CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK

SWRK 202
Social Work and Diverse Populations: Theory and Practice
Fall 2006

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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 12:30 pm-2:30 pm and Fridays Noon-1 pm and by appointment

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to present human diversity and population-at-risk content for the academic foundation curriculum at the graduate level. This course serves as a base for content on human diversity and populations-at-risk that is integrated into other areas of the MSW curriculum. The course addresses human diversity and its complexity through the use of a multilevel approach, which includes looking at interactions and dynamics from within and between different size systems. It incorporates the strengths derived from a variety of theoretical frameworks (i.e. Ecological, Empowerment, Feminist, Social Class Stratification, Constructivist/Social Constructionist, and Narrative Theories). Learning experiences guide students in the exploration of experiences such as race, ethnicity, culture, whiteness, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, other forms of human diversity, personal and social identities, oppression, and social justice. Oppressive and discriminatory experiences (i.e., economic deprivation, sexism, homophobia, racism, and classism) as well as resiliency and strengths often encountered by the poor, women, people of color, gay and lesbian persons, and individuals with mental and physical disabilities within the United States are major themes addressed throughout this course. Students are expected to address these issues in relation to personal values, professional policy, and practice.

In sum, this course is designed to introduce graduate students to a repertoire of social work skills and strategies for social work practice within the context of human diversity and populations-at-risk.

Course Objectives:

1. To provide a foundation for understanding human diversity through the use of theoretical frameworks, particularly in terms of cultural/ethnic, socioeconomic status, gender and sexual orientation, racism, sexism, and homophobia which are expressed in discrimination, economic deprivation and oppression in historical and current trends.

2. To explore and critique varying concepts of culturally/socially diverse values.
3. To promote professional/personal self-awareness regarding ways that racism, sexism, and homophobia affect the personal and professional lives of social workers.

4. To understand the institutional and attitudinal barriers which restrict access to life sustaining and life enhancing resources for particular groups.

5. To prepare students for multi-dimensional practice within the context of diverse populations.

6. To promote student understanding and use of a repertoire of strategies and approaches which will challenge discrimination, economic deprivation, and oppression and promote social justice.

7. To promote critical analysis among students when exploring human diversity issues, needs, and strengths within the context of social work practice.

8. To develop the ability to control or even change assumptions stereotypes and false beliefs, and therefore feel less need for defensive behavior.

9. To develop the ability to let others teach us about the differences that makes a difference for them.

Class Norms:

1. Students feel as if they have a voice.
2. Students feel that when they speak, people listen with open minds, open hearts and open ears.
3. Everyone—students and faculty—expects to learn from each other and change in the process.
4. Students realize that each has partial knowledge and therefore needs one another to develop a fuller understanding.
5. Students feel as if who they are is recognized, understood, and assumed to be a critical part of their capacity to learn.
6. Everyone assumes that dissent, debate, and disagreement are part of how we learn.
7. Everyone realizes that the class is one forum to express one's ignorance, misinformation, incomplete knowledge, and that voicing such ideas is one way of expanding learning.
8. Everyone recognizes the importance of the personal and the experiential as one source of knowledge in combination with other sources.

Course Format

This course is conducted on a discussion/laboratory basis. **Students are expected to have read all assigned readings prior to class sessions.** Readings are not rehashed in class. Student preparation and participation are integral parts of this learning process. The instructor may use a variety of teaching methods including, lecture, video, discussion, small and large group activities, etc. The instructor may make changes to the syllabus and will provide oral and written explanation previous to doing so.
Course Expectations

This course demands students’ active participation. Taking risks even if the environment does not feel completely “safe” is encouraged. In order to enhance feelings of safety, and to create a positive learning environment, the following must apply:

- Students attend class.
- Students are prompt.
- Students have read the assigned material and come to class prepared.
- Students get their needs met by interacting with classmates and by raising their concerns and criticisms with the instructor.
- Students do not ridicule other.
- Students own expression of bigotry. In other words, rather than attribute a negative characteristic to a social group or to a member of that group, students begin with, “This is how I have been taught to believe,” or “ I don’t like to admit it but I do have the belief that…”
- Students are committed to personal/professional growth and self-exploration.
- Students resolve issues that they may have with other group members. If students are not sure how to accomplish this task, students and instructor can discuss possible strategies. **It is not acceptable to miss class in order to avoid the group.**

Written work must be mechanically and stylistically acceptable. Serious deficiencies in areas such as spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and coherent organization will result in lower grades. Plagiarism (claiming the work of someone else as your own) will result in a grade of FAIL for the course.

