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RESOURCE Syllabus for “Spirituality, Religion, and Secularism in Social Work”	TIMEFRAME Semester-long social work course
BRIEF DESCRIPTION	
<p>This semester-long social work course is an introduction to the role of spirituality, religion, and secularism in micro, mezzo, and macro social work practice. Students will examine their own personal values, morals, spirituality, religion, and secular traditions and reconcile any differences between these personal values and professional, ethical practice with diverse clients. As they learn about many different cultures, students will develop appreciation for diverse religious, spiritual, and secular traditions. Students will be aware of the role religion has played and continues to play in the marginalization of particular populations. Finally, students will understand strengths, challenges, and policies of faith-based and secular organizations in the context of social service provision. A complete syllabus is provided below.</p>	
TOPIC ADDRESSED	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Religion• Spirituality• Secularism	
SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARATION FOR THE FACULTY MEMBER	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review course text, assigned readings, and course assignments• Compose or select a case study for the final exam• Prepare materials for each class period	
CONNECTION TO COMPETENCIES/EPAS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2.1.4: Engage diversity and difference in practice.• 2.1.2: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.	
ASSESSMENT MEASURES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class participation• Reflective journal entries• Group presentations• Final case study papers	

RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS or PERSPECTIVES

- Major religious, spiritual, and secular traditions
- Religious, spiritual, and secular traditions specific to the region in which the course is offered

HOW TO APPLY IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS

- Include religious, spiritual, and secular traditions specific to the region in which the course is offered
- Could be taught as an online course

MATERIALS NEEDED, READINGS, OR OTHER LEARNING MATERIALS

- Main text: Van Hook, M. P., Huguen, B., & Aguilar, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Spirituality within religious traditions in social work practice*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Additional required readings (listed below in the weekly schedule and reference list).
- Additional course materials as selected by the instructor.

SPECIFIC CONTENT AREAS

- Diversity and Cultural Competence
- HBSE
- Policy
- Practice skills

RELEVANCE FOR PRACTICE

- Provides basic information about major religious, spiritual, and secular traditions in this United States
- Focuses on micro, mezzo, and macro areas of practice
- Includes information on managing differences between personal and professional values, and ethical practice
- Incorporates role-plays for demonstration of practice skills

Spirituality, Religion, and Secularism in Social Work

Course Description:

Bulletin Description: This undergraduate course offers an opportunity for students to examine the role of spirituality, religion, and secularism in social work practice. Students will learn to manage differences between personal values and professional, ethical practice; understand the role of faith-based organizations in providing social services; and develop appreciation for many different religious, spiritual, and secular traditions.

This course is an introduction to the role of spirituality, religion, and secularism in micro, mezzo, and macro social work practice. There will be an emphasis on these topics as part of the bio–psycho–social framework. Students will examine their own personal values and morals, spirituality, religion, and secular traditions, and reconcile any differences between these personal attributes and professional practice with diverse clients. As they learn about many different traditions, students will develop appreciation for diverse religious, spiritual, and secular traditions. Students will be aware of the role religion has played and continues to play in the marginalization of particular populations. Finally, students will understand strengths, challenges, and policies of faith-based and secular organizations in the context of social service provision.

Related CSWE’s Core Competencies:

Core Competency	Practice Behavior	Assignment / Evaluation
2.1.1—Identifying as a professional social worker and conducting oneself accordingly	Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development	Reflective Journal Class Discussions and Activities
2.1.2—Applying social work ethical principles to guide professional practice	Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice	Reflective Journal Class Discussions and Activities
	Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics	Reflective Journal Class Discussions and Activities Final Case Study
	Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts	Reflective Journal Class Discussions and Activities Final Case Study
	Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions	Reflective Journal Class Discussions and Activities Final Case Study
2.1.4—Engaging diversity and difference in practice	Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power	Reflective Journal Class Discussions and Activities Final Case Study
	Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups	Reflective Journal Class Discussions and Activities

Core Competency	Practice Behavior	Assignment/Evaluation
2.1.4—Engaging diversity and difference in practice (continued)	Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences	Reflective Journal Class Discussions and Activities Final Case Study
	View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants	Reflective Journal Class Discussions and Activities Final Case Study
2.1.7—Applying knowledge of human behavior and the social environment	Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation	Reflective Journal Class Discussions and Activities Final Case Study

Text:

Van Hook, M. P., Huguen, B., & Aguilar, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Spirituality within religious traditions in social work practice*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Additional required readings are listed below in the weekly schedule.

