

**SWRK 713**  
**Understanding Social Change: Issues of Race and Gender**  
**School of Social Policy & Practice University of Pennsylvania**  
**Spring Semester 2019**  
**Thursdays 4:00-6:30 Caster Building A14**

**Course Description:**

This course examines the multi-faceted nature of social oppression, its manifestation in social welfare institutions, and the role of social movements in challenging it. The course builds on SWRK603's analysis of the historical foundation of racism in the United States by assessing how racism interacts with the multiple and simultaneous manifestations of other forms of social oppression. Critical race, social justice, and post-colonial theories are used to place the American experience in a comparative and transnational perspective. Social movements—from the Civil Rights movement of the middle of the 20th century to contemporary social protest like Black Lives Matters and #MeToo—and social institutions—including education and mass incarceration—provide students with the opportunity to apply these theories to concrete settings of relevance to social work. In order to foster more inclusive institutions, students will be asked to develop strategies for promoting transformative change that addresses the matrix of oppression as part of their professional practice. The course serves as a capstone for the MSW curriculum that allows students to rethink the meaning of social change as they integrate their learning across the entire curriculum and transition into the next phase of their professional lives.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students are expected to demonstrate the following competencies:

1. Professional identity: Understand the simultaneous and contradictory roles of social workers in helping their clients adapt and survive in an unjust social order and the professional responsibility to address oppression in a variety of systems and institutions.
2. Ethical practice: Critically assess the ethical code of the profession and apply the responsibility for promoting social change in particular practice settings.
3. Critical thinking: Understand and challenge different theories of social justice. Apply these theories to particular practice and community settings. Use existing data

effectively to understand and communicate the role of social institutions in reinforcing injustice.

4. Diversity in practice. Understanding the multiple and simultaneous connections between different forms of social oppression and how white racism has served as a template for other forms of oppression. Assess the ways in which social movements based on particular identities (race, gender, sexual identity, economic status, ability, and immigration status) can reinforce and cross-cut one another.
5. Human rights and social justice. Explain how discourses of human rights and social justice are based both on national and international standards and how these standards continue to evolve.
6. Research-based practice. Develop skills in gathering and analyzing data on indicators of oppression in social agencies, institutions, and communities and communicating findings to relevant constituencies.
7. Human behavior. Understand processes that “internalize” oppression and develop strategies for addressing both its external and internal manifestations.
8. Policy practice. Use one’s understanding of oppression and the structure of social institutions to promote policy changes in systems from social agencies to national and international institutions to advance social well-being and effective services.
9. Practice contexts. To tailor one’s approaches to social justice in agencies, larger social institutions, and communities based on their distinctive character and the existing resources that may promote or block change efforts.
10. Engage, assess, intervene, evaluate. To use one’s entire set of practice and research skills to support clients in overcoming and combating social oppression as it occurs in different systems with which they engage.

### **Recommended Texts**

Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Michelle Alexander (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.

### **Required Readings**

All students are expected to read the chapters/articles before class.

During several class sessions, students will be divided into 2-3 groups and each group will be responsible for, and present one of the readings. The groups are expected to highlight questions for discussion and engage the class in a seminar format.

## Assignments and Grading

Assignments	Due	Grade
1. Reflections	3 papers and 1 in-class share-back required Jan 31st Feb. 14th April 4th	20% P or F
2. Midterm paper	March 21st	20%
3. Final group project and presentation	April 18th	30%
4. Final individual reflection paper	April 18th	10%
5. Class participation	Ongoing	20%

### 1. **Reflections** (20% of grade; pass/fail).

During the semester students write short (2-3 pages double-spaced) responses to the assigned readings for that week. At least one of the papers must be an event reflection. Students could attend a film screening, lecture, fundraiser, performance, community meeting, etc. Instructor will share events but students are encouraged to also share events they know of to the class. Events must be connected to the themes of the class. Responses can use an informal format to identify critical issues in the readings and how they connect to the student's understanding of their professional role and the course objectives. Students are encouraged to make connections to personal experiences, including upbringing, schooling, and professional practice including field placement, and political events of the day to the course readings. As with all assignments and discussions in this course, students are encouraged to consider intersectionality and their own positionality.

