Critical Perspectives on Social Justice and Anti-Oppressive Social Work

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:
Anti-oppressive social work is based on a critical understanding of a social justice framework and of the social, economic, psychological, and political impact of discrimination and oppression. Students will explore ways in which social work can address, resist, and counter oppression, through conceptual and theoretical analyses of privilege, marginalization, intersectionality (e.g., between ‘race’, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, and ability), and processes of inclusion/exclusion. The course will examine the role of institutions and policy in maintaining oppression and the construction of the ‘other’. Students will be expected to articulate their understanding of anti-oppressive frameworks by drawing from critiques of various epistemological traditions, including critical modernism, post modernism, and post colonialism. Social work policy and practice issues will be analyzed, using anti-oppressive frameworks.

PREREQUISITES: Admission to the MSW program
COREQUISITES: None

TOTAL HOURS PER TERM: 45

* STRUCTURE OF HOURS
Lectures: 15
Seminar: 30
Laboratory: 
Field Experience: 
Student Directed Learning: 
Other (Specify): 

MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT: 24

EXPECTED FREQUENCY OF COURSE OFFERINGS: On a yearly basis

AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURES:
Course Designer(s): Adrienne S. Chan, MSW, PhD, RSW and Lisa Moy, MSW, PhD, RSW
GPC Chair: John Hogg
Dean: 
GSC Chair: Yvon Dandurand
GSC Approval in Principle Date: 
GSC Final Approval Date: March 17, 2011

COURSE IMPLEMENTATION DATE: September 1, 2011
COURSE REVISED IMPLEMENTATION DATE: 
COURSE TO BE REVIEWED (4 years after approval): August 1, 2013
COURSE OBJECTIVE - The overall purpose / rationale for this course is:

To provide students with the skills to analyze and critique the multifaceted phenomena of marginalization and exclusion. The course will develop student competence in the examination of the nature of oppression and the relationship to models of social justice and social work.

LEARNING OUTCOMES – Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an advanced level of understanding of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism and other historical practices and processes that have created and reinforced marginalization of social groups. Colonialism and the impact on First Nations peoples is critical to this historical lens;
- Demonstrate knowledge on the conditions that are important to the historical and present day realities of classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and other forms of oppression in Canada;
- Develop a framework and strategies for social work practice using anti-oppressive theories;
- Critique anti-oppression strategies, methods, and actions used in the community in organizations and by individuals;
- Critically examine the histories of anti oppression theory and practice;
- Examine models of anti oppression and social justice and their application to social work practice;
- Identify and critically analyze post modernism and post colonialism as they link to anti oppressive framework.

METHODS:

This is a combination of online and face to face course. For the face to face component, students will participate in classroom discussions, reflect and analyse the readings, and integrate the lectures into their learning. For the online portion of the class, students are expected to log in at least once a week and participate in discussions and reflections.

COURSE CONTENT:

- Introduction – Interrogating social justice and oppression
- Theoretical/epistemological foundations
- Politics of difference, power and recognition
- Genealogy of anti-oppressive practice
- Theories of oppression revisited: Debates and Tensions
- Imperatives of social work – anti-oppressive social work in current context
- Anti-oppressive theory in practice: Clinical context (counseling/health)
- Anti-oppressive theory in practice: Community development
- Anti-oppressive theory in practice: Policy development/critique
- Anti-oppressive theory in practice: Child welfare
- Anti-oppressive theory in practice: Aboriginal considerations and context
- Developing a model for one’s own anti-oppressive practice. Working in conjunction with different theories and ethical considerations.
STUDENT EVALUATION:

Assignment #1 - Reflexivity and positioning paper (Value: 20%)

Procedure

This assignment will help introduce students and instructor to each other as well help us each trace the complex relationship between our personal and professional experiences, our social location and the theories and assumptions about social justice and oppression that we all carry. For this assignment, each student will write a five to six double spaced pages, (12 point font, Times New Roman) ‘profile’. The students can choose what to share with others; however, they may want to structure their profile around demographics and past experiences.

Assignment #2 - Critical Reflection paper (Value: 35%)

Procedure

Provide a critical reflection of three readings from the same week (e.g. three readings on the politics of difference). Write a nine page critique of the three readings. The critique should NOT be three separate critiques of three pages each, rather it is a critique of the three readings, and a comparison of the three readings together.

Assignment #3 - Major paper – Integration of Theory and Practice (Value: 45%)

Procedure

1. Describe a client, family, or community, from an ethno-cultural or racial background, sexual orientation, dis/ability, other than your own, that you have dealt with in the past. Provide a clear statement of purpose that describes the situation and why you chose it for this assignment.

2. Provide an analysis and discussion of your experience working with this individual, couple, family, group, or community.

3. Integrate practice and theory: Taking into account this case example, articulate your own model/framework of anti-oppressive practice. How did your experience with this client and your readings in social work and social justice contribute to this model/framework? Provide a rationale for this model and how you would use it in the future.

4. Reflect back on the first assignment (‘Reflexivity and positioning paper’): how has your framework for anti-oppressive practice evolved? What concepts or tenets in the course have resonated with you?

TEXTBOOKS, REFERENCES, MATERIALS:


A Coursepack will accompany the text.

SUPPORT MATERIALS:


PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT RECOGNITION (PLAR):
Credit can be awarded for this course through PLAR (Please check:) □ YES ☒ NO
* If YES specify how:

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* These sections are subject to change at the discretion of the department and the content will vary.