Course Description
This course will prepare students to engage in integrated practice focused on utilizing community and social systems to support and empower individuals, families, and communities. This will include skills for entering, assessing, and working collaboratively with client systems and their social networks. This course will build on practice methods presented in the foundation and platform methods courses and give special attention to partnership, strengths based, and empowering models of practice. Special emphasis will be placed on conducting this work in a multicultural context with vulnerable and oppressed populations and communities.

Course Content
This course will cover practice methods for working with multiple social systems to promote well being through the involvement of community and social systems. The primary focus will be on ways to work in partnership with formal and informal social systems in communities such as schools, neighborhood associations, self-help organizations, community centers and faith based organizations. Emphasis will be placed on ways in which different levels of practice -- including interpersonal, organizational, community, and policy -- can be involved in this kind of work. Under-girding all of these levels is a focus on methods for encouraging community participation and empowerment.

Course Objectives:
On completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of how community and social systems can play a role in improving the well being of individuals, families, organizations and communities;
2. Identify the critical primary and secondary structures in communities that can be mobilized for engaging in practice;
3. Describe how the gender, racial, religious, economic or other characteristics of a community affect the needs and assists to be mobilized in practice;
4. Demonstrate skills for engaging community systems and encouraging the participation of community members;
5. Identify how social work ethics and values can guide practice with community and social systems.
Course Design
In-class discussion, readings, and course assignments will be coordinated so as to enhance course objectives. Students’ field placement experiences will provide the contextual background for lectures and student assignments. Lectures by the instructor will be complemented by speakers representing providers and professionals involved in advocacy, community education, and service delivery. Each assignment for the course is designed so as to be suitable to be a portfolio artifact.

Relationship Of This Course To Four Curricular Themes
- **Multiculturalism and Social Diversity:** This course will focus on ways in which the characteristics of individuals, families and communities will drive the approach to practice. Therefore, the themes of diversity and multiculturalism will be addressed throughout the course. This will include attention to race, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, economic status, and sexual orientation.

- **Social Justice and Social Change:** This course will focus on methods for increasing community participation and empowerment. Therefore, the themes of social change on multiple levels toward the goal of social justice are central to this course. Special attention will be paid for developing methods that are democratic, participatory and focused on equity and equality.

- **Behavioral and Social Sciences Research:** Community and social systems practice is supported by research that suggests that well being is enhanced by the involvement of social supports and social networks. This course will be based in social research that guides this practice. In addition, social science methods will be introduced as a means for developing and evaluating specific practice methods.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation:** This course will consider how community and social systems can be mobilized toward promotion, prevention, treatment or rehabilitation efforts. For example, community and social system involvement can be an integral element of the promotion of mental health, the prevention of mental illness, the treatment of mental distress or the rehabilitation of the mentally disabled. This course will shed light on how these methods can be involved at these different types of practice focus.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values
The course will address ethical and value issues related to working with, and in, organizations, communities, and societies. For example, as employees of organizations, members of communities, and citizens of states, social workers must work to ensure equal treatment for all citizens, while at the same time expressing preferential programmatic attention to the most disadvantaged within those systems. The course will also focus on social workers’ responsibility as professionals to promote the general welfare through working toward the elimination of discrimination, expanding choices for all persons, encouraging respect for diversity, advocating for progressive changes in social policies, and encouraging informed participation by the public.

Relationship to PODS Content
Social Work 697 is one of the concentration courses designed to provide intensive focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS). Materials on these four themes are woven in to the four curricular themes described above and are integral aspects of course readings, assignments, activities, and exercises. Methods for developing and implementing practice that addresses the PODS content are a major emphasis of Social Work 697. Specifically, PODS reflects six competencies:

1. Vision of and Skills for Social Justice
2. (Methods for) Reduce barriers (Oppression and Privilege)
3. Intersectional and Intercultural skills and humility
4. Monitor PODS development and application
5. Critical consciousness, self knowledge for continued learning
6. Intersectionality and eight groups (economic class, age, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion and disability status).

At the end of the course outline (p. 11) I provide specific examples of the ways in which the course clearly address the competencies in specific course content, assignments, activities, and readings.

**Housekeeping**

*Accommodations for students with disabilities*
If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities and the way that the course is taught can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. The earlier that you make me aware of your needs, the more effectively we will be able to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. If you do decide to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential.

*Religious Observances*
Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.

*Electronic Devices*
In consideration of your classmates and your own learning please turn off all cell phones and pagers during class. I prefer that you receive no messages during class time, if you must be on call for an emergency, please let your home or office know that you are only available for emergencies that no one else can handle. If you must carry a pager, please set it to vibrate only.

*Required Reading*
The following book is the required text for the course. It is available for purchase at Ulrich’s Bookstore (across the street from the School of Social Work):


The book for this course has been selected very carefully to reflect community and social systems practice. Students should come to class having read the material and prepared to discuss and work with what has been covered. All classroom discussions and exercises have been developed to synthesize and apply the readings to practice.

The Supplemental Readings are indeed that, supplemental. They are not required readings and will not be discussed in class. They are provided for those students who have additional interests in a topic.

