

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE**  
**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**  
**SW 512 Social, Economic, and Political Environments (2 credit hours)**  
**Fall 2009**  
**Wednesdays 9:05-11:05 AM (206 Henson Hall)**

**Instructor:** David R. Dupper, M.S.W., Ph.D.

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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](http://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*, 2009).

### **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 environment 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, the 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:**

Discussion board assignments (4 @ 10 points each).....	10% (40 pts.)
Paper assignments (3 @ 40 points each).....	30% (120 pts.)
Mid-term .....	25% (100 pts.)
Final exam (TBA).....	25% (100 pts.)
Attendance/participation.....	10% (40 pts.)

***Students are expected to attend every class session.*** It is essential that students notify the instructor by e-mail ([ddupper@utk.edu](mailto:ddupper@utk.edu)) in a timely manner if circumstances interfere with class attendance or the completion of course assignments.

**Discussion Board Assignments**

Topics for discussion board assignments will include: a definition and application of the concepts of *social justice* and *economic justice* and a discussion of their importance within the social work profession; a discussion of how economic and political decisions impact access to resources both nationally and internationally; and a discussion of the meaning and impact of global hegemony and its impact on structural inequality.

**Paper Assignments**

In several paper assignments, students will be asked to uncover and discuss the ideologies and assumptions that impact several important social issues in the U.S. today (e.g., health care debate, immigration debate). In another paper, students will define and discuss the concepts of *participatory change* and *conscientization* and discuss the ethical dilemmas and challenges of the social worker as learner and engaging client systems as experts of their own experience.

**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. 19)**—

Overview of course and assignments.

**Session 2 (Aug. 26)**— 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. 2)**— *Discussion board assignment #1 is due*

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. 9)--**

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. 16)--**

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 (Sept. 23)- Paper assignment #1 is due**

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 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 7 (Sept. 30) – Discussion board 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 8 (Oct. 7)- MIDTERM EXAM**

**Session 9 (Oct. 14)**

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 (Oct. 21)— Discussion board assignment #3 is due**

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 (Oct. 28)-- Paper assignment #2 is due**

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. 4)**

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. 11)-- Discussion board assignment #4 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 (Nov. 18)-- Paper assignment #3 is due**

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 lexus and the olive tree: There is a way forward*. Thorndike Press. (chapter 18-pp. 349-378)

**Final Exam- TBA**