SW 502: Organizational, Community, and Societal Structures and Processes
Section 002, Tuesdays 2:00 to 5:00
Instructor: Daniel Rosen
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Course Description

This course examines theory and research knowledge about political, economic and societal structures and processes related to communities, groups and organizations within contemporary society. Consideration is given to ways in which these social systems have significant social, political, economic and psychological impacts on the functioning of individuals, families, and social groups. The course provides a framework for understanding the influences of medium to large social systems on individuals, families and groups with whom social workers practice. Communities, organizations and other social groups are examined in terms of risk and protective factors that promote or detract from optimal individual and group well being.

The course gives special attention to the critical evaluation of theory and research knowledge about social change and social processes within an organizational, community, societal and international context. There is a focus on oppression, discrimination, prejudice and privilege and their relationship to social and economic justice for populations served by social workers. This knowledge is considered within a context of social work values and ethics that support the general welfare of all citizens, especially the disadvantaged and oppressed.

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

1. Identify, describe and discuss selected theoretical perspectives on organizational, community, and societal structures, processes and change, and on social and behavioral science knowledge.
2. Describe and discuss the impact of communities, organizations and other societal groups on the social environment interactions between individuals, families, and small groups.
3. Describe and discuss the meaning of multiculturalism and diversity and their consequences in American society for community, organizational, and societal functioning.
4. Identify, describe and discuss the role of risk and protective social factors in relation to social problems, social work interventions and social/economic justice.
5. Identify, describe and discuss major processes and contemporary manifestations within the social environment of oppression, discrimination, prejudice, power, and privilege as they impact on the social environment, especially in relation to women, people of color, and gay, lesbian and bisexual persons.
6. Identify, describe and discuss barriers to organizational and community competence, especially those derived from race, ethnicity, culture, social class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental functioning ability, age, or national origin.
7. Critically evaluate organizational, community, and societal structures and processes that seek to promote social and economic justice by applying professional values and ethics.
8. Critically evaluate and apply social and behavioral science knowledge about macro systems to generalist social work practice.

**Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes**

*Multiculturalism and Diversity* will be addressed through presentation of theory and research on their role in community, organizational, and societal functioning and well being.

*Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed through discussion of the role of risk factors and preventive social factors in relation to social problems and social work interventions.

*Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* will be addressed through discussion of programs and systematic interventions to prevent stress and oppression of individuals, families, and groups and enhance their quality of life and well being.

*Behavioral and Social Science Research* will be addressed through its inclusion in the description of the social environment and its impact on individuals, families, and groups.

**Relationship of Course to Social Work Ethics and Values**

This course will address ethical and value issues related to working with organizations, communities, and societal structures and processes. The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to inform practice in this area. Examples of ethical and value related issues will include: the social worker’s responsibility to promote the general welfare of society by preventing and eliminating discrimination, ensuring equal access to resources, expanding choices and opportunities for all persons, encouraging respect for diversity, advocating for change of social policies, and encouraging informed participation by the public. In addition, issues related to organizations will be covered, such as preventing discrimination in the work place, improving agency policies and procedures, and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations.
Course Assignments and Requirements

There will be two (2) major written assignments for this class and four (4) reaction papers. Each of the two major assignments will count for 30% of your grade. The reaction papers will count for 20% of your grade. Completion of discussion questions prior to class will account for 10% of your grade. Attendance will account for the final 10% of your grade. Additional details regarding all assignments will be given out in class.

Assignments will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
- Systematic and logical presentation of arguments;
- Appropriate use of evidence;
- Familiarity with and appropriate use of relevant literature and concepts;
- Clarity and coherence of presentation;
- Originality and creativity;
- Conformity with the requirements of the assignment

Assignment 1 – Self-Reflection Integrating Issues from Course – Due October 9

Assignment 2 – Analysis of Ehrenreich book – Due October 30

The first two assignments should be 5-7 double-spaced, typewritten pages (using a 12-point font). Sources used must be cited using appropriate citation format. Note that two important criteria for the evaluation of each assignment are that its emphasis must be on analysis, and not merely description; and that the paper applies concepts and theories covered in class and required readings.

Reaction papers – 4 out of the last 6 weeks (sessions 8-13)

Reaction papers should be no more than 2 pages double-spaced.

Discussion questions – 10 out of 13 weeks

Questions need to be emailed to me (drosen@umich.edu) by 5 PM on the Monday prior to class.
Class Schedules and Readings (* = Reading Coursepack)

1. September 11, 2001: Introduction to the Course and each other.

2. September 18, 2001 Basic goals and concepts
   - Mullaly, Chapters 1-3
   - Kirst-Ashman text, Chapter 1: Intro to Human Behavior in the Social Environment

3. September 25, 2001 Paradigms and Society
   - Kirst-Ashman text, Chapter 2 & 3.
   - Mullaly, Chapters 4-6, and 8

4. October 2, 2001 Neighborhood and Communities
   - *Fellin, Phillip (1987). Chapter 7 from The Community and the Social Worker
***Assignment 1 Due***

5. October 9, 2001 Interlocking Stratification, Pt. 1
- Ehrenreich, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2.

6. October, 16, 2001 Interlocking Stratification, Part 2
- Ehrenreich, Chapter 3 and Evaluation chapter.

7. October 23, 2001 Interlocking Stratification, Part 3

***Assignment 2 Due***

8. October 30, 2001 Community Mapping and Assessment
9. November 6, 2001 Theories of Community Change 1
- Mullaly, Chapter 10

10. November 13, 2001 Theories of Community Change 2

11. November 20, 2001 Theories of Organizations and Organizational Practice 1
- Kirst-Ashman text, Chapters 5 and 6.

12. November 27, 2001 Theories of Organizations and Organizational Practice 2
- Kirst-Ashman text, chapter 8.

13. December 4, 2001 Summary