Method of Instruction and Classroom Climate:

This course combines lectures, reading of assigned text and handouts, group work, videos, writing and composition, class discussion, and participation in instructional exercises. A very high degree of student participation in class is critical to achieving success in course objectives. Many materials in the course will be learned experientially, and the class, as a group, will develop, maintain, and observe norms of behavior and communication that are confirming, supportive, and respectful. To preserve a classroom atmosphere that optimizes teaching and learning, all participants will share a responsibility in building a civil forum. In this atmosphere, each individual will have the freedom of thought and expression. Finally, the course will promote the acceptance, respect, and value of individuals and cultures.

Assignments and Expectations:

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Participation	10	Ongoing
Reflective Journal	40	Ongoing
Group Presentation	20	Class 20–22
Final Case Study	30	Class 30
Total	100	Dates may change as needed.

Based on how many points you earn in the course, you will be assigned a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	93 – 100	B-	80 – 82.9	D+	67 – 69.9
A-	90 – 92.9	C+	77 – 79.9	D	63 – 66.9
B+	87 – 89.9	C	73 – 76.9	D-	60 – 62.9
B	83 – 86.9	C-	70 – 72.9	F	0 – 59.9

Participation (10 points/Ongoing):

Participation includes thoughtful questions and appropriate contributions to class. It is expected that students will complete readings and participate in class discussions. Student will receive the full 10 points for participation if they contribute to entire-class discussions on a regular basis and

add to their small group activities and discussions. Such participation is necessary to explore diverse views and perspectives, which will enrich the class experience for all students.

Reflective Journal (40 points/Ongoing):

You will keep an electronic journal throughout this course and will turn in journal entries during class. Each entry should include your name, date, and topic/reading at the top of the page. Responses should be single spaced, use Times New Roman, 12-point font, and have 1-inch margins.

ENTRY 1/Class 3 (5 points)

Today's entry should be at least three pages long and should include the following information:

- a) Your initial thoughts about this class based on information in the syllabus
- b) A description of your personal spiritual, religious, and/or secular beliefs, values, and traditions
- c) Your assessment of your comfort level in serving populations with spiritual, religious, and/or secular beliefs that are different than your own
- d) An example of a micro, mezzo, or macro practice situation related to spirituality, religion, and/or secularism that will be challenging for you (continued on next page)
- e) What you hope to learn in this class to assist you in handling challenging situations and becoming a culturally competent social worker

ENTRY 2–31/Class 4–29 (1 point each)

For each class period (beginning with Class 4), you will write one journal entry per reading. You will only receive full credit if your responses:

- a) Are at least half a page per reading (single spaced)
- b) Take a specific concept, idea, or proposition that the author makes and explore it further
- c) Demonstrate critical thinking abilities
- d) Apply the information in the reading to social work practice
- e) Compare the information in the reading to previous readings and topics discussed in class
- f) Are not answered somewhere in the reading
- g) Are not informational in nature (i.e., asking what something means or simply saying that something was interesting or that you disagree, asking a question without trying to think about possible answers)

FINAL ENTRY 32/Class 30 (5 points)

Today's entry should be at least three pages long and should include the following information:

- a) A review of your journal entries for the entire semester and a summary of what you have learned in this course
- b) What you have learned in this course that will assist you in handling challenging situations related to religion, spirituality, and secularism (provide specific examples as evidence)
- c) What additional knowledge gaps you have and how you will address these as a future social worker

Group Presentation (20 points/Class 20–22):

In a small group, you will prepare a 30-minute presentation that educates the class on a particular topic related to spirituality, religion, or secularism. Topics must be approved and should be of interest to students in the class. Example topics are gender and sexuality in religious traditions,

Catholic Charities role in addressing poverty in the United States, faith-based international aid, the Quaker tradition, faith-based agencies and nonreligious clients, and atheism and social work.

