1. Course Description

This course will analyze those policies and services that promote or inhibit the development of civil society, enhance or deny human rights, and contribute to the attainment of social justice or sustain the existence of social injustice. Emphasis will be placed on those policies and services which serve to enhance social participation, economic security, respect for diversity, voluntary action, and community and corporate responsibility. The course will also integrate an intensive focus on how policies and services, particularly at the local level, maintain or diminish the existence of oppression and privilege in U.S. society. Programs provided by various units of government, nonprofit and social service organizations, and corporations will be reviewed, and various partnerships and collaborations among funders, service providers, and community groups will be examined. The course will also explore ways in which the involvement of community members can lead to the construction of socially just policies and services that can overcome the effects of privilege and oppression.

2. Course Content

Students will learn that community well-being is enhanced when social problems are managed, human needs are met, and social opportunities and human rights are optimized. Both problems and needs are the outcome of interactions between individuals, collectivities, and the larger society. The implications of these interactions will be examined in the context of a diverse society, with special attention given to the relationship between policy development and implementation, the attainment of social justice goals, and the eradication of oppression and privilege. Attributes of such policies and programs include, but are not limited to, enhanced opportunities for social participation, economic security, heightened respect for diversity, increased voluntary action, and greater corporate responsibility.

Selected laws, programs, and structures that enhance citizen participation within diverse populations will be described and compared. Emphasis will be placed on those that enable the sustained and meaningful participation of diverse and oppressed populations and on the social worker’s responsibility for facilitating such participation. Examples will include the use of mediating structures, such as citizen boards, advisory groups, commissions, and consumer
involvement in promoting and guiding positive social change. In many of these, participation is intended to enhance citizen capacity to initiate and oversee action. However, participatory structures are also intended to assure the responsiveness of programs of a promotional, service, or preventive nature. These programs are designed to promote social justice by reducing poverty and economic insecurity; address personal crises and community emergencies (such as those brought about by violence against persons and property, nature and environmental disasters, war and terrorism, or economic dislocation); resettle and integrate refugees and other immigrant populations; overcome the consequences of privilege; and respond to the needs of oppressed groups seeking social justice (e.g., women, racial, religious, ethnic and sexual minorities, the disabled, and other oppressed groups). In addition, the participatory opportunities provided via self-help, grassroots associations and informal networks, and congregational-based service providers will be explored.

3. Course Objectives

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

1. Within the context of a diverse society, analyze relevant policies and services that promote social justice, encourage social participation, community well-being, human rights, and economic security, and enable individuals and groups to overcome the consequences of privilege and oppression.
2. Demonstrate familiarity with selected aspects of the structures, legal standing, and roles of the nonprofit sector in providing human services, advocating for human rights, and promoting community participation and well-being.
3. Locate and apply commonly used indicators of social, economic, and other measures of community well-being to diverse populations that are experiencing the effects of social injustice and oppression.
4. Analyze how privilege, oppression, and injustice affect the levels and types of participation possible and desirable for members or representatives of diverse communities in mediating structures that are intended to promote well-being.
5. Identify the political, social, economic, and cultural factors that lead to or detract from such participation among oppressed populations.
6. Understand the roles social workers can play at the community level in promoting the well-being and sustained participation of its members.

4. Course Design

In-class activities, readings, and course assignments will be coordinated so as to enhance course objectives. For example, simulations of real-work processes, films, videos, and speakers presented in the classroom will provide the contextual background for student assignments in the community. Lectures by the instructor will be complemented by student presentations and by speakers representing consumers, providers, professionals, and volunteers involved in advocacy, community education, and service delivery.

5. Relationship of the Course to Curricular Themes
• **Multiculturalism and Diversity** will be addressed in this course through the emphasis on enhancing the well-being and community participation of populations and groups that have been historically subject to discrimination, injustice, and oppression. The issues to be examined will include the motivations for, content, and impact of laws and regulations affecting human rights and nondiscrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, age, religion, and sexual orientation.

• **Social Justice and Social Change** underlie the creation of mediating structures, programs, and policies expressly designed to enhance community well-being. Students will examine these issues as well as social work’s historical engagement in planned change and the meaning of its underlying commitment to social justice in the contemporary environment.

• **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be examined in terms of whether programs and policies are effective or ineffective in their promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation efforts. Sometimes, programs designed to express these themes complement each other – for example, when participation enhances promotion and prevention, and both are part of a comprehensive strategy of change. The course will also focus on how policies and services can promote the goal of social justice and, by addressing the structural causes of privilege and oppression, prevent the emergence or reemergence of their consequences. For these reasons, the extent to which programs and policies are infused with these themes and how they interact with each other will receive critical analysis.