Our class will also have a CTools website where additional materials and lectures will be posted. Login to the CTool portal at: [https://ctools.umich.edu/portal](https://ctools.umich.edu/portal) to find the course materials.
Assignments & Grading
There will be 10 quizzes administered Weeks 2 – 11 of the course. The quizzes will be given during the first 15 minutes of class and will cover the chapter(s) assigned for that date. Students will be able to use notes taken from the readings, but not the book itself, in taking the quiz.

In addition, there will be three papers due over the course of the semester. They are summarized below with their relative value. Details follow the course outline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments/Quizzes</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>Weeks 2 - 11</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philosophy Statement</td>
<td>January 31st</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology Paper</td>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice Paper</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>50</td>
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Grading
Grades are earned by successfully completing the work on the assignments. At the end of the term, the numerical grades earned for each written assignment will be translated into letter grades according to the following formula:

A  90 – 100%
B  80 – 89%
C  70 – 79%
D  ≤ 69% (no credit)

PLEASE NOTE:

- Incompletes are not granted unless it can be demonstrated it would be unfair to hold the student to the normal limits of the course. The student must formally request in writing an incomplete with the instructor prior to the final week of classes.

- All assignments are to be completed by the date due. Exceptions will need the permission of the instructor in advance of the due date for the assignment. At least one letter grade will be deducted for late submission of assignments.

- Where needed (and sparingly) students are to use the footnote function in MS Word with the reference material included in APA format. Papers need to include appropriate attribution of authorship for paraphrases or ideas acquired from another source or appropriate citations, including page numbers for direct quotes. Please review the Student Guide section on Ethical Conduct in the University Environment. This section specifically addresses plagiarism and the possible consequences for engaging in this behavior.

- *No other aspects of the APA style guide will be used.* Instead, students are expected to prepare all assignments as “professional reports,” i.e., single-spaced, generous use of headings & sub-headings, a non-Times New Roman font, underlining, italics, bold, etc.
## Course Outline and Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| Jan 10  | Course Overview  
          | Chapter 1 Systems Thinking for the 21st Century |
| Jan 17  | Chapter 2 Why Philosophy  
          | Chapter 3 The Systems Idea |
|         | **Supplemental Readings**  
| Jan 24  | Chapter 4 Process Philosophy |
|         | **Supplemental Readings**  
| Jan 31  | ---PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT PAPER DUE--- |
|         | Chapter 5 Why Methodology  
          | Chapter 6 Systemic Intervention |
|         | **Supplemental Readings**  
| Feb 7   | Chapter 7 Boundary Critique  
          | Chapter 8 Theoretical Pluralism |
|         | **Supplemental Readings**  

Feb 14  Chapter 9  Methodological Pluralism

Supplemental Readings

Feb 21  Chapter 10  Mixing Methods
Chapter 11  Learning about Methodology and Methods

Supplemental Readings

Feb 28  Spring Recess
Mar 7
---METHODOLOGY PAPER DUE---

Chapter 12 Why Practice?
Chapter 13 Community Operational Research
Chapter 14 Developing Housing Services for Older People

Supplemental Readings

Mar 14
Chapter 15 Planning for Disaster

Supplemental Readings

Mar 21
Chapter 16 Planning and Evaluating Diversion from Custody for Mentally Disordered Offenders

Supplemental Readings

Mar 28  Chapter 17  Developing Services with Young People (Under 16) Missing from Home or Care
Chapter 18  Looking to the Future

Supplemental Readings

Apr 4  Rich Picture Presentations – 1
Apr 11  Rich Picture Presentations – 2
Apr 18  Rich Picture Presentations – 3

---Practice Paper Due---
Descriptions of Assignments for SW 697

1. Philosophy Statement Paper

*What is a philosophy of social work?*
Midgley provides considerable discussion as to what he thinks philosophy in general should address and practice philosophy specifically. For the purpose of this assignment we will view this statement as representing your personal values and demonstrates the important ideas, theories, beliefs, and assumptions that underlies your professional behaviors. Most statements begin by articulating the values that underlie our work: “social justice”, “respect for humanity”, “dedication to positive social change”, “personal empowerment”, etc. Although there is no set formula for creating a statement, most authors begin with identifying these core values and then move on to brief explanations/theories and examples of how those values inform their practices, long-term vision and goals, as well as their commitment to on-going professional development.

*Why is a philosophy of social work important?*
Articulating a philosophy of social work helps us to assess and clarify the goals and values we wish to embody in our professional practices and provides stability, continuity, and long-term guidance. These statements fulfill several purposes:
1. Personal: It lends a distinctive organizing vision—a clear picture of why we are doing, and what we are doing. This picture can be called up at points of crisis and confusion - lending crucial guidance, sanity and morale.
2. Political: It provides a sense that our position is grounded in a well-developed and carefully conceived philosophy of practice, therein generating thoughtfulness and commitment, which is important for our self-esteem, professional development and even our political survival. Furthermore, our values, ambitions, philosophies, attitudes, ethical beliefs and behaviors do have an impact on the organizations and institutions we serve. Guided by a philosophy, we can hopefully affect positive change in our work environments.
3. Professional: It helps us to develop a commitment and a rationale for social work which helps us in our on-going development of personal and collective identities and goals.
4. Practical: It helps us to understand and commit to the kind of change we want to make in the world, as well as the types of goals, actions, alliances, and personal attributes we need to achieve those goals.