You will meet with your group several times during class to plan and prepare for your presentation. Your contribution to the project will affect your grade for this assignment; five of the points for this assignment will come from peer and self-evaluations of your contributions.

The presentation should include the following elements:

- a) a short, 10–15 minute lecture-style presentation of your topic
- b) a one-page handout summarizing the salient points of your presentation (with references)
- c) at least one in-class activity related to your topic (either as a whole class or in groups)
- d) a visual aid (e.g., video, PowerPoint, poster, etc.)
- e) attention to micro, mezzo, and macro social work practice
- f) connection to material previously read or discussed in class
- g) a question-and-answer period at the end
- h) a creative presentation designed to engage your classmates with the material
- i) the participation of each group member (in preparation and in the actual presentation)

Final Case Study (30 points/Class 30):

A case study will be provided in class along with several questions. You will use the information that you have learned throughout the semester to address the questions about this case.

Tentative Weekly Schedule:

Date	Topics	Readings/Assignments For Today
1	Review of the syllabus and assignments	None
2	Introduction to spirituality, religion, and secularism—definitions	Furness & Gilligan (2010)Appendix Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar (2001)Chapter 1
3	Introduction to spirituality, religion, and secularism—practices	Heyman, Buchanan, Musgrave, & Menz (2006) article Initial Reflective Journal 1
4	Religious and spiritual identity development	Peek (2005)article Reflective Journal 2
5	History of religion, spirituality, and secularism in the social work profession	Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar (2001) Introduction Reflective Journal 3
6	Religion, spirituality, and secular traditions in social work assessments	Hodge (2005) article Frame (2003) Chapter 4 Reflective Journal 4–5
7	Laws, policies, and practices of faith-based and secular agencies; <i>Form presentation groups and decide on topics</i>	Kaseman & Austin (2005)article Hugen & Venema (2009) article Reflective Journal 6–7
8	Ethical considerations in faith-based social work practice	Furness & Gilligan (2010) Chapter 10 Reflective Journal 8
9	Introduction to Judaism*	Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar (2001)Chapter 6 Reflective Journal 9
10	Introduction to Christianity	Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar (2001) Chapters 7 & 9 Reflective Journal 10–11
11	Introduction to the African American Baptist	Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar (2001)Chapter

	Tradition, <i>Group time</i>	11 Reflective Journal 12
12	Introduction to Humanism, Atheism, and Agnosticism	Cimino & Smith (2007) article Reflective Journal 13
13	Introduction to Hinduism, <i>Group time</i>	Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar (2001) Chapter 3 Reflective Journal 14
14	Introduction to Islam	Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar (2001) Chapter 8 Reflective Journal 15
15	Introduction to Native American spirituality	Schiff & Pelech (2007) article Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar (2001) Chapter 2 Reflective Journal 16–17
16	Introduction to Paganism and Wicca, <i>Group time</i>	Yardley (2008) article Reflective Journal 18
17	Introduction to Mormonism	Beaman (2001) article Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar (2001) Chapter 13 Reflective Journal 19-20
18	Introduction to Buddhism, <i>Group time</i>	Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar (2001) Chapter 4 Reflective Journal 21
19	Introduction to Confucianism, <i>Group time</i>	Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar (2001) Chapter 5 Reflective Journal 22
20–22	Group Presentations	Group Presentations
23	Introduction to holistic and spiritual approaches to social work practice	Vohra-Gupta, Russell, & Lo (2007) article Reflective Journal 23
24	Religion, spirituality, and mindfulness	Coholic (2006) article Reflective Journal 24
25	Religion, spirituality, secularism, and trauma	Tan (2006) article Reflective Journal 25
26	Religion, spirituality, secularism, and sexual orientation	Schnoor (2006) article Reflective Journal 26
27	Religion, spirituality, secularism, and addiction	Carlson & Larkin (2009) article Reflective Journal 27
28	Religion, spirituality, secularism, and health	Behrman & Tebb article Van Hook, Hugen, & Aguilar Chapter 14 Reflective Journal 28–29
29	Religion, spirituality, secularism, and politics	Micon (2008) article Bendyna, Green, Rozell, & Wilcox (2001) article Reflective Journal 30–31
30	Course wrap-up	Final Reflective Journal 32, Final Case Study

*Discussion of each faith group listed in the weekly schedule will include information related to basic beliefs, comparisons with other faith groups, events of historical importance, historical treatment or marginalization of the group, and current events.

