CSWE EPAS Policy Statement

4.3 Human Behavior and the Social Environment

Social work education programs provide content on the reciprocal relationships between human behavior and social environments. Content includes empirically based theories and knowledge that focus on the interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems. It includes theories and knowledge of biological, sociological, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development across the life span; the range of social systems in which people live (individual, family, group, organizational, and community); and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being.

Course Catalog Description

Introduction to theoretical, practical, and policy issues related to race, ethnicity, and women. Historical, political, and socioeconomic forces are examined that maintain racist and sexist values, attitudes, and behaviors in society and all levels of organizational behavior.

Expanded Description of Course Content

This course is part of the Human Behavior and the Social Environment curriculum sequence in the School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Arlington. Students are introduced to the theoretical issues related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and disability status. The course includes a study of historical, political, and socioeconomic forces that maintain racist, sexist, heterosexist, and ablest values, attitudes and behaviors in our society and profession. Concepts related to race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and disability status include but are not limited to sociopolitical processes (racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, oppression, prejudice,
discrimination, class, etc.), interpersonal processes (identity, self concept/esteem, authenticity, mental health, and basic behaviors), and socio-cultural processes (cultural fusion, culture conflict, acculturation, and assimilation). The implications of these sociopolitical, intrapersonal, and socio-cultural processes for social work practice are examined in terms of social work values, knowledge and skills at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of organizational behavior.

The emphasis in this course will be on developing an understanding of (a) those client groups who, because of factors of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and disability status are particularly oppressed in our society, and (b) those client groups who perpetuate such oppression against individuals due to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or disability status. Please note, this is not a practice course. While practice interventions will be discussed at times, the focus of the course remains on developing a theoretical understanding of human behavior in relationship to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and disability status.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:**
Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

**Educational Objectives Addressed:**

SOCW 3317 addresses the following MSW foundation educational objectives:

**Objective 2.** Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly.

**Objective 3.** Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients’ age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

**Objective 4.** Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.

**Objective 7.** Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities.

This course relates to and advances the program objectives by developing knowledge and competence in working with diverse populations. Students completing this course will have developed a critical understanding of social justice, discrimination, and oppression, and will be prepared to apply this understanding in their practice.
Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors
SOCW 3317 addresses the following Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) requirements for Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors:

Educational Policy 2.1.2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. [Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers:]
(a) Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.
(b) Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Social Workers
(c) Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and
(d) Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

Educational Policy 2.1.3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments. [Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers:]
(a) Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom.

Educational Policy 2.1.4—Engage diversity and difference in practice. [Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers:]
(a) Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.
(b) Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.
(c) Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences; and
(d) View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.

Educational Policy 2.1.5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice. [Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work
incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers:
(a) Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.
(b) Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and
(c) Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

**Educational Policy 2.1.6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.** Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers:
(a) Use research evidence to inform practice.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, students should be able to demonstrate the following knowledge areas through their course assignments, papers, examinations, and group projects:

This course aims at enabling students to:

1. Identify theoretical, policy, and practice issues related to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and disability status.
2. Identify historical, political, socioeconomic forces that maintain racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, etc.
3. Identify how sociopolitical, interpersonal, and socio-cultural processes promote/block optimal health and well being for persons of oppressed groups.
4. Examine self-identity and values as regards to social work values, ethics, and professional practice.
5. Develop strategies to counter racist/sexist/heterosexist/ablest policies and practices in social institutions.
6. Develop specific strategies that promote economic and social justice for populations at risk.

**Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials**

1. Koppelman, K. & Goodhart, L. Understanding Human Differences: Multicultural Education for a Diverse America, 3rd Edition. (the 4th edition is also fine)
## Course Outline/Topics and Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session #</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Graded Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
<td>Aug 21</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Paradigms</td>
<td>Aug 26 &amp; 28</td>
<td>Ref 1; Quiz 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prejudice, Stereotyping &amp; Discrimination</td>
<td>Sept 2 &amp; 4</td>
<td>Ref 2; Quiz 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cross Cultural Communication</td>
<td>Sept 9 &amp; 11</td>
<td>Ref 3; Quiz 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Privilege</td>
<td>Sept 16 &amp; 18</td>
<td>Ref 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>Sept 23 &amp; 25</td>
<td>Ref 5; Quiz 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sexism and Gender Diversity</td>
<td>Sept 30 &amp; Oct 2</td>
<td>Ref 6; Quiz 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Heterosexism</td>
<td>Oct 7 &amp; 9</td>
<td>Ref 7; Quiz 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Ref 8; Midterm</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ableism</td>
<td>Oct 21 &amp; 23</td>
<td>Ref 9; Quiz 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ageism</td>
<td>Oct 28 &amp; 30</td>
<td>Ref 10; Out of Comfort Zone (due Nov 2 at 10 pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Classism</td>
<td>Nov 4 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Ref 11; Quiz 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Religious Intolerance</td>
<td>Nov 11 &amp; 13</td>
<td>Ref 12; Quiz 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cultural Pluralism</td>
<td>Nov 18 &amp; 20</td>
<td>Ref 13; Quiz 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Racism Revisited</td>
<td>Nov 25</td>
<td>Ref 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Dec 11</td>
<td>Ref 15; Final</td>
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As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. –Dr. Nordberg

