

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number: SW 381S

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**FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE:
VALUES, DIVERSITY, POWER & OPPRESSION**

I. Course Description

This course is based the following assumptions: 1) membership in a population-at-risk group (e.g., people of color, women, gay and lesbian persons) significantly influences an individual's life experiences, world view, and increases risk factors for exposure to discrimination, economic deprivation, and oppression; 2) professional social work ethics and values demand culturally competent practice; 3) it is necessary for students to learn to apply social justice approaches to influence assessment, planning, access to resources, intervention, and research; and 4) professionals and programs have strategies to critically analyze distributive justice, human and civil rights, and global interconnections of oppression. There is an emphasis in this course on the impact of discrimination and oppression by individuals and society on people of culturally diverse backgrounds and orientations.

II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course the students will be able to:

1. Critique and apply social justice approaches to influence assessment, planning, access of resources, intervention, and research;
2. Demonstrate familiarity with the history and heritage of population-at-risk groups, including women and culturally diverse populations, globally as well as those prevalent in the southwestern region of the United States;
3. Understand the social construction of race and ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation;

4. Examine the personal and professional use of self in ethical, culturally competent, and socially just social work practices; and,

5. Assess the impact of discrimination (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia), and oppression on public policy, institutional structure, service delivery, and one's own role in promoting social and economic justice.

III. TEACHING METHODS

The content of this course has the potential to be emotionally-charged. Guidelines will be established collaboratively by students and the instructor to create a respectful, safe and challenging learning environment. The instructor has the ultimate responsibility to manage differences and conflict that arise in the course. The instructor will incorporate a variety of teaching methods, including readings, lectures, discussions, audiovisual materials, guest speakers, small group activities, experiential learning exercises and student presentations. A variety of populations-at-risk groups will also be used to critically examine a social justice framework, with emphasis on values, diversity, power and oppression.

IV. REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS, AND MATERIALS

Naylor, L. L. (Ed.) (1997). *Cultural diversity in the United States*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Required journal articles and book chapter and other excerpts listed in "Text/Readings" under the course schedule (section VII of the syllabus).

The recommended reference list at the end of your syllabus provides examples of readings focusing on populations-at-risk to consider in completing course assignments.

The following selected readings will also be placed on reserve in the Learning Resource Center (LRC) and on electronic reserves (as instructor announces). These will be particularly useful for the Self Study and the Immersion Assignments.

The following chapters are taken from the books and :

(1) *Ethnicity and Family Therapy* by Monica McGoldrick, John Pearce, and Joseph Giordano (2001), The Guilford Press, New York; and

(2) Galens, J., Sheets, A., & Young, R. V. (1995). *Encyclopedia of multicultural America*, vols. 1 and 2. Detroit, MI: Gale Research

Ch 12 German Families, Ch 13 Greek Families, Ch 14 Iranian Families, Ch.15 Irish Families, Ch 16 Italian Families, Ch 17 Jewish Families, Ch 18 Polish Families, Ch 19 Portuguese Families, and Ch 20 Norwegian Families.

V. Course Requirements

Students will be evaluated on the following required assignments, as well as in-class participation and contribution.

1. Attendance, Preparation, Contribution (10% of grade)

Students are expected to attend all classes, participate meaningfully in class discussion and exercises, and call upon life experiences and course readings for contributions.

It is important for social workers to be aware of group dynamics including peer groups in which they participate. It is also important to contribute to the group process. A portion of the grade for this course will depend on your level of attendance, preparation, participation, and contribution. For some, this means learning to speak up, to add comments or to raise questions. For others, it means being sensitive and allowing others to contribute.

Policy on Absence for Religious Holidays:

<http://www.utexas.edu/cee/uex/resources/model.shtml>

The UT *General Information* catalog states that "A student who is absent from a class or examination for the observance of a religious holy day may complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, if proper notice has been given" (p.79).

Notice must be given at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates the student will be absent. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, notice should be given on the first day of the semester.

2. Self Study Paper (25% of grade)

The Self-Study Paper is assigned to address course objectives #2, 3, and 4, and to heighten awareness of your own identity in relation to other cultural groups considered in this course.

Your paper should address the questions: Who am I? Who do others think I am? How do I imagine others see me? What judgments do I imagine they make about what they see? How do I feel about others' reactions to me? Who would I like to be or how would I like to be seen? You are to describe your cultural background, values, and beliefs associated with your group identities, and discuss how these attributes and dimensions of who you are influence your attitudes toward and interactions with others who are "different," as well as their attitudes toward and interactions with you. This paper is to be about 6-10 typed pages plus a reference page(s) with a minimum of 8-10 academic citations incorporated into your work and reference page. *Self-Study Paper is due the beginning of class, Week 4 September 23rd. You are urged to begin working on this*

paper immediately. See Day 1 in-class handout as well as list of Assignments on Blackboard for a detailed description of this assignment.

