### Course Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Course title:</strong></th>
<th>SW505: Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course #/term:</strong></td>
<td>SW 505-801, Fall 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Live Class Meeting:</strong></td>
<td>6pm Tuesdays, via Zoom in Canvas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credit hours:</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prerequisites:</strong></td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructor:</strong></td>
<td>Dr. Laura Yakas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronouns:</strong></td>
<td>[She, her]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Contact info:** | Email: lyakas@umich.edu  
Phone: N/A working remotely abroad |
| **Office hours:** | On Zoom by appointment |

### 1. Course Statement

#### a. Course description

This required foundation course is designed to increase students’ awareness, knowledge, and critical skills related to diversity, human rights, social and economic justice. The topics of this course include developing a framework for 1) engaging diversity and differences in social work practice and 2) advancing human rights and social and economic justice. 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 developing skills in critical contextual thinking and analyses, and in praxis, learning to use knowledge and theory to recognize and critique underlying assumptions and paradigms, and inform working for change. Multiple kinds of boundaries 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

- CLO 1. Recognize the extent to which structures, policies, and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, create or enhance privilege and power (Essentials 14, 30, 33, 44).
- CLO 2. Explain the cumulative effect of structural discrimination on people with differing and multiple social identities and locations. (Essentials 11, 14, 29, 33, 38, 45)
• CLO 3. Distinguish between health differences and health disparities and provide relevant examples of each. (Essential 5,11,15,30)
• CLO 4. Discuss the policy reform sought by modern social justice movements in response to police brutality. (Essential 6,13,14,30,32,44)
• CLO 5. Recognize how policy decisions at the local, state, and national levels can exclude and endanger the environmental health of citizens when their voices are not heard or heeded. (Essential 5,13,22,29,30)
• CLO 6. 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)
• CLO 7. Define and apply your own positionalities and the importance of their intersections (Essential 38,42,45,46)
• CLO 8. Evaluate historical context and its current applications within the profession and practice as an ally. (Essential 6,11,15,29,39,44,45)

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 of their beliefs and perspectives. This course will work to create a climate that supports critical analyses, mutual learning, engaging within and across differences and examining sources of power and knowledge. It involves lectures, video, 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 PODS
This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of practice, theories 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.

e. My Experience and Teaching Style
A bit about me: I completed my PhD in anthropology and social work here at the University of Michigan in 2018. My main area of passion and experience is Disability Justice (especially the Mad Pride and Neurodiversity movements) and how this connects to other forms of anti-oppression like intersectional feminism, antiracism, and decolonization. I have devoted much energy to studying and teaching about oppression and anti-oppression using anthropology and the other social sciences. Anthropology is a discipline that aims to deeply understand humanity and human evolution, and I am passionate about bridging this with social work, a profession that aims to change humanity. I work as a lecturer in our SSW (here’s the link to my faculty profile), and I specialize in healing-centered social justice education.
Healing-Centered Teaching: I aim to co-create radically accessible and healing-centered learning communities. We will discuss this in more detail during our first class (please also see this video about my healing-centered pedagogy practice), but in our class you can expect:

1) **Choice** – to me it is important for students to have agency and to feel ownership over their learning journeys. Therefore, I offer you choices in this class; firstly, the “pre-work” for each Module features a list of materials designed to support your learning, and though you’re invited to use them all, depending on your capacity and learning pace you can choose which to prioritize (there are written descriptions of each material, which can help you prioritize); secondly, for the Discussion Posts and Journal Assignments, you are given multiple prompts to choose from; and you may choose up to 2 (of the 8) Journal Assignments to skip, up to 3 (of the 12) weekly Discussion Posts to skip, and you can miss up to 3 (of the 13) Zoom classes, without any point deductions. This translates to: over the course of the semester you are expected to do at least 6 of the 8 Journal Assignments; you are expected to do at least 9 of the 12 Discussion Posts; you are expected to attend/participate in at least 10 of the 13 Zoom classes.

2) **Flexibility** – to me, radical accessibility in a classroom means affirming different learning paces and styles, and making room for any barriers life throws our way, everything from the limitations of our own body-minds to the systemic barriers we face because we live in an ableist culture. I aim to co-create classes that are free of the common stressors of academia (such as perfectionism and anxiety about grades), and where students feel seen and cared for. My classes are “penalty-free zones,” which means that all course expectations and deadlines are flexible. All students need to do is let me know about any needs and barriers so I can support their learning. For example, you can email me if you need to miss a Zoom class so we can arrange a way to make up what is missed (such as watching a recording of the class later). If you need an extension for any assignment, I am always happy to offer that. If you need to tweak an assignment to better suit your learning style (e.g. doing an assignment verbally instead of in writing), we can do that too. I do not believe in “laziness” (I resonate a lot with this article titled “Laziness does not exist: unseen barriers do”), I believe everyone learns at their own pace and that an oppressive culture like ours can create barriers to learning. These barriers are easier to move through when there is honest communication about them!

