

**SOCIAL WORK 8110
Institutional Oppression
(3 Credit Hours)**

SYLLABUS

1.0 Course Description Information

1.1 Catalog Description:

This course is about institutional racism, sexism and classism as it relates to social policy and social injustice. The focus is on how institutional oppressions are related and are mutually reinforcing. The consequences of institutional racism, sexism and classism are examined at the individual, group, family, and agency levels. Discussion will be directed at increasing the awareness and appreciation of the theories of institutionalized oppression and practice implications that emerge from this examination. Attention will be given to the role of social work practice for the elimination of institutional barriers for racial minorities, the poor, homosexuals, women, and older adults.

1.2 Prerequisites of the course: Admission to MSW Program or permission of the School of Social Work.

1.3 Overview of content and purpose of the course:

This course is about institutional racism, sexism and classism as it relates to social policy and social injustice. The focus is on how institutional oppressions are related and are mutually reinforcing. The consequences of institutional racism, sexism and classism are examined at the individual, group, family, and agency levels. Discussion will be directed at increasing the awareness and appreciation of the theories of institutionalized oppression and practice implications that emerge from this examination. Attention will be given to the role of social work practice for the elimination of institutional barriers for racial minorities, the poor, homosexuals, women, and older adults.

1.4 For whom the course is intended: This is a required course designed for students admitted to the foundation MSW program.

1.5 Unusual circumstances of the course: None

2.0 Course Justification Information

2.1 Anticipated audience/demand: This course is required for every student admitted to the foundation MSW program.

2.2 Indicate how often this course will be offered and the anticipated enrollment: The course is offered every spring semester. Enrollment is predicted to be 25-50 students. Two sections may be offered depending on enrollment.

2.3 If it is a significant change to an existing course, please explain why it is needed: This course syllabus includes gerontological content, an updated bibliography, and links MSW foundation objectives to course objectives and assignments.

3.0 Objective Information

3.1 List of performance objectives stated in learning outcomes:

This course meets the following MSW foundation objectives:

- Foundation Objective #1:** To apply critical thinking skills in identifying and explaining theoretical frameworks.
- Foundation Objective #2:** To demonstrate knowledge of NASW Code of Ethics and the values and ethics of the profession.
- Foundation Objective #3:** To demonstrate understanding and respect for people of diverse backgrounds and populations-at-risk.
- Foundation Objective #4:** To understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change.
- Foundation Objective #5:** To understand the history of social welfare and the social work profession.
- Foundation Objective #6:** To apply the generalist social work perspective to systems of all sizes.
- Foundation Objective #7:** To identify and explain empirically based theoretical frameworks to understand human behavior in the social context.
- Foundation Objective #8:** To analyze social problems and social policies, emphasizing social justice and civic engagement.
- Foundation Objective #9:** To evaluate research studies applied to social work practice and evaluate one’s own practice.
- Foundation Objective #10:** To communicate effectively orally and in writing with systems of all sizes.
- Foundation Objective #11:** To utilize and benefit from supervision and consultation to improve social work practice.
- Foundation Objective #12:** To function effectively within agencies and social service delivery systems.

At the conclusion of this course, the student will be able to:

| Course Objectives | Program Objectives | Assignments |
|--|--------------------|--|
| Recognize the effects of racism, ageism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism in shaping the behavior of all people. | #1, 3, 8 | Reading assignments PBS Documentaries (Eyes on the Prize), Class test, Term paper |
| Analyze how social institutions often reflect the racism, ageism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism that exist in our society | #1, 4, 5, 8 | Reading assignments, PBS Documentaries (Eyes on the Prize), Class test, Term paper |
| Identify and discuss the major issues of racism, ageism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism which confront the profession of social work and social work practice. | #2, 3, 7 | Reading assignments Term paper Participate in Lobby Day activities by NASW. |
| Indicate the manifestations of individual and institutional racism, ageism, sexism, heterosexism and classism as these impact on the delivery of services, to individuals, families, and groups. | #4, 6, 8, 12 | Gay, Lesbian, Bi and Transgender Panel discussion organized by PFLAG Term paper Web assignment. |
| Assist individuals in coping with institutional racism, ageism, sexism, heterosexism and classism. | #3, 4 | Reading assignments, Presentation by Domestic violence activist from YWCA or Nebraska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition, Gay, Lesbian, Bi and Transgender Panel discussion organized by |