3. Immersion Experience and Reflection Paper (35% of grade)

The Immersion Assignment is designed to address course objectives #1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, by providing an opportunity for students to listen to various manifestations of the voices of people from a population for which students have little, no, or negatively charged familiarity. It is an opportunity to gain insight into the perspective and world of the other while simultaneously immersing in the values and ethical mandates of the social work profession.

Students will (1) interview a social worker or community leader (business owner, teacher, police officer, faculty member, city counsel person, minister, priest, etc.) from the community selected for this project, (2) solicit the help as “guide to the culture,” of a person from a population-at-risk group with which they are unfamiliar, and attend three different culturally relevant events. The assignment culminates in a research based paper about the sum of these immersion experiences. Students should remember to cover the intersection between class-gender-power-privilege-race in their interviews, and consider its manifestation in events and the paper.

The purpose of this assignment is to observe and experience a constellation of issues a person from a population-at-risk group different from your own. **Prior to the immersion experience students are asked to submit a type written plan to your instructor for approval (no later than Sept. 23rd)**. Subsequent to the immersion experience, students are asked to write a 12-15 page final paper composed of a graduate level (i.e. reflecting critical thinking and informed by the research literature) reflection on the shadowing experience and implications for applying social justice approaches to influence assessment, planning, access to resources, intervention, and research. Grounded in how the “host” perceives such issues, examine the current day oppression for this group and privilege for other groups in relation to this group’s oppression.

In this paper it is intended that you demonstrate an understanding of the textual material, the ability to research concepts and ideas, and present them in professionally written form. Cogent integration of what was learned through research, thoughtful interaction/questions posed to the person shadowed/culture immersed in, and a depth of consideration of micro, meso, and macro level challenges facing the group being studied should be reflected in the immersion experience reflection paper. I will be looking for this “depth” as it manifests in your questions and throughout your paper, in my grading of your paper.

A separate handout with a more detailed assignment description will be provided by your instructor and also put into the course Blackboard Assignment listing.

Due Friday, Dec. 2.

4. Weekly One-Page Reaction Paper (30% of grade)

Students will be expected to have read all required readings prior to each class and write a brief (1 page) reaction to these readings each week. While one goal is to ensure students keep up with the weekly reading, a further purpose of this assignment is to enhance your ability to process material encountered in and outside of class and your overall learning experience. The one-page, typed, single spaced, indented paragraphs (no extra space between paragraphs), 12-pt. Times font, one inch margins all around, paper is due at the beginning of class each week as a way to (1) cut down on student silence in class as many of us opt to mull over our thoughts when we feel compelled to discuss such touchy issues "off the cuff," with out some time to formulate a thoughtful reaction (this is not to say I expect stiff, formal, or only political correctness in class discussions);(2) to facilitate class discussions by add depth of thought to the in class component; and (3) to give students greater opportunities to share concerns about issues raised by this class.

Reaction papers will be due at the beginning of the class session for the week of the assigned reading material indicated on the syllabus. For example, a reaction paper is due on Friday, September 9, on either the "Trafficking thrives in U.S." article (handout), or Chapter 1 "Culture and Cultural Groupings," or Chapter 2 "Multiculturalism: Issues for the Twenty-First Century," from the required Naylor text. (Note that both chapters and the article are required reading, and students are required to write a reaction paper that provides a depth of analysis of one of the readings or demonstrates an integration of themes across several assigned readings.).

This paper is not a summary of the articles you read but a brief commentary in which you demonstrate your abilities of critical thinking. Writing style expectations are not as strict or formal for this assignment. I will not be expecting APA style, for example, unless you've taken time to find supportive citations for a critique or stance you are taking on an issue presented in assigned reading. Be sure to indicate which readings you are responding to. Your critical analysis, evaluation, comments, questions, and/or suggestions for the raised issue are required. This really is a place for you to reflect about what the readings suggest about the population(s) affected by the issue(s) discussed (can you hear the issue in their voices?), and what this all means in relation to your identity and growth as a professional social worker. Feel free to related what you view in a video, such at Postville, to the readings of the week you viewed the video or readings of the subsequent week following the video.

