I. COURSE PURPOSE

This course examines social work’s historical and current commitment to diversity and social and economic justice within a global context. Grounded in theoretical perspectives on injustice and oppression, the course explores the relationship between the social construction of difference and persistent inequalities operating at personal, institutional, and societal levels. Utilizing a strengths perspective and principles of empowerment practice, the needs, experiences, and resilience of diverse and at-risk populations are addressed; including groups distinguished by race, ethnicity, immigration status, religion and spirituality, sex and gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, and socio-economic status. Course content, structure, and learning activities are designed to enhance personal and professional self-awareness in order to develop knowledge, values, and skills required for culturally-sensitive social work practice.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Articulate the linkages between societal definitions of difference and the development of identity and worldviews among individuals and groups in a multicultural society.

2. Utilize theoretical perspectives to analyze the interlocking dynamics of discrimination and oppression as they operate at the personal, institutional, and societal levels.

3. Analyze the common characteristics and elements of oppression as they apply to diverse groups and at-risk populations.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the impacts of oppression in the lives of individuals from diverse groups and at-risk populations, as well as the adaptive strategies and sources of resilience used to cope with such oppression.

5. Demonstrate appreciation of human diversity within oneself and others and its importance to both personal and professional development and the profession of social work.

6. Demonstrate increased critical self-awareness of personal and professional beliefs, attitudes, and values as they influence one’s practice with diverse groups and at-risk populations.

7. Demonstrate the knowledge, values, and skills required for culturally-sensitive and ethical social work practice, including a working knowledge of the NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice and the NASW Code of Ethics.

8. Integrate theoretical and empirical knowledge of oppression and oppressed groups into social justice strategies relevant to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Text/Supplemental Readings:


[Indicated in Course Schedule as “Text:”]

Supplemental Readings also will be assigned for most class sessions.
Supplemental Readings can be printed from the Electronic Reserve on Blackboard 8. To access Blackboard 8, go to http://home.cua.edu and click on Sakai and Blackboard. On the screen that appears, click on “Login to Blackboard 8.” You will be prompted to type in your username and password. Your username is the last two digits of your CUA student ID number followed by your last name, with no space inbetween (e.g. ##lastname). Your password is the same one that you use to access cardinal email. Go to “My Courses”; click on the name of the course; click on “Electronic Reserve.” You must have a current ID to gain access to the articles. You can also access them via http://aladin.wrlc.org.

[Indicated in Course Schedule as “SR:”]
B. **Course Assignments:** The following lists the course assignments and the relative weights for each assignment. Detailed instructions for written assignments are attached to this syllabus.

1. **Personal/Professional Learning Journal:** (20%). This assignment requires students to make four journal entries that focus on self-awareness of their reactions/responses to readings and class sessions.

2. **Midterm:** (30%) A take-home exam focusing on the reading and in-class material presented in the first half of the semester

3. **In-Class Group Presentation:** (15%). This in-class group presentation provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of particular interest area in relation to core course concepts.

4. **Understanding Dimensions of Difference Paper:** (25%). This paper requires students to use library research and class materials to analyze the processes and consequences of oppression for a particular oppressed group.

5. **Attendance/Participation** (10%). Students are expected to be engaged participants and co-learners in this course. Class participation will be assessed by attendance and active participation in class discussions and activities.

C. **Due Dates:**
Assignments are due on the dates designated by the beginning of the class period and will be marked down one-third of a letter grade for each day late unless alternative arrangements have previously been made with the instructor.

D. **Grading Policy:** The grade for this course will be based on the University Grading System.

E. **Course and Instruction Evaluation:**
NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations using your CUA username and password. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.
IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. **Scholastic Expectations:**
   Please refer to NCSSS Announcements or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and be carefully proofread by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. **Academic Honesty:**
   Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and Appropriate Program Handbooks.

C. **Accommodations:**
   Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

D. **Attendance and Participation:**
   Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to arrive to class on time. If you know you must be absent for a particular session, please notify the instructor in advance. If absent due to illness, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Students are responsible for obtaining any class notes or other materials missed due to absence. Unexcused or multiple absences will result in a reduction of the final grade.

   Students are expected to read all required readings listed on the course outlines and be prepared to participate in classroom discussions and exercises. Students are also expected to take responsibility for being an active part of the learning experiences for themselves and others.

