

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

SW 512 Social, Economic, and Political Environments (2 credit hours)
Fall 2008
Mondays 12:20-2:20 PM (306 Henson Hall)

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Code of Conduct

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct Code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook (www.utk.csw.edu).

The Honor Statement

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (*Hilltopics*, 2008).

Disability

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact The University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at 2227 Dunford Hall (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

Course Description

This course is a required foundation course. Examines the profound influences on and critical interfaces of client systems with the world in which we live. Incorporates local to international information about social, economic, and political trends and innovations, and about effects of social problems, injustice, and power on client systems and on social change and service delivery systems. The course pays special attention to the process of devolution and globalization and the influence of these economic and political forces on the distribution of resources. International comparative social patterns are analyzed to understand economic justice from a national and international perspective. The history of the social and political environment, both nationally and abroad, are considered to enhance students' understanding of how political decisions shape the social welfare arena in which we practice.

Course Rationale

The Social, Economic, and Political environments course provides a foundation for understanding the interconnectedness of various economic, social, and political theories and systems that influence oppression and social injustice, and the challenge of social workers to change oppressive social systems. Social work students, therefore, must understand and critically analyze local, national, and international interconnectedness of macro level social arrangements and how these arrangements may result in structural oppression, discrimination, and social injustice. Students require evidence-based knowledge in preparation for culturally competent practice in work with multicultural client systems, organizations, agencies, and communities.

Course Competencies

By the completion of this course, students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments, and/or exams):

1. Trace the history and trends of the economic and political system in the United States that affect how the U.S. welfare system is constructed. (Practice-F.1; Values/ethics-F. 1; Pops at-risk & SJ-F.2; Policy- F.1). *(content: define the political economy and the relationship with social welfare; identify the historic trends in economic theory and the changes in political ideology over time (e.g. supply side economics and neo-liberal/conservative movements; utilize information technology to analyze economic and political trends).*

2. Describe the political process in the United States, and how power, and influence prevent or promote social and economic justice within and across multicultural populations. (Policy-F.7; Pops at-risk & SJ- F.2, F.3; Practice-F.8; Diversity-F6). *(content: how interest group politics influence the political process; understanding the political system; global hegemony, first and third world economic issues and immigration; structural inequality; distributive justice).*

3. Use social and economic justice as a basis for analyzing the effects of social, economic, and political trends and the resultant interactions between individual, families, groups, organizations and communities. (Values/ethics-F.1; Pops at-risk & SJ-F.4, 5; Policy- F.1, F.7, CT/EBP- F.4). *(content: the influence of values of the dominant culture of societal choices in economic and political systems and the profession; privilege; the differential effect on client systems, communities, and organizations of tax systems and benefits).*

4. Connect economic and political decisions to peoples' access to resources, locally, nationally, and internationally, and recognize the ethical dilemmas inherent in lacking resources. (Pops at-risk & SJ-F.3, F.4; Values/ethics-F.1, F.2, F.3, F.4).*(content: tax system; economic, distributive justice; disparities in health and welfare; devolution of resources and services; corporate welfare; poverty gap and income/wealth inequality; use information technology to analyze access to resources).*

5. Analyze and compare national and international social, economic and political conditions using existing available statistics to identify differences in societies' access to

resources.(CT/EBP-F.3; Pops at-risk & SJ-F.3; Policy-F.7; Research-F.1). (*content: use existing national statistics to compare social welfare and access across states; use international comparative literature to assess differences across countries in social welfare policies and practices; use information technology to identify disparities in access to resources*).

6. Analyze client systems and the relationships of power among individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and societies, using theories of empowerment, participatory change, conscientization, and social construction to understand the relationships of power and advantage in society, recognizing the role of social worker as learner and engaging client systems as experts of their own experience. (Pops at-risk & SJ-F.2, F.3). (*content: theories of empowerment, social construction, popular education, and participatory change in the context of group/population membership; how groups attain powers*).

Course Requirements/Plan for Evaluation:

Small Group presentations (2 @ 10 percent each).....	20% (100 pts.)
Paper assignments (3 @ 10 percent each).....	30% (100 pts.)
Mid-term25% (100 pts.)
Final exam (TBA).....	.25% (100 pts.)

Students are expected to attend every class session. Attendance will not be taken, but lack of attendance and participation will be reflected in student comprehension, fulfillment of assignments and in tests and examinations. Lecture and class discussion material will be indicative of content in assignments, tests and examinations. It is essential that students notify the instructor by e-mail (wright@knoxvoice.com) in a timely manner if circumstances interfere with the completion of course assignments.