Bring two copies of your reaction papers to our Friday class sessions so that you can hand one in and use your copy to jog your memory about the readings and facilitate your contributions to the discussion. Late papers will not be accepted without a legitimate excuse, which in most (not necessarily all as emergencies do happen) cases means pre-class session arrangement which instructor or TA has agreed to.

First reaction paper due Fri., Sept. 9th. No paper due Oct. 21, Nov. 11. Final paper due on Dec. 9th, last day of class. For weeks where we will view a video, significant effort has been made so that the readings and the content of the video overlap/inform each other. This permits an even richer reaction paper response.

In case of absence, students are responsible for turning in Reaction paper via email or to the main desk in SSW or Main 101 in a reasonable amount of time before the next class session.

Overall Criteria for Evaluating All Student Assignments

Your written work should be well-conceptualized and researched, clearly organized (I do require subheaders), and supported by examples and details. Show evidence of your own creative and thoughtful analysis. Papers should follow the APA style format. Additional criterion and evaluation guidelines will also be provided. While the reactions themselves will not be formally graded, promptness of submission at the beginning of each class session, and the overall quality and depth of thought of students' critiques and reflections will be considered in assigning final grade.

Grading and Weighting of Assignments

Attendance, Preparation, Contribution	10%	
Self Study Paper	25%	(due Sept. 23)
Immersion Experience and Reflection Paper	35%	(due Dec. 2)
Weekly Reaction Paper	30%	(Starting Sept. 9)

FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS +/- GRADES WILL BE ASSIGNED AS FOLLOWS:

A = 100-94, **A-** = 93-90, **B+** = 89-87, **B** = 86-84, **B-** = 83-80, **C+** = 79-77, **C** = 76-74, **C-** = 73-70, **D+** = 69-67, **D** = 66-64, **D-** = 63-60, **F** = 59 and below

A = Significantly exceeds assignment/performance expectations (evidence of critical thinking and analysis that resulted in work additional to that laid out in the assignment directions);

B = Assignment/overall performance in course meets all the requirements with evidence of critical thinking and analysis (i.e. coherence and integration of ideas);

C = Average. Assignment/performance meets all the requirements but lacks evidence of in depth thinking and analysis;

D = There are important gaps in the assignment/performance both in terms of requirements and critical thinking and analysis.

VI. CLASS POLICIES

1. It is important for social work practitioners to be punctual in both attendance and in meeting deadlines. Therefore, class attendance is expected, as is handing in assignments on time. Students will lose 3 points for each day that an assignment is

- late. Any adjustments in due dates must be discussed with the instructor at least 24 hours PRIOR to the regularly scheduled due date.
2. Students who fail to attend class on a regular basis (missing more than one class without a valid excuse, e.g., medical documentation) may receive one or more course grades lower than their final grade when points are totaled.
 3. Social work practitioners assume responsibility for themselves. Therefore, it is expected that work handed in will be your own. Scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating during examinations, violates social work values and will result in recommendation for dismissal from the social work program and a referral to the Dean of Student's Office.
 4. Social work practitioners are assertive and function as team members. Therefore, feedback about the course is welcome and the course will be viewed as a joint effort between students and the instructor.
 5. Social work practitioners respect others. Therefore, differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected.
 6. As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.
 7. The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY.

VII. WEEK 1-4 COURSE SCHEDULE (REMAINDER OF SCHEDULED FORTHCOMING)

Date	Description/Due Dates	Text / Readings
Week 1 9/2/05	Course Overview and Introductions	Marsh (2004) "Social Work in a Multicultural Society" (handout) NASW (2001) Standards for Cultural Competence (handout)
Week 2 9/9/05	Defining Social Justice (Video: Los Trabajadores) First Weekly Reaction paper due	"Trafficking thrives in U.S." 2005 Daily Texan article (handout), Naylor Chapter 1 "Culture and Cultural Groupings," Chapter 2 "Multiculturalism: Issues for the Twenty-First Century," Reisch, M. (2002) "Defining Social Justice in a Socially Unjust World" (handout)
Week 3 9/16/05	Social Movements and the Politics of Difference (Video: Postville: When Cultures Collide)	Kerchis & Young (2006) Social movements and the politics of difference (LRC), Moore (2006) Racism in the English language (handout), Naylor Chapter 3 "We call ourselves 'Americans,'" Chapter 7 "When White Americans are a minority"
Week 4 9/23/05	Considering issues of "Class" in America (Video: Wage Slaves: Not Getting By in America) SELF STUDY PAPER DUE	The New York Times "Class Matters" Series, May 15, "Shadowy lines that still divide," and May 16 "Life at the top in America isn't just better, it's longer" (handout)