   In order to assure safe and honest exploration of sensitive issues in a course focusing on the consequences of oppression and privilege for all people, the following ground rules or guiding principles will be followed:

   1. We acknowledge that social inequalities and oppression exist.
   2. We acknowledge that we have all been systematically exposed to misinformation about groups to which we and others belong.
   3. We cannot be blamed for misinformation we have learned, but we must take responsibility for repeating it after we have learned otherwise.
   4. We will not blame people who have been oppressed for their oppression.
5. We will assume that people are doing the best they can and we will not demean, devalue, or in any way “put down” people for their experiences, perceptions, questions, or comments.

6. We will actively pursue information about our own groups and those of others, share it with classmates, and translate this knowledge into professional behavior.

7. We will respect the confidentiality of classroom discussions about specific individuals, groups, communities, or organizations that could be identified in any way. This includes information that classroom colleagues share about themselves. The use of any recording devices in class must be approved prior to use.

V. COURSE UNITS

Unit I: Theoretical Understandings of Diversity and Oppression (Classes #1-#4)
   B – Experiencing Difference: Privilege, Power, Inequality, and Stigma
   C – The Meaning of Difference: The Dynamics and Consequences of Oppression
   D – The Normalization of Oppression: The Cycle of Socialization

Unit II: The Many Faces of Diversity and Oppression (Classes #5-#11)
   A – Exemplar #1: Race, Ethnicity, Immigrant Status
   B – Exemplar #2: Religion and Spirituality
   C – Exemplar #3: Sex and Gender
   D – Exemplar #4: Sexual Orientation
   E – Exemplar #5: Disability
   F – Exemplar #6: Age
   G – Exemplar #7: Socio-Economic Status

Unit III: Implications for Generalist Social Work Practice (Classes #12-#14)
   B – Social Work Strategies for Social Justice
   C – Becoming a Social Justice Ally
Course Schedule

#1  
Course Overview and Introductions; Co-Creating a Learning Environment

_Unit I. Theoretical Understandings of Diversity and Oppression_


_Readings:_  
_Text: Tatum, _The Complexity of Identity – Who am I?_ (8-14)


#2  
Experiencing Difference: Privilege, Power, Inequality & Stigma

_Readings:_  
_Text: Johnson, _The Social Construction of Difference_ (15-20)

_SR: Rosenblum & Travis, _Experiencing Difference_ (194-220); McIntosh, _White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack_ (163-168); Wright, _The Ethics of Living Jim Crow: An Autobiographical Sketch_ (23-32); French, _Can You See the Rainbow? The Roots of Denial_ (194-201)

#3  
The Meaning of Difference: The Dynamics and Consequences of Oppression

_Readings:_  
_Text: Bell, _Theoretical foundations_ (21-25); Hardiman, Jackson and Griffin, _Conceptual Foundations_ (26-34); Young, _Five Faces of Oppression_ (35-44)

_SR: Rosenblum & Travis, _The Meaning of Difference_ (334-351); Pharr, _The Common Elements of Oppressions_ (53-64);_

#4  
The Normalization of Oppression: Cycle Of Socialization

_Readings:_  
_Text: Harro, _The Cycle of Socialization_ (45-51); Thompson, _White Men and the Denial of Racism_ (104-109); Edginton, _Moving Beyond White Guilt_ (127-129)

***DUE: Journal Entry #1***
Unit II: Dimensions of Diversity and Oppression

#5 Exemplar #1 – Race, Ethnicity, & Immigrant Status

Readings:
Text: Section 2: “Racism” (59-139)

SR: Aquirre & Turner, White Ethnic Americans (217-242); Churchill, Crimes Against Humanity (413-420)

***Student Presentation: Race, Ethnicity, & Immigrant Status

#6 Exemplar #2 – Religion & Spirituality

Readings:
Text: Section 4: “Religious Oppression” (227-313)

SR: Ellor, Netting, & Thibault, Understanding the Diversity of Religious Groups in the United States (44-71); Mindell, Religious Bigotry and Religious Minorities (227-246)

***Student Presentation: Religion & Spirituality

#7 Exemplar #3 - Sex & Gender

Readings:
Text: Section 5 “Sexism” (315-369) & Section 7 “Transgender Oppression”(423-456)

SR: Fausto-Sterling, The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female are Not Enough (87-92); Thompson, A New Vision of Masculinity (630-636)

***DUE: Journal Entry #2

***Student Presentation: Sex & Gender
#8 Exemplar #4 – Sexual Orientation

Readings:
Text: Section 6 “Heterosexism” (371-421)

***Student Presentation: Sexual Orientation

#9 Exemplar #5 – Disability

Readings:
Text: Section 8 “Ableism” (pp. 457-529)

