

**Saint Louis University
School of Social Service**

SW S701-01 Social Justice: Human Liberation and Community Building

Fall, 2003 Semester
Tegeler Hall 105
Thursdays, 6:00-8:30

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

“If you have come to help us, you are wasting your time.
But if you have come because your liberation
is bound up with ours, let us work together.”

Rose Gregoire – Unnu Woman

This course is designed to help students understand the meaning of social justice, community building, and human liberation within the context of social work practice. Based on social work’s historical mission of intervention in high risk communities while advocating for social reform, this course is aimed at teaching students the history, theory and practice realities of community building locally and globally through discussion, research and exploration.

The norms and values that support the characteristics of a just society will be stressed. Students will learn to compare and contrast current social and economic conditions with the values and norms underlying a just society as a structure for critically analyzing situations. They will gain knowledge of the issues underlying oppression while learning values and techniques which can help in the struggle for liberation. Students will gain knowledge of models and procedures for organizing for social justice. They will study liberation movements and discuss issues of policy and politics locally and globally. Learning will take place as we focus on groups experiencing social and economic injustices based on racial, ethnic, socio-cultural and gender characteristics.

PREREQUISITES

SW S751 or permission of the instructor

OBJECTIVES

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

1. demonstrate knowledge of the history of the struggle toward social justice and human liberation over the past century.
2. compare and contrast social change strategies utilized by social work and social justice organizations.
3. analyze the history and current reality of inequality, change, and organizing.
4. demonstrate skills and strategies for assessing community needs, redressing the impact of economic, racial, and social oppression and evaluating community practice.
5. utilize knowledge of history, theory, strategies, and methodologies to develop methods for current and future change through community building.
6. manifest an understanding of social change methods which help empower disadvantaged individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities to achieve increased control and greater social justice.
7. analyze current local, national, and global conditions demonstrating the skills necessary for critically analyzing issues and developing alternative solutions.
8. recognize ethnic, cultural, age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender factors and biases and their implications for practice in congruence with social work ethics and values.

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

Teaching methods used in the course will mirror as closely as possible the techniques and methods widely used in educating and organizing grassroots groups for engaging in social action for social change. This kind of teaching/learning is generally described as “popular education” (i.e., the people’s education). The methodology is characterized by co-equal roles for “teacher” and “student,” based on the assumption that we are all teachers and learners who have experiences and insights to share, and that we are capable of looking critically at the world through dialogue with each other. In addition, we will make use of videos, music and opportunities for dialogue with others who are working for social justice to assist us in dreaming and realizing a new dream for our world.

MAJOR CONTENT AREAS

Social and economic justice and the impact of injustice on vulnerable populations will be explored and understood through the lenses of race, ethnicity, class and gender. Human liberation and community building within the context of social work practice will be interwoven with specific justice themes through review of the history of social work as social reform and by exposure to activists currently working for social change in various venues. Strategies examined will include non-violent direct action, advocacy, community organizing, and popular education. During the course of the semester the class will explore the elements of liberation oriented practice and develop its own set of principles for a just society.

TEXTS

Required:

Freire, Paulo. (2001) Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company.

Readings on Electronic Reserve: Assigned readings will be placed on the Electronic Reserves at Pius XII Library. These readings may be accessed by computer from virtually anywhere access to the Internet is available. Go to the SLU homepage (www.slu.edu) and click on the link for libraries. Select the link to Pius XII Library (www.slu.edu/libraries/pius). Click on Electronic Reserves. On the Reserves Systems page, click on Electronic Reserves again. On the Electronic Reserves Web Page click on Electronic Reserves and Course Materials. Select the instructor (Slosar) or the department (Social Work) and click on Go. Click on the course. Type in the password : JUSTICE (all caps). Click on Accept if you agree to abide by the copyright statement on this page. Select the desired title.

Additional readings on the Internet will be assigned for certain topics.

Recommended:

It is recommended that students read (on their own) a variety of news and periodical publications, including both mainstream and “alternative” publications. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and *River Front Times* represent often opposing, but mainstream, perspectives and will address local and state-wide issues. Other local alternative papers are the *St. Louis American* (minority press) and *the Vital Voice* (gay and lesbian newspaper). *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* are mainstream sources for national and international issues. Interesting and enlightening periodicals that address social justice issues include *Sojourners*, *Utne Reader*, *Mother Jones*, *The Progressive*, and *Fair/Extra!*, a publication of Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting. Any of these may provide material for your assignments. Class members’ suggestions for other publications will be welcomed. Additional references are available upon request from the instructor.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Assignments/Tasks/Grading

Attendance: Much of the learning in this class takes place through small group processing. One cannot learn from others or contribute to the learning of others without being present. If the student anticipates the need to miss more than two classes during the semester, the student should not be in this course. More than two absences will result in a lower grade for the course.

