

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE**

**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SW 512 Social, Economic, and Political Environments**

**Mondays 5:30-7:20 PM (2 credit hours)**

**Spring Semester 2008**

**Instructor: Phyllis Thompson, M.S.W.**

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**Section #004**

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**Room No: 234**

**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*, 2007).

**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 191 Hoskins Library (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. (*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. (*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. (*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. (*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. (*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. (*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:**

Attendance/participation.....	5%
Activity.....	5%
Discussion board participation.....	10%
2 Paper assignments (2 @ 15 points each).....	30%
Power Point Presentation.....	15%
Final Paper.....	35%

***Students are expected to attend every class session.*** It is essential that students notify the instructor by e-mail pthomp11@utk.edu in a timely manner if circumstances interfere with class attendance or the completion of course assignments.

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

- A = 95-100 points (Superior performance, exceeds expectations)
- B+ = 90 - 94 points (Better than satisfactory performance)
- B = 85 - 89 points (Satisfactory performance, meets expectations)
- C+ = 80 - 84 points (Less than satisfactory performance)
- C = 73 - 79 points (Performance well below the standard expected of graduate students)
- D = 66 – 72 points
- F < 66

**Required Texts:**

Fine, M., & Weis, L. (1998). *The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults.* Beacon Press, Boston.

Ehrenreich, B. (2001). *Nickel and dimed.* Henry Holt and Company, LLC. New York.

Journal articles can be accessed on-line through the Hodges library website. Additional required readings may be added during the semester.

## Course Outline

### January 14 - Week 1- Welcome and Overview

This course will:

- 1) examine the profound influences on and critical interfaces of client systems with the world in which we live.
- 2) incorporate local to international information about social, economic, and political trends and innovations and the effects of social problems, injustice, and power on client systems and on social change and service delivery systems.
- 3) pay special attention to the process of devolution and globalization and the influence of these economic and political forces on the distribution of resources.
- 4) analyze international comparative social patterns in order to understand economic justice from a national and international perspective.
- 5) examine history of the social and political environment, both nationally and abroad, in order to enhance students' understanding of how political decisions shape the social welfare arena in which we practice.

### Required readings for first day of class

Ehrenreich, B. (2001). Nickel and Dimed On (Not Getting By in America. Henry Holt and Company, New York. p. 1-119.

### January 28 - Week 2 - Politics, Influences & Economic Justice

In this unit, we will explore the United State's political system and processes; how interest group politics influence the political process; how power, and how influence prevents or promotes social and economic justice within and across multicultural populations.

### Required Readings

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.), (p. 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.), (p. 267-282). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Fine, M., & Weis, L. (1998). The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults. Beacon Press, Boston. p. 1-83.

Moore, R. B. (2007). Racist stereotyping in the English language. In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins (Eds.), Race, class & gender: An anthology (6th Ed.) (p. 365-375). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Rubin, L. (2007). Is this a white country, or what? In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins (Eds.), Race, class & gender: An anthology (6th Ed.) (pp. 190-197). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

### February 4 - Week 3 - Empowerment, Participatory Change, Conscientization, and Social Construction

The focus of this unit is to understanding the relationships of power and advantage in society using theories of empowerment, participatory change, conscientization, and social construction.

### **Required Readings**

Andersen, M.L. & Collins, P.H. (2007). Why race, class, and gender still matter (p. 1-16). In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins *Race, class & gender: An anthology* (6th Ed.) Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Fine, M. & Weis, L. (1998). *The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults*. Beacon Press, Boston. p.84-107.

Fook, J. (2002). *Social work: Critical theory and practice*. Sage Publications. Chapter 4- p. 45-56.

Larson, G. & Allen, H. (2006). Conscientization – The experience of Canadian social work students in Mexico. *International Social Work*, 49, 507-518.

Lorde, A. (2007). Age, race, class and sex: Women redefining difference. In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins *Race, class & gender: An anthology* (6th Ed.), p. 52-59. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Schrifer, 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* p.121-140. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

### **February 11- Week 4 - Economic Theory, Politics and their Relationship with Social Welfare**

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

### **Required Readings**

Allard, S. (2007). The changing face of welfare during the Bush administration. *The Journal of Federalism*. 37(3). p. 304-332.

Fine, M. & Weis, L. 1998. *The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults*, p. 108-132.

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* p. 1-24. Allyn and Bacon, Inc. (Chapter one)

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* p. 1-14. New York: Columbia University Press. (Chapter one)

### **February 18 -Week 5- The Impact of Values**

In this unit we will examine the influence of values of the dominant culture in terms of economic and political systems and the social work profession; privilege; and the differential effect of tax systems and benefits on client systems, communities, and organizations.

### **Required Readings**

Fine, M. & Weis, L. 1998. *The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults*, p. 133-160.

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*.

