Course rationale

This course is designed to prepare students for practice with immigrants and refugees. Because of the growing trends of relocation and increasing numbers of immigrants, refugees and asylees, because of political, economic, familial and personal reasons, one in five clients of social workers is likely to be foreign-born or have a foreign-born parent. Therefore, social workers are required to be knowledgeable about immigration-related issues and strategies to address them.

The theoretical underpinnings of the course are stress, acculturation and trauma theories, the Ecological approach and the Strengths perspective. The nature of immigration is discussed from a global, and national perspective, deepening and expanding content on immigration taught in the undergraduate level course on the culture of ethnic and immigrant groups. Building on knowledge acquired in the foundation level courses, this course moves on to focus on the application of this knowledge to address issues and needs of immigrants.
The course is organized in 4 units: (1) Global and national contexts of immigration; (2) Characteristics of the immigration process including risk and protective factors associated with the immigration process; (3) Differential effects of immigration on individual and families along the life cycle, and communities; (4) Effective practices in serving immigrants.

**Learning objectives**

By the end of the course students should:

1. Be informed about legal, developmental, social and psychological aspects of immigration in historical and global perspective.
2. Understand the mutual impact of immigrants and the society of relocation on each other.
3. Distinguish between transient and traumatic stressors in the immigration experience.
4. Display a sound grasp of potential negative and positive impacts of immigration on individuals and families, including differential age- and gender- specific effects on groups such as children, adolescents, the elderly and women.
5. Know how to assess immigrants’ mental health problems within their situational and cultural context, including understanding of diverse patterns of coping with immigration.
6. Articulate the effects of provision of services in institutions that are foreign to both the language and culture of the populations being served.
7. Understand the role of social workers in relation to immigration related issues, including immigration policy.

8. Develop knowledge and skills for effective direct practice with immigrants, including strategies for enhancing posttraumatic growth of immigrants.

**Required texts**


Novel on immigrants or refugees

**Grading Criteria**

Please note that course grades are based on a point system. Extra credit is built into the course. Criteria used for evaluating students correspond with the grading policy adopted by the faculty of the School of Social Work on January 27, 2003 and March 10, 2003 for the graduate program. These criteria consist of the following contents:

- Mastery of content
- Critical thinking
- Organization of material and line-by-line writing
- Integration and application of course content to social work
- Ability to conceptualize

**The numerical equivalents for letter grades are:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 points and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 70</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The nominal definitions of letter grades are:

A is awarded for excellent work
B is awarded for good work
C is awarded for marginal work
F is awarded for failing work

Common Student Assignments
To fully participate in each module or weekly activities, students are expected to read all required readings and expose themselves to the recommended readings. The readings are intended to inform about human development and behavior, and provoke your critical thinking in human behavior and practice. Additionally you are expected to be prepared and active in the course room and encouraged to read widely. Without a broad and critical examination of the literature, you will not master this course content, contribute well to online course discussions, or adequately complete course assignments. Active participation in the course room is vital to the learning process. In meeting these expectations, you will be required to complete the following types of graded online activities:

Discussions
Voicethreads
Quizzes
Essay papers

Course Outline

Week 1: The context of immigration: National and global perspectives
Understanding the changing volume and nature of immigration as a global and national phenomenon.

- Review of changing demographic characteristics
- Economic aspects of immigration and relocation: Professional and education composition of immigration, economic reasons for immigration, economic effects on country of relocation – myths and realities (e.g., effects on host culture’s job market, welfare, educational system, culture).

Required Readings:


doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11205-011-9924-4

**Week 2 and 3: Historical and Current Context of US Immigration Policy:**

**Implications for social work practice**

- An overview of historical and present day immigration policies
- Legal Classifications and Terms: Immigrants (documented & undocumented), refugees and asylum seekers.
- United States Immigration and Nationality Acts, Immigration Reform and Control Act
- Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and Welfare Reform

**Required Readings:**


**Week 4: Immigration Policies Related to Entitlements and Access to Public Resources**

**Resources**

- Objectives: Understanding of health insurance policies and food stamp program
- Immigrant eligibility for federal programs

**Required Readings:**


Stevens, G. D., West-wright, C., & Tsai, K. (2010). Health insurance and access
to care for families with young children in California, 2001-2005:


Weeks 5 and 6: Lived Experience at the Individual, Community and Societal Level

- Anti-immigration sentiment in Society
- Interpersonal and Institutional Discrimination
- Settlement experiences

Required Readings:


**Week 7 and 8: Theories for Social Work with Immigrants and Refugees**

- Transnational Theoretical Approach
- Stress and Trauma theories
- Acculturation Theory
- Ecological approach
- Strength perspective
- Post-colonial Feminist Social Work Perspective

**Required Readings:**


Week 9 : Differential Effects of Immigration on Families along the Life Cycle

- Differential experiences along the life cycle: specific effects of immigration on children, adolescents, adults and the elderly; gender specific issues.

- Effects of immigration on the receiving society: The “melting pot”, mono vs. bi-culturalism, segmented assimilation.

- Typical issues: Coping with multiple losses, personal and ethnic identity
**Required Readings:**


**Week 10: Exploring the mental health and health of immigrants**

- Psychological and social effects of immigration.
- Factors that shape the effects of immigration: Social, cultural, racial, familial and personal factors of the immigrant, and characteristics of the receiving society.
- Differentiation among diverse immigration experiences.
• Social aspects: Immigration of families vs. individuals, differences and similarities between cultures of origin and culture of relocation, “downward assimilation”, transnationalism.

**Required Readings:**


**Week 11: The Immigrant Experience at the Intersections**
• The intersectionality of multiple identities among immigrant populations
• Differential experiences of elderly and GLBTQ immigrants.

Required Readings:


Weeks 12 and 13: Effective Clinical Practice with Immigrants and Refugees
• Effective modalities for intervention with immigrants on individual and family levels
• Effectively Selecting, Critically Evaluating, and Adapting Evidence Based Interventions to fit the needs of Immigrants and Refugees


integrative theory, (pp. 152-177). Los Angeles, CA, Sage.


**Week 14 Effective Organizational and Community Practice Serving Immigrants and Refugees**

- Issues that pertain to educational and social services for immigrants on the community level.

**Required Readings:**


Week 15 Final Paper and presentation due