Required Texts, Chapters, and Articles From Weekly Schedule:

- Beaman, L. G. (2001). Molly Mormons, Mormon feminists, and moderates: Religious diversity and the Latter Day Saints church. *Sociology of Religion*, 62, 65–86.
- Behrman, G., & Tebb, S. (2009). The use of complementary and alternative interventions as a holistic approach with older adults. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 28(1 & 2), 127–140.
- Bendyna, M. E., Green, J. C., Rozell, M. J., & Wilcox, C. (2001). Uneasy alliance: Conservative Catholics and the Christian right. *Sociology of Religion*, 62, 51–64.
- Carlson, B. E., & Larkin, H. (2009). Meditation as a coping intervention for treatment of addiction. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 28(4), 379–392.
- Cimino, R., & Smith, C. (2007). Secular humanism and atheism beyond progressive secularism. *Sociology of Religion*, 68, 407–424.
- Coholic, D. (2006). Mindfulness meditation practice in spiritually influenced group work. *Arete*, 30, 90–100.
- Frame, M. W. (2003). *Integrating religion and spirituality into counseling: A comprehensive approach*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Furness, S., & Gilligan, P. (2010). *Religion, belief, and social work: Making a difference*. Portland, OR: The Policy Press.
- Heyman, J., Buchanan, R., Musgrave, B., & Menz, V. (2006). Social workers' attention to clients' spirituality: Use of spiritual interventions in practice. *Arete*, 30, 78–89.
- Hodge, D. R. (2005). Spiritual lifemaps: A client-centered pictorial instrument for spiritual assessment, planning, and intervention. *Social Work*, 50, 77–87.
- Hugen, B., & Venema, R. (2009). The difference of faith: The influence of faith in human service programs. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 28(4), 405–429.
- Kaseman, M., & Austin, M. J. (2005). Building a faith-based human service agency: A view from the inside. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 24(3), 69–91.
- Micon, J. (2008). Limestone prophets: Gauging the effectiveness of religious political action organizations that lobby state legislatures. *Sociology of Religion*, 69, 397–413.
- Peek, L. (2005). Becoming Muslim: The development of a religious identity. *Sociology of Religion*, 66, 215–242.
- Schiff, J. W., & Pelech, W. (2007). The sweat lodge ceremony for spiritual healing. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 26(4), 71–93.
- Schnoor, R. F. (2006). Being gay and Jewish: Negotiating intersecting identities. *Sociology of Religion*, 67, 43–60.
- Tan, P. P. (2006). Survivors of the killing fields: Spirituality and religious faith as protective factors against the impact of trauma. *Arete*, 30, 112–123.
- Van Hook, M. P., Hugen, B., & Aguilar, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Spirituality within religious traditions in social work practice*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Vohra-Gupta, S., Russell, A., & Lo, E. (2007). Meditation: The adoption of Eastern thought to Western social practices. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 26(2), 49–61.
- Yardley, M. (2008). Social work practice with Pagans, witches, and Wiccans: Guidelines for practice with children and youths. *Social Work*, 53, 329–336.

Supplemental Readings:

- Abels, S. L. (Ed.). (2000). *Spirituality in social work practice: Narratives for professional helping*. Denver, CO: Love Publishing.
- Ainlay, S. C., & Smith, D. R. (1984). Aging and religious participation. *Journal of Gerontology*, 39, 357–363.
- Bein, A. W. (2008). *The Zen of helping*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Birnbaum, L., & Birnbaum, A. (2008). Mindful social work: From theory to practice. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 27(1 & 2), 87–104.
- Cadge, W., Olson, L. R., & Wildeman, C. (2008). How denominational resources influence debate about homosexuality in mainline Protestant congregations. *Sociology of Religion*, 69, 187–207.
- Canda, E. R., Nakashima, M., Burgess, V. L., Russel, R., & Barfield, S. T. (2003). *Spiritual diversity and social work: A comprehensive bibliography with annotations*. Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education.
- Canda, E. R. (2005a). The future of spirituality in social work: The farther reaches of human nurture. *Advances in Social Work*, 6, 97–108.
- Canda, E. R. (Ed.). (2005b). *Reflections, Narratives of Professional Helping: Special Issue on Spiritual Diversity in Social Work*, 11(3).
- Dowd, E. T., & Nielsen, S. L. (2006). *The psychologies in religion: Working with the religious client*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Eichler, M., Deegan, G., Canda, E. R., & Wells, S. (2006). Using the strengths assessment to mobilize spiritual resources. In K. B. Helmeke & C. F. Sori (Eds.), *The therapist's notebook for integrating spirituality in counseling* (pp. 69–76). New York, NY: Haworth Press.
- Ellor, J. W., Netting, F. E., & Thibault, J. M. (1999). *Religious and spiritual aspects of human service practice*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

