

The University of Texas at Austin
School of Social Work

Foundations of Social Justice

Fall 2013

Course Number: SW325	Instructor: Laurie Cook Heffron, LMSW
Unique Number: 64040	Office Location: SSW 3.212E
Class location: SW 2.118	Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:00 am to 12:30 pm or by appointment
Class times: Monday and Wednesday, 9:30 am to 11:00 am	Email: lcookheffron@austin.utexas.edu

Course Description

This course is based the following assumptions: 1.) membership in a population-at-risk group (e.g., people of color, women, gay and lesbian persons) significantly influences an individual's life experiences, world view, and increases risk factors for exposure to discrimination, economic deprivation, and oppression; 2.) professional social work ethics and values demand culturally competent practices; 3.) it is necessary for students to learn to apply social justice approaches to influence assessment, planning, access to resources, intervention, and research; and 4.) professionals and programs have strategies to critically analyze distributive justice, human and civil rights, and global interconnections of oppression. There is an emphasis in this course on the impact of discrimination and oppression by individuals and society on people of culturally diverse backgrounds and orientations.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Critique and apply culturally competent and social justice approaches to influence assessment, planning, access to resources, intervention, and research (PB 18, 19, and 20)
2. Demonstrate familiarity with the history and heritage of population-at-risk groups, including women and culturally diverse populations globally, as well as those prevalent in the southwestern region of the United States (PB14, 16 and 17)
3. Understand the social construction of race and ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation (PB 14)
4. Examine the personal and professional use of self in ethical, culturally competent, and socially just social work practices (PB15)
5. Assess the impact of discrimination (e.g. racism, sexism, homophobia) and oppression on public policy, institutional structure, service delivery, and one's own role in promoting social and economic justice (PB 18, 19, and 20).

Accreditation

The University of Texas' School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1952. In order to maintain our accreditation status, we engage in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Several required courses in our curriculum are part of this ongoing assessment, including this course. Below is a list of the specific Educational Policies (EP) and Practice Behaviors (PB) that are assessed in this course. The complete EPAS can be found in your Student Handbook.

EP2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice.

PB14 Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, create or enhance privilege and power

Objectives 2 and 3

Assignment:

- Reflection Papers
- Culture Chests
- Social Justice Project & Presentation

PB15 Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups

Objectives 4

Assignment:

- Reflection Papers
- Culture Chests

PB16 Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences

Objectives 2

Assignment:

- Reflection Papers
- Social Justice Project & Presentation

PB17 View selves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants

Objectives 2

Assignment:

- Social Justice Project & Presentation

EP2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

PB18 Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination

Objectives 1 and 5

Assignment:

- Reflection Papers
- Social Justice Project & Presentation

PB19 Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice

Objectives 1 and 5

Assignment:

- Social Justice Project & Presentation

PB20 Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice

Objectives 1 and 5

Assignment:

- Social Justice Project & Presentation

Teaching Methods

The course will be presented through a variety of teaching strategies. For example, case studies, discussions, videos, small group work, news articles, quizzes, readings, paper assignments, and lectures will be utilized. Videos will be used as tools for addressing key concepts in the course. The goal is to stimulate critical thinking, intellectual creativity, and sharing of knowledge and skills with and through the class.

Teaching involves collaboration between instructor and student in a mutual learning process. The content of the course has the potential to be controversial and to spark emotional responses. Together, students and the instructor will establish guidelines to create a respectful, safe and challenging learning environment.

Class Policies

1. Students are expected to attend ALL class meetings, to read ALL the assigned readings, and to participate in class discussions.
2. Submit all assignments via Blackboard on the day of the deadline.
3. There are no “excused” absences. However instructors will make exceptions for students who miss class on religious holidays. Students missing more than two class sessions may receive a 10% reduction in their overall course grade. Students missing three or more class sessions may receive an “F” for the course. The instructor may use her/his discretion.
4. Assignments are to be submitted according to the schedule. All late assignments will receive a five (5) percent penalty per day (weekend days will be included).
5. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) is the style manual to be used for all assignments. Incorrect APA style will result a deduction of points on assignments.
6. Appropriate referencing is required. Failure to use quotation marks for direct quotes or citation for indirect quotations and/or others ideas may result in a “0” for the paper and/or an “F” for the course.
7. All papers are to be word-processed or typewritten, double-spaced, 12 point font, and “normal” (1 inch) margins.
8. University policies governing scholastic dishonesty, as presented in the General Information Bulletin and the brochure prepared by Student for Academic Integrity apply in this course. Scholastic dishonesty may result in a report to the Graduate Program Director, the Dean of the School of Social Work, and/or the Dean of the Graduate School. Students may receive an “F” for the course and other sanctions in accordance with University policies.

