[uh.edu/socialwork](http://www.uh.edu/socialwork)

**COURSE TITLE:** Confronting Oppression and “Isms” in Social Work Practice (SOCW 8248)

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# Course

# Description

# Critical analysis and reflection of oppression, privilege, power, and isms, with attention to self exploration of perceptions, and to how these conscious and unconscious beliefs influence social interactions, especially between social worker and individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

# Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this course is to expand professional social work framework that incorporates a social justice approach with a human dignity perspective which seeks to recognize, challenge, and contest oppression, inequalities, and social inequities. Social work students will engage in critical peer and self-awareness and self-reflection and apply an anti-oppressive lense to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that advance human rights and social and economic justice.

# Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following objectives related to CSWE competencies:

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| Course Objectives | CSWE Competencies and Practice Behaviors |
| Understand social work ethics and values related to diversity, oppression and social justice  Recognize the importance of critical self-reflection and self correction | Identify with the SW profession, its mission and core values, and conduct oneself accordingly |
| Recognize how the U.S. dominant culture’s systems, structures, and values may oppress and marginalize those from minority cultures or create or boost privilege and power for certain individuals or groups | Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice |
| Develop reflective self awarness skills to critically examine how biased thinking and behavior can influence their work with diverse populations | Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments |
| Learn how to effectively communicate and disagree with those from different cultural backgrounds | Engage diversity and difference in practice |
| Develop skills and practice advocating for human rights and social justice  Develop and engage in practices that advance human rights and social justice | Advance human rights and social and economic justice |

# Course Content

This course will include the following topical (content) areas:

1. Self Awareness and Reflection
2. The Social Work Profession
3. Critical Analysis of Oppression, Privilege, Power, and “Isms”
4. Integration of Social Work Practice and Social Justice
5. **Course Structure**

Participation and Attendence: This course will be conducted as a face to face course. Active participation in class ia a significant component of the course and therefore required and accounts for 20% of the grade. Teaching methods will include lectures, class discussion, oral presentations, group activities, critical service-learning, and critical reflection.

# Textbooks and Reading List

Textbook:

Marsiglia, F., & Kulis, S. (2008). *Diversity, oppression and change: Culturally grounded social*

*work*. Chicago, IL: Lyceum.

Mini Books

Adichie, C. N. (2015). *We should all be feminists*. New York: Anchor Books.

Workers, N. A. (2008). *NASW code of ethics* (Guide to the everyday professional conduct of

social workers). Washington, DC: NASW.

Articles

Greene, A. (2017). The role of self-awareness and reflection in social care practice.

*Journal of Social Care, 1(1)*, 1-13.

Greenleaf, A. T., Ratts, M. J., & Song, S. Y. (2016). Rediscovering Classism: The Humanist

Vision for Economic Justice. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *56*(6), 646–664.

Kravetz, D. (1976) Sexism in a woman's profession. Social Work, *1*(6), 421–426.

McIntosh, P. (2003). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. In S. Plous

(Ed.), Understanding prejudice and discrimination (pp. 191-196). New York, NY, US: McGraw-Hill.

Peacock, E, W., Talley, W,M. (1984) Iintergenerational contact: A way to counteract ageism.

*Educational Gerentology*, *10*(1), 13-24.

Yanos, P. T., Lucksted, A., Drapalski, A. L., Roe, D., & Lysaker, P. (2014). Interventions

targeting mental health self-stigma: A review and comparison. *Psychiatric rehabilitation journal*, *38*(2), 171-8.

# Course Assignments and Schedule

**Final Paper- Knowledge Application to Practices (30%)**

The final paper includes two parts. In the first part of the paper you will address your own personal learning and development in the course, and how course material or activities particularly influenced you. It will also ask you to address how you intend to implement your learnings in your practice, and also how you will continue your own development.

Here are some questions that may be of assistant for you in writing this assignment; These questions are designed to be helpful, therefore you do not have to answer each one.

1. Present concepts and information from your reading for the course which you found thought provoking and enlightening related to “isms”.
2. Describe the level of cultural humility/competence you had when you started the course. What experiences had particularly shaped you views of your own culture and the culture of others? Be sure to cite literature and use relevant theoretical concepts in your analysis.
3. In considering your own isms, what have you learned in the course? What was meaningful? What piqued your curiosity and made you want to learn more?
4. What groups and culture do you want to learn more about so that you might more effectively provide social work services? Describe any population with which it may be difficult for you to work with. Explain why. State whether this is something that you feel that you should overcome
5. What more do you need/want to know about your positionality? Describe what more you want to learn about other cultures and diverse families.
6. List three or more actions that are feasible for you to do that will increase your cultural humility.

