### 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 cultural community.

### 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, physical or mental ability, ethnic, class, immigrant, sexual orientation, and gender groups in the United States. The status of these cultural groups is 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.
   f. Applying the items in a-f (above) to the current historical, political and social contexts, using the 2004 national elections.

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, physical and mental ability, 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 one's 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, ability, 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, video, group work and guest presentations.

5. **Source Materials:**

**Required Texts:**


All Books Are Available at Common Language Bookstore on Liberty and South Fourth Street in Ann Arbor.

There are also a number of resource materials on the class CourseTools site for your use.

**Assignments and Grading:**

**Attendance and participation** is required and will consist of 15% of your final grade. Attendance will be taken at every class, and includes presence for small group discussions. Participation includes being present, on time, active, and prepared for class and group discussions. Active discussion includes asking questions or providing critical perspectives on the readings, but may also include e-mail contact with the class’ CourseTools discussion groups. Refer to your Student Guide for further criteria and writing guides.

**All Assignments** must be typed, double-spaced, use a clear, readable 12 point font, one-inch margin, page numbered, and edited for spelling and grammatical errors. Points will be deducted from a paper that is difficult to read or one containing numerous spelling or grammatical errors. In addition to the stated criteria, papers will be graded for quality and clarity. Please read the assignment section carefully. Refer to “General Requirements for Class Papers in the School of Social Work” section of your Student Guide.

Those students for whom English is not a first language, or who need additional assistance due to a “dis”ability must notify the instructor at the beginning of the term so that alternatives for the assignments can be arranged.

**ALL PAPERS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COURSETOOLS SITE.**

Two points per day are deducted from late assignments. Papers not received at the beginning of the class period are considered late. If you have any concerns about your paper, you should see the instructor before the paper is due.

. The page limits will be enforced. No matter how brilliant you might be on page 8 of your 5 page assignment, the instructor will only read 5 pages and your brilliance will not be included in the determination of your grade for that assignment.
Assignment 1: A 2 Part Taping Activity (20% of final grade). This assignment is designed to 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. You will be supplied with a set of questions for this taping assignment.

Part A: First Tape DUE: September 17, 1003 (Credit will be given for submitting your tape on time.)


Assignment 2: Commentary (15% of final grade)- This first commentary invites you to integrate personal experiences and course content. How have historical, social, and political forces influenced your extended family’s opportunities and challenges? How have the interactions of multiple social group memberships differently affected outcomes for family members? What specific family influences are currently present in your own interactions with others? When did you learn that you were not “just an individual”? When completing this assignment, please go back to at least two generations prior to your own and consider migration, immigration, and class issues explicitly. The instructor will read a maximum of 6 pages. (Hint: One way of efficiently managing the space allocation is to create a “family” genogram.) DUE: October 1, 2004

Assignment 3: (50% of Final Grade) Influencing Social Policy through Knowledge of Intersectionality

Goals: This assignment is actually an extension of the first. Now you must move from your personal and familial view to a societal one. In order to complete this assignment well, please be aware that you will be expected to move through community, organizational, societal and global levels as well as the two you have already captured. Completion of this work will also recognize your ability to integrate yourself and work within the realities of the political realm of social work practice in the U.S.

You have been selected as one of several domestic policy advisors to the Presidential candidate. {Please note: You have the opportunity to choose your party here, all choices are encouraged, as long as you can accurately capture the platform of the party for this election year. Even a choice to be “non-political” is a political choice in this country. The profession you have chosen is inextricably linked to political interests and your activities as a social worker influence public policy, no matter where you work.} Your first assignment is to develop his platform on a particular social issue about which you are expert. Remember that there are group of other advisors who are doing likewise and your succinct and clear presentation of the particular issue will greatly influence your ability to gain and keep the candidate’s ear. Your contextualized analysis with its historical, political and social aspects provide compelling arguments based on your awareness of all of the nuances regarding the topic. Further, your own passion and knowledge are revealed through your standpoint on the particular issue. Most importantly, the
candidate knows that he can rely on your skill to design a comprehensive plan of action based on measurable and observable objectives.