***Student Presentation: Disability

#10 Exemplar #6 – Age

Readings:
Text: Section 9 “Ageism and Adultism” (pp. 533-585)

SR: Kelcher, *Ageism’s Impact and Affect on Society: Not Just a Concern for the Old* (85-100); Pampel, *Images of Old Age* (1-24); Caudill, *Personal Narrative* (33-37); Molidar & Maes, *A Rose by Any Other Name* (11-20);


***DUE: Journal Entry #3
***Student Presentation: Age

#11 Exemplar #7 - Socio-Economic Status

Readings:
Text: Section 3 “Classism” (141-226)

***Student Presentation: Socio-Economic Status
Unit III: Implications for Generalist Social Work Practice

#12 Social Work’s Commitment to Social Justice: Origins and Current Commitment

Readings:
SR: Lundblad, Jane Addams and Social Reform: A Role Model for the 1990’s (661-669); Carlton-LaNey, African American Social Work Pioneers’ Response to Need (311-321); Polack, Social Justice and the Global Economy: New Challenges for Social Work in the 21st Century (281-290);


***DUE: Journal Entry #4

#13 Social Work Strategies for Social Justice: The Strengths Perspective And Empowerment Practice

Readings:
Text: Pharr, Reflections on Liberation (591-598); Collins, Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection (604-609)

SR: Saleeby, The Strengths Perspective (1-22), Van Wormer, The Empowerment Tradition in Social Work (125-147); Parsons, Gutierrez, & Cox, A Model for Empowerment Practice (3-23); Praeger, A World Worth Living In (523-535); East, Journey for Justice (5-11)

#14 Becoming a Social Justice Ally; Course Summary and Closure

Readings:
Text: Section 10: “Next Steps” (pp. 620-639)

***DUE: ANALYSIS OF OPPRESSED GROUP PAPER
Assignment #1: Personal/Professional Journal

During the semester, students will be exposed to various ideas and experiences of others that may be challenging to their worldview and personal beliefs or values. As developing critical self-awareness is a major objective of the course, this assignment is designed to help students consider reactions/responses they have to assigned readings and classroom experiences. Each student will complete 4 “journal entries” to be turned in as indicated on the course outline and the schedule listed below:

Each entry must include reactions/responses to:

one reading (specify title and author); and

some aspect of the class session (lecture, class discussion, class exercise, speaker, etc.).

In addition, students should also address at least one major concept that has been presented for that class session (privilege, oppression, the norm, the other, lack of prior claim, etc.).

For each entry, include:

a) The number and topic of the class session being discussed and the date the journal is being turned in. (e.g., Session #2- Experiencing Difference; turned in January 26).

b) Reflections and insights regarding the experience [for the specific reading and the specific class activity (lecture, class discussion, class exercises, guest presentation, etc.)].

c) What was your immediate reaction to the experience? What is your reaction as you think back on it now?

d) Explain what it is about you that predisposes you to this reaction. For example, can you connect your reaction to previous personal or professional experiences; family or cultural heritage; societal messages; prejudices, biases or lack of knowledge/exposure?

e) Identify specific strengths and/or limitations of your personal and professional development that are revealed by this self-reflection.

f) For each strength or limitation identified, list an implication for further growth and how you plan to support this growth.

Journal entries are expected to move beyond description to demonstrate self-analysis based on thoughtful reflection and critical self-assessment. Simply stated, the point of this assignment is to turn “the eye inward” and conduct an honest self-assessment. It is important to note that students’ entries will be kept confidential and will not be graded on the content of their entries, but rather on students’ ability to thoughtfully reflect about their reaction/responses and walk themselves through the 4 steps of the process.
Entries should be approximately 4-5 pages long, typed, and double-spaced. They will be assessed based on the following criteria:

Comprehensive coverage of the 4 required areas for both a reading and a class activity.
Evidence of thoughtful and critical self-reflection and analysis.
Ability to produce readable, well-organized journal entry.

Points assigned as follows:
5 points = complete coverage, in-depth self-reflection & analysis, well-organized & well-written.
3 points = limitations in 1 area: coverage, reflection & analysis, or organization/writing.
1 point = limitations in more than 1 area: coverage, reflection & analysis, or organization/writing.

Schedule for Assignment #1: Personal/Professional Journal

Assignment #2: Take Home Midterm Exam
DUE: February 26th

The take-home midterm examination will be distributed one week prior to the due date. It will consist of short answer questions covering both in-class and reading material from the first five classes. This is an open book exam, but is to be completed individually by each student.