The second part of the paper will require you to interview someone using the interview guide created in class that also draws from the literature. You will explore the lived experiences of someone from a different racial and/or cultural background then yours. This person must also posses one other dimension of intersectionality that is different from yours (i.e. mental illness, gender, sexuality, religion, SES). You will describe your interview experience, including lessons learned. Did the interviewee share anything that was suprising to you? What was meaningful about the interview? Were there any cultural miscommunications? Based on course reading and research you conduct, you will then explain the social, institutional, and personal challenges that person may experience. You will also describe the difficulties you may face as a clinician to the individual you interviewed. This will be a 15-page paper (no more than 17 pages, not including cover page and reference page) and must be Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and APA style.

**Group Project- Cultural Immersion Presentation (25%)**

For this group assignment, students will be assigned to work within a group (3-4 people) to develop a presentation on a marginalized population. Throughout the semester, you will begin to learn about the culture of the group you are studying by finding articles (both academic and non-academic), websites, music, references in popular culture. Most of the material used in this assignement must have been developed by members of the group you are studying. Your group will give a 30 minute presentation to the class. Each member of the group must submit an annotated record (critical or explanatory notes of material) of their contributions to the group including at least 2 academic articles and 2 websites. These references will be submitted individually in a word document. If you have not submitted the annotated record by the day of the presentation, 10 points will be individually subtracted from your group presentation grade. Aim to be as creative, as well as informative with your presentation. The 30 minute presentation must include:

1. Based on the literature, describe the legal, political, economic, and educational oppression the population has experienced
2. A brief but thorough description of the history and current day consequences of the above listed oppression for this group.
3. Discuss major beliefs and stereotypes that the dominant culture has applied to this group and this group’s response to the dominant culture
4. Examine some of the areas of agreement and disagreement on issues within the sub-group within this population.
5. Discuss both individual and collective acts of resistance and resilience to one of the isms (racism, sexism, ageism, etc.)
6. Present your ideas for practice, policy, and research implication to address the major issues for this group.

**Quizzes (20%)**

1. Code of Ethics Quiz (5%): Measures understanding and knowledge of the standards of social work practices, ethical conduct, and professionalism.
2. Theories Quiz (5%): Measures understanding of theoretical perspectives of diversity.

**Reflective Journals (15%)**

The reflective journal allows you to reflect on your own responses, experiences, and reactions to the course content. Each (3) entries are worth 5% of your final grade. You can respond however you see fit, since this is based on your reactions (e.g., emotions, cognitive, etc.). The responses will be kept confidential. The first journal will be in response to our self awareness lecture, the second journal will be in response to the “Slavery By Another Name” documentary, and the third journal will in response to your volunteer experience at a senior home. Journal entries must be typed and can be organized any way you like. All entries must be submitted in a word document via Blackboard by 11:59 pm on its due date. Each entry must contain at least 500 words in 12pt font.

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| **Week** | **Topic** | **Pre- Readings**  **and Activities** | | **Classroom Tasks** |
| 1 | Self-awareness and Self Knowledge | “The Role of Self-Awareness and Reflection in Social Care Practice” | | Introduction of Course and Requirements  “Story of My Name”  “Crossing The Line” activity |
| 2 | The Social Work  Profession | NASW code of ethics | | Code of Ethics Quiz (10%)  Vignette Activity |
| 3 | Positionality, Privilege,  and Oppression | “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisble Knapsack”  Marsiglia Chpts.  1-3 | | \*Reflective Journal Due (5%)  Social Identity Mapping  “A Step Above” activity  Matrix of Oppression Lecture and Discussion |
| 4 | Race and Racism, and Colorism | Marsiglia Chpt. 5  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAuecX\_971A | | Theoretical Perspectives on  Diversity Lecture  \*\*Assignment of Group members |
| 5 | Marsiglia Chpt. 8  Implicit Association Tests  Colorism and Racism | | Theories Quiz (10%)  Implicit Bias and Microagression lecture  “Slavery By Another Name”  <http://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/watch/> |
| 6 | Classism and Economic Justice | “Rediscovering Classism: The Humanist Vision for Economic Justice” | | \*Reflective Journal Due (5%)  Classism and Intersectionality lecture  Create Interview Guide |
| 7 | Gender and Sexism | “Sexism in a woman's profession” “We Should All Be Feminists” | | Gender and Sexism in Social Work  Lecture  “The Other Gender Is…” activity  Discussion of WSABF |
| 8 | Sexuality and  Heteosexism | Marsiglia Chpt. 10 | | Heterosexism in Social Work Practice lecture  Sexual Orientation Identification activity |
| Spring Break! | | | | |
| 9 | Ageism | “Intergenerational Contact: A way to Counteract Ageism”  https://www.ted.com/talks/ashton\_applewhite\_let\_s\_end\_ageism#t-403656 | Volunteer 3 hrs at a Senior home  \*Reflection Journal Due (5%) | |
| 10 | Ableism | “Interventions Targeting Mental Health Self-Stigma: A Review and Comparison”https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrbTbB9tTtA | Lecture on Ableism and Mental Illness and  class discussion  Class time to work on group presentations | |
| 11 | Integration of  Social Work Practice and  Social Justice | Marsiglia Chpt. 11 | Lecture on Cultural Norms and Social Work Practice  Advocacy Practice Acticity | |
| 12 | Marsiglia Chpt. 12 | Lecture on Culturally Grounded Methods of Social Work  Empowerment Practice Activity | |
| 13 | Group Presentations (25%) | | | |
| 14 |
| 15 | End of Semester  Reflection | Teacher Evaluation | \*Final Paper Due (30%)  Unity Circle Activity, Discussion of Semester | |