### 2. **Mid-term Paper: Personal Education Critique** (20% of grade).

Write a 5 page (double-spaced) critique of your education to date (including but not limited to your SP2 education) using the seminal concepts included in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Discuss how the author's views inform your analysis. In the paper, articulate the two contrasting conceptions of education. Examine how your educational experience prepared you (or not) in critical thinking as well as to engage with others, including social service users. Include recommendations for improving the quality and effectiveness of K-12, higher ed and professional social work education. Cite specific data, including personal examples, in support of your arguments wherever applicable. Consult other sources, including other required course readings or other academic/scholarly or journalistic sources, in your arguments. Be sure to include formal APA citations and references.

### 3. **Final Group Project** (30% of grade)

Students will work together in teams to collect and analyze new data (through observations, surveys, interviews, etc.) to address oppression—at Penn, SP2, field placement, individual neighborhoods, etc. The topic should include an analysis of how race, gender, gender identity, class, religion, nationality, ability and/or sexuality relate to this issue of oppression. Be sure to consider these issues through an intersectional lens. The final product/deliverable should be a proposal or modest intervention for affecting social change and may be in the form of a report, video, skit, curriculum, training, brochure, poster, event or some other creative product appropriate for the intended audience. We will work on this project throughout the semester. Teams are expected to present their final project during the final day of class. Projects must cover-

- A. Explain your specific topic. What is the impact on people? How does it impede their development.
- B. What are the main challenges in responding to the issue and how are the challenges being negotiated and addressed.
- C. How does race and racism shape the issue? How do the dimensions of power/marginalization such as gender, class, sexuality etc. influence the issue?
- D. Discuss how it is being currently addressed at the micro and/or macro level depending on your topic (by your agency, or by the government, the university, on social media, etc.) How are they serving or not serving the people impacted by the issue? Are they engaged in social management vs. social change?
- E. Discuss the interaction between structural and individual-level factors in the way the issue manifests itself in the community (for example, the manner in which structural issues of stigma and criminalization interact with individual-level addiction issues in a substance using community).

#### **Action Plan:**

- F. Articulate an action plan to initiate/support/bolster social change efforts around the issues/theme.
- G. Discuss how this plan will address social change vs. social management
- H. Action plan should also address
  - 1. collective action and social movement
  - 2. structural and individual change
  - 3. issues of feasibility and sustainability

### 4. **Final Individual Reflection paper** (10% of grade)

Write a 3 page double-spaced paper (1) summarizing your contributions to the final group project; (2) describing the significance and limitations of the project; and (3) next steps you could imagine for the project. This reflection should also include an

assessment of our own learning, personally and professionally, from this course and ways in which you imagine continuing your own education around issues of race, gender, and social oppression.

## **Class Schedule**

### **Section 1: Theories of Oppression**

#### January 17th-Week 1: Race and Intersectionality

- Lorde, Audre (1984) *Sister outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Trumansburg, NY: The Crossing Press “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House.”
- Freire, P. (1993) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapters 1-2.
- Arao and Clemens (2013), “From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue around Diversity and Social Justice,” in *From the Art of Effective Facilitation*.
- Lily Zheng (2016), “Why your brave space sucks,” *Stanford Daily*.

#### January 24th-Week 2: Origins of Critical Race Theory

- Freire, P. (1993) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Continuum. Chapter 3-4
- Crenshaw, K. (1988). Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Anti-Discrimination Law. *Harvard Law Review*, 101(7), 1331-1387.
- Perea, Juan F. (1997) The Black/White Binary Paradigm of Race. *California Law Review*, 85; 1213.