| | | |
|--|----------|---|
| | | PFLAG Workshop on nonviolence by the New Covenant Justice Center in Omaha |
| Employ change strategies to help eliminate institutional racism, ageism, sexism, heterosexism and classism. | #5, 6, 8 | Documentaries: Still Killing US softly, One Woman One Vote, Black Panthers in Omaha (BBC), PFLAG Panel discussion |
| Recognize and describe the role of social work practice in helping to eliminate institutional racism, ageism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism | #5, 6 | NASW Lobby Day activities |
| Utilize internet resources to explore, analyze and critique social policy and programs related to institutionalized oppressions. | #4, 7, 8 | Web assignment |

4.0 Content and Organization Information

4.1 List of topics to be covered in chronological sequence:

- 4.1.1 Race, gender, age, and class oppression: Historical background
- 4.1.2 The social construction of race, class, age, gender, and sexuality
- 4.1.3 Economics of race, class, age, and gender, in the U.S.
- 4.1.4 Domestic violence and violence against women, homophobia and hate crimes
- 4.1.5 Dismantling these oppressions at the institutional level: Role of Social Work Professionals
- 4.1.6 Social movements against these oppressions
- 4.1.7 Theoretical framework to understand oppression based on race, age, class, gender, and sexual orientation

5.0 Teaching Methodology Information

5.1 Methods to be used: Lecture/discussion, web discussion, guest speakers, audio and video presentations.

5.2 Student role in the course: Do all the assigned readings from the textbooks. The test will be based on the selected readings, lecture and discussions.

Attendance policy: Only two days of absence will be excused. These should be cleared in advance or, if not feasible, as soon thereafter as possible. A third day of absence will result in losing 5% of the grade and fourth absence 10%. Any absence over four days will result in a failing grade. I do not take attendance. We will adopt an honor system. It is your responsibility to inform me if you miss classes. For incompletes, “illness, military service, hardships or death in the immediate family” plus legitimate distance commuting exigencies such as weather or auto breakdown, and certain work emergencies. It is a courtesy to your instructor and your fellow students to turn off your mobile phones and pagers in class.

5.3 Contact hours: Three contact hours per week for 15 weeks.

6.0 Evaluation Information

6.1 Types of student projects that will be the basis for evaluating student performance:

The one-hour test will be in **Week 10 (100 points)**.

Answer one question from the set of questions given (6 to 8 double spaced; see Appendix A). This may be submitted any time during the semester. The deadline is **Week 14 (100 points)**. The evaluation

criteria: 1) originality, 2) organization and logic of the arguments, 3) bibliographic references, and 4) proper reference style.

Internet assignment: (20 points) See Appendix B. Due on **Week 15**

6.2 Basis for determining the final grade:

The grade point average for the class will be a B+ (approximately around 3.5). This means that the students will be ranked; based on the distribution of scores, grades will be assigned in such a way that the class average GPA will be a B+. For example, if the top one third of the class gets As, the middle one third gets B+s and the lower third get Bs, it will make the class average B+. This grading system has been adopted to control the grade inflation problem in the School of Social Work.

6.3 Grading Type:

| | | | |
|------|--------------|------|-----------------|
| A+ = | 98% or Above | C+= | 78 to 80.9% |
| A = | 94 to 97.9% | C = | 74 to 77.9% |
| A- = | 91 to 93.9% | C- = | 71 to 73.9% |
| B+ = | 88 to 90.9% | D+ = | 68 to 70.9% |
| B = | 84 to 87.9% | D = | 64 to 67.9% |
| B- = | 81 to 83.9% | D- = | 61 to 63.9% |
| | F | = | 60.9% and below |

7.0 Resource Material

7.1 Textbooks or other required readings used in course

Rothenberg, P. (Ed.). (2006). Race, class, and gender in the United States (7 ed.). New York: St. Martin's Press.

Zinn, Howard. (1980). A people's history of the United States. New York: Harper Colophon Books.

Eyes on the Prize - PBS television series videos in the Library.