# Evaluation and Grading

The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the college.

A = 96-100% of the points C+ = 76-79.9%

A- = 92-95.9% C = 72-75.9%

B+= 88-91.9% C- = 68-71.9%

B = 84-87.9% D = 64-67.9%

B- = 80-83.9% F = Below 64%

**Late work will ONLY be accepted under emergency circumstances with approval.**

# Policy on grades of I (Incomplete):

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either **(a)** passing a course or **(b)** still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they receive an “I” grade to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students should be instructed not to re-register for the same course in a following semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or to a "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements, and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work completed in the course. The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of **W**.

# Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism

Please click the link below for the full explanation of the Academic Honesty policy and procedure

Policy: <http://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/honesty/_documents-honesty/academic-honesty-policy.pdf>

Definitions:

“Academic dishonesty” means employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic endeavor that contravenes the standards of ethical integrity expected at the University of Houston or by a course instructor to fulfill any and all academic requirements. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, the following:

*Plagiarism*

* + 1. Representing as one’s own work the work of another without acknowledging the source (plagiarism). Plagiarism includes copying verbatim text from the literature, whether printed or electronic, in all assignments including field.

*Cheating and Unauthorized Group Work*

* + 1. Openly cheating in an examination, as copying from another’s paper; c. Being able to view during an examination, quiz or any in-class assignment an electronic device that allows communication with another person, access to unauthorized material, access to the internet, or the ability to capture an image, unless expressly permitted by the instructor;

1. Using and/or possessing “crib notes,” as unauthorized use of notes or the like to aid in answering questions during an examination;
2. Giving or receiving unauthorized aid during an examination, such as trading examinations, whispering answers, and passing notes, and using electronic devices to transmit or receive information;
3. Securing another to take a test in the student’s place. Both the student taking the test for another and the student registered in the course are at fault;

*Fabrication, Falsification, and Misrepresentation*

1. Changing answers or grades on a test that has been returned to a student in an attempt to claim instructor error;
2. Using another’s laboratory results as one’s own, whether with or without the permission of the owner;
3. Falsifying results in laboratory experiments;
4. Misrepresenting academic records or achievements as they pertain to course prerequisites or corequisites for the purpose of enrolling or remaining in a course for which one is not eligible;
5. Representing oneself as a person who has earned a degree without having earned that particular degree

*Stealing and Abuse of Academic Materials*

1. Stealing, as theft of tests or grade books, from faculty offices or elsewhere, or knowingly using stolen tests or materials in satisfaction of exams, papers, or other assignments; this includes the removal of items posted for use by the students;
2. Mutilating or stealing library materimaterials; misshelving materials with the intent to reduce accessibility to other students;

*Complicity in Academic Dishonesty*

1. Failing to report to the instructor or departmental hearing officer an incident which the student believes to be a violation of the academic honesty policy;

*Academic Misconduct*

1. Any other conduct which a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest or improper in an academic setting.

Process:

Students shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty to the instructor of record involved or to the appropriate authority if the alleged act is not associated with a specific class within 5 class days of the incident. Faculty or instructor of record shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty through their college hearing officer within 5 class days of the incident. The faculty should include the recommended sanction in the report. The college hearing officer will notify the student of the report and recommended sanction. The student can accept the sanction and waive a hearing or request a college hearing. A hearing shall be set within 10 days and would be consist of two faculty and three students chosen by the hearing officer.

# Americans with Disabilities Statement

The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact the UH Center for Disabilities at 713-743-5400.