1. Course Description:

This course explores the origins and development of selected social variables characterizing racial, ethnic, religious, class and other cultural groups in contemporary U.S. society. Social and behavioral science theories and research findings on the allocation of different roles, status and opportunities to these populations are studied. A multidimensional, social justice and multicultural framework is established to examine privilege, discrimination and oppression. The course will emphasize that effective social work practice with diverse cultural groups involves understanding professional ethics in the context of the values of both the dominant society and the ethnic community.

2. Course Content:

The course content includes an exploration of historical, social, and political contexts for the study of diverse cultural groups, as gleaned from contemporary social science theories and conceptual frameworks. The various components that make up a culture will be examined in conjunction with a survey of selected racial, ethnic, class, immigrant, sexual orientation, and gender groups in the United States. The current status of these cultural groups are studied, including constructs such as the family, economic and educational attainment, development of informal and formal institutions within the cultural community, and modes of spiritual expression. The course also explores the impact of multiple social group memberships on social roles, help seeking and coping behavior, attitudes and values. In addition, the course contains a review of the contemporary conceptual frameworks influencing social science knowledge about
intergroup relations and conflict including, but not limited to, culturally sensitive, culturally competent, and ethnoconscious practice. The course examines the relationships among privilege, discrimination and oppression for selected cultural groups, and the implications of these forces for social work practice, the administration of human service organizations, and the formulation of public policies. Individual and small group activities related to the construction of critical consciousness in social work are also included.

3. **Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to perform the following skills:

1. Identify the historical, social, and political forces influencing the social constructions of diverse cultural groups in the United States by:
   a. Evaluating social science frameworks for the discussion of culture
   b. Distinguishing differences among culturally sensitive, culturally competent, multicultural and ethnoconscious frameworks in social work;
   c. Differentiating the experiences of indigenous and immigrant populations;
   d. Reviewing one’s own social group memberships and how they have influenced students’ opportunities and challenges.

2. Discuss the influences of discrimination, oppression and privilege on life experiences of diverse cultural groups by:
   a. Labeling forms of discrimination, prejudice and oppression as these differentially affect U.S. cultural groups including the poor, gay/lesbian/bisexual, ethnic, gender, racial, and social class groups;
   b. Identifying sources of intragroup and intergroup conflict stemming from cultural group membership;
   c. Describing social welfare policies and programs designed to address issues of differential treatment of cultural groups. Contrast these social welfare policies with those of other countries.
   d. Testing ones group participation and conflict management skills in an educational setting.

3. Review the potential between- and within-group similarities and differences among ethnic and racial groups in the United States and identify key variables to be considered by individuals attempting to work with these populations by:
   a. Examining historical, social and political forces influencing the current contexts these groups;
   b. Locating the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation for these groups;
   c. Critiquing the social science literature on ethnic and racial groups;
   d. Examining such variables as immigration and migration, cultural norms and roles, acculturation and assimilation, help-seeking behaviors, spirituality, employment and income, educational attainment, and the establishment of informal and formal institutions within these cultural groups;
e. Comparing and contrasting the experiences of at least two different racial and/or ethnic groups discussed in class, using an ethnoconscious framework.

4. Course Design:

This course uses various pedagogical strategies, including lecture, didactic and small group exercises, and video. Unique to this course will be the use of dialogue groups to enhance and promote discussion among classmates with the assistance of peer-facilitators. These groups will be composed of approximately 10 members and will meet weekly. The purpose of the groups is to further develop our knowledge of multiculturalism and critical consciousness through the process of group exercises that are experientially based. While the peer-facilitators have received some training, it should be understood that their role is to facilitate student motivated learning. We operate under the assumption that we are all teachers and learners in the class and the use of peer-facilitators is not intended to promote further hierarchy or to introduce experts into the groups. Rather, the use of the peer-facilitators is intended to reduce power hierarchies in our discussion of difficult and challenging issues that we might still be working through. The peer-facilitators are supervised by the course instructor and will not have grading responsibilities. The use of dialogue groups have been used in the undergraduate program for many years and have proven effectiveness. As part of a SSW initiative, we are introducing these groups to MSW students and hope that it proves equally effective as it has been with undergraduates.

