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. COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

Practice behaviors that are covered in this class are indicated by **bold**. Practice behaviors that are not covered in this class are indicated by **grey**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Competency</th>
<th>CSWE Suggested Practice Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.</td>
<td>1.1 advocate for client access to the services of social work&lt;br&gt;1.2 practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development&lt;br&gt;1.3 attend to professional roles and boundaries&lt;br&gt;1.4 demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication&lt;br&gt;1.5 engage in career-long learning&lt;br&gt;1.6 use supervision and consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.</td>
<td>2.1 recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice&lt;br&gt;2.2 make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles&lt;br&gt;2.3 tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts&lt;br&gt;2.4 apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.</td>
<td>3.1 distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom&lt;br&gt;3.2 analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation&lt;br&gt;3.3 demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage diversity and difference in practice.</td>
<td>4.1 recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power&lt;br&gt;4.2 gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups&lt;br&gt;4.3 recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance human rights and social and economic justice.</td>
<td>4.4 view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.1 understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 advocate for human rights and social and economic justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 engage in practices that advance social and economic justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.</td>
<td>6.1 use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 use research evidence to inform practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.</strong></td>
<td>7.1 utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7.2 critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services</td>
<td>8.1 analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to contexts that shape practice.</td>
<td>9.1 continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2 provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

| **Engagement** | 10.1.1 substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;  
| 10.1.2 use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and  
| 10.1.3 develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes. |
| **Assessment** | 10.2.1 collect, organize, and interpret client data;  
| 10.2.2 assess client strengths and limitations;  
| 10.2.3 develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and  
| 10.2.4 select appropriate intervention strategies. |
| **Intervention** | 10.3.1 initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;  
| 10.3.2 implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;  
| 10.3.3 help clients resolve problems;  
| 10.3.4 negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and  
| 10.3.5 facilitate transitions and endings. |
| **Evaluation** | 10.4.1 social workers critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions. |
III. FURTHER EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the linkages between the 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.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts and Readings:


Additional Required Readings: There are a number of additional required readings that are listed on the Course Schedule using full citations. These readings may be accessed through Blackboard or from the original sources.
B. **Recommended Readings**

Additional readings may be available on BB.

C. **Other Recommended Resources and Media:**

Additional resources and media may be available on BB.

D. **Course Assignments:**

Detailed instructions for all assignments are included at the end of this syllabus. Assignments are to be submitted to the instructor on the due date. Unless you have prior permission from the instructor, five (5) points will be deducted for each day the assignment is submitted late. No extensions will be granted the day an assignment is due.

Assignment 1: Personal/Professional Learning Journals – **Due Classes 4, 7, 10, & 13**

Assignment 2: Family Culture Paper – **Due Class 8**

Assignment 3: Class Presentation – **Due Classes 6-13 as assigned**

Assignment 4: Understanding Dimensions of Difference Paper – **Due Class 14**

E. **Grading Policy:** The university grading system will be utilized (see policy in bulletin). The grade will be based upon the extent to which the student meets the course objectives as demonstrated by class participation and the two NCSSS required papers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal/Professional Learning Journals</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Culture Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Dimensions of Difference Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Grade</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. **Attendance and Participation**

1. Students are expected to attend all class sessions, to arrive at classes on time, and to conduct themselves in an ethical and scholarly, and professional manner. In the event that it is necessary for a student to miss a class session or come late, s/he is expected to notify the instructor in advance. Please be aware that more than one absence jeopardizes your ability to successfully complete this course. Please be also aware that “unexpected” absence due to work or employment (paid or unpaid) related tasks or travel is not considered an acceptable excuse and may also jeopardize your course participation. More than three unexcused absences will result in a grade of F. Students are individually responsible for obtaining any class notes or other materials distributed when they are absent.
2. The use of laptops or other devices should be used in such a manner that they do not
disturb or distract other students. Recording devices should only be used with the
permission of the instructor and should be turned off at the request of the instructor or
class participants when requested in the event that personal or confidential information is
being discussed.

3. Students are expected to read all required readings for each class session and be prepared
to participate in classroom discussions and exercises.

