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 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.

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 each Discussion Post and Journal Assignment, you are given multiple prompts to choose from; finally, you are only expected to do 6 of the 8 Journal Assignments and 9 of the 12 Discussion Posts, so you may choose which topics resonate with you the most.

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 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 :)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Read-Watch-Listen (SEE CANVAS FOR LINKS)</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Module 1 | Critical Race Theory and Anti-Racism | **Read** Racial Equity Tools Glossary  
**Watch** Critical Race Theory episode of Last Week Tonight (and accompanying follow-up resources) | DISCUSSION POST #1                |
| Module 2 | Culture and Oppression               | **Read** Cultural Competence or Cultural Humility? Moving Beyond the Debate  
**Read** Cultural Relativism  
**Read** NASW code of ethics  
**Watch** assigned Robert Sapolsky videos  
**Watch** The "Other and Oppress" propensity  
**Watch** Cultural Appropriation vs. Appreciation | DISCUSSION POST #2  
JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT: ANTI-RACIST PARENTING |
| Module 3 | Intersectionality                    | **Read** The intersectionality wars  
**Read** why our feminism must be intersectional  
**Read** The Gender Unicorn  
**Listen to** On Being with Krista Tippett - Imani Perry: The Fabric of Our Identity  
**Watch** Unpacking Intersectionality  
**Watch** Intersectional Challenges  
**Watch** What is Intersectional Feminism?  
**Watch** The Urgency of Intersectionality | DISCUSSION POST #3  
JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT: LGBTQ+ & DISCRIMINATIOD |
| Module 4 | Closing the Health Gap               | **Read** Health Equity: Eradicating Health Inequalities for Future  
**Read** Racial disparities in COVID-19 outcomes: Unwarranted statistical adjustments and the perpetuation of stereotypes  
**Read** Critical Disability Studies Terminology  
**Read** I’m a psychologist – and I believe we’ve been told devastating lies about mental health  
**Read** What is Disability Justice?  
**Listen to** Ableism and Racism: Roots of the Same Tree  
**Watch** Bias in Medicine episode of Last Week Tonight  
**Watch** Social and Cultural Determinants of Health | DISCUSSION POST #4                |
| Module 5 | Future Implications for Closing the Health Gap | **Read** Structural Competency Meets Structural Racism: Race, Politics, and the Structure of Medical Knowledge  
**Read** Peer support, Mad Pride, and Disability Justice  
**Read** 28 Ways to Make the World Less Hostile to Mad, Neurodivergent, and Psychiatrically Disabled People  
**Read** Advancing Health Equity: A Guide to Language, Narrative, and Concepts (Links to an external site.)  
**Read** Why Person-First Language Doesn’t Always Put the Person First  
**Read** Building a New Normal: Strategic Actions for Health Equity in a Post Pandemic World | DISCUSSION POST #5  
JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT: SICK WOMAN THEORY |
**Read** She’s 10, Homeless and Eager to Learn. But She Has No Internet. | DISCUSSION POST #6                |
| Module 7 | Future Implications for Ending Homelessness | Read Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people  
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 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Module 8 | Environmental Justice | Read End Homelessness Grand Challenge  
Read The National Coalition for the Homeless  
Read How Health and Homelessness are Connected—Medically  
Watch Homelessness episode of Last Week Tonight  
Watch What Happens If You Can’t Pay Rent? | DISCUSSION POST #7 |
| Module 9 | Economic Inequality | 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 Intersections of Police, Racism and the Environment  
Watch Environmental Justice video lecture  
Watch Environmental Racism episode of Last Week Tonight | DISCUSSION POST #8 |
| Module 10 | Future Implications for Reversing Economic Inequality | Read Reversing Extreme Inequality Grand Challenge  
Read Teaching About King’s Radical Approach to Social Justice  
Read Wealth is the Missing Piece: If you want to talk about student loan cancellation, you have to talk about wealth  
Listen What it would take to end child poverty in America | DISCUSSION POST #10 |
| Module 11 | Policing & Community Relations | Read How Did We Get Here?  
Read What Is Owed  
Read Defunding the Police  
Listen to The evidence on crime and policing  
Listen to Race, policing, and the universal yearning for safety  
Watch Intersection Disability Racism Police Violence  
Watch Police episode of Last Week Tonight  
Watch What is Transformative Justice? | DISCUSSION POST #11 |
| 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 I’m a Black Feminist. I Think Call-Out Culture Is Toxic  
Read Excommunicate me from the church of social justice!  
Read A Not-So-Brief Personal History of the Healing Justice Movement, 2010–2016  
Watch What is Transformative Justice?  
Watch Allyship | DISCUSSION POST #12 |
|---|---|---|
| Module 13 | Course Wrap-Up | No assigned materials | LIFE TRAJECTORY ASSIGNMENT  
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION |

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>
</table>

d. **Attendance Policy and Zoom Class Participation**

**Attendance:** I do not monitor student attendance, as that can be disempowering and micro-managing, and therefore antithetical to my healing-centered teaching practice. Instead, I empower you all to track your own attendance each week, and keep a written record of your attendance over the term. Please remember to do this, as you'll be asked to share your attendance record with me at the end of term!

In line with my healing-centered teaching practice, points are not deducted for missing (or arriving late to) class as long as the following conditions are met:

- When possible, please email me in advance to let me know if you need to miss or arrive late to a Zoom class. If it is not possible to email before, email me as soon as possible afterwards to let me know what happened.
• We will then discuss how to make up the missed content (e.g., watching the recording of our class, etc).

And although I am not going to monitor attendance, if I do notice that you are regularly late or 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 the behavior continues, I may reach out to someone in the Office of Student Services to have them check in on you.

**Participation:** I recognize that class participation can appear in many ways. It can be more active (like sharing thoughts and asking questions) but it can also be more passive (like listening and thinking). I also recognize that our capacity for and styles of participation can vary a lot based on our circumstances and life experiences (e.g., folks who experience “imposter syndrome” might behave more passively). You all know yourselves and your participation styles better than I do, so for participation I use an “ungrading” strategy that’s designed to empower you and encourage development of important social work skills like critical self-reflection. What this means is that you will be asked to self-evaluate your Zoom class participation instead of the traditional situation where I evaluate you.

At the beginning of the semester, I will invite you to set goals for how you want to engage/participate in our class, reflecting on:
• What is your usual participation style in classes? Are you more active (e.g., do you often share your thoughts/ask questions?) or are you more passive (e.g., do you listen but not share often?). And why is this your usual participation style? What factors lead you to being more active or passive?
• In this class it is important to participate actively as well as passively, so if you are not used to active participation, what can you do build that skill and confidence? And what can we (as your class community) do to support that?
• What are your engagement goals for this class (i.e., how do you want to show up?) and how will you know if you have met these goals?

At the end of the semester, I will ask you to send me an email telling me:
• Your attendance record, i.e., how often you came to class, and what you did to make up when you missed class. For example, you could write: “I was present every class” or “I missed 2 classes (please include the dates), and I emailed you about it and watched the video afterwards.”
• A brief self-reflection/self-evaluation of your participation, reflecting back on the goals you set at the beginning. How did you contribute to and engage in our Zoom classes? Did you meet the goals you set for showing up in our class? If not, what were the barriers that prevented this, and what lessons can you take from that experience and apply to your next class?
• 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. I might encourage you to be more confident in your self-evaluation (e.g., sometimes I feel students are overly self-critical, and we end up agreeing to a higher grade than they originally propose), or I might suggest a more humble approach (e.g., sometimes I feel students are overly self-confident, and we end up agreeing to a lower grade than they originally propose).

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+
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