Week 5 9/30/05	Environmental Racism: The clash of class, race/ethnic communities and business cultures (Video: Fenceline)	Naylor Chapter 8 “The illusion of Ethnic Identity,” and Chapter 19 “Business and Organizational Culture“ Pincus (2000) “Discrimination Comes in Many Forms” ^E
Week 6 10/7/05	Women People with Disabilities (Video: Borderline)	Naylor Chapter 18 “Deaf American Culture” Heise (1989) “The Global War Against Women” (handout) Pharr (1988) “The Common Elements of Oppressions” ^E
Week 7 10/14/05	Education, Diversity, and American Culture (Video: A Class Divided)	Naylor Chapter 22 Education, Diversity, and American Culture” Young (2000) “Five Faces of Oppression” ^E
Week 8 10/21/05	Out of Class Immersion Assignment—Assignment No Formal Class	Relevant resources from course bibliography, readings, and text
Week 9 10/28/05	Religion and Social Work (Video: School Prayer)	Readings TBA
Week 10 11/4/05	GLBTQ	Naylor Chapter 14 “Gender Identity,” and Chapter 15 “Of Prejudice and Pride” Markowitz (1997) “The Cultural Context of Intimacy” ^E Sullivan & Wilson “Should Same-Sex Marriages be Legally Recognized?” ^E

Week 11 11/11/05	NASW-TX in Galveston, TX No Formal Class Session	
Week 12 11/18/05	SW Practice in Context of Ethnic/Racial Difference (Video: The Color of Fear)	Naylor Chapter 21 “Social Work Practice with Ethnic Mionrity Persons”
11/25/05	Holiday Break	
Week 13 12/2/05	Next Steps Immersion Assignment Due	Naylor Chapter 23 “Practical Consideration for Living and Working in Contexts of Diversity
Week 14 12/9/05	Wrap Up	

“E” Electronic documents will be available as soon as TA and Instructor are trained to do so.

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Class Discussion And Rules of Participation:

The primary objective of this course is learning through dialogue. Assignments and in class discussions are designed to provide class participants an opportunities to articulate their own views and experiences with the goal of promoting self-exploration and awareness among discussion participants. A further goal is to highlight the **guidelines for having such interactive discussions** of some of the most difficult topics in our society so that students are prepared to more effectively negotiate “diversity,” in their field and subsequent work and life settings.

Ground Rules - Class participation and Discussions

The purpose of these rules is to assist and encourage contributions from the largest number of students possible – safely. We are all encouraged that “safety” is an “ideal,” and that **there is a big difference between “comfort,” and “safety.”** Our clients should not be responsible for making us feel comfortable when race, religion, sexual orientation, class, gender, etc. are issues that impact how they are treated.

- Controversy is not always bad. It can be a tool to promote learning because the situation itself forces complex thinking and effective communication, and can result in more tolerant attitudes towards different points of view.
- Remember your role in this course/school is to be open minded and a respectful learner.
- Remember your goal in discussions of the ‘isms and other issues of diversity is to learn rather than WIN; to risk a little to grow rather than protect to stay the same; to realize there are generally two or more ways to look at a situation/issue; to build relationships not tear them down; to look for and allow possibilities; to illuminate similarities and understand and appreciate differences; to break down assumptions and stereotypes; to give each other strength and courage to go on in the face of the challenge you will all encounter in this great and important profession
- Everyone sets their own boundaries for self disclosure with a commitment to pushing the envelope and not sticking with the status quo...stretching and challenging oneself is key for such a course to be meaningful
- Speak from experience and avoid generalizations about groups
- Respect confidentiality

- Personal information shared in the group, stays within the group.
- Allow others equal time to speak and acknowledge what was said before moving on
- Avoid, or rather everyone agree to observe when the response to a participant is criticizing, judging, patronizing, etc. and agree to work on reducing and eliminating these tendencies in our response set
- Respect other's developmental process, and rights to express and form their own opinions
- Listen to others without interrupting
- Refrain from blaming or scapegoating others
- Focus on your own learning
- **Amnesty**: a general pardon granted by a government, especially for political offenses; an act of clemency by an authority (your profession and your peers); a period during which offenders are exempt from punishment.
- Granting amnesty does not absolve your instructor of the responsibility to use every available opportunity to correct misinformation, misinterpretation and other challenges in thinking that will impair students' abilities to think and practice according to NASW cultural diversity standards and to provide culturally competent services.