Small Group Presentations

Guest speakers will present material in two separate sessions dealing with the concepts of social justice and economic justice and their importance within the social work profession; how economic and political decisions impact access to resources locally, nationally and internationally; the influence of power structures on client systems within groups, organizations, communities and societies; how participatory change, popular education and the concept of social construction can impact social work practice and client/social worker interactions.

Students will use information presented by guest speakers to analyze micro and macro practice scenarios, breaking into small groups to incorporate concepts and examples from guest speakers in a 5-minute group presentation discussing how these concepts could influence and be applied in social work practice.

Paper Assignments

Paper #1

Length: Five double-spaced pages

Students will write a reflection paper examining the influences of structural inequalities, power and privilege in their own life experiences through discussion of a specific policy, political decision or political trend and its effect on the student's interactions with an individual, family, group, organization or community. Students will discuss the relationship of the policy or political decision/trend to dominant culture values and access to resources, examining the impact of economic and social justice on their own lives.

- Analysis of structural inequality, power and privilege.....(25 pts.)
- Discussion of policy, political decision or trend.....(10 pts.)
- Influence on student interaction.....(15 pts.)
- Connection to dominant culture values and access to resources.....(25 pts.)
- Examination of economic and social justice influences.....(25 pts.)

Paper #2-

Length: Five double-spaced pages

Students will use a current U.S. news article to analyze the influence of political and economic systems on client systems, communities or organizations. Article must be published in a daily newspaper after September 1, 2008, and a copy of the article must be submitted with the paper. Article should relate to one or more of the following topics: supply side economics, neoliberal/conservative movements, global hegemony, immigration, corporate welfare, disparities in health and welfare and/or income/wealth inequalities.

Students will use critical thinking skills to apply concepts from readings, classroom lectures and discussions to analysis of a current news topic. Students will identify how the influence of power and privilege impacts client systems, communities or organizations, noting disparities and dominant culture values. Students will apply this analysis to social work practice using theories of empowerment.

- Article submission and relevance to course content.....(10 pts.)
- Identification of topic, connecting article content to course content.....(20 pts.)
- Critical analysis of article content using material from readings, classroom lectures and discussions.....(30 pts.)
- Discussion of power, privilege, disparity, dominant culture values.....(20 pts.)
- Application to empowerment-based social work practice.....(20 pts.)

Paper #3

Length: Five double-spaced pages

Students will compare and contrast social welfare policies and practices in the United States with that of another country of the student's choice, briefly identifying historic trends in economic theory and political ideology in the two countries. Students will discuss the impact of interest group politics on the policies and practices, relating concepts of global hegemony and first and third world economic issues to the policies and practices. Students will compare the two countries' tax systems and benefits to discuss the differential effect on client systems, communities and organizations, identifying disparities in access to resources.

- Comparative discussion of social welfare policies and practices.....(10 pts.)
- Identification of historic trends in economic theories and political ideologies... (20 pts.)
- Analysis of interest group politics.....(20 pts.)

Discussion of global hegemony and first and third world economic issues.....(20 pts.)
Comparison of tax systems and benefits.....(10 pts.)
Identification of differential effects and disparities in access to resources.....(20 pts.)

Mid-term Exam

The mid-term exam will include, but not be limited to, questions on the following topics: tracing the history and trends of the economic and political system in the United States that affect how the U.S. welfare system is constructed; analyzing client systems and the relationships of power among individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and societies using theories of empowerment, participatory change, conscientization, and social construction to understand the relationships of power and advantage in society; recognizing the role of social worker as learner and engaging client systems as experts of their own experience.

Final Exam

The final exam will include, but not be limited to, questions on the following topics: connecting economic and political decisions to peoples' access to resources, locally, nationally, and internationally, and recognize the ethical dilemmas inherent in lacking resources; analyzing and comparing national and international social, economic and political conditions using existing available statistics to identify differences in societies' access to resources.

The final course grade will be based on the following scale:

A = 376-400 points (Superior performance, exceeds expectations)
B+ = 348-375 points (Better than satisfactory performance)
B = 328-347 points (Satisfactory performance, meets expectations)
C+ = 308-327 points (Less than satisfactory performance)
C = 280-307 points (Performance well below the standard expected of graduate students)

Required Texts:

There is no textbook for this course. All required readings can be accessed on-line through the Hodges library website. Additional required readings may be added during the semester.

Course Content Outline:

Session 1 (Aug. 25)—

Overview of course and assignments.

Session 2 (Sept. 8)

The political processes and political system in the United States, how interest group politics influence the political process; how power, and influence prevent or promote social and economic justice within and across multicultural populations

Required readings:

Abramovitz, M. (2008). Political ideology and social welfare (pp. 368-374). In T. Mizrahi & L.E. Davis (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Social Work (20th Edition)*.