9. Any modifications, amendments, or changes to the syllabus and or assignments are the discretion of the instructors. Changes will be announced in class. It is the responsibility of the student to inquire about any changes that might have been made in his/her absence.

Confidentiality

Personal disclosure is not an expectation or a requirement of this course. However, it might be appropriate for students to talk about personal information during class only as it relates to our learning about a particular topic. Students are expected to adhere to strict standards of confidentiality during the semester.

The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Professional conduct in class

The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

Policy on social media and professional communication

Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image. Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a

client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

Policy on scholastic dishonesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>).

Documented disability statement

Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471- 6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Religious holidays

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Use of e-mail for official correspondence to students

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time- sensitive. Students can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Safety

As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Emergency evacuation policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Electronics in class

Turn off and put away your cell phones before class begins.

Cultural Diversity Flag

This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

Required and Recommended Texts

Students will be assigned a set of required readings for this course. Other readings may be assigned and will be made available on Blackboard. The course calendar will be updated accordingly. All readings are expected to be completed before each class.

Required:

- Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W. J., Castañeda, R., Hackman, H.W., Peters, M.L., Zúñiga, X. (eds.) (2013) Readings for Diversity and Social Justice. Third Edition. New York: Routledge.

Recommended:

- Anaya, R. (2012). Bless Me, Ultima. Grand Central Publishing.
- Anzaldúa, G. (1999). Borderlands: La Frontera.
- Burch, S., & Joyner, H. (2007). Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Wilson. Univ. of North Carolina Press.
- Fadiman, A. (2012). The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures. Farrar Straus & Giroux.
- Jensen, R. (2005). The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism, and White Privilege. San Francisco, CA: City Lights.
- Lloyd, R. (2011). Girls Like Us. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Scholinski, D., & Adams, J. M. (1997). The Last Time I Wore a Dress. New York: Riverhead Books.

Course Requirements

Your grade for this course will be based on the following assignments and expectations:

Assignment #1: Active Learning – Participation & Attendance	10 points
Assignment #2: Initial Personal Statement	5 points
Assignment #3: Reflections in the Readings	20 points
Assignment #4: Culture Chest	10 points
Assignment #5: Social Justice Project & Action Plan	25 points
Assignment #6: Social Action Project Presentation	15 points
Assignment #7: Final Personal Statement	10 points
Quizzes	5 points
Total	100 points

Assignment Descriptions

All written assignments should be double-spaced in 12-point New Times Roman font. Assignments are due via Blackboard.

Assignment #1: Active Learning – Participation & Attendance

You are expected to actively contribute to the class discussions and learning in and outside the classrooms and will be evaluated according the criteria listed below.

- Preparation – Are you prepared for class by reading the assignments? Are you on time to class? What have you learned outside of class that enhances our learning together?
- Quality of Participation – To what extent is your contribution to course discussions and small group activities meaningful? Does your participation in course discussions advance the depth of course learning?
- Current events - Students are expected to stay abreast of current events, and thus add to class discussions, by viewing at least one national or international news source on a weekly basis. Recommended sources include, but are not limited to: BBC, CNN, Democracy Now!, network news (i.e., CBS, ABC and NBC), New York Times, NPR, US News and World Report and Washington Post.

In addition to regular attendance, active, cooperative learning is a requirement of this course. You will learn via listening, talking together, reading with a critical eye, and engaging in class activities. Your thoughtful contributions in each of these modes of active learning are an important aspect of the learning process.

Furthermore, as part of active participation in the class, each student is expected to stay abreast of current events and present discussion questions related to critical course material. The instructor will award active learning points based upon observation and, if necessary, discussion with the student.

Expectations:

- Regular class attendance. A student may miss two classes without penalty. For each additional unexcused class missed, two points will be deducted from their active learning grade. Students missing several classes will be asked to meet with the instructor to discuss their attendance.
- Participate in an interactive educational process grounded in course readings. Content (e.g., readings and lecture material) and process (e.g., classroom experiences) are mutually enhancing and both are necessary for an optimal learning experience.
- Raise questions, express your viewpoints, and engage in small and large group discussions and experiential exercises.
- Participate in a professional manner that includes respectfulness with regard to difference.
- View at least one national or international news source each week.
- Demonstrate understanding of current events and their relevance to course content.

Assignment #2: Initial Personal Statement

To assist you in beginning the course, write a three-page essay that answers the following questions:

1. What life and work experiences have informed your decision to become a social worker?
2. What are your professional goals?

3. What adjustments will you have to make to meet the challenges of the BSW program?
4. What resources (e.g., personal strengths, family/friend support, community support) will you draw upon to facilitate your success in the class and program?
5. What will be your contribution to the field of social work and how will you change the world?