- Faiver, C., Ingersoll, R. E., O'Brien, E., & McNally, C. (2001). *Explorations in counseling and spirituality*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Faver, C. A. (2009). Seeking our place in the web of life: Animals and human spirituality. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 28(4), 362–378.
- Graham, J. R. (2006). Spirituality and social work: A call for an international focus of research. *Arete*, 30, 63–77.
- Hick, S. F. (Ed.). (2009). *Mindfulness and social work*. Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books.
- Hodge, D. R. (2009). Secular privilege: Deconstructing the invisible rose-tinted sunglasses. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 28(1 & 2), 8–34.
- Hodge, D. R. (2005). Social work and the house of Islam: Orienting practitioners to the beliefs and values of Muslims in the United States. *Social Work*, 50, 162–173.
- Hodge, D. R. (2003). *Spiritual assessment: Handbook for helping professionals*. Botsford, CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work.
- Hodge, D. R., Langer, C., & Nadir, A. (Eds.). (2006). *Arete: Special Issue on Spirituality and Social Work Practice*, 30(1).
- Horton-Parker, R. J., & Fawcett, R. C. (2010). *Spirituality in counseling and psychotherapy: The face-spirit model*. Denver, CO: Love Publishing.
- Hugen, B., & Scales, T. L. (Eds.). (2008). *Christianity and social work: Readings on the integration of Christian faith and social work practice* (3rd ed.). Botsford, CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work.
- Koenig, H. G., McCullough, M. E., & Larson, D. B. (2001). *Handbook of religion and health*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Koenig, H. G. (2007). *Spirituality in patient care: Why, how, when, and what* (2nd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Templeton Foundation Press.
- Lee, M. Y., Ng, S. M., Leung, P. P. Y., & Chan, C. L. W. (2009). *Integrative body–mind–spirit social work*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, G. (2003). *Incorporating spirituality in counseling and psychotherapy*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Moore, K. M. (2007). Visible through the veil: The regulation of Islam in American law. *Sociology of Religion*, 68, 237–251.
- Nelson-Becker, H., Nakashima, M., & Canda, E. R. (2007). Spiritual assessment in aging: A framework for clinicians. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 48, 331–347.
- Ostow, M. (2007). *Spirit, mind, and brain: A psychoanalytic examination of spirituality and religion*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Roehlkepartain, E. C., King, P. E., Wagener, L., & Benson, P. L. (Eds.). (2005). *The handbook of spiritual development in childhood and adolescence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Russell, R. (2006). Spirituality and social work: Current trends and future directions. *Arete*, 30, 42–52.
- Sheridan, M. (2009). Ethical issues in the use of spiritually based interventions in social work practice: What are we doing and why. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 28(1 & 2), 99–126.
- Sperry, L., & Shafranske, E. P. (Eds.). (2005). *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Publishing.
- Sperry, L. (2001). *Spirituality in clinical practice: Incorporating the spiritual dimension in psychotherapy and counseling*. Ann Arbor, MI: Taylor Francis.
- Stewart, C. (2009). The inevitable conflict between religious and social work values. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 28(1), 35–47.
- Sullivan, W. P. (2009). Spirituality: A road to mental health or mental illness. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 28(1), 84–98.
- Thyer, B. A., & Walton, E. (Eds.). (2007). *Research on Social Work Practice: Special Issue on Faith-Based Programs*, 17(2).
- Van Hook, M., Hugen, B., & Aguilar, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Spirituality within religious traditions in social work practice*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.