

**WAYNE STATE  
UNIVERSITY**  

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**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SW 3110: DIVERSITY/OPPRESSION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**MASTER SYLLABUS**

**I COURSE DOMAIN AND BOUNDARIES**

This course focuses on issues of diversity, oppression and social justice. It is designed to prepare social work students to be knowledgeable of people's biases based on race, ethnicity, culture, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, social and economic status, political ideology, disability and how these contribute to discrimination and oppression. Students will learn about diverse cultures, family structure, roles, immigration and assimilation experiences of marginalized groups. Students will also learn about the influence of dominant culture on these diverse and marginalized (population at risk) groups.

Additionally, this course will examine the adaptive capabilities and strengths of these marginalized groups and how such capabilities and strengths can be used in effective social work practice. The course will assist social work students in understanding the complex nature of the person in the environment taking into consideration the dynamics of social oppression, diversity and social functioning. Students will explore their own personal values, beliefs, and behaviors that may limit their ability to practice effective social work with people of diverse backgrounds, in particular, disadvantaged and oppressed persons. This course utilizes a systems and ecological perspective which provides a basis for analysis of the social and physical environment as well as the political reality of diverse populations.

**II SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES**

1. Students will be able to describe the dynamics of working with a wide range of people who are culturally different or similar to themselves.
2. Students will be able to describe and assess how discrimination and oppression impact the lives of people of color and other marginal populations in the United States.
3. Students will analyze the relationships among power, privilege and oppression among marginalized and nonmarginalized populations.
4. Student will be able to identify theoretical frameworks/perspectives that facilitate the understanding of oppression in its varied forms.

5. Students will gain an understanding of the needs and services of diverse populations and the dilemmas they experience in accessing social services
6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the impact of personal values and professional social work values and ethics in working with diverse populations and awareness of the potential for value conflicts.
7. Students will gain an understanding of the role research plays in understanding the needs of marginalized and oppressed populations and in generating the assets that increase the resilience and options of oppressed populations.

### **III SPECIFIC SKILL OBJECTIVES**

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of advocacy and empowerment skills in their work with clients.
2. Students will recognize and combat stereotypes, myths and discriminatory attitudes and practices held by individuals and institutions.
3. Students will critically assess client systems (individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities) in which cultural norms and behaviors are evaluated as strengths and differentiated from problematic or symptomatic behaviors.
4. Students will develop skills in creating an environment that demonstrates develops respect for human diversity.
5. Students will develop skills to create strategies to advocate for social, political, legal, and economic justice for oppressed populations.
6. Students will critically examine their personal traits attitudes, and values regarding human diversity and evaluate their compatibility with the values of the social work profession.

### **IV EXPECTATIONS:**

Students will fully participate in the classroom activities and discussion as well as complete all outside classroom assignments. Each participant will demonstrate a sincere effort through verbal and written assignments to understand the origin and possible impact of their own beliefs, values and behaviors and to challenge and change those that may be contrary to professional social work ethics relative to diversity and oppression.

Students are expected to attend all class sessions punctually. The instructor should be notified of unavoidable absences. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, a student will not be able to earn an **A** from the course with more than two absences, or a **B** with more than 3 absences, and will earn a grade no better than a **C** or lower with 4 or more absences.

Students are expected to do their own work without the unauthorized assistance of others. If you do need assistance or are having trouble with this course, you are encouraged to come to me for help. All students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic courtesy and honesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarizing the works of others. A first offense, places the student in jeopardy of the most severe form of sanction—expulsion from the University. Where there is clear evidence of such dishonesty, the student will be penalized to the maximum extent. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please talk to me about them.

**Ground Rules.** (Adapted from those by Margaret Andersen, University of Delaware).

Given the nature of this course, the following rules are intended to promote an atmosphere which will facilitate the learning process as well as respect the experiences of different groups in the classroom and the larger society. The class can agree to revise them and add others, but all students must commit themselves to the final set of rules by the end of the first class. These principles will guide our class discussions and interactions.