Where appropriate, the following criteria are used to evaluate assignments:

- Effective use of knowledge: the integration of concepts, theories, models, and information from readings, lectures, and class discussions is used in a way that demonstrates internalization.
- The inclusion of personal points of view along with rationale, logic, and examples: generalization of ideas, observations, concepts, and experiences are carefully supported with empirical data, conceptual work generated by authors, practitioners, or researchers, and/or original thoughts. Use refereed journal articles.
- Organization: thesis in introduction, smooth relationship between ideas and between paragraphs, and a clear overall structure, including an integrative concluding section. Careful planning is evident in the organization.
- Clarity: syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Sentences and paragraphs are clear, unified, and coherent.
- References in appropriate format (use of APA format).

(Students are reminded to retain a duplicate copy of all their written assignments prior to submitting them for grading in the event of accidental loss or destruction.)
**Attendance**

Students’ interest, time, and commitment to the course, as well as personal/professional development is highly valued. Attendance will be taken at all class sessions. As a matter of fairness and equity, anyone missing more than two scheduled class sessions will have their final grade reduced by one grade. Missing a third scheduled class session will result in a second grade reduction. Missing more than (4) four scheduled class sessions will result in being dropped from the course and will require the student make arrangements to complete the course at another time in a manner acceptable to the M.S.W. Director (where appropriate) and/or Director of the Division of Social Work. There is no substitute or make-up for attendance and participation.

**Course Assignments**

Students are expected to have completed assignments for the course by the scheduled due date. If special circumstances arise, the instructor may grant an extension of the due date. This must be arranged prior to the date the assignment is due and be approved by the instructor. If students need help or have questions, they are encouraged to contact the instructor during office hours or by e-mail. Should this situation occur, the student should provide several avenues through which they may be contacted (e.g., e-mail, home or work phone numbers, cell phone numbers).

Written work must conform to the APA (5th edition) format. Serious deficiencies in areas such as spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and coherent organization will result in a lower grade. Students are encouraged to use the writing lab if writing problems emerge.

**Incompletes**

Incompletes are not given automatically. A grade of “Incomplete” may be assigned only in cases of illness, accident, or other occurrences clearly beyond the student’s control. It is the student’s responsibility to fulfill the University’s and/or Division’s policies and procedures for obtaining an “incomplete” for a course grade. Students who fail this policy will automatically be assigned a grade of “F” for the course.

**Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism (claiming the work of someone else as your own) will result in a grade of FAIL for the course. Refer to the APA Manual (5th edition) pp. 349-350 and p.395 for clarification on this principle. Students should be aware of CSUS policy regarding plagiarism. This information can be obtained through the University Policy Manual in the section pertaining to Academic Honesty (see CSUS website: www.csus.edu).

**ADA Provisions**

Students who have a learning disability or experience other reasons that might interfere with their ability to complete the class requirements, need to make an appointment and discuss this with the instructor. Students with documented learning difficulties, can obtain special accommodations for course materials, testing facilities, and equipment by contacting the Office of Disability Services (916) 278-6955. The instructor should be advised of these accommodations so as to better assist the student with his/her learning needs.
COURSE GRADING

Each student’s final grade will result from averaging the grades obtained from all the assignments required by the course.

1. Attendance and Participation 10%
2. Ethnic Roots Paper 30%
3. Sexual Identity Paper 30%
4. Self-Awareness/Cultural Knowledge/Direct Practice Paper 30%

Total: 100%

GRADING SCALE

A = 93-100 pts.
A- = 90-92 pts.
B+ = 87-89 pts.
B = 84-86 pts.
B- = 80-83 pts.
C+ = 77-79 pts.
C = 74-76 pts.
C- = 70-73 pts.
F = 69 or less

Attendance and Participation (10% of final grade)

Students’ interest, time, commitment to the course as well as personal/professional development, are highly valued. Attending all scheduled class sessions and being prepared for class discussion and activities are required. The following criteria will be used to assist in assessing students’ attendance and participation:

- As a matter of fairness and equity anyone missing two (2) scheduled class sessions loses a minimum of a letter grade on the final course grade. There is no substitute or make-up for attendance and participation. Missing four (4) scheduled class sessions will result in drop from the course and will require the student to make arrangements to complete the course in a fashion acceptable to the MSW Program Director and/or the Director of the Division of Social Work.
- Each student is responsible to read each of the readings assigned for this class and be prepared for class discussion.
- Repetitive lateness (i.e., 15 minutes late—more than three times) will affect the final grade. Speak to the instructor individually if you believe that you will be repetitively late for class.
ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment I: Ethnic Roots Paper (30 points) (Due 10/3/06)

The purpose of this assignment is to explore your ethnic/racial roots and examine the unique experiences of your parents/grandparents/great grandparents and beyond or significant individuals that have shaped your life. This paper should be 5-7 pages, double-spaced, in APA format and respond to the following questions:

A. Background
   • Very briefly describe yourself (age, birthplace, social class and status when you were growing up, current cultural orientation, etc.).