#### January 31-Week 3: Critical Race Studies: Intersectionality and Matrices of Oppression

- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*. 43, 6, pp. 1241-1299
- Collins, Patricia Hill. (1991) Chapter 8, “Black Feminist Epistemology” in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Chang, Roberts. (1999). *Disoriented: Asian Americans, law, and the nation-state*. New York: New York University Press. Chpt 1

#### February 7th-Week 4: Racism, Neocolonialism and Postcolonial Theory

Penn Museum Field Trip

- Childs, Peter and Williams, Patrick (1997). *An Introduction to Postcolonial Theory*. Chapter 1, “Introduction: Points of Departure,” pp. 1-25. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Quijano, Anibal (2000). Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America, *International Sociology* 15(2): 215-232.

### February 14th-Week 5: Postcolonial Theory and Social Work Practice

Guest Speaker- Mal Biel Tutdeal: <https://www.nyaedenfoundation.org/nyamal-1/>

- Tamburro, Andrea (2013). Including Decolonization in Social Work Education and Practice, *Journal of Indigenous Social Development* 2(1): 1-16.
- Sakamoto, Izumi and Pitner, Ronald O. (2005). Use of Critical Consciousness in Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice: Disentangling Power Dynamics at Personal and Structural Levels. *British Journal of Social Work* 35: 435-452.
- Smith, Linda (2008). South African social work education: Critical Imperatives for social change in the post-apartheid and post-colonial context. *International Social Work* 51(3): 371-383.
- Gray, Mel. (2005). Dilemmas of international social work: Paradoxical processes in indigenization, universalism, and imperialism. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 14, 231-38.

## **Section 2: Social Movements, Collective Action and Social Change**

### February 21-Week 6: Social Movement Theories

- McAdam, Doug (1999). *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. Introduction and Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-64. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miller, Shaeleya D., Taylor, Verta and Rupp, Leila J. (2016). “Social Movements and the Construction of Queer Identity,” Chapter 16 in *New Directions in Identity Theory and Research*. Oxford Scholarship Online.

### February 28-Week 7. Social Media and Social Change

Guest Lecturer- Randall Wilson, MSW- Social Work Services Manager DHS

- Chao Guo and Gregory D. Saxton (2014). Tweeting Social Change: How Social Media Are Changing Nonprofit Advocacy, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 43(1) 57-79.
- Monica Anderson, Skye Toor, Lee Rainie, and Aaron Smith (2018). *Activism in the Social Media Age*, Pew Research Center.

- Perri Campbell (2017). Occupy, Black Lives Matter and Suspended Mediation: Young People’s Battles for Recognition in/between Digital and Non-digital Spaces, *YOUNG*, 26(2) 145–160.
- Melissa Brown, Rashawn Ray, Ed Summers & Neil Fraistat (2017). #SayHerName: a case study of intersectional social media activism, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40:11, 1831-1846.
- Nouredine Miladi (2016). Social Media and Social Change. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 25(1): 36–51.

### **Spring Break March 4<sup>th</sup> – 8th**

#### March 14-Week 8: Language of Engagement

Film Screening “Breathe in the Roots” & Discussion with/ Indrias Kasseye

<http://www.tadias.com/09/15/2017/ethiopia-film-breathe-in-the-roots-director-interview/>

- Brian L. Ott (2017). The Age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34(1): 59-68.
- Judith Shulevitz (2015). “In College, Hiding from Scary Ideas,” *The New York Times*, 21 March.
- Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado and Crenshaw (1993). “Introduction,” pp. 1-15 in *Words that Wound: Critical Race Theory, Assaultive Speech, and the First Amendment*. Boulder CO: Westview Press.
- Crenshaw, Kimberly (1993). “Beyond Racism and Misogyny: Black Feminism and 2 Live Crew,” Chapter 5, pp. 111-132, in *Words that Wound*.

### **Section 3: Contemporary Social Movements**

#### March 21-Week 9: #MeToo Movement

Guest Speaker on Art & Social Change

- D’Efilippo, Valentina (2018). The anatomy of a hashtag—A visual analysis of the MeToo movement,” Muzli 26 September.
- Harris, Aisha (2018). She Founded Me Too. Now She Wants to Move Past the Trauma. *The New York Times* 15 October.
- NPR, Iowa Public Radio (2018). “Unsettled: Mapping #MeToo,” Podcast series. (Listen to two or more episodes).