1. Acknowledge that racial and ethnic oppression exists in our society.
2. Acknowledge that one of the key elements of oppression is that we are all systematically taught misinformation about race and ethnicity. This is true for both majority and minority group members.
3. While we cannot be blamed for the misinformation that we have learned, we can and will be held responsible for repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
4. We will actively pursue information about racial and ethnic groups. However, the basis for this information will not be on societal learned myths or stereotypes about these groups.
5. We will share information and ideas with members of the class and we will never demean, devalue, or “put down” people for their experiences.
6. We each have an obligation to combat actively the myths and stereotypes about race and ethnicity so that we can break down the barriers which impede group cooperation.
7. We will assume that all of us, regardless of our racial identity, nationality, sex, class or cultural background, have been influenced by the racism of our society and that individuals can actively change.
8. We will create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. At times, members of the class may wish to make comments that they do not want repeated outside of the classroom. If so, the student will preface his or her remarks with a request and the class will agree not to repeat the remarks.

9. We will try to see the world through the experiences of people who have different perspectives than our own. This will mean not assuming that one's own perspective is the only or the best way to see and think.

**V PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:**

Through written assignments, small group projects, and class participation, the student will be expected to meet the knowledge and skill objectives outlined above.

**VI TEXTS AND REQUIRED MATERIAL:**

Appleby, G., Colon, E., & Hamilton J. (2001). *Diversity, Oppression, and Social functioning: Person-In-Environment Assessment and Intervention,* Boston: Allyn and Bacon Course Pack edited by Bowers, Cassandra J. (2003).

**VII ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES**

- A. Analysis Paper 20%
- B. Group project 30%
- C. Quizzes 40%
- D. Personal Work Plan 10%

Grading scale:

100-95 A	94-90 A-	89-87 B+	86-83 B	82-80 B-
79-77 C+	76-73 C	72-69 C-	68-65 D+	64-60 D

**VIII ROLE OF STUDENT:**

See University Statement of Obligations of Students and Faculty Members of the teaching learning process.

## IX COURSE OUTLINE:

Topic/Activity	Readings
<b>UNIT I CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS</b>	
Session 1 Introductions and Orientation to course	
Session 2 Social work ethics and values related to diversity, oppression and social justice, NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice. Framework for practice with diverse and oppressed clients:	Appleby pp 1-14. Code of Ethics NASW 1996. NASWdc.org Payne, Malcolm, (1997). <i>Modern social work theory</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> edition) Anti-discriminatory, Anti-oppressive perspectives, chapter 11 pp 238-265
Session 3 Culture, Social Class, and Social Identity Development.	Appleby pp.16-34, Tajfel, H., & Turner, J.C. (1986). <i>The social identity theory of intergroup behavior</i> pp.7-24.
<b>II Oppressed Segments of U.S. Society Institutional and Systemic Practices of Oppression</b>	
Session 4 Racism: People of Color	Appleby pp 53-68 Lum, D. (1996). <i>Social work practice with people of color</i> . (4 <sup>th</sup> edition) Pacific Grove, Ca: Brooks Cole. Chapter 1 Ethnic Minority Perspectives on social work practice. And chapter 2 Ethnic minority values and knowledge base. Schaefer Richard T. (1996). <i>Racial and Ethnic Groups</i> (6 <sup>th</sup> ed.) Chapter 8 African Americans Today. Family, Socialization environment, and identity development in Black Americans. In <i>Black Families</i> (3 <sup>rd</sup> ed.) Harriette P. McAdoo (Ed.), Pacific Grove CA: Sage. Pp. 234-250.
Session 5 Women and Sexist Oppression	Appleby pp.70-89 Lorber, J., (1998). The social construction of gender. In P.S. Rothenberg (Ed.) <i>Race class and gender in the United States: An integrated study</i> (4 <sup>th</sup> edition) pp. 33-45.
Session 6 Multidiversity Perspective on Latinos: Issues of Oppression and Social Functioning	Appleby pp.92-107 Nydia Garcia-Preto (1996) Latino Families: An overview pp. 141-154 in McGoldrick M., J. Giordano, & J., & Pearce (Eds.) <i>Ethnicity and family therapy</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> edition).
Session 7 Native Americans: Oppression and Social Work Practice	Appleby pp. 109-128 Sutton, C., & Broken Nose, M. (1996). Back to the future: An Examination of the Native American Holocaust Experience An overview. In M. McGoldrick, J. Giordano, & J. K. Pearce (Eds.) <i>Ethnicity and family therapy</i> pp. 45-54.