• **Behavioral and Social Science Research.** This course will be based on the twin assumptions that the programs and policies to be studied can be understood through social scientific methods and that scientific concepts can also be used in the design of effective programs and policies. However, even this assumption needs analysis. Scientific perspectives can lead to very different interpretations of social issues and, consequently, different policy and programmatic responses. For example, much of sociology can be divided into (1) structural/functionalist perspectives which advocate the eliminating of cultural and behavioral skill differences between groups and the legal, economic, and other barriers to full participation; and (2) conflict perspectives, which assume that societies tend towards conflict because power and resources are inequitably distributed and that, in the long run, conflict is positive because it increases the likelihood of expanding access to social goods. These perspectives infuse many of the readings and analyses presented in this course. Applying one or the other can lead to different interpretations of events and social processes and to very different social agendas and programs for social change. For this reason, even the social science knowledge base of this course will itself be subject to examination.

• **Social Work Ethics and Values.** This course will address ethical and value issues related to policies and services directed at social participation and community well-being. The NASW *Code of Ethics* and other sources of the profession’s ideology and values will be used to inform practice in this area. Special emphasis will be placed on the social worker’s responsibility to promote social justice in a diverse society by preventing and eliminating discrimination, oppression, and privilege, 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,
ethical issues related to working with various client systems will be reviewed, such as the meaning of self-determination in a multicultural society, the impact of information technology on client confidentiality and privacy rights, and the concept of the client’s interest, proper and improper relationships with clients, interruption of services, and termination.

7. Required reading:
A coursepack of required readings is available at Excel Text Preparation, 1117 South University Avenue. Students are also encouraged to read either print or electronic versions of the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Detroit Free Press daily. The Economist is excellent weekly reading. Additional documents and web-based readings will be assigned during the semester.

7. Assignments: (each assignment will incorporate the special focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice as well as a special focus on Strength and Assets)

Assignment 1: Reflection Paper. Students will submit a reflection paper online (via Coursetools) each week. Please note: If you are in SW697 section that requires a journal or reflection paper (e.g. Gutierrez), you may submit the same paper for that course and this one, but they’ll need to integrate readings from each course!! Reflection papers should reflect upon and integrate material in the readings (for each course) with your personal experience and or your field work experience. Additionally, this paper must attest to your knowledge of current pertinent media coverage, as reported in the New York Times or other newspaper. Reflection papers will incorporate one or more aspects of our focus on privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice. Postings to coursetools should be brief and concise, about 2 pages in length. Reflection papers should be posted every week on the Friday prior to class. Late postings will not earn credit. The reflection entries will count towards 20% of your grade.

Assignment 2: Analytic Paper. This assignment requires each student to analyze the policies and processes in one component of the community’s subsystems covered in the course syllabus in terms of how they enhance community well being within the specific area of concern. The final product will be a written paper of 8 to 10 pages, documenting the effects of the policies, programs, and services in the area selected. You must incorporate one or more areas of our special focus; privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice. This paper will be worth 30% of your grade. Papers are due at class on March 10. Late papers will have one point deducted per each day late.

Assignment 3: Group Project. This assignment relates to both SW 647 (Gutierrez Section) and 697. In our second class session you will sign up for a working group presentation that will work on an assessment of a specific dimension of the SW Detroit Neighborhood. This assessment will utilize multiple methods for community assessment that will be covered in the first section of the class. Time will be provided each week for student groups to work on the project and “field work” time will be provided during one or more class sessions. The group will turn in a 8 to 10 page summary of their findings in class on March 10. Each group will present their findings to the rest of the class during the second half of the semester. These findings will be compiled into a report to be shared with our community partners at a
presentation on April 14. Remember to incorporate our focus on privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice. Assignment 3 is worth 30% of the grade.

**Groups will be required to submit a 3 page executive summary of their findings on March 17. Presentations will begin on March 17.** Groups will be created and a schedule of presentations developed during the first two weeks of class. The presentation and accompanying paper will be worth 30% of your grade. The instructor will allocate up to 20 of those points and students will allocate up to 10 of those points according to predetermined criteria and ground rules.

| Gutiérrez (697) Dimensions (COPC) – Gant (647) Dimension Interface and Crosswalks |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| **SW697**                      | **SW747**                      |
| Environment                    | Housing                        |
| Safety/Security                | Social Well-Being              |
| Education                      | Cultural Activities            |
| Internet                       | Urban Community Technologies   |
| Diversity/Fairness             | Economic Well-Being            |

**Class Participation.** Students are expected to attend every class session, come prepared by doing the required reading, and participate in discussions and exercises. Each week we will engage in group activities and discussion, therefore attendance is very important. Students are expected to attend every class session and participate in discussions and group exercises. Class participation will be worth 20% of your grade. Class participation will be graded based on the self-assessment form that is at the end of this course outline.