To complete your pre-election assignment for the candidate, you are to **produce a brief working paper (not more than 8 pages, with full citations, for 30 points)** with a one page Executive Summary highlighting your major points (5 points). The working paper should address all of the constituents that your candidate feels he wishes to fully represent and acknowledge their voices, some for the first time. These constituents include G/L/B/T formal and informal networks, aging families, those who are experiencing physical or mental “dis”-abilities (including those whose conditions are “hidden”). The candidate is also determined to address the needs of protected groups under the US Constitution (people of color, white women, members of religious groups). Your candidate has taken a strong stance on the importance of viewing groups as a method of social change rather than individuals (an unusual stance to be certain) and has publicly embraced families in their various forms as the unit of analysis he will begin with in addressing public policy reforms. Having experienced first hand the differences between opportunities available to families in the Americas based upon economic and social class, he also addresses each policy issue with a discussion about the positive and negative consequences income and social status make in its operationalization. Your document will need to address these as well.

Whether you are interested in working with youth, health care, corrections, or any other field of service, you will need to develop a comprehensive plan. It must include at least two long term goals and two short term objectives the candidate can use to influence the population so that even those who have not participated in the political arena feel compelled to vote in November, 2004. Do not forget to provide a rationale for each of your goals and objectives.

**OPTIONS For Influencing the Candidate’s Platform (15 Points)**

**Option A.** Twice during the term, at random, you will be asked to do a 30 minute writing exercise linking your policy choices to the changing contexts of our political scene during this election. The expectation for these writing exercises is that you will incorporate course readings and current news reports in the body of the paper. Each of these writing exercises will be worth 7 1/2 points. Those missing the written assignments without having been excused in advance will forfeit the points.

**Option B.** Instead of the random writing exercises, you may choose to produce an annotated bibliography of ten scholarly readings related to intersectionality and your field of service. If you choose this option, you will be required to inform the instructor of your topic AND your ten citations. The annotated bibliography will be due October 29, 2004.

The Executive Summaries (worth 5 points) will be due on November 19. Anyone not meeting this deadline must attend the following class with 30 copies of their
summary so that each class member will receive one and be able to read it. In addition, those Executive Summaries must be posted in the Discussion Section of the Coursetools site no later than the evening of November 18. If the Summary is not posted on Coursetools or distributed in class on the due date, no credit will be received for this part of the assignment. Everyone is responsible for reading all of the uploaded papers.

The brief working papers (35 points) will be due December 3. Six of these papers will be chosen at random, and the entire class assigned to small groups to compare these with the platforms of the 2004 candidates from all parties and the outcomes of the actual Presidential election on November 2, 2004. The point of these comparisons is to consider their implications for intersectionality, social work practice in its broadest forms, and the next four years of the nation. Those individuals whose papers are chosen for discussion will serve as “expert” co-facilitators of the groups working with their proposals.

ALTERNATIVE ASSIGNMENTS: I view all students as responsible for their learning experience. As a part of the community of learners, I 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 all alternative assignments. If you choose to do an alternate in place of one of the assignments listed above, a written proposal must be presented for 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.