7.2 Other suggested reading material

7.3 Current bibliography and other resources

Adelman, J. and Enguidanos, E.(eds.) (1995). *Racism in the lives of women: Testimony, theory, and guides to antiracist practice*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Anthias, F. (1990). "Race and Class Revisited---Conceptualizing Race and Racism." *The Sociological Review*. 38:2 pp. 19-24.

Appleby, G. Alan and Jeane W. Anastas. (1998). *Not Just a Passing Phase: Social Work with Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual People*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Asamoah, Y., Garcia, A., Ortiz Hendricks, C., and Walker, J. (1991). "What we call ourselves: Implications for resources, policy, and practice," *Journal of Multicultural Social Work*, 1, pp. 7-22.

Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I. (1991). *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. Translation by Chris Turner, London: Verso Publishing.

Barndt, J. (1991) *Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.

Dana, R. H., Behn, J. D., and Gonwa, T. (1992). "A checklist for the examination of cultural competence on social work service agencies." *Research on Social Work Practice*, 2, pp. 220-233.

Delgado, R. (1995). *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

- Devore, W. & Schlesinger, E.G., (1991). *Ethnic Sensitive Social Work Practice*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.
- D'Souza, D. (1995). *The End of Racism*. New York: Free Press.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Bantam Books,
- Early, G. (ed.) (1993). *Lure and Loathing: Essays on Race, Identity and the Ambivalence of Assimilation*. New York: The Penquin Press.
- Emerson, M.O. and Smith, C. (2000). *Divided By Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fox, J. R., (1983). "Affective learning in racism courses with an experiential component," *Journal of Education for Social Work*, 19(3), pp. 69-76.
- Frankenberg, R. (1997). *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Fredrickson, G. M. (2002). *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Fusco, C. and Wallis, B. (2003). *Only Skin Deep: Changing Visions of the American Self*. New York: International Center of Photography/Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Graves, J. L. (2004). *The Race Myth: Why We Pretend Race Exists in America*. New York: Dutton.
- Griffin, J.H. (1960). *Black Like Me*. New York: A Signet Book.
- Hacker, A. (1992). *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Helms, J. E. (1992). *Black and White Racial Identity*. New York: Praeger.
- _____, (1992). *A Race Is a Nice Thing To Have: A Guide to Being a White Person or Understanding the White Person in Your Life*.
- Ignatiev, N. (1995). *How the Irish Became White: Irish-Americans and African-Americans in 19th Century Philadelphia*. New York: Verso.
- Jen, G. (1991). *Typical American*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Jennings, J. (ed.) (1997). *Race and Politics: New Challenges and Responses for Black Activism*. London: Verso.
- Kerner Report on Civil Disorders, Supplemental Studies for the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, (1968). New York: Praeger.
- KinKead, G. (1992). *Chinatown: A Portrait of a Closed Society*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Kotlowitz, A. (1998). *The Other Side of the River*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Loewen, J. W. (1995). *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American History textbook got wrong*. New York: Touchstone.
- Lum, D. (1992). *Social Work Practice and People of Color: A Process-stage approach* (2nd ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Mason, J.L., Benjamin, M.P., and Lewis, S. (1996). "The cultural competence model: Implications for child and family mental health services. In C.A. Heflinger and C.T. Nixon (Eds.). *Families and the mental health system for children and adolescents*, pp. 165-190. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Matthews, L., (1996). "Culturally competent models in human service organizations," *Journal of Multicultural Social Work*, 4(4), pp. 131-135.
- Neubeck, K.J. and Cazenave, N.A. (2001). *Welfare racism: playing the race card against America's poor*. New York: Routledge.
- McWhorter. J.H. (2000). *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America*. New York: The Free Press.
- Otis, H.B. (2000). *E Pluribus Omaha: Immigrants All*. Omaha, NE: Lamplighter Press.
- McMahon, A., and Allen-Meares, P., (1992). "Is social work racist? A content analysis of recent literature," *Social Work*, 37, pp. 533-539.
- Moen, P., Dempster-McClain, D. and Walker, H.A., (eds). (1999). *A Nation Divided: Diversity, Inequality and Community in American Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Montagu, A. (1964). *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*. Cleveland: World.
- _____, (1969). *The Concept of Race*. London: Collier Books.