We are very fortunate to have a wonderful group of students who will be co-facilitating the dialogue groups for the class. The peer-facilitators for the class are as follows: Courtney Long, Jeannine Vinson, Miriam Burkett, Foula Dimopoulos, Aaron Price, Liza Fleming-Ives, and Denise Poon. Contact information for your peer-facilitator will be provided in class.

5. Source Materials:

Required Texts:


Available at Ulrich’s on S. University.

6. Assignments:

A. Attendance and participation is required and will consist of 20% of your final grade. Participation includes being present, on time, active, and prepared for class and group discussions. Attendance includes active participation in your dialogue groups as well. Active discussion includes asking questions or providing critical perspectives on your
personal experiences and the readings, but may also include e-mail contact with the instructor or the class e-mail group (which will be created the first week of class). Refer to your student manual for further criteria.

B. Papers and Presentations.

Paper 1. Contextualizing a Life. (25% of final grade)

a. The purpose of this paper is to examine your family history and critically analyze how you, your family, and members of your social identity group came to be. Connecting with who we are both historically and in contemporary society can give us a perspective on how our views, attitudes, and opinions are shaped.

b. First, this paper invites you to take what you have learned thus far in this class and apply it to your own life. Begin the assignment by going back to at least two generations beyond your own and address place of residence, migration and immigration patterns, class, sexual orientation issues, gender, race and ethnicity. While it is not necessary to write about every parent or grandparent, choose at least one member from each generation to write about in greater depth. Sometimes students have found it useful to interview their family members for this assignment. I encourage you to do so if time and circumstances allow.

c. Next, I would like you to list two core values held by one member of each generation in your chart including yourself. Discuss how and why these values were important to each member. What were the attitudes of these members towards less privileged groups, for example, people in poverty or on welfare, ethnic and racial minorities, gay/lesbian individuals, persons with disabilities, persons of a different spiritual background, etc. Discuss the social, historical and political climate experienced by each cohort and its impact on the values chosen by you and selected family members. Discuss how these values, attitudes, and environmental contexts influenced how you see yourself, your values, and your attitudes.

d. In discussing these core values, consider the following questions. How has membership in multiple social identity groups differently affected outcomes for you and your family members? What specific family influences and values are currently present in your own interactions with others? What do you attribute any differences between you and your family to? Please reference the readings from class to help you make these connections as well.

e. Points will be given based clarity and comprehensiveness in each area. The paper assignment must not exceed 7 pages and is due February 12th at the beginning of class.

Paper 2. Integrative assignment. (25% of final grade)
a. **Part 1.** The paper is designed to help you integrate the themes of the course with a professional area of interest. First, select a social work content area of interest to you (i.e., social problem, policy issue, specialization, practice population, etc.) Present a literature review of the content area and why it is of interest to you. You will need to provide academic references that substantiate your evidence (minimum of 3 research or journal articles).

b. Describe the role of culture, as defined broadly in the course (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, spirituality, nation) in your area of interest. While it is impossible to provide the necessary coverage, it is important to demonstrate thoughtfulness of how different cultural groups play a critical role in your interest area. In what way is culture critically important? Are there instances when it is less important?

c. **Part 2.** Integrate how the following themes of the course have influenced your thinking in this area.

1. **Self-reflection**—Critically analyze how your participation in the course and outside of class this term has promoted the process of better understanding the role of culture in your interest area, in others, and in yourself. Describe your personal struggles and accomplishments this term regarding self-reflection.

2. **Oppression**—Critically analyze and reflect on the ways in which oppression and oppressive practices impinge upon your interest area and the environment of the individuals with whom you hope to work with as a social worker or other professional.

3. **Social Change/Social Justice**—Present how the terms social change and social justice relate to your interest area. Describe at least two ways in which you feel you will be able to promote social change and social justice in your specific area of interest. Describe a detailed and specific plan of action, including at least two short term and two long term goals, which will allow you to promote social change and social justice in your area of interest. Include in this plan, goals for your own continued personal growth and promotion of social change/action after the course.

f. Points will be given based clarity and comprehensiveness in each area.

The second paper assignment must not exceed 7 pages and is due November 19 at the beginning of class.