3) **Transparency / Radical Authenticity** – and speaking of honest communication, I aim to co-create learning communities that feature transparent and authentic communication. I bring my full and vulnerable self into our class, and I invite this from students too. With authenticity, we can challenge the hidden curriculum of academia and the oppressive norms that ask us to be inauthentic. For example, you don’t need to pretend “I have a technology issue, so I can’t come to class” when you really feel overwhelmed and stressed - you can be honest, and I can reassure you that your need for rest and self-care is valid (or as I like to say; *in this community, we respect any "no" from our body-minds*)! Or, you don’t need to pretend you agree with me or the other students all the time - you can be honest about differing perspectives, and an exploration of our
differences might lead to deepened understanding and empathy! In sum: students are invited to speak their truths. Not only can this help us feel belonging, but it can also support healing and anti-oppression, and make our time together more enjoyable :)

f. **Course Logistics**

1. **Announcements**: On every day that we meet for Zoom Class, you will receive a “Plan of the Day” Announcement on Canvas, which will tell you what to expect for our meeting that day. You will also receive a “Debrief” Announcement after the Zoom session has ended, where I will share the slides from the class. Please be sure that you have Canvas announcements enabled (in Canvas under Account → Notifications → Announcement).

2. **Content warnings**: in the service of our collective learning and growth, this course explores a variety of potentially activating topics. Instead of providing specific content warnings for each assigned piece (a difficult feat given that "activating" is subjective), I urge you to take care of yourselves however and whenever necessary, and please feel free to reach out to me if you need to process anything that comes up for you.

3. **Expected Time Commitment**: at our school a 3-credit class amounts to 135 hours of expected time commitment over the semester. This includes all synchronous and asynchronous work, such as Zoom classes, exploring assigned materials, and assignments. For our class, this averages to approximately **10 hours per week**.

4. **Accommodations for Disabled students / my fellow "spoonies"**: as mentioned in the previous section on Healing-centered teaching, I am committed to **radical accessibility** in my learning communities. Please let me know by email if you have any specific needs. We can work together informally, or if you wish, you can include the **Services for Students with Disabilities Office/SSD**.

5. **Religious observations**: please let me know if you have any religious observations that I should be aware of (for example, if you need to miss a Zoom class).

6. **Paywalls**: some of the readings for this course are on websites (like New York Times) that have paywalls. If you find that you can't access a reading on the website due to a paywall, please search the title on our **Library website**, as our school has paid subscriptions.

2. **Class Requirements**

a. **Text and class materials**
- All required and suggested readings will be provided on Canvas in the form of links to external sites (e.g. news, video, podcast), or PDFs.

b. **Class schedule**

**Note**: Any changes to the course schedule will be communicated via announcement in class and/or on Canvas. Please see the Canvas Modules for the links to assigned materials, and for assignment due dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Read-Watch-Listen (SEE CANVAS FOR LINKS)</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>Resources for</td>
<td>Read Racial Equity Tools Glossary</td>
<td>DISCUSSION POST #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Discussion Post</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td>#2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Intersectionality</td>
<td></td>
<td>#3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Closing the Health Gap</td>
<td></td>
<td>#4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Future Implications for Closing the Health Gap</td>
<td></td>
<td>#5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>End Homelessness</td>
<td></td>
<td>#6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Read and Watch Links</td>
<td>Journal Assignment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 7      | Future Implications for Ending Homelessness | **Read** She’s 91 and Is Being Kicked Out of Her Apartment  
**Watch** Home Saves Your Life: Bill’s Story  
**Watch** Gray Tsunami: More seniors filling homeless shelters  
**Watch** Housing Insecurity | JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT: TA-NEHISI COATS ON THE CASE FOR REPARATIONS |
| 8      | Environmental Justice | **Read** End Homelessness Grand Challenge  
**Read** How Health and Homelessness are Connected—Medically  
**Watch** What Happens If You Can’t Pay Rent? | DISCUSSION POST #7 |
| 9      | Economic Inequality | **Read** What is Environmental Justice?  
**Read** Key terms in Environmental Philosophy  
**Read** 10 egregious examples of environmental racism in the US  
**Read** Environmental Justice: The Intersection of Social Equality and Environmentalism  
**Read** Patriarchy and speciesism  
**Read** Trump’s EPA Concludes Environmental Racism Is Real  
**Read** Intersections of Police, Racism and the Environment  
**Watch** Environmental Justice | DISCUSSION POST #8 |
| 10     | Future Implications for Reversing Economic Inequality | **Read** Reversing Extreme Inequality Grand Challenge  
**Read** Teaching About King’s Radical Approach to Social Justice  
**Read** Is Economic Inequality Really a Problem? | DISCUSSION POST #10 |
| 11     | Policing & Community Relations | **Read** How Did We Get Here?  
**Read** A Teenager Didn’t Do Her Online Schoolwork. So a Judge Sent Her to Juvenile Detention.  
**Read** What Is Owed  
**Listen to** Podcast - The Ezra Klein Show: Why Ta-Nehisi Coates is hopeful  
**Listen to** Podcast - The evidence on crime and policing  
**Listen to** Podcast - A Conversation With a Police Union Leader | DISCUSSION POST #11 |
Listen to Podcast - Race, policing, and the universal yearning for safety
Watch Intersection Disability Racism Police Violence
Watch Police and Community Relations