4. The course combines the formats of didactic lectures and participatory seminars.
Students and the instructor will endeavor to draw on their own experience including
professional practice experience, relevant literature and analytic thinking about the course
content. Each student is expected to participate actively in class discussions and to come
prepared to share current knowledge, ideas, and relevant experiences as appropriate.
Students and the instructor will view each other as resource persons.

G. Course and Instructor 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 special requests. These evaluations will serve as a basis for ongoing course revisions.

V. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Scholastic Expectations:

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic
Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should
demonstrate communication ability consistent with graduate level performance, 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.

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.

Accommodations:

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other challenges wishing to request
accommodations must identify themselves with the Disability Support Services (DSS)
and submit documentation of a disability. Once you have documented a disability, DSS
will establish whether any accommodations or academic adjustments are required. If so,
please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.
CLASS SCHEDULE

CLASS 1 COURSE OVERVIEW & INTRODUCTIONS
THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF DIVERSITY & OPPRESSION:
DEFINING DIFFERENCE IN SELF & OTHERS

Jan. 11 Course Overview and Introductions; Co-Creating a Learning Environment

Required Reading:
Kirk & Okazawa-Rey. *Identities and social locations* (pp. 9-15)


CLASS 2 THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF DIVERSITY & OPPRESSION:
EXPERIENCING DIFFERENCE

Jan. 18 Experiencing Difference: Privilege, Power, Inequality & Stigma

Required Reading:
Text: Johnson. *The social construction of difference* (pp. 15-21).


CLASS 3 THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF DIVERSITY & OPPRESSION:
THE MEANING OF DIFFERENCE
Jan. 25  The Meaning of Difference: The Dynamics and Consequences of Oppression

**Required Reading:**
**Text:** Bell. *Theoretical foundations* (pp. 21-26).
Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin. *Conceptual Foundations* (pp. 26-35).
Young. *Five Faces of Oppression* (pp. 35-45).


---

CLASS 4  THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF DIVERSITY & OPPRESSION: THE NORMALIZATION OF OPPRESSION

Feb. 1  The Normalization of Oppression: Cycle of Socialization

**Required Reading:**
**Text:** Harro. *The Cycle of Socialization* (pp. 45-52).


**Personal/Professional Learning Journal #1 Due**

---

CLASS 5  DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY & OPPRESSION: RACE, ETHNICITY, & IMMIGRANT STATUS

Feb. 8  Dimensions of Diversity & Oppression: Race, Ethnicity, & Immigrant Status

**Required Reading:**
**Text:** Section 2 on *Racism* (pp. 57-139).


Diller, J. V. (2011). Working with white ethnic clients: *An interview with the author. Cultural*


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

** Student Presentation: Religion & Spirituality

CLASS 6  Dimensions of Diversity & Oppression: Religion & Spirituality
Feb. 15

Required Reading:
Text: Section 4 on Religious Oppression (pp. 227-313).


** Student Presentation: Religion & Spirituality

CLASS 7  Dimensions of Diversity & Oppression: Sex & Gender
Feb. 22

Required Reading:
Text: Section 5 on Sexism (pp. 315-369) & Section 7 on Transgender Oppression (pp. 423-456).


** Personal/Professional Learning Journal #2 Due

** Student Presentation: Sex & Gender

CLASS 8  Dimensions of Diversity & Oppression: Sexual
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>ORIENTATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>** Required Reading: **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text: Section 6 on <em>Heterosexism</em> (pp. 371-421).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>** Family Culture Paper Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>** Student Presentation: Sexual Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>** Personal/Professional Learning Journal #3 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>ORIENTATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>** Required Reading: **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text: Section 8 on <em>Ableism</em> (pp. 457-529).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>** Student Presentation: Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>** Administrative Friday (No Class): 3/22/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY &amp; OPPRESSION: DISABILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 15</td>
<td>** Required Reading: **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 29</td>
<td>** Required Reading: **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 29</td>
<td>** Student Presentation: Age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**CLASS 11** DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY & OPPRESSION: SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Apr. 5

**Required Reading:**
Text: Section 3 on Classism (pp. 141-226).

**CLASS 12** IMPLICATIONS FOR GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: SOCIAL WORK’S COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Apr. 12

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

**Required Reading:**


**CLASS 13** IMPLICATIONS FOR GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: SOCIAL WORK STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Apr. 19

Social Work Strategies for Social Justice: The Strengths Perspective and Empowerment Practice

**Required Reading:**
Text: Pharr. Reflections on liberation (pp. 594-598).
Collins. Toward a new vision: Race, class, and gender as categories of analysis and connection (pp. 604-609).