**Paper 3. Taping Assignment (see handout in class) 20% of final grade**

All papers must be typed double-spaced, using a clear, readable 12 point font, one-inch margin, page numbered, and edited for spelling and grammatical errors. Points will be taken from a paper that is difficult to read or contains numerous spelling or grammatical errors. In addition to the stated criteria, papers will be graded for quality and clarity. Refer to “General Requirements for Class Papers in the School of Social Work” section of your Student Guide.
Late papers will be reduced two points per day. Papers not received at the beginning of class are considered late. If you have any concerns about your paper, you should see me before the paper is due. I will be willing to read drafts and provide comments up to one week before the paper is due. I will need at least 3 days to read it and return comments. I will not read and comment on drafts during the week prior to the date the paper is due, but will discuss any issues or problems you are encountering.

Group Presentation. (10% of final grade)

You and your assigned groups will facilitate a 40-minute presentation to the class on a specific hot topic chosen by the group. It would be preferred that the hot topic be related to at least two social identity groups (intersectionality) and not be a group extensively covered in the class, but does not necessarily need to be. You will be required to research and present content material on:

a. A description or definition of the topic you choose and the purpose of the presentation, historical and current social, economic, and political issues that arise from the topic. Hot topics might include such issues as affirmative action, LGBT issues in the Asian community, current immigration policies and its impact on people of color, bisexuality or transgender people and the LGBT community, interracial dating, etc.

b. Any other information that might be useful in countering myths and stereotypes with factual information.

c. Be creative in how you present this information. Utilize exercises and small, facilitated groups and other dialogic techniques that you have seen in the class.

d. Each presentation will be followed by 20 minutes of questions and dialogue.

Each group must develop a written one-page handout for the class and should list critical knowledge areas for practice and policy. If you need to make duplicate copies of your handout, make an appointment to see me during my office hours or make an appointment so we can do this. If you need audio/video equipment, you must also place the order with me one week before the presentation. The group will receive one grade, although I will be cognizant of your individual effort.

ALTERNATIVE: I see all students as responsible for their learning experience. We, as a community of learners, contribute to the experience, but the student is ultimately responsible for the depth, challenge, and enjoyment of learning. If you are interested in discussing alternative or additional assignments, I welcome you to speak with me about the ideas you have. I must approve an alternative assignment. If you choose to do an alternate in place of one of the assignments listed above, a written proposal must be presented for my approval at least three weeks prior to the date the above assignment is due. No alternative assignments will be given for missed or late assignments.

7. Evaluation:
Your feedback is very important to me and I will provide you with opportunities to give me anonymous feedback throughout the term. These will likely occur both at the middle and at the end of the term. You will also provide me with additional feedback through brief in-class evaluations. Selected feedback will be discussed in class.

COFFEE/LUNCH BREAK! In addition to regular office hours, I will reserve at least one hour after class or at another designated time to have coffee/lunch with a group of students each week. This is an open invitation to meet in a less formal setting to discuss the class or get to know each other better. Depending on the response, I may have to limit the number of students so that the group remains small. Coffee time attendance is not required and non-attendance will not affect your grade.

9. Schedule of Topics and Readings for the Term:

Week 1. January 6, 2003

Overview of course and dialogues

Introductions, pretest, concentric circles, syllabus, expectations for class

Andersen and Hill-Collins: Ch. 1, Missing people and others; Ch. 2, La Guera; Ch. 3, Report from the Bahamas; Ch. 6, A different mirror

Zinn: Ch. 1 and 2

Diamond: Prologue and Ch. 1

Week 2. January 13, 2003

Contemporary cultures and the social construction of race and ethnicity

Andersen and Hill-Collins: Ch. 8, White privilege and male privilege; Ch 9, Of race and risk; Ch. 10, The other Americans; Seeing more than black & white: Latinos, racism, and the cultural divides

Zinn: Ch. 3 and 4

Diamond: Ch. 2 & 3
Martin Luther King Day (January 20) No Class

I strongly encourage you to attend the events on campus and in the community. Attendance to such events is mandatory, this is not a day off but a day of reflection.

Diamond: 4 & 5


Multiple Social Group Identities: Who are we and why is it important?

Andersen and Hill-Collins. Ch. 11, What white supremacists taught a Jewish scholar; Ch. 23, J.A.P. Slapping; Ch. 37, Media magic; ; Ch. 47, Is this a white country, or what?; ; Ch. 48, Black Hispanics: the ties that bind; Ch. 49, Optional ethnicities; Ch. 50, Crimes against humanity; Ch. 51, Your’re short, besides!; Ch. 52, Time to look and listen; Ch. 60, More power than we want

Zinn: Ch. 5 and 6

Diamond: Ch. 6 & 7

Week 4. February 3, 2003

Racism and oppression

Video: The Color of Fear

Andersen and Hill-Collins: Ch. 4, Angry women are building; Chc. 5, Oppression; Ch. 7 Something about the subject makes it hard to name; Ch. 12, Race matters; Ch. 36, Racist stereotyping in the English language; Ch. 62, Korean Americans vs. African Americans: conflict and construction.