*Getting Started:*
Please address the following questions in developing your philosophy statement (3 pages, single-spaced, max):
1. What brought you to the field of social work? Why did you choose this profession?
2. Have your reasons for becoming a social worker changed since coming to the SSW?
3. What have you learned at the SSW that has excited, empowered, and/or moved you in some way? Have there been any particular topics, incidents, assignments, field experiences etc., that have had an impact on you? If so, what was the experience and why did it affect you? What did you learn about yourself from the experience?
4. What specific theories inform your practice?
5. What ‘boundaries’ are implied by the use of a particular theory?
6. Conclude with a few ‘next steps’ for your professional development.

*Special thanks to Melissa Peet for the background to these guidelines.*
2. Methodology Paper

- Identify a situation/issue/project/problem you have or would like to deal with in your field placement. Begin by applying the Critical Systems Heuristics (p. 141) to the situation addressing each of the 12 points in both modes (is and ought).
- Based upon the results of this analysis, choose a methodology outlined by Midgley, or a methodology you have learned in the SSW or your field placement, to address this situation.
- Discuss why the method you chose is appropriate referencing your boundary critique, theoretical orientation, and professional philosophy.

The methodology paper should be approximately 4-5 pages in length.

3. Practice Paper

Based upon your practice philosophy and your methodological approach (which includes the boundary critique), develop a model of the intervention you would like to pursue to address the situation/issue/project/problem identified above. The modeling approach can be the Viable System Model, a Soft Systems Model, or another conceptual modeling approach of your choice. Handouts on the former two will be provided in class.

One aspect of this paper will be a Rich Picture. These rich pictures will be presented over the last three weeks of the course. The purpose of these presentations will be to inform your fellow students on the situation/issue/project/problem and to receive feedback as to additional issues you may want to consider.

The practice paper should be approximately 4-5 pages in length with an additional one page containing your rich picture.
PODS Competencies in Detail

1. Develop a specific vision of IF/PODS practice relevant to practice area concentration; implement that vision within one's work environment
   a. Visions of social justice in specific practice contexts
   b. Steps towards achieving social justice that recognize limitations and strengths of current paradigms
      i. Work within intersectional framework
      ii. Adjust framework cognizant of personal and professional growth
   c. Skills to recognize, develop, implement steps in change process
   d. Apply practice and evaluation models that
      i. Differentiate within and across social categories
      ii. Maintain strengths-based and resiliency perspectives
      iii. Attend to power dynamics (and other mechanisms of privilege/oppression)
   e. Collaborate and work with/use processes that are socially just

2. Describe strategies for and learn skills to recognize and reduce barriers to social justice
   a. Identify and disrupt mechanisms in society that support oppression and injustice
   b. Identify how inequitable power is manifested on various dimensions (age, gender, race, economic status, sexual orientation, disability status, religion), and how these various dimensions interact with each other. What knowledge and specific action steps can offset or alleviate the impact of differentials in power
   c. Connect complex social problems with specific historical and cultural inequities; understand how these inequities are embedded within current institutions' structures and processes.

3. Demonstrate skills for intersectional and intercultural communication and collaboration, cultural humility
   a. Recognize how an individual's history, culture, group memberships and positions within society (ascribed and earned) shape their perceptions, attitudes, cognitive processes and actions.
   b. Apply practice models that
      i. differentiate within and between social categories;
      ii. maintain strengths-based and resiliency perspectives, address risk and protective factors; and
      iii. are inclusive and collaborative in ways that promote dialogue with others across social and cultural differences. These include skills in decentering one’s own perspectives, listening, engaging, speaking, facilitating, and tolerating ambiguity and discomfort.
   c. Recognize unfamiliar cultural practices and ask relevant questions in order to understand individual, group, or community needs within the context of those practices and perspectives.

4. Develop the knowledge and skills for monitoring PODS development and application
   a. Be able to describe and implement the process of praxis: iterative steps involved in applying knowledge, taking action informed by that knowledge, and reflecting on what is learned through action (and modifying knowledge accordingly).
b. Develop humility and skills in working in multiple contexts, with various types of conflict and translations; learn to recognize how PODS dynamics are operating

c. Critique knowledge, research, and practice methods in terms of their cultural framing and how power and inequities are being initiated or reinforced.

5. **Build and use self knowledge and skills and critical consciousness to continue learning about PODS**
   
a. Locate oneself in social categories, identify corresponding lenses and biases
   
b. Maintain an awareness of self that is central to assessment, analysis and action from a PODS perspective in all the above dimensions

6. **Develop the knowledge and skills to apply the concept of intersectionality in PODS**
   
a. Understand how systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape people’s experiences and, in turn are shaped by them
   
b. Reflecting on oneself historically, in relation to others, including an awareness of how one’s race, gender, class, and other group identities simultaneously work together to create one’s perception and experiences

How SW 697 addresses PODS Competencies?

TBD……by you