This course is designed to help students understand the meaning of social justice, community building, and human liberation within the context of social work practice. Based on social work’s historical mission of intervention in high risk communities while advocating for social reform, this course is aimed at teaching students the history, theory and practice realities of community building locally and globally through discussion, research, and exploration.

The norms and values that support the characteristics of a just society will be stressed. Students will learn to compare and contrast current social and economic conditions with the values and norms underlying a just society as a structure for critically analyzing situations. They will gain knowledge of the issues underlying oppression while learning values and techniques which can help in the struggle for liberation. Students will gain knowledge of models and procedures for organizing for social justice. They will study liberation movements and discuss issues of policy and politics locally and globally. Learning will take place as we focus on groups experiencing social and economic injustices based on racial, ethnic, socio-cultural and gender characteristics.

PREREQUISITES

SW S751 or permission of the instructor.

COMPETENCIES

Generalist Foundation Competencies
* Apply critical thinking to information and communicate professional judgments.
  Practice Behaviors:
  • Able to analyze information from various perspectives and disciplines.
  • Engage in self-reflection and supervision to become aware of personal biases in practice.
  • Practice clear communication for understanding, orally and written across client/colleague relationships.
* Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
  Practice Behaviors:
  • Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination
  • Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.
  • Employ knowledge of Universal Declaration of Human Rights in client settings.
* Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
  Practice Behaviors:
  • Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation
  • Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment
* Respond to contexts that shape practice
  Practice Behaviors:
Continuously discover, appraise and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services

Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services

(adopted from http://www.bemidjistate.edu/academics/departments/social_work/curriculum/competency_areas/)
(adopted from CSWE EPAS, 2008)

**Community and Organization**

* Provide leadership in a variety of roles in community and organization practice.

**Practice Behavior:**
- Develop facilitation and leadership skills to engage communities and organizations in the process of planned change.

* Approach community and organizational planned change using logical, scientific and theoretical frameworks.

**Practice Behaviors:**
- Familiarize self with variety of theoretical frameworks to identify best application.
- Commit to understanding frameworks and theories that challenge the personal worldview of the social worker.
- Actively seek opportunities to engage multiple-perspectives when working with organizations and communities in the planned change process.

* Demonstrate culturally competent practice with communities and organizations.

**Practice Behaviors:**
- Identify culture and communication styles/patterns of organizations or groups.
- Seeks best practice methods when engaging specific organizational cultures.

* Use research and professional expertise to improve practice with communities and organizations

**Practice Behaviors:**
- Utilizes scholarship to promote understanding in the planned change process.
- Uses self-reflection and supervision to work toward solutions, not relying solely on emotional motivations for social justice and economic justice.

**OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this course, each student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the history of the struggle toward social justice and human liberation over the past century;

2. Compare and contrast social change strategies utilized by social work and social justice organizations;

3. Analyze the history and current reality of inequality, change, and organizing;

4. Demonstrate skills and strategies for assessing community needs, redressing the impact of economic, racial, and social oppression and evaluating community practice;

5. Utilize knowledge of history, theory, strategies, and methodologies to develop methods for current and future change through community building;

6. Manifest an understanding of social change methods which help empower disadvantaged individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities to achieve increased control and greater social justice;

7. Analyze current local, national, and global conditions demonstrating the skills necessary for critically analyzing issues and developing alternative solutions; and
8. Recognize ethnic, cultural, age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender factors and biases and their implications for practice in congruence with social work ethics and values.

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

Teaching methods used for this course will mirror the “adult-learning method.” The course will be discussion-focused as opposed to lecture based. This method is characterized by the assumption that both students and the instructor bring valuable life experiences and insights to share.

It is the student’s responsibility to come to class prepared by completing the assignments identified in this syllabus. These assignments will be supplemented by guest speakers from the community, relevant films and music, and participatory workshops. Students are encouraged to bring or suggest additional resources which enhance the topic addressed in each section.