Session 8 Asian Americans: Ethnocentrism and Discrimination	Appleby pp.131-143 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights-Issues facing Asian Americans in the 1990s In Rosenblum & Travis, <i>The meaning of difference: American construction of race, sex and gender, social class, and sexual orientation</i> pp.315-329
Session 9 Middle Easterners:	Abdo A. Elkholy (1998). The Arab American family pp 439-454. In C.H. Mindel, R. Habenstein & R. Wright (Eds.), <i>Ethnic families in America: patterns and variations</i> . New York: Elsevir. Suleiman, Michael W. (Ed.). (1999). Arabs in America: Building a New Future.
Session 10 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People	Appleby pp. 145-173 Blumfeld, W.J. (Ed.). (1992).The social construction of sexuality. In P.S. Rothenberg (Ed.) <i>Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integrated study</i> . (5th edition), pp52-55. Suzanne Pharr (2000). Homophobia as a weapon of Sexism.In P.S. Rothenberg (Ed.) <i>Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integrated study</i> . (5th edition), pp143-152.
Session 11 Ableism: Social Work Practice with Individuals with physical disabilities	Appleby pp. 179-194.Orlin, M. (1995). The Americans with Disabilities Act: Implications for social services. <i>Social Work</i> 40 (2), pp 233-239.
Session 12 Ableism: mentally and emotionally Challenged People	Appleby pp.217-236 Scheff, E. (1974). The labeling theory of mental illness <i>American Sociological Review</i> 39 444-452
Session 13 Religious bigotry and Religious Minorities	Appleby pp 195- 215 Eck, D. Introduction to A New America; Bridge Building: A New Multireligious America. In <i>A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" has now become the world's most religiously diverse Nation</i> . New York: Harper Collins. Worchel, Stephen and William G. Austin, (Eds.). Bridge Building: A New Multireligious America. In <i>Psychology of Intergroup Relations</i> Chapter 7.
<b>Unit III Institutional and Systemic Practices of Oppression</b>	
Session 14 Affirmative practice with people who are culturally diverse and oppressed	Appleby pp 239-255. Public policy on research and oppression. Jones, J., (1996). The rise and fall of affirmative action. In K. Rosenblum & Travis, <i>The meaning of</i>

	<i>difference: American construction of race, sex and gender, social class, and sexual orientation. pp272-286. Ten Supreme Court Cases (1996). In K. Rosenblum &amp; Travis, The meaning of difference: American construction of race, sex and gender, social class, and sexual orientation pp241-251.</i>
<b>Unit IV</b>	<b>Summary and Evaluation</b>
Session 15	Wrap-up and student evaluation

Note: Syllabus subject to change based on the needs of the class

### Assignments

#### **Analysis Paper: Instances of Personal and Institutional Discrimination (3-6 pages in length)** **Due Date:**

1. Write about one incident in your life in which you were in power/privilege or the victim of discrimination or prejudice and one in which you were the perpetrator of discrimination or prejudice.
2. Identify the practice of institutional discrimination in an area of social work practice. This may occur in an area such as your agency board composition, staff recruitment and promotion, professional relationships with clients and community or interpersonal relationships in the agency including professional, clerical and maintenance support

#### **The Study of a Family's Ethnicity or a Group's Diversity**

Select one ethnic or diversity group and examine its collective history. Consider the sources of cohesion, identity and strength, as well as the sources of stress, discord and strife which may influence problem generation and resolution.

