Organizational, Community, and Societal Structures and Processes  
SW 502, Section 003, Fall 2004  
Tuesday: 2-5:00pm  
School of Social Work, Room 3816

Instructor  
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Office Hours: Tuesday 1-2 pm OR by appointment

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 American society. Consideration is given to ways in which these social systems have significant social, political, economic, and psychological impact on the functioning of individuals, families and social groups. This 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 large social units are examined in terms of risk and protective factors that promote or detract from optimal individual and group well-being.

Course Content  
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 will be 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 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 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 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 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 the MSW Curriculum
This course is part of the HBSE (Human Behavior and Social Environment) component of the foundation, generalist component of the curriculum. As such, it focuses on the “macro” knowledge base for social work practice in all methods and fields, emphasizing mid to large size systems. It draws from some areas of psychology, but more from sociology, political science, and anthropology, with some economics and history. The course will emphasize what evidence is available to support particular perspectives and theories and will analyze the strengths and limitations of each. A major goal is to develop the capacity to think, plan, problem-solve, and create change at larger systems levels, and to understand how larger systems affect individuals, families and groups.

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes
- **Multiculturalism and Diversity** is addressed through the presentation of theory and research on their role in community, organizational and societal functioning and well-being.

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

- **Behavioral and Social Sciences Research** is addressed through its inclusion in the description of the social environment and its impact on individuals, families and groups.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** is addressed through the discussion of programs and systemic interventions to prevent stress and oppression of individuals, families, and groups and to enhance their quality of life and well-being.

Course Design
Required readings have been identified by lecture topic. A selection of readings from the required texts, articles, and class handouts will be used for class discussions, small group activities, student-led learning opportunities, and assignments.

Attendance and Participation
Students are expected to attend all lectures and prepare by completing the assigned readings prior to class. Students are expected to participate in the following class activities: discussions, small group applications, homework assignments, student-led activities, and mock exercises. Coming to or leaving class mid-way is considered an absence. In-class participation will determine 10% (10 points) of the final grade.
Deadline Expectations
All assignments are due on the date listed in this course outline. The assignment will be graded down one full grade (points are calculated by assignment) if the assignment is submitted within two days of the due date. Assignments more than two days late will be assigned zero points. Exceptions will need the permission of the instructor prior to the due date.

Grading System
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91–93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>81-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-80</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>&lt;69 (no credit)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Incompletes are not granted unless it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the normal expectations of the course. The student must formally request an incomplete with the instructor prior to the final week of classes. Students with specialized learning needs are requested to make an appointment with the instructor to discuss the necessary arrangements. Please review the Student Guide section on Ethical Conduct in the University Environment (pp. 50-52). This section addresses plagiarism, harassment and discrimination policies. Students are expected to complete the assignments on their own.

Assignments
Students will use APA format in their written assignments. All papers will be double-spaced, typewritten with 12-point font. Students are encouraged to reference class readings and other relevant literature.

1. **Theories of Change (20 points)**
   *due Oct. 12th*

   Students will select a published newspaper or professional journal article describing a social or economic justice effort (policy or program). Using a one-page logic model, students will extract and articulate the theory of change, including the system conditions that led to the need for the action, the intended action, and the expected outcomes. A 3-4 page critical analysis of the theory including a discussion of contrasting theories and a review of assumptions will accompany the logic model. Students will develop the grading rubric for this assignment in class. References are required.

2. **Inventory of Protective Factors (20 points)**
   *due Nov. 16th*

   Based on class readings, class discussions, and a literature review, students will develop an inventory of protective factors. This inventory should be presented as a conceptual model (not solely based on empirically-derived factors). A brief description of each factor and a rationale for inclusion of the factor is expected. Students can select to inventory either organizational OR community-level factors. References are required.
3. **Student Leadership Opportunity (20 points)**  
**In-Class**  
At the first class, students will identify a “focus population” and be connected to other classmates with a similar interest. The group will contribute to class content by implementing a class activity relevant to the lecture topic and readings. In previous classes, activities have included completion of a survey, participation in focus groups, presentation of a video clip and discussion, facilitation of the book club discussion, or the implementation of a mock exercise. Students are encouraged to be creative and productive while respecting the time of their classmates. Students will be evaluated by other students and the instructor. In order to prepare, students will meet with their “focus population group” and the instructor one week prior to their scheduled leadership opportunity to clarify the learning objectives and plan the activity. The student group will lead the class for 20-30 minutes. The instructor will de-brief the activity.