Criteria of Evaluation:

- √ Timely completion of the assignment.
- √ Ability to demonstrate reflection and self- -exploration.
- √ Adherence to APA style guidelines.

DUE: Sept. 9

Assignment #3: Reflections on the Readings

Ten reflection papers are due over the course of the semester. The reflections are your opportunity to use writing to integrate the course readings and clarify your thoughts.

Follow these steps:

- Read the assigned readings for the week.
- Reflect on what you have read.
- Write **your** thoughts, opinions, feelings related to the issues raised in readings.

For one of the ten reflection papers, choose one of the following books to read. Based on your selection, write your reflection paper on the book for the week assigned. Each student will choose one of the following books:

- Anaya, R. (2012). *Bless Me, Ultima*. Grand Central Publishing. (Oct. 2)
- Anzaldúa, G. (1999). *Borderlands: La Frontera*. (Nov. 20)
- Burch, S., & Joyner, H. (2007). *Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Wilson*. Univ. of North Carolina Press. (Nov. 6)
- Fadiman, A. (2012). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures*. Farrar Straus & Giroux. (Nov. 20)
- Jensen, R. (2005). *The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism, and White Privilege*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights. (Oct. 2)
- Lloyd, R. (2011). *Girls Like Us*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers. (Oct. 23)
- Scholinski, D., & Adams, J. M. (1997). *The Last Time I Wore a Dress*. New York: Riverhead Books. (Oct. 9)

The reflection paper should be 1 page, typewritten, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins.

Headings for each reflection should appear left aligned as shown below:

Last Name, First Name/Date/Reflection # (1-10)

Criteria for Evaluation:

- √ Relevance to readings
- √ Clarity and timely completion of the assignment (late reflections not accepted)
- √ Adhere to the manuscript guidelines 1a, 1b, 3(attached)

DUE: Sept. 18, 25, Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Nov. 6, 13, 20

Assignment #4: Culture Chest

Choose a small box for your “culture chest.” Place inside, 5 items that represent your social identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, social class, nationality, age, size) that have influenced your worldview or behavior. These items might include photographs, pieces of art, jewelry, piece of clothing, or anything you believe has significant influence on how you perceive and behave in the world.

Decorate the outside of your box with 5 images (e.g., pictures, drawings, words or phrases) that describe how you think others view these social identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, social class, nationality, age, size) and/or have treated you based on these social identities.

Please try to be mindful of time while presenting your culture box so others also have an opportunity to do so within a timely manner. As you share each item it is necessary to explain how this relates to a particular social identity.

Criteria for evaluation:

- Thoughtful contents inside the culture chest
- Thoughtful decoration of the outside of the culture chest
- Sharing of the culture chest during class, including your description of how each item relates to a specific social group membership

DUE: Sept. 23 (presentations Sept. 23 and Sept 25)

Assignment #5: Social Justice Group Project and Action Plan

During the course of this seminar, readings, lectures, and class discussions will touch on many pressing social justice issues. Students will indicate topic areas which are of interest to them. Students will be grouped with other students who have similar interests. Students will then work together to develop a social justice project and action plan based on this topic. The purpose of the project is to raise class/student awareness of social justice, diversity and power issues within populations and communities through a variety of methods, media and collaborations. Projects may be a research paper, photo essay or a video, a series of interviews or a survey. There is great deal of latitude; however, students must prepare a project proposal and meet with the professor to answer questions and provide details prior to approval. The approved proposal will serve as the specific criteria of the project. Students will submit updates throughout the semester that demonstrate progress towards achievement of the project as detailed in the proposal. Following the research/data collection phase of the project, students will develop a social action plan on their chosen topic that promotes social and economic justice with a micro, mezzo and macro level strategy with specific reference to how the social work profession can address and ameliorate the issue and associated problems. This can be an outline or a visual display such as a chart or diagram.

The project will assist you in:

- Integrating course content
- Sharpening your critical analysis skills
- Formulating a viable social action plan

- Seeing past the problems of individual clients by identifying and addressing the broader, structural factors that compromise the well-being of individuals, families, and communities
- Learning to work in a group setting

Criteria for Evaluation of Project:

- √ Clearly identifies and addresses a social justice issue
- √ Describes the prevalence and impact of the problem
- √ Communicates the complexities of the issue from an individual and structural perspective
- √ Connects and synthesizes course readings, discussions, and student development
- √ Adheres to the guidelines of the proposal approved by the professor
- √ Individual student contributions are evident in the final product

Criteria for Evaluation of Action Plan:

- √ Viability of action plan
- √ Identification of social work's role in the plan
- √ Format and presentation of the plan
- √ Individual student contributions are evident in final product

The instructor reserves the right to award differentially weighted grades on the group project based on the contribution of the group members to the social justice project and action plan. If an individual student's performance is consistently below par, students should set up a meeting with the instructor to discuss the situation.