Select a family or support system from this ethnic or diverse group. Ask permission to interview members. Consider:

1. How the family or group may be viewed in the light of its collective history.
2. What are the sources of cohesion, identity and strength; stress, discord and strife that are evident as the result of the group's reality?
3. How are roles assigned in relation to gender and age? Is this assignment a reflection of the group's cultural reality? What are the consequences of the role assignment?
4. How does the group function in relation to other systems: e.g., educational, religious, occupational, judicial?

5. How does it function as a transmitter of cultural values?
6. How does this group compare with the information contained in the literature about people of similar identity?
7. What are the implications for social work practice at both micro and macro levels? Be specific in terms of principles of practice.

References must be in APA format. Grammar, spelling, punctuation and coherence will also be taken into account in the grading of the paper.

### **Group Project:**

#### **Due Date**

1. Current sociodemographics of the group, major trends.
2. A review of the beliefs and stereotypes about the group throughout history. An analysis of how beliefs and stereotypes have been maintained and continue to thrive today. A history of how the group has been treated in the United States. Include content on legal, political, economic, and educational oppression the group has experienced.
3. Overview of values and norms.
4. Strengths of the group. Positive coping and resiliency of the group.

#### Examples of group projects

Elderly persons  
 Persons with physical disabilities  
 Persons with mental health issues  
 Ethnic groups  
 Gay and lesbian persons.

Criteria for group evaluation are completeness and responsiveness to assignments specific integration of content from readings and lectures, use of literature, creativity, and originality in the use of self and personal insight. You are expected to conduct a library research, sharing with the class an annotated bibliography of the five best sources of material your group found which are relevant to the content of your topic.

Should you need equipment for the presentation, please give two weeks advanced notice.

**Quizzes:** Students will take periodic short quizzes on weekly readings. There will be a total of four (4) quizzes. The format includes short essay responses and multiple choice questions.

## **Personal Work Plan for Culturally Competent Practice**

### **Due Date:**

Students will write a 3-4 page paper examining the types of clientele they might find particularly challenging, stimulating and beneficial to work with due to their own background, values, and relationship style discussing concepts and information from your reading for the course which you found thought provoking and enlightening.

### Self assessment of beginning cultural competence

Describe the level of competence you had when you started the course. What experiences had particularly shaped you views of your own culture and the culture of others? Cite literature and use relevant theoretical concepts in your analysis.

### What have you learned in the course?

Highlight succinctly things you learned while participating in this course that were most meaningful for you. What aspects did you already know? What challenged your preconceptions? What piqued your curiosity and made you want to learn more? What questions were aroused in your mind that would merit further investigation and exploration?

### What does this mean for your practice?

Types of clients you could help. Discuss how what you learned about cultures and families relate to your previous and current work experience. What groups and culture do you want to learn more about so that you might more effectively provide social work services?

Describe any population with which it may be difficult for you to work/analyze the reason for this. State whether this is something that you feel that you should overcome, and whether you should do something to make it easier for you to work with this population.

### What more do you need to know?

Describe what more you want to learn about other cultures and diverse families. Discuss some of the ways that knowledge could be effectively acquired. You may want to document your statement with information you have acquired about certain populations, societal need, and resources for developing cultural competence.

### Action Steps

List three to five actions that are reasonable and feasible for you to do that will increase your cultural competence.

## **Bibliography for SW3110 Diversity, Oppression and Social Justice**

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- Jackson, James S., Wayne R. McCullough & Gerald Gurin ((1997). Family, socialization environment, and identity development in Black Americans. *In Black families* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). McAdoo, Harriette Pipes (Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
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- Tafoya, Nadine,& Ann Del Vecchio. (1996). Back to the future: An examination of the Native American holocaust experience. In M. McGoldrick, J. Giordano, & J.K. Pearce (Eds). *Ethnicity and family therapy* pp. 45-54. New York: The Guilford Press.

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