4. **Contemporary Manifestations (30 points) due Dec. 17**  
Based on the author’s experience in *Nickel and Dimed*, students will refer to their “focus population” and identify contemporary manifestations of oppression, discrimination, prejudice, power and privilege using one of the paradigms presented by Mullaly. The paper will include a description of the impacts on the social environment and a review of relevant professional social work values/ethics and actions (within and outside the system) designed to promote social and economic justice. The grading rubric for this assignment will be developed in class by the students. References are required.

**Required Texts –on reserve at SSW library**  


**Required Readings by Lecture**  
(E) Required reading is available from SSW Library website

**Lecture 1, Sept. 7**  
Introduction to course, expectations, identification of Student Leadership Opportunities and focus population.

**Lecture 2, Sept. 14**  
Social problems, capitalism, welfare reform theories  
• Mullaly CH1 Capitalism, Crises and Paradigms  
• Mullaly CH2 Social Work Vision

**Lecture 3, Sept. 21…no class due to instructor’s absence.**

**Lecture 4, Sept. 28**  
Ideologies, paradigms  
• Mullaly, CH3 Neo-conservative Paradigm
• Mullaly, CH4 Liberal Paradigm
• Mullaly, CH5 Social Democratic Paradigm

Lecture 5, Oct. 5
Theoretical perspectives and social work history

Lecture 6, Oct. 12 Theory of Change Due
Theoretical perspectives and macro social work practice

Lecture 7, Oct. 19…no class due to UM Fall Break.

Lecture 8, Oct. 26
Theoretical perspectives and communities
• Kirst CH1 Intro to Human Behavior in Macro Social Environment
• Kirst CH2 Communities in the Social Environment: Theories and Concepts

Lecture 9, Nov. 2
Resiliency, power and empowerment in communities and neighborhoods, theories about community organizing
• Kirst CH3 Human Behavior and Empowerment
• Kirst CH4 Neighborhood Empowerment

Lecture 10, Nov. 9
Power and empowerment in organizations
• Kirst CH5 Knowledge and Theories about Organizations
• Kirst CH6 Internal and External Environments of Organizations
• Kirst CH7 Human Behavior in Traditional Organizational Environments
• Kirst CH8 Human Behavior and Empowerment in Organizations
Lecture 11, Nov. 16
Theories of groups in macro social environment
• Kirst CH10 Types of Groups in the Macro Social Environment
• Kirst CH11 Human Behavior in Groups: Theories and Dynamics

Lecture 12, Nov. 23
Privilege, oppression, diversity, social justice (PODS)
• Kirst CH9 Empowerment of People with Developmental Disabilities in Community and Organizational Environments
• Kirst CH12 Diversity, Populations-at-risk, and Human Behavior in the Macro Social Environment
• Ehrenreich, Intro and Chapter one

Lecture 13, Nov. 30
Privilege, oppression, diversity, social justice (PODS) and macro social work
• Mullaly CH7 Structural Social Work Theory and Oppression
• Ehrenreich, Chapter two

Lecture 14, Dec. 7
Privilege, oppression, diversity, social justice (PODS) and macro social work
• Mullaly CH8 Oppression
• Ehrenreich, Chapter three and evaluation

Lecture 15, Dec. 14
• Mullaly CH9 Working Within (and Against) the System: Radical Humanism
• Mullay CH10 Working Outside (and Against) the System: Radical Structuralism

Final Assignment due by 5pm on December 17th in Office #3760 School of Social Work.