**8. Grading**

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 written assignment will be translated into letter grades according to the following formula:

- A+ 97-100
- B+ 87-90
- C+ 77-80
- D <69 (no credit)
- A 94-96
- B 84-86
- C 74-76
- A- 91–93
- B- 81-83
- C- 70-73

**9. Class Schedule and Readings**

Note: Readings for this course have been selected very carefully to reflect policies at the community and social systems level. Students should come to class having read the assigned readings and prepared to discuss and integrate them with classroom and field content. Some in-class exercises have been developed to synthesize and apply readings to practice situations.

1. **January 6** Introductions, Course Overview, Group roles review and Coursetools Review

2. **January 13** Concepts of Community Well-Being
** TOPIC FOR ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE & TASK GROUPS FORMED**

Readings:


January 20       Martin Luther King Jr. Day – classes are not held

A number of lectures, exhibits, videos, performances and other presentations will be held on campus from January 6 to January 31 in recognition of Martin Luther King Day. A complete listing of these events is on the Web at  http://www.mlksymposium.org/. Select at least two of these events to attend and discuss them in your journal. We will also discuss these events in class on January 27.

3. January 27                          Concepts of Community Participation

Readings:


4. February 3 Promoting Economic Well-Being at the Community Level

Readings:


• Chuck Collins (May/June 1995): “Aid to Dependent Corporations,” *Dollars & Sense* 5-17.


5. February 10 Promoting Social Well-Being at the Community Level

Readings:


6. February : Improving Urban Community Technologies: GIS, Internet Access, Wi-Fi and Warchalking

Readings:


February 24                                      Spring Recess – no classes

7. March 3                                      Creating Affordable and Safe Housing

Readings:


8. March 10 Cultural Activities, Community Participation & Well-Being

** Individual Narrative Papers due – March 10 **

Readings:

• M. McDonald, G. Antunez, and M. Gottemoeller, “Using the Arts and Literature in Health Education,” *International Quarterly of Community Health Education*,


9. March 17 Promoting Economic Well Being through Participation at the Community Level

**Summary of Group Projects due March 17**

Economic Group Presentation

Readings:


11. March 24 Promoting Social Well-Being at the Community Level through Citizen Participation.  
Social Well-Being Group Presentation

Readings:


12. March 30 Improving Urban and Community Technologies: GIS, Internet Access, Wi-Fi and Waranchalking

Community Information Technology Group Presentation

Readings:


13. April 7 Creating Affordable and Safe housing through Community Participation  
Housing Group Presentation

Readings:


14. April 14 Cultural Activities, Community Participation and Well-Being
Cultural Activities Group Presentation
All Class Presentation for Community Partners at Trinity-St. Marks United Church of Christ, 9315 W. Fort Street, Detroit, Michigan

Readings:


• Southeastern Michigan Community Partnership for Cultural Participation (December 1999), *Southeastern Michigan Geodemographic and Database Analysis* (Executive Summary), Southfield, MI: Art Serve.


Review and Evaluate the Course.
Guidelines for Evaluating Your Own In-Class Participation

Successful social planning at the community level is almost always a collaborative activity. Participants in a planning process are often volunteers who may be new to the planning process and who learn “on the job,” often from others they work with. Much of what you learn in this class is also likely to derive from your own participation and your interaction with other students. You will contribute to your own learning and to theirs by the questions and comments you make in class, the way in which you make formal presentations, the leadership you undertake in your design teams and the ways you contribute to others in class groups.

You may use the following criteria to evaluate your own in-class participation. Alternatively, you may prefer to write a brief, one-page essay (400 words or less) that indicates how you would grade your own participation and why.

Your Name________________________________ Score Yourself 1-10

1. I read the assignments in advance of class, thought about them and came ready to ask questions or to integrate new info. ______

2. I took initiative for raising issues in class that I think benefited others, brought in news clippings or other useful materials to share. ______

3. I played a leadership, facilitative or otherwise active role during in-class exercises and small group activities. ______

4. I did my share and more as a member of my assignment team. ______

5. I played a constructive role and assumed my share of responsibility and more as a member of the class. ______

6. I attended all class sessions. ______

7. Other (describe) ____________________________
   ____________________________ ______

Pick the five highest scores, and multiply by 2. Your total score _____