**Personal/Professional Learning Journal #4 Due**

---

**CLASS 14  IMPLICATIONS FOR GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: BECOMING A SOCIAL JUSTICE ALLEY**

**Apr. 26**  Becoming a Social Justice Ally; Course Summary and Closure

**Required Reading:**
**Text:** Section on *Next Steps* (pp. 620-639).

**UNDERSTANDING DIMENSIONS OF DIFFERENCE PAPER DUE**
ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINE

Assignment 1

Personal/Professional Learning 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 journals to be turned in as indicated on the course outline and the schedule listed below:

Each journal must include your reactions/responses/reflections on the selected topic from the course contents (e.g., meaning of difference, cultural humility, race, etc.). In addition, you should integrate course readings and class activities (e.g., lecture, class discussion, videos, etc.) in your reactions/responses/reflections.

For each journal, please include the following:

1) The topic of the class session being discussed and the date the journal is being turned in should be listed at the top of each journal.

Example) Journal #1
Reflection on Experiencing Difference: Privilege, Power, Inequality & Stigma
Turned in on February 1, 2017

2) Reflections and insights regarding the selected topic, integrating both assigned readings and class activities. Here are a few examples of what you may reflect on:

a. What was your immediate reaction to the selected topic/assigned readings/class activities? Has your reaction changed? If so, how?

b. What do you think have influenced your immediate 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?

c. Is there anything you have newly learned in relation to the selected topic? If so, how would this affect your perspectives/beliefs/value, etc. toward the selected topic?

d. What strengths/limitations would you identify for yourself, based on your reflections? That are revealed in this self-reflection. How would you strengthen or improve the identified strengths/limitations?

Journal entries are expected 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**. The journal entries will be graded on students’ *ability to thoughtfully reflect* about their reactions/responses and walk themselves through this process. Students’ journals will be kept **private**, meaning that they will only be read by the instructor. However, at the instructor’s discretion, they may be shared with the program director if there is a concern for issues related to students’ academics, adherence to the code of ethics, and/or professional behaviors.

Journals should be approximately 2-3 pages long, typed, and double-spaced. They will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Evidence of advanced level of reflection, providing thoughtful, critical, and honest self-reflection and analysis
- Integration of assigned readings and class activities in reflection
- Ability to produce a well-organized journal with no grammatical errors

Points will be assigned as follows:

- 5 points: In-depth, thoughtful self-reflection & analysis; excellent integration of assigned readings and class activities in reflection; excellently organized & written
- 3 points: Major limitations in 1 of the 3 areas (reflection & analysis; integration of course materials; organization/writing of the journal)
- 1 point: Major limitations in more than 1 of the 3 areas (reflection & analysis; integration of course materials; organization/writing of the journal)

**Schedule:**

Personal/Professional Learning Journal #1 Due: February 1, 2017
Personal/Professional Learning Journal #2 Due: February 22, 2017
Personal/Professional Learning Journal #3 Due: March 29, 2017
Personal/Professional Learning Journal #4 Due: April 19, 2017
Assignment 2

Family Culture Paper

Students will select two members of their family to reflect on their culture, particularly their family culture. Since we are all cultural beings, this assignment intends to offer an opportunity for students to reflect in-depth on the impact of family culture on their experiences, perspectives, values, and beliefs.

1. Interview: Interview two individuals from your family system. For this assignment, we will define family broadly, perhaps including extended kin relations, adopted family or care takers, as well as “found” family who have been instrumental in shaping your awareness of who you are and how you interpret the world around you. The interview should focus on the following themes:
   - Personal identity and connect to you. Think about personal identity in relation to the course topics, i.e. age, gender, sexual orientation, education, socio-economic status, immigration, health/mental health/disability, legal status, etc.
   - Experiences with Privilege
   - Experiences with Oppression
   - Identification of family culture and ethnic culture. Family and ethnic culture are broad categories and you should feel free to interpret them as such. To facilitate the reflection section, you must ask at least the following two questions (although you are free to alter the wording as is appropriate to your family system):
     - What achievements/characteristics/circumstances are worthy of celebration in your family? Why? (pride)
     - What achievements/characteristics/circumstances would the family not want to be publically known? Why? (shame)
   - Family perspectives on at least two of the areas covered in class (e.g. age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status)