- Shipler, D.K. (1997). *A Country of Strangers: Blacks and Whites in America*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Spencer, M.S., (1998). "Reducing racism in schools: Moving beyond rhetoric," *Social Work in Education*, 20(1), pp. 25-36.
- Steele, S. (1990). *The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- _____. (2006) *White Guilt*.
- Stowe, D. (1996). "Uncolored People: The Rise of Whiteness Studies," in *Lingua Franca* (Sept/Oct), pp. 68-77.
- Takaki, R, (1993). *A Different Mirror: History of Multicultural America*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- _____, (1990). *Iron cages: Race and culture in 19th century America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Thomopoulos, E. C. (2003). *St. Joseph and Benton Harbor*. Chicago: Arcadia
- Wu, F.H. (2002.) *Yellow: Race in America beyond black and white*. New York: Basic Books.

External Links on the class web page.

<http://www.nyu.edu/socialwork/ip/>
<http://www.zmag.org/>
<http://www.now.org/>
<http://www.nonviolence.org/>
<http://www.webactive.com/>
<http://www.unicam.state.ne.us/>
<http://www.n2pp.info/>
<http://www.epinet.org/>
<http://www.ips-dc.org/>
<http://www.nglrf.org/>
<http://thomas.loc.gov/>
<http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/nea/domestic.htm>
<http://www.ndvsac.org/>
<http://www.pflag-omaha.org/>
<http://www.commondreams.org/>
<http://www.guerrillanews.com/>
<http://www.whitehouseforsale.org/>
<http://www.gaylibrary.com/>
<http://www.cfep-ne.org/content/>
<http://www.apastyle.org/>
<http://www.freepress.net/>
<http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/home.html>

8.0 Other Information

8.1 Plagiarism

The Executive Body of the School of Social Work has passed a policy alerting students to and emphasizing the importance of the issue of plagiarism. The UNO policy on plagiarism is as follows:

“The prevention of plagiarism and the imposition of sanctions upon those who resort to plagiarism is necessary in any university that espouses the ideals embodied in the concept of academic freedom. Plagiarism is the appropriation of the work (be it ideas or words) of another without crediting the source. Such a practice is particularly reprehensible in a community dedicated to the pursuit and advancement of knowledge.”

The UNO policy on Academic Integrity reads as follows:

“The maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions.”

Academic dishonesty definitions, procedures and sanctions are available on the current University of Nebraska at Omaha web-site.

8.2 Procedure Regarding Student Grades/Papers

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA-1974) requires that student grades not be published in a personally identifiable fashion. Therefore, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor, students must provide a self-addressed adequately stamped envelope for papers, projects or exams that were not returned to them in class. Any remaining papers, projects, or exams will be kept by the instructor for 3 months after the semester ends, at which time they will be shredded.

8.3 Statement regarding Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are provided for students with certified disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities, EAB 117 or 554.2872, TTY 554.3799.

8.4 Additional Assistance

Students who have concerns about their competence in writing papers or who have extreme anxiety in taking tests or giving class presentations should address these concerns by seeking professional counseling through the University Division of Counseling Services.

Appendix A Questions

(Answer any one of the following)

1. Choose any one of the following: 1) Christian Identity Theology 2) Feminist Theology. What are its postulates (doctrines)? What is its origin and history? What do you think has been its impact on society so far? What are the likely effects on society if this theology becomes popular? Explain your answer. You need to do your own library research to answer this question.
2. Write a profile of any one of the following organizations. You may organize it along the following guidelines:
i) Origin and history, ii) objectives iii) its appeal and base of support, iv) its projects, activities and resources, and v) the impact on society. The organizations are 1. Posse Comitatus 2. The Populist Party 3. Gay Liberation Front.
3. Review the movie 'Mississippi Burning' and write a review. You may refer to other reviews in the newspapers and newsmagazines. But I would advise you to read them after you have seen the movie and written down your own thoughts and reactions. It will be interesting to compare your thoughts with those of other professional reviewers. You also need to be familiar with the historical background or the context of the movie and the role of the FBI in dealing with the Civil Rights Movement and its activists (E.g.: Hooverism). This would require library materials on Freedom Summer.
4. Write profile of National Organization of Women. Focus on its social change activities. In your opinion which of the theoretical perspective has guided its activities and actions.
5. Choose any one of the following issues:
 - a) Comparable worth
 - b) Domestic violence

c) Any other issues that you are interested in but it should be related to institutional sexism.