Module 12
Resources & Activities for Allyship
Read Mapping Our Social Change Roles in Times of Crisis
Read 4 tips for talking to people you disagree with
Read Calling In: A Quick Guide on When and How
Read Opinion: I’m a Black Feminist. I Think Call-Out Culture Is Toxic
Read A Not-So-Brief Personal History of the Healing Justice Movement, 2010–2016
Watch What is Transformative Justice?
Watch Allyship

Module 13
Course Wrap-Up
No assigned materials

C. Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoom Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>13 x 10 points=130 points</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>See below (section d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>12 x 5 points= 60 points</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>See Canvas for topics, due dates, and rubric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Assignments</td>
<td>8 X 10 points =80 points</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>See Canvas for topics, due dates, and rubric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Trajectory Final Project</td>
<td>30 points</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>See Canvas for assignment prompts, due date, and rubric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300 points</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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d. Attendance Policy and Zoom Class Participation

Attendance and participation is worth 10 points for each Zoom class (which means 130 points total for the 13 weeks of class). In line with my Healing-centered teaching style, points are not deducted for up to three absences as long as you communicate the following:
- When possible, please email me in advance to let me know if you need to miss a Zoom class.
- If you are unable to let me know beforehand, please reach out to me afterwards to let me know what happened.
I will not be monitoring your attendance (as you’ll see below, that is part of your responsibility as a student in this class), but if I notice that you are regularly absent, here is what may happen:

- I may reach out to you to check in and see what the barriers are to your attendance.
- If I do not hear back from you and you continue to miss classes, I may reach out to someone in the Office of Student Services to have them check in on you.

I recognize that participation can look like a lot of different things (it can look like sharing verbally, but it can also look like listening and thinking quietly). I also recognize that our capacity for participation varies based on a lot of personal life factors. Y’all know your circumstances and participation styles better than I do, so for attendance and participation, I use an “ungrading” strategy that’s designed to give students more agency over their learning journey. What this means is that you are expected to self-evaluate your Zoom class participation instead of the traditional situation where I evaluate you based on criteria that I've created, and which may fail to account for the nuances of your situation.

At the end of the semester, I will ask you each to send me an email telling me:

- I want to know about your attendance, how often you came to class. For example, “I was present every class” or “I missed 2 classes (please include the dates), and I emailed you about it (ideally!) and watched the video afterwards.”
- I want a brief self-reflection/self-evaluation about your participation. For example, “I contributed to class discussions in these ways:__ / or “I engaged in our classes in these ways:__” Basically, I want to know your perspective about your engagement and participation in our Zoom classes. Did you meet your goals for how you wanted to show up? Did you give to this class what you hoped to give, and get from it what you hoped to get? If not, what were the barriers?
- Zoom participation has 130 possible points (10 points for each of the 13 weeks). Please tell me how many points you feel you earned?

Once I receive your email, I'll respond, and we will dialogue and agree on an appropriate grade!

e. Grading

Final grades are based on 100 percentage points. Letter grades are assigned to point totals according to the following:

100 - 94 = A
93 - 90 = A-
89 - 87 = B+
86 - 84 = B
83 - 80 = B-
79 - 77 = C+
76 - 74 = C
73 - 70 = C-
69 - 67 = D+

8
66 - 64 = D
63 - 60 = D-
59 and below = E

f. 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.

g. 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. 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.

h. 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