2. Reflection: After writing up a summary of your interviews, please compose a reflection focused on the following questions:
   - What are the pride/shame issues of your family and what impact do you think these pride/shame issues will have on your work with clients?
   - What are you most and least comfortable with in your culture?
   - How do you think the values you got from your family-member will influence your ability to work with clients whose values and beliefs are discernably different from yours?
   - What did you learn about yourself and your cultural identity by talking to these individuals?

Please note your report on the interviews should be presented in essay format and not as a transcript. Feel free to use direct quotes as necessary. You do not need to cite direct quotes from your interviewees for this paper. Papers should be between 6-8 pages long, typed, numbered, and double-spaced. Please follow APA for the paper format (title page, running head, etc.). Please upload your entire assignment on BlackBoard.
Assignment 3

Group Presentation

Each group (2-4 students per group) will be responsible for a **45-minute class presentation** (30-minute presentation; 15-minute 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 (e.g., newspaper articles, videos, books, etc.) that reflect societal stereotypes, hate crimes, prejudicial behavior or treatment by individuals or institutions and/or that provide examples of resiliency, strengths, and positive social change by the targeted group or population are encouraged.

**Audio-Visual Equipment**

If you need something beyond what is available in the classroom (e.g., DVD, VHS, PowerPoint), it is your responsibility to contact the instructor and arrange for any audio-visual equipment needed for the presentation. This should be done **well in advance**.

**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.

**Evaluation**

Presentations will be evaluated based on feedback from your peers (see the evaluation form at the end of this guideline) and the instructor’s assessment of the content and the 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 selected topic in this presentation - that is not the point of the assignment! Your task is to select one or a few aspects of the topic and provide a presentation that deepens or expands understanding of your selected focus.
SSS 570: Diversity in a Multicultural Society

Group Presentation Evaluation Form

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 (e.g. 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?
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 have 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 and/or population in the dominant culture within the United States. Using the course contents, “5 Characteristics of Oppression” and “Common Elements of Oppression,” identify and analyze the major dynamics and consequences of oppression 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 her 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, etc.)

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.

NOTE: The person selected as the interviewee for this assignment cannot be a client in your field placement or work setting!!!

Additional Guide

1 Please refer to course slides, and review course readings on privileges and oppression, including Pharr (1988).
Here are a few examples on whom you can interview with:

A. **Race**: Interview someone from a different race other than your own. Ask about their beliefs, customs and traditions, and compare them to your own. Also ask how they think they are treated in this country.

B. **Ethnicity/Culture**: Interview someone from a different ethnicity/culture other than your own. Ask about their beliefs, customs and traditions, and compare them to your own. Also ask how they think they are treated in this country.

C. **Religion**: Interview someone from a different religion other than your own. Ask about their beliefs, customs and traditions, and compare them to your own. Also ask how they think they are treated in this country (e.g., Are there religious holidays?)

D. **Gender/Sexual Orientation**: Interview someone whose gender or sexual orientation is different from yours. Ask about their beliefs, customs and traditions, and compare them to your own. Also ask how they think they are treated in this country.

E. **Disability**: Interview someone who has a disability or who has a different type of disability other than your own. Ask about their beliefs, customs and traditions, and compare them to your own. Also ask how they think they are treated in this country.

F. **Older Adults**: Interview an older adult (someone at least aged 65 or older). Ask about what they find positive and negative about growing older from a physical, psychological and/or social perspective. Ask about their beliefs (especially in relation to life, death and acceptance of help), customs and traditions, and compare them to your own. Also ask how they think they are treated in this country.

Also, here are a few examples of questions you may ask your interviewee:

- What are the things you would like me or others to know about the group you identify with (e.g., beliefs, customs, and/or tradition)?
- What are the strengths and challenges of your identified group?
- How has your upbringing as a member of your identified group impacted you and your experiences (e.g., within families, schools, work places, restaurants, etc.)? Or could you describe what your life has been as a member of your identified group?
- What are the things you think professionals in health, human services, and/or education should be aware in order for them to be effectively working with your identified group?