1. Course Description:
This course will examine theory and research knowledge regarding how political,
economic, and societal structures and their processes influence human behavior in
communities, groups, and organizations within contemporary American society.
Consideration will be given to ways in which these systems have a significant social,
political, economic, and psychological impact on the functioning of individuals,
families, and social groups. This course will provide a social work theoretical
framework for understanding the influence of these significant social systems on
individuals, families, and groups with whom social workers practice. Communities,
organizations, and other large social units will be examined in terms of risk factors that
promote or detract from optimal individual and group well-being. The course has a
twofold purpose: (1) to advance student knowledge and understanding of the nature
and operation of such macro-level processes, structures and conditions; and (2) to
help students to critically analyze these processes and consider the implications for
vulnerable populations, as well as for social work’s place and role in contributing to
improvements and change in the society.

2. Course Content:
This course will give 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. Emphasis will be placed on oppression,
discrimination, prejudice, and privilege and their relationship to social and
economic justice for populations served by social workers. This knowledge will be
considered within a context of social work values and ethics that support the general welfare all of citizens, especially the disadvantaged and oppressed.

3. **Course Objectives:**
   Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify, describe, and discuss selected theoretical perspectives on organizational, community, and societal structures, processes, and change as well as 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 from community, organizations and societal functioning.

4. Identify, describe, and discuss the role of risk and protective social factors in relation to social problems, social work intervention, and social/economic justice.

5. Identify, describe, and discuss major processes and contemporary manifestations 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, bisexual, and transgender persons.

6. Identify, describe, and discuss barriers to organizational and community competence, especially those derived from race, class, ethnicity, culture, social class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin.

7. Critically evaluate organizational, community, and societal structures and processes that seek to promote and 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.

4. **Course design:**
The instructor will select required readings. Suggested references will be included for each session, along with a list of books related to this course. The course is divided into four units. The assigned readings are related to the unit of study.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

♦ Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed throughout the course and in written assignments.
♦ 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 systemic 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.

6. Relationship of the 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 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 changes in 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 polices and procedures, and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations.

Required Texts
There are two required texts. All texts are available at Ulrich’s Books.


Assignments and Grading

The overall grade for the course will be based on (3) three written assignments: (1) an investigative research supported 12-15 pages typed, doubled spaced, 12-point font. (2) Mid-term, a 2-3pages book review of both texts describing the primary theoretical position articulated by the author, and (3) Final exam. Assignments will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

♦ Systematic and logical presentation of arguments;
♦ Appropriate use of evidence;
♦ Familiarity with appropriate use of relevant literature and concepts;
♦ Clarity and coherence of analysis.

The respective weightings are 45% for the paper, 20% for the midterm, 30% final, and 5% for class participation/individual meetings.

Grades are earned by successfully completing the work on the assignments and by attending and participating in class. A 100-point system is used. At the end of the term, the numerical grades earned for each assignment will be translated into letter grades according to the following formula:

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The final exam will be held during the University’s exam week at the regular class time.

The Paper:

In Search of the Puppet Master: An Investigative Inquiry into the Social Environment. Due the 12th week of class on November 21. All written assignments must include a bibliography, APA format. I will fully explain the paper, mid-term, and final in class. Please do not over use quotes.

Paper Explanation:

This assignment offers students an opportunity to choose and investigate a particular aspect of contemporary American society. The student’s area of interest might include the political system, health care, education, financial, mental health/theories of therapy, or economics, family life, gender, women issues, etc…

The paper is divided into four parts. (I) Part one is the descriptive analysis. The descriptive analysis describes the area of interest using research and theoretical constructs to inform the reader. Theories help to explain the general tendencies in American society including oppression, class structure, and macro processes. (II) Part two examines the impact of the system on individuals, families, groups, communities, institutions, and organizations. (III) Part three explores alternative theoretical constructs. Special attention is given to social change theories including the theory of social work. (IV) Part four utilizes a NASW influenced ethical and value based social work theoretical framework to
suggest thoughts/theories on addressing issues related to multiculturalism, social justice and social change, promotion, prevention and rehabilitation, and treatment.

**DUE DATES**
The midterm, Oct. 17
Paper, November 21
The final, Dec. 12

**Class Schedule**

**Unit I**
9/5 Introduction
9/12 Ashman, Preface chps.1,2  Mullaly, Preface chap. 1
9/17 Ashman , chp11-Mullaly,
9/26  Mullaly chp.8

**Unit II**
10/1 Ashman chaps. 3,4 Mullaly, chaps.6, 8
10/8 Ashman chap. 5 Mullaly, chap. 3
10/17 Ashman, chap.6
10/24 Ashman, chap.7
10/31 Ashman, chap.8

**Unit III: Month of November**
Alternative Voices:
Mullaly, chaps. 5,6,7,8
Ashman, chaps. 7,8,10,

**Unit IV**
Ashman, chaps. 9,12
Mullaly, chaps. 2, 10,