- Oxford University Press.
- Myers, R. & Granstaff, C. (2008). Political process (pp. 380-387). In T. Mizrahi & L.E. Davis (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Social Work (20th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- Andersen, M.L. & Collins, P.H. (2007). Systems of power and inequality. In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins (Eds.), *Race, class & gender: An anthology (6th Ed.)*, (pp. 61-90). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Andersen, M.L. & Collins, P.H. (2007). The structure of social institutions. In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins (Eds.), *Race, class & gender: An anthology (6th Ed.)*, (pp. 267-282). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Session 3 (Sept. 15) Guest Speaker/Small Group Presentations

Understanding the relationships of power and advantage in society using theories of empowerment, participatory change, conscientization, and social construction

Required readings:

- Fook, J. (2002). *Social work: Critical theory and practice*. Sage Publications. Chapter 4- pp. 45-56.
- Schraver, J.M. (1999). Harry Lawrence Lurie and social work's questionable commitment to social and economic justice. In G.R. Lowe & P. N. Reid (Eds.), *The professionalization of poverty: Social work and the poor in the twentieth century* (pp. 121-140). New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Meyer, M. (2008). Political interventions (pp. 374-380). In T. Mizrahi & L.E. Davis (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Social Work (20th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- Larson, G. & Allen, H. (2006). Conscientization – The experience of Canadian social work students in Mexico. *International Social Work*, 49, 507-518.

Session 4 (Sept. 22)-- Paper assignment #1 is due

Historic trends in economic theory and the changes in political ideology over time (e.g. supply side economics and neo-liberal/conservative movements); the political economy and its relationship with social welfare

Required readings:

- Karger, H.J., & Stoez, D. (2005). Social policy and the American welfare state. In H.J. Karger & D. Stoez, *American Social Welfare Policy: A Pluralist approach* (pp. 1-24). Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Lewis, M.A., & Widerquist, K. (2001). The economic perspective. In M.A. Lewis and K. Widerquist, *Economics for Social Workers: The application of economic theory to social policy and the human services* (pp. 1-14). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lewis, M.A. (2008). Economics and social welfare (pp. 102-107). In T. Mizrahi & L.E. Davis (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Social Work (20th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- Allard, S. (2007). The changing face of welfare during the Bush administration. *The Journal of Federalism*. 37(3). pp. 304-332.

Session 5 (Sept. 29)-

The influence of values of the dominant culture in terms of economic and political systems and the social work profession; privilege; the differential effect of tax systems and benefits on client systems, communities, and organizations.

Required readings:

- Stoesz, D. (1999). Ideological nostalgia, intellectual narcosis. In G.R. Lowe & P. N. Reid (Eds.), *The professionalization of poverty: Social work and the poor in the twentieth century* (pp. 141-160) New York: Aldine de Gruyter. (Chapter nine)
- Kilty, K., & Vidal de Haymes, M. (2000). Racism, nativism, and exclusion: Public policy, immigration, and the Latino experience in the U. S. *Journal of Poverty*, 4(1/2), 1-25.

Session 6 (Oct. 6) MIDTERM EXAM

Session 7 (Oct. 13) –

The effects of social, economic, and political trends and interactions between individual, families, groups, organizations and communities in relation to social and economic justice.

Required readings:

- Sklar, H. (2007). Growing gulf between rich and the rest of us. In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins (Eds.), *Race, class & gender: An anthology (6th Ed.)* (pp. 116-117). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Jennings, J. & Kusbnick, L. (2002). Poverty as race, power, and wealth. In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins (Eds.), *Race, class & gender: An anthology (4th Ed.)* (pp. 139-143). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Khinduka, S.K. (2008). Globalization (pp. 275-279). In T. Mizrahi & L.E. Davis (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Social Work (20th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- Shefner, J. (2004). Global economic change, protest, and it's implications for U.S. policymakers. In *Agenda for Social Justice* by K. Ferraro, J. Miller, R. Rerrucci, and P. Rodriguez (Eds.). Society for the Study of Social Problems.

Session 8 (Oct. 20)— Paper assignment #2 is due

How economic and political decisions (e.g., tax system, economic and distributive justice) impact peoples' access to resources, locally, nationally, and internationally; globalization; social welfare and access across states; the ethical dilemmas inherent in lacking resources

Required readings:

- Finn, J.L. & Jacobson, M. (2008). Social justice (pp. 44-52). In T. Mizrahi & L.E. Davis (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Social Work (20th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- Friedman, T. (2007). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. "If it's not happening, it's because you're not doing it" (pp. 489-514). New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus & Giroux
- Reingold, D., Pirog, M., & Brady, M. (2007). Empirical evidence on faith-based organizations in an era of welfare reform. *Social Service Review*. 81 (2), 245-283.
- Jurik, N.C., Cavender, G. & Cowgill, J. (2006). Searching for social capital in U.S. Microenterprise Development Programs. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 33, 151-170.