Evaluation:

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Schedule of Topics and Readings for the Term:

Week 1. September 10, 2004: An Introduction to Intersectionality
Beginnings
- Introductions
- Syllabus overview
- Ground rules
- Preliminary Constructs, Theories
- Hopes and fears

Readings: (To be Completed Following The First Class)
Andersen and Hill-Collins: Ch. 1, 2, 6, 27, 36,

Week 2. September 17, 2004: Sankofa
Culture: An Historical, Social, Political and Global Perspective
- Film collage
- Submit Tapes for Taping Assignment

Readings:
Anderson & Hill-Collins: 5, 11, 24, 29, 30, 40, 47
Zinn: Ch. 1-4

Week 3. September 24, 2004: Contemporary Culture or Cultures?
- Preliminary List of Citations for Independent Reading Due
- Multiple Identities, Power & Privilege
- Understanding “whiteness” as a social construct
- Culture box exercise
- I am exercise
- Levels of Power and Privilege

Readings:
Andersen and Hill-Collins: 11, 27, 36, 40, 45, 59

Week 4. October 1, 2004 Please come to class on time!
Racism and oppression
- Video: The Color of Fear
- Class Discussion
- Commentary Due
Readings:

Andersen and Hill-Collins:8, 9, 13, 20, 44, 47-9

Zinn: Ch. 5, 9-10.


**Week 5. October 8, 2004 Gender and Sex**
- Act like a man/woman activity
- A united feminist front?
- Male/Female caucus groups

Andersen and Hill-Collins:19, 21, 22, 29, 31, 38, 50

Zinn: Ch. 6, 17, 19

**Week 6. October 15, 2004 What Do We Know, What Do We Need To Know?**
- Intersectionalities
- What does this have to do with the Election
- First Commentaries Due
- Midterm Evaluations

Andersen and Hill-Collins:

Zinn: Ch. 7 and 8, Afterword for the 20th Century Edition

**Week 7 October 22, 2004 Classism**
- "We don't have class in the United States"
- Understanding the relationship between race and socioeconomic status
- Cross the Line Exercise
- Video: People Like Us
- Understanding class privilege in social work

Readings:

Andersen and Hill-Collins: 14-18, 25-6, 28, 32, 43

Zinn: 13, 15

Week 8. October 29, 2004  Ableism: Visible and invisible privilege

- (Dis)ability defined
- Markers of "ability privilege"
- Mental illness and Traumatic brain injury
- Parenting
- U.S. social and political responses
- International responses
- Annotated Bibliographies Due

Readings:
http://www/c-c-d.org/doors.html (Disability and Housing)
http://www.mpas.org (Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service, Inc.)


Week 9. November 5, 2004  Religion and spirituality: A source of strength, privilege, and oppression

- Definition of terms
- Dimensions of Spiritual Wellness
- "Why is it so hard to be a _____________ in the School of Social Work?"
- Rituals
- Practitioner Self-Awareness
- Pink triangle assignment
Readings:


Andersen and Hill-Collins: 49, 61

Week 10. November 12, 2004  Heterosexism, the politics of sexuality, and sexual identity
- Pink Triangle Assignment Revisited
- The intersectionality of sexual orientation and race
- Hate crimes
- Body image exercise
- Policy Briefs Due

Readings:
Andersen and Hill-Collins: 7, 33, 52

Zinn: Ch. 19.

Week 11. November 19, 2004  Alliance Building : Guest Speaker

Readings:
Andersen and Hill-Collins: 3, 4, 12, 20, 60, 62, 63

Zinn: Ch. 21 and 22

NOVEMBER 26, 2004  NO CLASS -PART OF THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY BREAK

Week 12. December 3. Models of Change and the Promotion of Justice Part 1
- Action Continuum: from individual through global change
- Sphere of Influence
Being an Effective Ally
Understanding our boundaries
Discussion of Policy Briefs
Final Papers Due

Readings:
Andersen and Hill-Collins: 10, 42, 46, 56, 64
Zinn: 19 and 20

- How can we manage intersectionality as citizens?
- What roles do social workers play?
- Challenges facing the profession for the next 4 years
- Speak Out Exercise
- Final Tapes Due
- Evaluations

Readings
Andersen and Hill-Collins: 23, 39, 41, 55
Zinn: Ch. 23, 24
**Recommended Reading List: Books and Articles**


Lieberman, Alice and Cheryl B. Lester (2004). *Social work practice with a difference*.