### Descriptions of major assignments and examinations

**Note.** Much of what students learn in the classroom is affected by two sources: the level of effort contributed by the individual, and the learning community that is created through the shared ownership and contributions of the collective whole. Everyone is asked to participate to her/his fullest extent in the learning environment, and to facilitate others’ ability to participate at the same time. This means that we come prepared to join in the classroom learning experience by having our readings and other work completed, we respect ourselves and others during discussions, and we take responsibility for completing assignments in a competent and timely manner. But much more than this, it also means that each of us takes a shared responsibility for the growth and professional development of each of the individuals in our learning community. The assignments for this course have been designed with these ideas in mind.
NOTE: Please refer to our Blackboard course for session readings, course material, discussion topics, and quiz and assignment dates.

Assignments:

Weekly Reflections. The weekly reflection should be about ½-1 page, and will be a written response to the materials you reviewed on Blackboard for that week’s session. Please see the discussion section of blackboard for weekly instructions and topics for your reflections. The weekly reflections will be submitted online.

Your Weekly Reflection write-up should answer the following questions:

1. What, if anything, did you learn/watch/read that surprised you?
2. What impacts the way you view this particular situation/experience/topic? (What lens/paradigm are you viewing from?)
3. What seem to be the root causes of the issue addressed?
4. What can we do at the micro (individual), mezzo (community), and macro (organization) levels to address this issue?

Quizzes. There will be 10 short timed quizzes administered on Blackboard during the semester. The quizzes will be open-book, and you may access your notes as well as other resources to complete the quizzes. You may take the quiz at any point during the week prior to its due date and will be worth a total of 10 points.

Online availability of reflection topics and quizzes:
Each reflection and quiz will be available from Monday at 6am until the following Sunday at 10pm for the associated session. For example, session 9 on ableism, will have both the reflection topic and quiz available for online completion from Monday, October 20th until Sunday October 26th. Please note that both these assignment items will NOT be available after those times. You will have one hour to complete each quiz which will always have 10 questions or less. Blackboard will keep track of your accumulated time, meaning you may opt to enter and exit the quiz any number of times for a total of 60 minutes. Reflections should be typed in word and submitted via blackboard.

Out of Comfort Zone Paper. One of the goals of this course is to push students out of their own comfort zones. Therefore, students will write a short paper (4-6 pages) based on their visit to a place that is out of their comfort zone. Students will choose a place to visit where they will not feel entirely comfortable, and after they visit, will write a paper describing the experience. Some example choices include: a mosque; a temple (Jewish, Buddhist, etc.); white, black, or Hispanic meeting; a gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (glbt) gathering; spending all day without speaking (to experience a disability firsthand); or going through the intake process at a homeless shelter, among others. You must include the following sections in your paper: 1) Introduction—include why you chose this particular experience that you’re writing about as well as the details of when and where it took place, 2) Your thoughts, feelings, apprehensions, and preconceived notions prior to the experience, 3) A detailed description of the
experience, including your thoughts and feelings throughout, interactions with others, etc., 4) Any –isms you noticed or experienced, 5) What you learned from the experience, 6) Conclusion. This assignment must be submitted on Blackboard before November 2 at 10pm.

Exams. There will be both a Midterm and a Final Exam in this course. Both will be administered online and will include various types of questions such as multiple choice, true/false, short answer and essay. Each exam will be worth 100 points.

Grading:
You can earn a total of 500 points in this course. The grading for this course is as follows:

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Weekly Reflections</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Quizzes</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Midterm Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Out of Comfort Zone Paper</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Points</td>
<td>500</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

450-500          A
400-449          B
350-399          C
300-349          D
Below 300         F

Grading Policy: Late assignments will not be accepted. You will not be permitted to “make-up” a test, quiz, or discussion board. It is your responsibility to ensure that your work is completed on time and submitted correctly. Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester and seek guidance from available sources (including the instructor) if their performance drops below satisfactory levels.

Attendance: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I will take attendance each week. Coming to class will not earn 20 points in this grading scheme. These points are bonus points, an opportunity for you to boost your grade. Attending class is expected, these points are for thoughtfully engaging with the material and your classmates.

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must
see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (http://wweb.uta.edu/ses/fao).

Americans with Disabilities Act:

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Title IX: The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law “Title IX” such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX.

Academic Integrity: All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

“I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.”

Per UT System Regents’ Rule 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses.
Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/sfs.

**Final Review Week:**
A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Librarian to Contact**

John Dillard—phone: (817) 272-7518; email: dillard@uta.edu

**Bibliography**


Please see the professor if you would like additional resources on any topic we cover in class.