Assignment #3: In-Class Group Presentation
DUE: Class #5-#11 as assigned

Each group will be responsible for a 45 minute class presentation (30 minutes presentation; 15 minutes for questions and discussion) on an issue related to oppression as it applies to a particular dimension of difference. Groups are encouraged to apply what we are learning in class about the connection between the social construction of difference and the experience of oppression. Presentations should go beyond facts and statistics to increase and deepen understanding. Presentations should also make explicit the specific implications of their presentation for generalist social work practice.

Each group will need to work together to develop the presentation and every group member should take an active role during the presentation. Be creative! Presentations that are simply read in class are less interesting and less appreciated by fellow students. Examples from media (newspaper articles, videos, books, etc.) that reflect societal stereotypes, hate crimes, prejudicial behavior or treatment by individuals or institutions or that provide examples of resiliency, strengths, and positive social change by the targeted group or population are encouraged.
Audio-visual equipment needed?
If something is needed beyond what is available in the classroom (DVD, VHS, powerpoint), it is the responsibility of the presenters to arrange for any audio-visual equipment needed for the presentation. This should be done well in advance. The form to request equipment set up is found on the CUA website at: http://digitalmedia.cua.edu//requestforms/event.cfm

Additional readings? The group may assign additional readings necessary for the class to benefit from the presentation, which must be made available at least 1 week prior to the presentation. Any additional readings, surveys or guest speakers must be approved by the instructor in advance of the date of the presentation.

Presentations will be evaluated based on feedback from your peers and the instructor’s assessment of the content and delivery of the material. Each student in the group will receive the same grade. Therefore, each group member is expected to contribute equally to the presentation.

NOTE: It is important to realize that you cannot cover everything about your general topic area in this presentation - that is not the point of the assignment! Your task is to select one aspect of the topic and provide a presentation that deepens or expands understanding of your selected focus.

Assignment
#4
Understanding Dimensions of Difference
Paper

Students will select a “dimension of difference” that represents a substantially different life experience than their own. They will explore this dimension of difference in two ways: through a review of the literature and a personal interview. The paper should include the following sections:

1. Introduction: Briefly identify the “dimension of difference” you selected and discuss why you targeted this aspect of the human experience. Why were you drawn to enhance your understanding in this particular area?

2. Literature Review: Summarize the scholarly literature on the experiences of this targeted group or population in the dominant culture within the United States. Using the 2 class handouts on the “5 Characteristics of Oppression” and the “12 Common Elements of Oppression,” identify and analyze the major dynamics and consequences of oppression presented in these two handouts that are reflected in the literature. Use a minimum of 8 scholarly sources from the professional literature beyond the class materials.

3. Interview: Interview an individual who represents your selected “dimension of difference.” Ask about his or her personal experiences of living with difference, remembering to set aside your own preconceived assumptions and listening with both open heart and open mind. Solicit his or his perspectives on the impacts of oppression especially as they may have affected his or her biopsychosocial-spiritual
development and visions for both self and the world. In writing up this interview be sure to include:
   a) a summary of the major or most critical points that the interviewee offered and
   b) a reflection on what the experience was like for you (e.g., how easy/difficult was it to ask someone to be interviewed, how was it to ask the questions and invite the stories, what did you notice about yourself during the interview, and what impact or meaning did this experience hold for you once it was completed.)

Papers should be between 6-8 pages long, typed, numbered, and double-spaced. All citations and reference list should follow *2010 (6th ed.) APA referencing style*. Papers will be assessed based on the following criteria:

   a. **Comprehensive coverage** of all assigned areas
   b. **Organization** and **logical flow** of ideas
   c. Evidence of **ability to identify/apply course concepts** reflected in the literature review
   d. Ability to **provide thoughtful reflection** about the interviewee’s sharing and your own reactions/responses throughout the interview process
   e. Correct **grammar, spelling, punctuation**, and use of **APA referencing** style.
Topic of Group Presentation__________________ Date ____________

Please circle the appropriate answer using the following Rating Key:

5 = Excellent    4 = Very Good    3 = Average    2 = Fair    1 = Poor

1. Presenters’ Knowledge of Subject Matter

   5  4  3  2  1

2. Organization of Material/Ability to Deliver Information

   5  4  3  2  1

3. Effectiveness of Presentation/Relevance to Generalist Social Work Practice

   5  4  3  2  1

4. Creativity and General Teaching Methods (visual aids, handouts, lecture, etc.)

   5  4  3  2  1

5. Effective Use of Media (if applicable)

   5  4  3  2  1

6. Overall Rating

   5  4  3  2  1

7. What did you like most about this presentation?

8. What suggestions would you give for improvement?