Project Description/Proposal DUE: Sept. 30

All final documentation DUE: Dec. 2

Assignment #6: Group Presentation

The purpose of the presentation is to share information with your classmates that is important for social workers to know about the social justice issue your group has analyzed. Each group will present their social justice project and action plan. Groups can present using a PowerPoint presentation, a poster, or other method approved by the instructor. Groups will also provide a handout of their action plan and useful resources.

Criteria of Evaluation:

- √ Ability to captivate and educate your audience about the social justice issue
- √ Ability to provide an effective and convincing social action plan
- √ Presentation method that engages students in dialog about the social justice issue
- √ Extent to which you maximize your allotted time
- √ Individual student contributions are evident during presentation

DUE: Dec. 2 or Dec. 4

Assignment #7: Final Personal Statement

To demonstrate your learning over the course of the semester, as well as to integrate that learning into your future professional life, write a three page essay that answers the following questions:

1. How have you grown as an individual and a future social worker?
2. What were the most important lessons you learned through your participation in this course?
3. How did you challenge your previous attitudes and opinions?
4. What were the most difficult aspects of this course for you?

5. How will this course help you in your future profession as a social worker (discuss both micro and macro applications)?
6. What will be your contribution to the field of social work and how will you change the world? Has this changed from the beginning of the semester?

Criteria of Evaluation:

- √ Ability to demonstrate reflection and self-exploration.
- √ Ability to demonstrate professional growth as a social worker.
- √ Adherence to APA style guidelines.

DUE: Dec. 9

Quizzes

There will be periodic unannounced quizzes to assess your preparedness for class. Quizzes will be directly related to assigned readings or assigned activities.

Grading Scale

94.0 and above = A	74.0 to 76.99 = C
90.0 to 93.99 = A-	70.0 to 73.99 = C-
87.0 to 89.99 = B+	67.0 to 69.99 = D+
84.0 to 86.99 = B	64.0 to 66.99 = D
80.0 to 83.99 = B-	60.0 to 63.99 = D-
77.0 to 79.99 = C+	Below 60.0 = F

Course Calendar

Week	Date	Topic/Activities	Class Preparation & Reading Assignments	Assignments Due
1	August 28	Introductions Course overview Review of syllabus Class agreements	Syllabus	
2	Sept 2	UT Holiday		
	Sept 4	Power, Privilege, & Oppression	NASW Code of Ethics (Blackboard) Galambos, 2008 (Blackboard)	<i>Submit social action project ideas (in class)</i> <i>Choose novel (in class)</i>
3	Sept 9	Conceptual Frameworks	Adams, Section 1, pp. 1-56	Initial Personal Statement
	Sept 11		Lum, 2011, pp.83-120 (Blackboard)	<i>Sign up for social justice project topics (in class)</i>
4	Sept 16	Culture, Identity & Social Construction Intersectionality Meet with social justice project team		
	Sept 18			Reflections on Reading 1
5	Sept 23	Culture Chests		Culture Chest
	Sept 25	Culture Chests		Reflections on Reading 2
6	Sept 30	Race and white privilege	Adams, Section 2, pp.57-140	Social Justice project proposals
	Oct 2			Reflections on Reading 3 (Jensen, Anaya)
7	Oct 7	Gender and Sexism	Adams, Section 5, pp. 317 - 372	
	Oct 9			Reflections on Reading 4 (Scholinksi)
8	Oct 14	Heterosexism & Transgender Oppression	Adams, Section 6, pp. 373-460	
	Oct 16	Meet with social justice project team		Reflections on Reading 5 <i>Sign up for social justice project</i>

				<i>presentation dates (in class)</i>
9	Oct 21	Class	Adams, Section 3, pp. 141-228	
	Oct 23			Reflections on Reading 6 (Lloyd)
10	Oct 28	Religious oppression	Adams, Section 4 pp.229-315	
	Oct 30			Reflections on Reading 7
11	Nov 4	Ableism	Adams, Section 8, pp. 461-534	
	Nov 6	Guest speaker EE		Reflections on Reading 8 (Burch)
12	Nov 11	Age	Adams, Section 9, pp. 535-588	
	Nov 13			Reflections on Reading 9
13	Nov 18	Immigration & Migration Guest speaker SM		
	Nov 20	Guest speaker KW		Reflections on Reading 10 (Fadiman, Anzaldúa)
14	Nov 25	Action, agents of change	Adams, Section 10, pp. 589-646	
	Nov 27	Meet with social justice project team		
15	Dec 2	Social Justice project presentations		Social Justice project due
	Dec 4	Social Justice project presentations		
16	Dec 9	Course reflection and wrap-up		Final personal statement due