Based on the discussion and readings in this section and library work, answer the following questions:

- i) Which of the theoretical perspectives, in your opinion, provides the best explanation for the issue you have chosen to analyze? Explain the reasons and arguments for your position. You may need to illustrate your reasons and arguments with typical examples, facts and figures.
- ii) Does your theoretical perspective suggest any direction towards solving the issue? If yes, describe them.

6. Discuss the differences or similarities in the theoretical perspective and praxis (methodology) adopted by movements led by Martin Luther King and Malcolm - X.
7. An award-winning family doctor, on the clinical faculty at Harvard Medical School, and author of the book, *Overdosed America: The Broken Promise of American Medicine*, Dr. Abramson argues how the corporate takeover of clinical research and medical practice is compromising Americans' health. You -- and your doctor -- will be stunned by his findings. "At the heart of the crisis, he found, lies the changed purpose of medical knowledge -- from seeking to optimize health to searching for the greatest profits. The lack of transparency that has become normal in commercially sponsored medical research now taints the scientific evidence published in even our most prestigious medical journals. And unlike the recent scandals in other industries that robbed Americans of money and jobs, this one is undermining our health."
 - Review this book, highlight the major arguments in it;
 - Evaluate the evidence presented by the author for each of the arguments;
 - Suggest policy changes you think are needed;
 - Indicate how the policy changes you suggested can be implemented.
 - Web source: <http://www.overdosedamerica.com/>

You may also consider reading Dr. Jerry Avorn's *Powerful Medicines* as a supplement. This is what the -- *Editorial review, Amazon.com* stated:

"Profiteering pharmaceutical companies and the FDA have met their match in Dr. Jerry Avorn, a Harvard Medical school researcher and clinician. In *Powerful Medicines*, he brilliantly combines patient vignettes, scientific critique, and statistics to create a risk/benefit balance for prescription drugs. His premise: "Every drug is a triangle with three faces--representing the healing it can bring, the hazards it can inflict and the economic impact of each." Avorn's gifts as a writer are apparent in the prologue, an edgy account of the mismanaged medications of several stroke patients. He then details the intellectual history of drug assessment and benefits, including the biblical food police in the Book of Daniel, the deer in the headlights Estrogen debacle and the current infatuation with Ginseng and other alternative medicines. Turning from benefits to risks, Avorn examines diet pills, Viagra, cold medicines and diabetes drugs with comparisons the decisions of Dr. Fautus--who makes life-changing bargains between safety and effectiveness. Other insightful chapters offer views of prescription drug economies, and comparative healthcare around the globe. The final chapters create an insightful template for emerging public policy. Throughout, Avorn pulls at common threads: the line between personal and public responsibility, the perils of drug promotion, and the marketplace that usurps the role of scientific evidence in selecting treatments. Anyone looking for a quick muckraking read will be disappointed. But Avorn's views, literate and complex, will frame the debate on prescription drugs for years to come."

<http://www.powerfulmedicines.org/pages/1/index.htm>

Appendix B Internet Assignment

INTERNET:

1. Spend at least 30 minutes each week reading the articles posted on the UNO School of Social Work Policy Forum. To get on the Forum, click of the Community Tab after logging on to the course web page.

Then Search for the UNO School of Social Work Policy Forum and click on enroll. The password to get in is **socialwork**.

2. Post at least **two** articles relevant to the course materials on the Forum. These articles may be copied from the web.
3. Post follow-up comments to at least **six** of the postings on the Forum. Follow up comments must contain substantive and critical and brief responses.
4. For Submission: Write a one to two page double spaced report indicating whether you completed all the tasks. Share your experiences on the Internet as a tool to learn the material for this course. This assignment carries a total of 20 points. Indicate in the paper the points you deserve for this assignment. The guidelines for grading yourself are: if you did the **minimum required** suggested in 1, 2, 3 give yourself **15** points. If you did **three times** the minimum give yourself all the **20** points.