Zinn: Ch. 7 and 8

Diamond: Ch. 8

Week 5. February 10, 2003

Sexism and the female identity

Paper 1. Contextualizing a Life due

Andersen and Hill-Collins: Ch. 19, Gender through the prism of difference; Ch. 20, Age, race, class, and sex; Ch. 21, Understanding and fighting sexism; Ch. 22, Ideological racism and cultural difference; Ch. 27, The gap between striving and achieving; Ch. 33, Countering the conspiracy to ignore black girls; Ch. 38, The myth of the Latin woman; Ch. 41, If men could menstruate; Ch. 59, The harm that has no name.
Zinn: Ch. 9 and 10
Diamond: Ch. 9-10

Week 6. February 17, 2003

Heterosexism and the politics of sexuality

Andersen and Hill-Collins: Ch. 24, A new vision of masculinity; Ch. 53, The gender of sexuality; Ch. 54, New politics of sexuality; Ch. 55, Where has gay liberation gone?; Ch. 56, The beauty myth; Ch. 57, Maiden voyage; Ch. 58, Getting off on feminism.

Zinn: Ch. 11 and 12
Diamond: Ch. 11-12

Spring break. February 24, 2003


Classism: Understanding the relationship between race and socioeconomic status

Andersen and Hill-Collins: Ch. 13, Tired of playing monopoly; Ch. 14, Wealth matters; Ch. 15, Poverty as race, power, and wealth; Ch. 17 The plight of black men; Ch. 18, Moving up with kin and community; Ch. 25 Economic restructuring and systems of inequality; Ch. 26, Race, class, gender, and women’s works; Ch. 28, The Latino population: the importance of economic restructuring; Ch. 29, Working poor, working hard

Zinn: 13 and 14
Diamond: Ch. 13

Week 8. March 10, 2003

Ableism: Visible and invisible privilege

Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 21-31 (on reserve)

http://www/c-c-d.org/doors.html (Disability and Housing)

http://www.mpas.org (Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service, Inc.)


Zinn: 15 and 16

Diamond: Ch. 14 & 15

Week 9. March 17, 2003

Religion and spirituality: A source of strength, privilege, and oppression

Adams, Blumenfeld, et al – Chapters 60-72


Zinn: 17 and 18

Diamond: Ch. 16

Week 10. March 24, 2003
Models of Change and the Promotion of Justice
Paper 2. Integrative research paper is due.

Andersen and Hill-Collins: Ch. 43, Can education eliminate race, class, and gender inequality?; Ch. 64, Coalition politics; Ch. 65, The boys and girls of (union) summer; Ch. 66, From the ground up; Ch. 67, Taking multicultural, antiracist education seriously; Ch. 68, Women of Color on the front line; Ch. 69, Having the tools in hand.

Zinn: 19 and 20

Diamond: Ch. 17 & 18

Week 11. March 31, 2003

Class Presentations
Andersen and Hill-Collins: Ch. 42, The first Americans: American Indians; Ch. 44, The shredded net: the end of welfare as we knew it; Ch. 45 Aid to dependent corporations; Ch. 46, Thoughts on class, race, and prison; Ch. 61, The police and the black male; Ch. 63, Where race and gender meet: racism, hate crimes, and pornography.

Zinn: Ch. 21 and 22

Diamond: Ch. 19

Week 12. April 7, 2003

Class Presentations and Dialogue group termination

Andersen and Hill-Collins: Ch. 30, The Armstong: an oral history of a homeless American family; Ch. 31, Our mother’s grief; Ch. 32, The diversity of the American families; Ch. 35 Migration and Vietnamese American women.

Zinn: Ch. 23

Diamond: Epilogue

Week 13. April 14, 2003

Speak Out, class termination, and potluck
Final taping paper assignment is due.

HAVE A WONDERFUL WINTER BREAK!!

Recommended Reading List: Books and Articles