MAJOR CONTENT AREAS

Students will gain a deeper understanding of social justice and leave this course with concrete knowledge and skills to integrate into their lives and social work practice. This course will explore:

- Principles of Social Justice
- Context for Social Justice
- Historical and Current Social Justice Movements
- Integrating Social Justice into Daily Living and Social Work Practice

TEXTS

Required:


Recommended:

It is recommended that students read (on their own) a variety of news and periodical publications, including both mainstream and “alternative” publications. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch and Riverfront Times represent often opposing, but mainstream, perspectives and will address local and state-wide issues. Other local alternative papers are the St. Louis American (minority press) and the Vital Voice (gay and lesbian newspaper). Students are encouraged to read and bring to class articles from other online sources such as Common Dreams, Democracy NOW, Utne Reader, Yes! Magazine, and other social justice oriented media.

Various Social Work Journal readings may be assigned will be available in electronic or on-line format.

Students are encouraged to seek out and share additional reading materials to enhance the learning experience. The instructor will periodically give the class a listing of additional resources. Any of these may provide material for your assignments. Additional references are available upon request from the instructor.
METHODS OF EVALUATION

Attendance:
Full attendance is expected of each student unless she/he is excused in advance with an acceptable reason. Much of the learning in this class takes place through small group processing. One cannot learn from others or contribute to the learning of others without being present. If the student anticipates the need to miss more than two classes during the semester, the student should not be in this course. More than one absence will result in a lower grade for the course.

Participation:
All students are expected to participate and contribute to class discussions and activities. Class participation will be evaluated on the basis of adequate participation and the quality of participation, not on whether the values or views you express are in agreement with those of the instructor or the majority of the class. Participation also includes completing in-class assignments.

Personal Social Justice Theory/Concept Paper:
The personal social justice concept paper will assist students to develop the theoretical framework for how they view social justice. Students will be evaluated on their ability to comprehend and incorporate the different philosophical and theological theories and perspectives discussed in the course into their personal concept of social justice. Additional information will be distributed in class on this assignment.

Social Justice Research Project & Reflection Paper:
The Social Justice Research project is designed to be the capstone project for the course. Using course texts as a guide, students will select one of the pressing issues for the research focus. The student will analyze the issue using the MAP Model and incorporating additional information from other sources. Students will also demonstrate these four areas in their project: The project will consist of background information on a social justice issue, current organizations addressing this issue and the student’s personal idea for designing a systemic intervention based on the efforts of the larger social change movement (Additional information will be distributed in class on this assignment.)
- Principles of Social Justice
- Context for Social Justice
- Historical and Current Social Justice Movements
- Integration of Social Justice into Social Work Practice
In the reflection paper the students will share personal insights and awareness as to how their understanding of their chosen issue changed with their research and application of designing a socially just systemic intervention.

Course Readings & Reflection Summaries
The reading material for this course is carefully selected and is a critical component for ongoing class discussions. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and come prepared to class every week to discuss them. Students will be expected to complete five (5) reflections of the readings and group discussions which will be due at the following class.

Discussion Queries:
Students are required to bring one (1) discussion question per assigned author’s readings and if a speaker is expected two (2) formulated discussion questions for each guest. Students will be graded on this. Each student working with a partner and the instructor will facilitate group discussions.

Readings are expected to be completed before each class and written assignments are due the following week.

GRADING SCALE
Students will be graded on the following items. Additional details per assignment will be given in class. The breakdown for grading is as follows:

Attendance & Participation (includes discussion questions) 30%
- Attendance (15%)
- Questions and Participation (10%)
- Group Facilitation (5%)
Personal Social Justice Definition Paper      10%
Social Justice Research Project & Reflection Paper    40%
    Project/Presentation      (25%)
    Paper                   (15%)
Weekly Reading/Discussion Summaries/Journal   20%
    5 Assignments (4% each)
TOTAL         100%

Grading scale is as follows:
A = 95 – 100%  A- = 90 - 94%  B+ = 87 – 89%
B = 84 – 86%  B- = 80 – 83%  C+ = 77 – 79%  C =
    74 – 76%  C- = 70 - 73%  D = 62 – 69%
F = 61 and below

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance
Students are expected to be present for every meeting of the course. Success in the course depends heavily on one’s attendance and participation in the classroom. The instructor has both e-mail and voice-mail. The instructor must be notified in advance for consideration of an excused absence. Even if the absence is excused, the student is fully responsible for any assignments due and the material covered in the missed session. You are allowed one excused absence if arrangements are made prior to missing class.