B. Background of Parents/Grandparents/Great Grandparents
   • Describe what you know about your mother, father, maternal and paternal grandparents and great grandparents and so on.
   • How did your ancestors enter the United States (e.g., were they voluntary immigrants, involuntary through conquest, time of entry, etc.)?

C. Experiences with Anglo Conformity and Factors Affecting Inclusion
   • By the standards of Anglo Conformity, were your relatives included or excluded in American society?
   • How did they avoid/attempt/achieve assimilation and integration?
   • What role did social class and social power play in their experiences?

D. Conclusion
   • What conclusions do you draw about your own status of assimilation based on your ethnic roots, socialization, and personal experiences?

Assignment II: Sexual Identity Paper (30 points) (Due 11/7/06)

The purpose of this assignment is to explore your own sexual identity and your relationship to heterosexism, homophobia. This paper should be 3-5 pages, double-spaced, in APA format, and respond to the following questions:

• When is the first time you remember there was a sexual orientation other than heterosexual?
• What do you remember about gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people and from what source did you learn this info?
• How did you learn that you were expected to be heterosexual?
• (For people who identify as straight): How does heterosexual privilege affect your daily life? What makes it difficult to be better allies to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons?
• (For people who identify as GLBTQ): How has (or does) internalized homophobia affect your daily life?
Assignment III: Self-Awareness/Cultural Knowledge/Application to Direct Practice Paper (30 points) (Due 12/12/06)

You have the option of selecting one of the three categories to write a 3-5 page, double-spaced paper:

1. **Self-awareness**—Keep a journal during the class. Reflect on your reactions in class, the readings, and the assignments. What are you learning about yourself? About your community? Other communities?

2. **Cultural knowledge**—Watch a film concerning individuals and/or group from another culture than your own. Write a short essay on how the film presented that group and culture. Identify what you learned from viewing this film.

3. **Application to direct practice**—Write a paper on diversity needs for a diversity group in your area/field of practice. Focus on important needs and issues in your regional area. Give two examples of what is needed to implement these services.

Bibliography

Include APA format of all references cited in paper. You do NOT need to cite additional references in your papers (other than the required text).

Required Text:


**COURSE ORGANIZATION**

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**UNIT I UNDERSTANDING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES**

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Readings: Adams et al. pp. 5-60

**UNIT 2 THEORIZING RACE**

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Readings: Adams et al pp. 61-103
Class 4
9/26
The Critical Study of Whiteness/White Privilege

Readings: Adams et. al, pp. 104-109
McIntosh, P.  White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack
Nylund, D.  Critical Multiculturalism, Whiteness, and Social Work: Towards a More Radical View of Cultural Competence

Class 5
10/3
Anti-Semitism

Readings: Adams, et. al, pp. 133-198

*Assignment I Due

UNIT III  THEORIZING GENDER

Class 6
10/10
Sexism, Feminism, Social Constructionism

Readings: Adams, et al., pp. 199-246

Class 7
10/17
Masculinities/Pro-Feminist Men’s Movements


UNIT IV  THEORIZING SEXUALITY

Class 8
10/24
Homophobia

Readings: Adams, et al., pp. 261-295

Class 9
10/31
Transgender, Gender Transgressions

Readings: Nylund, D. & Tilsen, J. The Gender Binary: Theory and Lived Experience

Class 10
11/7
Becoming an Ally

Readings: Adams et al., pp. 296-318

*Assignment II Due
UNIT V  THEORIZING DISABILITY/ABILITY

Class 11  Ablesim
11/14

Readings:  Adams et al., pp. 319-355

Class 12  Disability Rights
11/21

Readings:  Adams, et al., pp. 356-378

UNIT VI  THEORIZING CLASS

Class 13  Classism
11/28

Readings:  Adams et al., pp. 379-420

Class 14  Challenging Economic Injustice
12/5

Readings:  Adams et al., pp. 421-446

UNIT IV  COURSE CONCLUSION/STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

Class 15  Working for Social Justice
12/12  Summary and Conclusion

Readings:  Adams, et. al, pp. 447-485

*Assignment III Due