Session 9 (Oct. 27)—Guest Speaker/Small Group Presentations

Disparities in health and welfare; devolution of resources and services; corporate welfare; poverty gap and income/wealth inequality; use of information technology to analyze access to resources

Required readings:

- Collins, C. (2007). Aid to dependent corporations: Exposing federal handouts to the wealthy. In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins (Eds.), *Race, class & gender: An anthology (6th Ed.)* (pp. 422-426). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Langston, D. (2007). Tired of playing monopoly? In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins (Eds.), *Race, class & gender: An anthology (6th Ed.)* (pp. 118-126). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Lewis, M.A., & Widerquist, K. (2001). The economics of poverty. In M.A. Lewis and K. Widerquist, *Economics for Social Workers: The application of economic theory to social policy and the human services* (pp. 129-142). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lewis, M.A., & Widerquist, K. (2001). The economics of health care. In M.A. Lewis and K. Widerquist, *Economics for Social Workers: The application of economic theory to social policy and the human services* (pp. 143-156). New York: Columbia University Press (*Chapter ten*).
- Furman, R., Langer, C., Sanchez, T., & Negi, N. (2007). A qualitative study of immigration policy and practice dilemmas for social work students. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 43(1), 133-146.

Session 10 (Nov. 3)—

Differences in societies' access to resources according to national and international social, economic and political conditions

Required readings:

- Rogge, M. E. (2008). Environmental justice (pp. 136-139). In T. Mizrahi & L.E. Davis (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Social Work (20th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- Miah, M.R. (2008). Social development (pp. 38-41). In T. Mizrahi & L.E. Davis (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Social Work (20th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- Walton, M. (2004). Neoliberalism in Latin America: Good, bad, or incomplete? *Latin America Research Review*, 39, 165-183.
- Harford, T. (2007). *The undercover economist*. "Beer, fries, and globalization" (pp. 189-217). New York: Random House.
- Friedman, T. (2007). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. "The unflat world" (pp. 533-579). New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus & Giroux

Session 11 (Nov. 10)--

Global hegemony, first and third world economic issues and immigration; structural inequality; distributive justice

Required readings:

- Harford, T. (2007). *The undercover economist*. "Why poor countries are poor" (pp. 166-188). New York: Random House.
- Askeland, G., & Payne, M. (2006). Social work education's cultural hegemony.

International Social Work, 49(6): 731–743.
Soifer, S. (2002). Principles and practices of community economic development In A.R. Roberts & G.J. Greene (Eds.), *Social Workers' Desk Reference* (pp. 557-562). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. (*chapter 101*)

Session 12 (Nov. 17)—

Differences across countries in social welfare policies and practices

Required readings:

- Andersen, G., & Hussey, P. (2000). Population aging: A comparison among industrialized countries. *Health Affairs* (May/June), 191-203.
- Friedman, T. (2007). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. “The virgin of Guadalupe” (pp. 403-440). New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus & Giroux
- Friedman, T. (2007). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. “What happens when we all have dog’s hearing?” (pp. 515-532). New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Session 13 (Nov. 24)-- *Paper assignment #3 is due*

Popular education, and participatory change in the context of group/population membership; how groups attain power

Required readings:

- Carroll, J., & Minkler, M. (2000). Friere’s message for social workers: Looking back, looking ahead. *Journal of Community Practice*, 8 (1), 21-36.
- Castelloe, P., Watson, T. & White, C. (2002). Participatory change: An integrative approach to community practice. *Journal of Community Practice*, 10, 7-31.
- McBride, A.M. (2008). Citizen participation (pp. 292-299). In T. Mizrahi & L.E. Davis (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Social Work (20th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- Spadacini, B. & Nichols, P. (1998). Campaigning against female genital mutilation in Ethiopia using popular education. *Gender & Development*, 6, 44-52.
- Martinson, M., & Minkler, M. (2006). Civic engagement and older adults: A critical perspective. *The Gerontologist*, 46(3), 318-324.

Session 14 (Dec. 1)--

The use of information technology in analyzing economic and political trends

Required readings:

- Friedman, T. (2007). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. “The new age of connectivity: When the web went around and Netscape went public” (pp. 60-77). New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Friedman, T. (1999). *The lexis and the olive tree: There is a way forward*. Thorndike Press. (chapter 18-pp. 349-378)

Final Exam- TBA