Class Participation: All students are expected to participate and contribute to class discussions and activities. Class participation will be evaluated on the basis of adequate participation and the quality of participation, not on whether the values or views you express are in agreement with those of the instructor or the majority of the class. A

greater percentage of the grade will be based on participation than is the norm for a lecture class because the dialogical nature of the learning process is a key element in understanding and gaining skill in appropriate practice methods for social justice work.

Readings: Students are expected to have completed the specified readings prior to their assigned date and to be able to participate fully in the sharing and discussion during class periods

Issue analysis or practice analysis. The student will submit a written report of 10 - 15 pages analyzing a justice issue or a practice setting. The options are described below. This assignment is due on **October 30, 2003**.

Issue analysis: The student will choose a current social justice issue to research and analyze. The analysis will show understanding of the kind(s) of oppression involved, the population group(s) impacted, and the social change methods which are being and/or could be used to redress the injustices and bring about social change. The analysis should apply the principles of a just society as developed by the class. Where possible, compare and contrast accounts of the issue from both mainstream and alternative media sources, and discuss the possible impact of the different reporting perspectives on the outcome of the issue.

Practice analysis: The student will choose a social action organization or agency setting and analyze it as a tool for human liberation. The organization may be one in which the student is doing or has done a practicum, in which the student is or has been employed or which involves an issue or a social change methodology of particular interest to the student. The student will research and become familiar with the organization's work for social justice through one-on-one interviews with staff and examination of the organization's literature. The paper produced should briefly describe the organization's mission and target population, explain methods used and analyze them based on the principles of empowerment and human liberation contained in course readings and discussions.

Social Action: Each student will be required to participate in an action for social justice during the course of the semester and to submit an 10-15 page analysis of the experience. The experience may consist of direct action, such as participation in a demonstration; it may also consist of attendance at a community meeting or event, followed by some form of related advocacy, such as visiting a public official, or submitting a letter-to-the-editor or an op-ed piece for the newspaper. The analysis should show how the experience fits the *see---judge---act---evaluate and celebrate* model and emphasize the judge and evaluate components of the model. The paper should reflect the values perspectives incorporated in class discussions and should measure the action according to the elements of liberation drawn from the readings. No extra credit will be given for being arrested; you alone are fully responsible for your actions. Your actions should be meaningful, but the evaluation will focus on the analytical aspects of the paper.

The instructor will announce opportunities that arise, or the student may seek out opportunities independently. (If there are questions about the suitability of an activity, please consult with the instructor in advance.) Students are encouraged to be watchful for opportunities that arise during the semester and share them with the class. This assignment will be due on **December 4, 2003**.

Grading Structure

Components of the course requirements will be weighted as follows:

Action experience & report	40%
Issue/practice analysis	30%
Class participation	20%

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Students are expected to be present for every meeting of the course. Success in the course depends heavily on one's attendance and participation in the classroom. The instructor has both e-mail and voice-mail. The instructor must be notified in advance for consideration of an excused absence. Even if the absence is excused, the student is fully responsible for any homework or lessons that were assigned or covered in the missed session.

Courtesy Expectations

Students will treat their classroom obligations as they should treat any serious professional engagement. This includes

1. Preparing thoroughly for each session in accordance with the instructor's request.
2. Arriving promptly and remaining until the end of each class meeting.
3. Participating fully and constructively in all classroom activities and discussions.
4. Displaying appropriate courtesy to all involved in the class sessions. Courteous behavior specifically entails communicating in a manner that respects, and is sensitive to, cultural, religious, sexual, and other individual differences in the SLU community.
5. Adhering to deadlines and timetables established by the instructor.
6. Providing constructive and courteous feedback to faculty members regarding their performance. Students should be as objective in their comments about instructors as they expect instructors to be in their evaluations of students.

Communications

Each student must come to class with his or her Saint Louis University student e-mail ID and Password activated and working. Any student who does not know his or her e-mail ID and Password, must contact Saint Louis University Information Technology

Services during normal business hours and have them “reset” the ID and/or Password. ITS can be reached at 314-977-4000.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

The following is a statement of minimum standards for student academic integrity at Saint Louis University.

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity, such as would be expected at a Jesuit, Catholic institution. As members of this community, students, faculty, and staff members share the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic dishonesty violates it. Although not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, it can be said in general that soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted toward academic credit is dishonest. It not only violates the mutual trust necessary between faculty and students but also undermines the validity of the University’s evaluation of students and takes unfair advantage of fellow students. Further, it is the responsibility of any student who observes such dishonest conduct to call it to the attention of a faculty member or administrator.