In the event of SLU closing due to snow or inclement weather, the instructor reserves the opportunity to schedule a make up session or sessions. To check to see if SLU is closed, call 314-977-SNOW.

Professional Expectations
Students will treat their classroom obligations as they should treat any serious professional engagement. This includes

1. Preparing thoroughly for each session in accordance with the instructor’s request.
2. Arriving promptly and remaining until the end of each class meeting.
3. Participating fully and constructively in all classroom activities and discussions.
4. Displaying appropriate courtesy to all involved in the class sessions. Courteous behavior specifically entails communicating in a manner that respects, and is sensitive to, cultural, religious, sexual, and other individual differences in the SLU community.
5. Adhering to deadlines and timetables established by the instructor.
6. Submitting original papers written specifically for each course. The same paper is not to be submitted in more than one course. When writing a paper, students are allowed to use previously cited literature.
7. Providing constructive and courteous feedback to faculty members regarding their performance. Students should be as objective in their comments about instructors as they expect instructors to be in their evaluations of students.
Communications

Each student must come to class with his or her Saint Louis University student e-mail username and password activated and working. Any student who does not know his or her e-mail username and Password, must contact Saint Louis University Information Technology Services during normal business hours and have them "reset" the ID and/or Password. ITS can be reached at 314-977-4000.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

The following is a statement of minimum standards for student academic integrity at Saint Louis University.

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity, such as would be expected at a Jesuit, Catholic institution. As members of this community, students, faculty, and staff members share the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic dishonesty violates it. Although not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, it can be said in general that soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted toward academic credit is dishonest. It not only violates the mutual trust necessary between faculty and students but also undermines the validity of the University’s evaluation of students and takes unfair advantage of fellow students. Further, it is the responsibility of any student who observes such dishonest conduct to call it to the attention of a faculty member or administrator.

Examples of academic dishonesty would be copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed-book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but presented as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, tampering with another student’s work, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, colluding with another student or students to engage in an act of academic dishonesty, and making unauthorized use of technological devices in the completion of assignments or exams.

Where there is clear indication of such dishonesty, a faculty member or administrator has the responsibility to apply appropriate sanctions. Investigations of violations will be conducted in accord with standards and procedures of the school or college through which the course is offered. Recommendations of sanctions to be imposed will be made to the dean of the school or college in which the student is enrolled. Possible sanctions for a violation of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.
Any clear violation of academic integrity will be met with sanctions. In a case of dishonesty within a course, the instructor may assign an appropriate grade and will refer the matter to the Program Director, who will determine whether additional action is needed. If the Program Director determines that additional sanctions are warranted, the Director will refer the matter to the appropriate body identified in the School of Social Work’s by-laws, which will deal with the matter under the provisions of the Professional Probation and Dismissal Policy. Students are referred to the BSSW and MSW student handbooks for a complete presentation of the Academic Integrity policy of the School.

Nondiscrimination Policy and Human Diversity

Saint Louis University and the School of Social Work’s BSSW and MSW Programs have a strong and active commitment to promote human diversity and to ensure that all aspects of educational programs are carried forth without discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation. A specific University goal is to foster “respect for diversity, other cultures, and belief systems.” A related School objective is to “demonstrate skill and responsiveness to the needs of clients and client systems, especially those who are poor, oppressed, and/or members of culturally diverse groups and at-risk populations.” This policy can be viewed in the University undergraduate and graduate bulletins plus the BSSW and MSW student handbooks.

Policy on Religious/Cultural Holidays

The School of Social Work strives to accommodate student participation in diverse religious and cultural holidays/observances by allowing reasonable adjustments to academic requirements. In accordance with this policy, School of Social Work faculty, staff, and students are to exercise sensitivity to religious and cultural observances of persons of diverse backgrounds. Therefore, when a major religious/cultural holiday or observance conflicts with academic requirements, the following process will be followed:

- It is the responsibility of the student to notify faculty within the first two weeks of the semester, the date(s) of a major religious/cultural holiday that conflict(s) with the date of an exam or the due date of a major assignment. It is expected that this policy will be invoked only for events that are of major significance to the student.
- It is the responsibility of the student and the faculty member to work in good faith to jointly discuss reasonable alternative(s) for completion of the course requirement(s) and to make realistic efforts to avoid negative academic consequences.
- If the student and the faculty member are unable to agree upon an alternative arrangement satisfactory to both parties, the student may initiate grievance and appeal procedures as outlined in the BSSW and MSW Student Handbooks.