McIntosh, P. (2007). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins (Eds.), *Race, class & gender: An anthology* (6th Ed.) p. 98-102. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

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* p. 141-160. New York: Aldine de Gruyter. (Chapter nine)

### **February 25 - Week 6 - Review and evaluation**

**Required Readings**

Ehrenreich, B. (2001). Nickel and dimed. Henry Holt and Company, LLC. New York. pp, 121-221.

Fine, M. & Weis, L. 1998. The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults, p. 161-185.

Assignment 1 Due

**March 3 -Week 7 - Interactions and Trends Impact on Social and Economic Justice**

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**

Fine, M. & Weis, L. 1998. The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults, p. 186—205.

Friedman, T. (1999). The lexus and the olive tree: Understanding globalization. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Chapter 2- pp. 25-37.

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.

Passel, J.S. Capps, R. & Fix, M.E. (2004). Undocumented immigrants: Facts and figures. Retrieved on July 16, 2007 from <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=1000587>

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.

Vidal de Haymes, M., & Kilty, K. (2007). Latino population growth, characteristics, and settlement trends: Implications for social work education in a dynamic political climate. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 43(1), 101-116.

**March 10- Week 8 - Resource Control**

This unit will examine how economic and political decisions (e.g., tax system, economic and distributive justice) impact peoples' access to resources, locally, nationally, and internationally. We will also look at the access of social welfare across states and the ethical dilemmas inherent in lacking resources.

**Required Readings**

Fine, M. & Weis, L. 1998. The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults, pp. 206-227.

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

Jordan, B. (2005). Social theory and social policy: Choice, order and human well-being. *European Journal of Social Theory*. 8(2). pp.149-170.

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.

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.

**March 24 - Week 9 - Health and Welfare**

During this unit we will cover disparities in health and welfare; devolution of resources and services; corporate welfare; poverty gap and income/wealth inequality; and the 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.) p. 422-426. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Fine, M. & Weis, L. 1998. *The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults*, p. 228-250.

Langston, D. (2007). Tired of playing monopoly? In M.L. Andersen & P.H. Collins (Eds.), *Race, class & gender: An anthology* (6th Ed.) p. 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* p. 129-142. New York: Columbia University Press.(Chapter nine)

DeNavas-Walt, C., Proctor, B.D. & Lee, C.H. (2006) *Income, poverty, and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2005* (P60-231). Washington, DC: U. S. Census Bureau.

### Assignment #2 Due

### **March 31- Week 10 - Societal Differences of Access to Resources**

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

### **Required Readings**

Fine, M. & Weis, L. 1998. *The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults*, p. 251-263.

Friedman, T. (2007). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. "The virgin of Guadalupe" p. 403-440. New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus & Giroux

Friedman, T. (2007). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. "The unflat world" p. 533-579. New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus & Giroux

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.

Harford, T. (2007). *The undercover economist*. "Beer, fries, and globalization" (pp. 189-217). New York: Random House.

Harford, T. (2007). *The undercover economist*. "Why poor countries are poor" (pp. 166-188). New York: Random House.

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).

Walton, M. (2004). Neoliberalism in Latin America: Good, bad, or incomplete? *Latin America Research Review*, 39, 165-183.

### **April 7- Week 11- Structural Inequality**

Unit 11 covers global hegemony, first and third world economic issues and immigration; structural inequality; and distributive justice

### **Required Readings**

Askeland, G., & Payne, M. (2006). Social work education's cultural hegemony. *International Social Work*, 49(6): 731-743.

Fine, M. & Weis, L. 1998. *The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults*, p. 251-263.

Friedman, T. (2006). *The world is flat: The globalized world in the twenty-first century*. Penguin Books. (Chapter 13).

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

#### **April 14 - Week 12- Differences in Social Welfare Policies Across Nations**

In this unit we will examine some of the differences across countries in social welfare policies and practices.

##### **Required Readings**

Amott, T., & Matthaei, J. (1996). Race, class, gender, and women's works. In Andersen, M. & Collins, P. (Eds.) (2006), *Race, class, & gender: An anthology*. Sixth Edition. p. 283-292. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Andersen, G., & Hussey, P. (2000). Population aging: A comparison among industrialized countries. *Health Affairs (May/June)*, 191-203.

Fine, M. & Weis, L. 1998. *The unknown city: The lives of poor and working-class young adults*, p. 264-313.

Friedman, T. (2007). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. "What happens when we all have dog's hearing?" p. 515-532. New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Final Paper Due

#### **April 21- Week 13- The Power of Groups and Using Information Technology for Analyzing Trends**

This unit will cover popular education, participatory change in the context of group/population membership; and how groups attain power. We will also examine the use of information technology in analyzing economic and political trends.

##### **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.

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.

Part II

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: Understanding globalization*. Thorndike Press. Chapter 18- 349-378.