## March 28-Week 10: Safe Space? Racism and Gentrification in the Gayborhood

### Guest Speaker on LGBT global issues

- Hanhardt, Christina B. (2013). *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence*, “Introduction,” pp. 1-33.
- James, Scott (2017). There goes the gayborhood. *The New York Times* 21 June.
- Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (2017). *Inform, Monitor, Enforce: Addressing Racism and Discrimination in Philadelphia’s LGBT Community and Progress Report*.
- Transcript of testimony, 25 October 2017, Racism in the Gayborhood.
- Bassichis, Lee & Spade (2011). “Building an Abolitionist, trans and queer movement with everything we’ve got,” In Smith, N. & Stanley, E.A., *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*. New York: AK Press.

## April 4-Week 11: Disability Rights Movement

### Career Panel

- Bagenstos, Samuel R. (2009). “Chapter 1: Introduction” and “Chapter 2, The Projects of the American Disability Rights Movement,” pp. 1-33. *Law and the Contradictions of the Disability Rights Movement*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Kafer, Alison (2013). “Introduction: Imagined Futures,” in *Feminist, Queer, Crip*. Indiana University Press.

## April 11-Week 12: Mass Incarceration & School to Prison Pipeline

- Stanley, E. (2011). “Fugitive flesh: Gender self-determination, queer abolition, and trans resistance” in *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*. Oakland: AK Press.
- Alexander, Michelle (2010) *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press. Chpt 1-2.
- Snapp, Shannon D., Hoenig, Jennifer M., Fields, Amanda and Russell, Stephen T. (2015). Messy, Butch, and Queer: LGBTQ Youth and the School-to-Prison Pipeline. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 30(1) 57–82.
- Erelles N. (2014) Crippin’ Jim Crow: Disability, Dis-Location, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline. In: Ben-Moshe L., Chapman C., Carey A.C. (eds) *Disability Incarcerated*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan.



- Padres & Jovenes Unidos and Advancement Project (2014). Lessons in Racial Justice and Movement Building: Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Colorado and Nationally.

April 18-Week 13: Final Project Presentations

April 25-Week 14: Happy Hour- Closing Activities

### **Grading Rubrics for Midterm & Final**

#### **MIDTERM:**

Completeness 5pts

- Is approx. 5 pages double spaced
- Discusses personal experience of education/schooling
- Uses the primary text and other sources

Application 10pts

- Articulates the two contrasting concepts of education and primary principles in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
- Analyzes and critiques your education from childhood to date
- Discusses how your education prepared you to think critically and engage with others (friends, peers, family, clients, people in various communities i.e. workplace, social circles, school, neighborhoods, etc.)
- Discusses how Freire's views inform your analysis
- Cites specific data to support your analysis & critique
- Demonstrates a solid understanding of the primary principles in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Quality 5pts

- Exhibits a strong overall writing quality and is well organized/structured
- Uses correct grammar and syntax (*syntax is the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences*)
- Is correctly formatted and follows APA in-text citation and reference page

### **FINAL GROUP PROJECT:**

Completeness 7pts

- Completes both sections
- Is authored by all students
- Uses 20+ sources including interviews with professionals or people impacted by the social issue and multimedia sources (film, podcast, newsclip, etc.)

Application 15pts

- Addresses items A-H
- Cites specific research and personal experience to address the items
- Is rooted in best practice and not in speculation, assumptions, or a narrow personal experience
- Project could be confidently presented to an organization, professional or constituent working on or coping with the issue

Quality 8pts

- Is well organized/structured
- Uses correct grammar and syntax

### **Grading Scale as depicted by MSW handbook:**

97-100: A+

94-96: A

90-93: A-

87-89: B+

84-86: B

80-83: B-

77-79: C+

74-76: C

70-73: C-

60-69: D

Below 60: F