Resources to Support Student Success

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about: (a) course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources) by asking your course instructor; and (b) university-level support (e.g.,
Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or to visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Writing and the APA Style

A variety of publication styles are recognized in academic and professional settings. The faculty of the School of Social Work requires social work students to study, learn, and master the conventions contained in the American Psychological Association Style Manual, 6th edition, 2009. At a minimum, students are expected to follow the rules of good grammar, syntax, punctuation, and spelling, and use APA format in citing references in the text and reference section. Information and guidelines for the use of APA style can be found on the school’s library homepage (http://libguides.slu.edu/socialwork) click on “Writing and Citing” tab.

Any student who needs assistance with writing is encouraged to seek services with the Undergraduate Writing Center (977-2930) or the Graduate Writing Center (977-3231).

Instructor/Course Evaluation

The instructor and course will be evaluated at the end of the term by students through the use of a standard evaluation instrument. Each evaluation will cover the quality and relevance of course material and the quality of instruction. The intent is to seek information, which will help to improve both the quality of the course and instructional competence. In completing these evaluations, the each student should be mindful of the extent to which the course objectives have been met.

COURSE OUTLINE

UNIT I – INTRODUCTION

Summary: This course begins with an overview of the objectives, structure, content, expectations, requirements, foreseeable outcomes, and other logistical issues that students will need to keep in mind throughout the semester. The instructor and students will introduce themselves and share their visions for the course.

Week 1 (Saturday October 22, 2011)

Participation:
Afternoon session – Group process, sacred containers, and building our class community.
AVP Workshop Facilitation and Presentation: Liz Oldham, Tom Sandidge, Sarah Gyorog
Film: Pete Seger
Film and group discussion

Assignment:

Revised July 2011
UNIT II – PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Summary: Students will learn about different philosophical and theological theories and models of justice. Students will also begin to define important concepts and terms that will inform how the class and individual students will view social justice.

Week 2 (Saturday October 29, 2011)

Reading:


Participation:
Workshop: Listening through volatile conversations
Guest Speaker: Mo & Kathy Costello (Winter Outreach/ Social action to Social Service)
Film: Naomi Klein’s The Take
Group Facilitation

Assignment:
- Reading and Discussion Summary due 11/5/2011
- Personal Social Justice definition paper due 11/5/2011
- Research Project Outline due 11/5/2011

Unit III: Understanding Social Movement Process, Tactics and Strategies

Students will take turns facilitating group process and brainstorm sessions. Using readings and additional resources they bring to class, students will identify various tactics used in current movements, their stages and growth opportunities for both the student and the movement.

Week 3 (Saturday November 5, 2011)

Readings:


Participation:
Guest Speakers – TC Parsons, MADP and Fair Housing
Film: The Garden
Afternoon – Film discussion:
Brainstorming, tactics, relationships, and accountability in the movement and the role of social workers in facilitating social & economic justice.
Group Facilitation
Time to meet w/ Instructor for questions, concerns regarding final project/ Group networking to advance personal intervention strategies.

Assignment:
- Reading and Discussion Summary
- Research Project Outline Due
Unit IV: Making it Personal

Students will examine current movements presented in guest speakers, case studies and personal projects. We will review principles used in AVP, Compassionate Listening and course readings to examine the role of social justice work in daily living as well as within our professional capacity.

Week 4 (Saturday, November 12, 2011)
Readings:


Participation:
Guest Speaker: Diana Oleskevich, MSW Social Justice, Social Work and Personal Growth
Film – Life and Debt
Group Facilitation

Assignment:
• Reading and Discussion Summary
• Final Projects due 12/3/2011

No Class Saturday, November 19, 2011 Students encouraged to attend SOA Vigil

No Class Saturday, November 26, 2011 Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 5 (Saturday December 3, 2011)
Readings:


Participation:
Final class reading discussions and presentations over pot-luck luncheon.
Reading discussion

Assignment:
• Reflection Summary
• Final Project Presentations/papers due
• Closing group discussion
• On-line course evaluation (LRC Lab)