracts	9/18/22 (11:59pm via Canvas)	75/25%
Public Health Campaign for Social Work Grand	10/30/22 (11:59pm via Canvas) Individual or group presentation	60/20%

Assignment	Due date	Points/Percent of overall grade
Challenges	due 10/31 9:00am	
Life Trajectory	12/4/22 (11:59pm via Canvas) Hard copy and oral presentation due 12/5/21 9:00am	90/30%
Total		300

d. Attendance and class participation

Both class attendance and active, purposeful, and high-quality participation in class discussion and activities are paramount for the successful completion of this course. If you must be absent for reasons beyond your control, please inform me, when possible, in advance. As a reflection of this importance, a significant proportion of the final grade will consist of course engagement according to the rubric below:

Criteria	Exemplary Performance	Points (75 max)
Frequency of participation in class	Student initiates contributions more than once in each class session, however, quality of comments is weighted over quantity. Student responds actively when invited by the instructor to contribute. Student does not comment overzealously or to the exclusion of other learners.	20
Quality of comments	Comments are always insightful & constructive. Student uses appropriate terminology when referring to individuals, communities, and cultural contexts. Comments are balanced between general impressions, opinions & specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions. Evidence is used to support arguments when possible. Comments are informative and relevant to the discussion at hand.	25
Listening Skills	Student listens attentively when others present materials and perspectives, and contribute comments that build on others' remarks. Student expresses disagreement in a professional and respectful manner.	30
Total		75

*Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence

Additional information regarding attendance may be found in the MSW Student Guide at [Policy on Class Attendance.](#)

e. Assignments

Case Study:

Ta-Nehisi – Coates on The Case For Reparations and Discrimination in Housing and Land Contracts. See instructions and rubric in Canvas.

Public Health Campaign for Social Work Grand Challenges:

- 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 or economic disparity identified.
- Can be completed with a group or individual

See rubric in Canvas.

Life Trajectory:

The purpose of this assignment is to engage with someone for an in-depth conversation (preferably over time) to as fully as possible, understand and document their life experiences. This trajectory should include the ways that economic stability or instability, broader social structures, policies, and institutions, discrimination and/or privilege, generational disadvantage or wealth, health or disability, social and cultural networks and capital, and all manner of challenges and opportunities have shaped their opportunities for personal and professional growth and fulfillment. 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). Use the power of storytelling to bring their journey to life and add polish. Finally, include an audio-visual component in the form of artwork or graphics, images, timelines, power point slides, or mini-podcast audio clips (with permission of the interviewee).

Word Maximum: 1000 words (Let the visuals/audio tell the rest of the story) and one 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 socio-historical context.	10
Conceptual integration from course material and discussions.	This trajectory should include the ways that economic stability or instability, broader social structures (e.g. education, criminal justice, etc.), policies, and institutions, discrimination and/or privilege, generational disadvantage or wealth, health or disability, social and cultural networks and capital, and all manner of challenges and opportunities have shaped their opportunities for personal and professional growth and fulfillment.	30
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 the interviewees, and using language that the general public can understand.	10

Visual Component	Up to three PowerPoint slides of images, art, timelines, other forms of real or representative visuals depicting themes or events of interviewee's life. Provide a brief description in "notes" section of slides describing items.	20
Total		90

*Adapted from J. Mitchell

f. Grading

Grades of A are given for exceptional individual performance and mastery of the material. The use of A, and A– distinguishes degrees of superior mastery. 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 which carries credit. D grades indicate deficiency and carry no credit. E grades indicate failure and carry no credit.

Each assignment will be given points in a corresponding letter grade, with criteria for each grade as follows:

A = 100 - 94	B = 86 - 84	C = 76 - 74
A - = 93 - 90	B- = 83 - 80	C- = 73 - 70
B+ = 89 - 87	C+ = 79 - 77	

Incompletes are given only when it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the stated time limits of the course. The Master of Social Work's Student Guidebook states that an I grade is used when illness or other compelling reasons prevent completion of work, and there is a definite plan and date for completion of course work approved by the instructor. The student must formally request an incomplete from the instructor prior to the final week of classes.

A Note on the Learning Environment:

The class is designed as a co-learning environment and one where class members are encouraged to try new skills and take risks. Your contribution as a "teacher and a learner" in the class will enhance the learning for all class members.

Quality social workers must be self-aware, self-reflective, and open to exploring our own histories and issues regarding any given concern or population. Be prepared to reflect on and explore your own family history, social systems, experiences, identity, cultural background and assumptions regarding all forms of diversity. There will be a variety of ways that students can do this through critical thinking, assignments and active participation in class discussions and activities.

Being honest, sensitive, and respectful to each other in preparation for quality social work practice is one of the learning environment goals. Please share opinions and feedback with others in discussions and exercises, and when you do so, please try to state them in a respectful and constructive manner.

Also, prepare yourself to hear varying opinions and feedback non-defensively, and to use those data or challenge them constructively. Please practice tolerance, not expecting yourself or your classmates to be polished in discussions about issues that can be challenging and confusing. We can expect to blunder and make mistakes in the classroom so that we are better prepared when we are in the field; **please honor and respect this process.**

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.

h. 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](#).

i. 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*