Examples of academic dishonesty would be copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed-book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but presented as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, tampering with another student’s work, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in an act of academic dishonesty.

Where there is clear indication of such dishonesty, a faculty member or administrator has the responsibility to apply appropriate sanctions. Investigations of violations will be conducted in accord with standards and procedures of the school or college through which the course or research is offered. Recommendations of sanctions to be imposed will be made to the dean of the school or college in which the student is enrolled. Possible sanctions for a violation of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Any clear violation of academic integrity will be met with sanctions. In a case of dishonesty within a course, the instructor may assign an appropriate grade and will refer the matter to the Program Director, who will determine whether additional sanctions are warranted. If the Program Director determines that additional sanctions are warranted, the Director will refer the matter to the appropriate body identified in the School of Social Service’s by-laws, which will deal with the matter under the provisions of the Professional Probation and Dismissal Policy. Students are referred to the MSW Program

Student Handbook for a complete presentation of the Academic Integrity and Honesty policy of the School.

Nondiscrimination Policy and Human Diversity

Saint Louis University and the School of Social Service's BSSW and MSW Programs have a strong and active commitment to promote human diversity and to ensure that all aspects of educational programs are carried forth without discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation. A specific University goal is to foster "respect for diversity, other cultures, and belief systems." A related School objective is to "demonstrate skill and responsiveness to the needs of clients and client systems, especially those who are poor, oppressed, and/or members of culturally diverse groups and at-risk populations." This policy can be viewed in the University undergraduate and graduate bulletins plus the BSSW and MSW student handbooks.

Students with Special Needs

If any member of the class has a disability and needs special accommodations of any nature, please let the instructor know at some point before, during, or immediately after the first scheduled class period. The instructor will work with you and the campus Disability Coordinator to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to perform well in the class.

Writing and the APA Style

A variety of publication styles are recognized in academic and professional settings (e.g., MLA, Chicago Style). The faculty of the School of Social Service encourage graduate social work students to study, learn, and master the conventions contained in the American Psychological Association Style Manual (APA, 2001). At a minimum, students are expected to follow the rules of good grammar, syntax, punctuation, and spelling. Any student who needs assistance with her or his writing is encouraged to meet with a writing assistant from the Graduate Student Writing Center.

Instructor/Course Evaluation

The instructor and course will be evaluated at the end of the term by students through the use of a standard evaluation instrument. Each evaluation will cover the quality and relevance of course material and the quality of instruction. The intent is to seek information, which will help to improve both the quality of the course and instructional competence. In completing these evaluations, the each student should be mindful of the extent to which the course objectives have been met.

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Course Outline

Fall, 2003

This is a tentative outline. Topics and dates may adjusted in order to accommodate guests and address important contemporary issues.

Week 1, August 28, 2003: Introduction and Overview

Introductions

Expectations for the course: Students' and instructor's

Overview – syllabus, assignments, action opportunities

Video: Dr. George Tinker, *Dreaming a new dream: Cowboys, indians, global violence and the gospel.*

Week 2, September 4, 2003: Two Perspectives on Human Liberation

Readings:

Freire, P. (2001). Publisher's Forward, Forward, Preface, & Chapter 1.

Simon B. (1994). The empowerment tradition in American social work, New York: Columbia University Press, Preface & Chapter 1.

Week 3, September 11, 2003: Dialogue & "Problem Posing" – Beginning Our Critique

Readings:

Freire P. (2001). Chapter 2.

Hope, A. & Timmel S. (1995) Training for transformation: A handbook for community workers, book 1, London: ITDG Publishing, pp.14-35.

Week 4, September 18, 2003: Capitalism, Democracy, and Liberty for All? A special presentation by the instructor on the School of the Americas.

September 23, 2003: Social Justice Night , 5:30-8:30 pm Tegeler Hall. All students are encouraged to attend.

Week 5, September 25, 2003: Economic Justice

Week 6, October 2, 2003: The Global Economy and Human Liberation

Week 7, October 9, 2003: The Global Economy and Human Liberation (cont.)

Week 8, October 16, 2003: Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free...

Week 9, October 23, 2003: Working Together-- Unions and the Pursuit of Justice

Week 10, October 30, 2003: Criminal Justice the U.S.—Is It Justice or Is It Criminal?
Social Issue/Practice Analysis Papers Due

Week 11, November 6, 2003: He Had a Dream.....

Week 12, November 13, 2003: Liberation with Our Gay Brothers and Sisters

Week 13, November 20, 2003: Human Rights for All

Week 14, December 4, 2003: Class Reflection and Celebration.
Social Action papers due.