I. Course Domain and Boundaries

This course examines the impact that the social, economic, and political environments have upon individuals, groups, and communities, particularly diverse populations distinguished by race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age and national origin. The underlying premise of the course is that it is essential for social workers to comprehend the impact of social, economic and political forces on individuals and social systems in order to thoroughly understand the problems and situations that their clientele (whether individual, group, or community) may face.

The course explores a range of issues, trends and forces within each of the three environmental dimensions. Issues examined include the dynamics and consequences of discrimination, oppression, economic injustice, and deprivation. In addition, theories on how to achieve social and economic justice and the role social workers and social work values and ethics are discussed. The focus is largely upon the United States, although an international perspective will be used as well.

In addition, in order to provide a grounding in Evidence Based Practice, this class prepares students to: 1) formulate practice questions which acknowledge the centrality of social, economic, and political forces; 2) find evidence regarding social, economic, and political problems, conditions and situations; 3) critique such data; and 4) begin to understand how to apply such data to client or client system problems.

II. MSW Competencies Addressed in this Course

Demonstrate ethical and profession behavior C1
Engage diversity and difference in practice C2
Advance human rights and social and economic and environmental justice C3
Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice C4

III. Common Pedagogical Elements

Pedagogical elements common to all sections of this course include:
1) Instructors will demonstrate critical evaluation of said data and research which is relevant to social work practice. Students will complete assignments demonstrating their ability to critically use such data as relevant to practice situations.

2) Students will demonstrate their understanding of social, economic, and political contexts as they: a) describe social problems; b) understand causes for social problems; and c) creatively suggest changes to remedy those social problems. These descriptions, understandings, and proposed changes will be anchored in the best available evidence.

3) Students will complete a course assignment which demonstrates these skills.

4) Instructors will demonstrate/model the EBP process, showing how specific field-generated questions/issues can be: a) formulated and operationalized; b) how best available evidence can be located; c) critically evaluated; and d) applied to practice.

5) This course will enable students to use computerized information retrieval systems and key web locations in order to access critical social, political, and economic data. These include sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the United Nations.

6) This course will expose students to various aspects of social justice and other ethical concerns through an examination of the disparities and inequities found within the social, economic, and political environments.

IV. Brown School Academic Policies

Academic Integrity: If a faculty member or student suspects that academic or professional integrity has been violated, they are required to submit an Academic Integrity or Professional Integrity Violation form found on Inside Brown for review by the Assistant Dean of the program. The Assistant Dean or designated representative will aid in the investigation of the violation, which includes but is not limited to gathering relevant evidence; conversations with the instructor, student(s) involved, witnesses, and others as necessary. Depending on the seriousness of the case, the Assistant Dean may choose to refer the matter directly to the University Student Conduct Board. This referral procedure will generally be followed if it is believed that the penalty is likely to involve suspension or expulsion from the University. The Assistant Dean for the program or designated representative will offer to meet privately with the student(s) against whom the complaint has been made. It is the student's responsibility to familiarize themselves with the behaviors that constitute an academic integrity violation requiring referral.

Student Handbook 2019

Accommodations: If you have a learning, sensory, or physical disability or any other diagnosis that requires accommodations and/or assistance in lectures, reading, written assignments, and/or exam taking, please work with the Disability Resource Center, a University-wide resource that provides academic accommodations support and referrals. After requesting academic accommodations by providing appropriate documentation, students approved for accommodations will provide an Accommodation Letter to the instructor and are encouraged to work directly with the instructor to discuss specific course needs. The student's Academic Advisor and/or the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs can support a student through this process.

Pronouns: The Brown School embraces and promotes gender expansiveness as reflective of the lived experiences of many students, staff, faculty and members of our expanded community. The correct use of an individual's pronouns is a critical part of an individual's identity and of building an inclusive community. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to use pronouns during
introductions, are expected to use expressed pronouns of all Brown School community members, and are encouraged to apologize when mistakes are made. Educational resources are available at: https://campuslife.wustl.edu/lgbtqia/lgbt-resources/gender-pronouns/

English Language Proficiency: If your English language proficiency is such that you may need special assistance in lectures, reading, written assignments, and/or exam taking, please communicate these needs to your instructor who may refer you to the English Language Program (ELP). ELP is a University-wide resource that provides classes and academic English language support designed to increase non-native English speaking students' English language proficiency and to facilitate their academic success at Washington University. You may also find the Academic Assistance resources available through the Office for International Students and Scholars to be helpful.

Professional Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom: Computers or other electronic devices, including "smart pens" (devices with an embedded computer and digital audio recorder that records the classroom lecture/discussion and links that recording to the notes taken by the student), may be used by students at the discretion of the faculty member to support the learning activities in the classroom. These activities include taking notes and accessing course readings under discussion. If a student wishes to use a smart-pen or other electronic device to audio record lectures or class discussions, they must notify the instructor in advance of doing so. Permission to use recording devices is at the discretion of the instructor, unless this use is an accommodation approved by Disability Resources.

Nonacademic use of laptops and other devices and use of laptops or other devices for other coursework is distracting and seriously disrupts the learning process for other people in the classroom. Neither computers nor other electronic devices are to be used in the classroom during class for nonacademic reasons or for work on other coursework. Nonacademic use includes emailing, texting, social networking, playing games, instant messaging, and use of the Internet. Work on other coursework may include, but is not limited to, use of the Internet, writing papers, using statistical software, analyzing data, and working on quizzes or exams. The nonacademic use of cell phones during class time is prohibited, and they should be set on silent before class begins. In the case of an emergency, please step out of the room to take the call. The instructor has the right to hold students accountable for meeting these expectations, and failure to do so may result in a loss of participation or attendance points, a loss of the privilege of device use in the classroom, or being asked to leave the classroom.

Religious Holidays: The Brown School recognizes the individual student's choice in observing religious holidays that occur during periods when classes are scheduled. Students are encouraged to arrange with their instructors to make up work missed as a result of religious observance, and instructors are asked to make every reasonable effort to accommodate such requests.

V. Washington University Academic Support Policies

Accommodations based upon sexual assault: The University is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations to students who are victims of sexual assault. Students are eligible for accommodation regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. Depending on the specific nature of the allegation, such measures may include but are not limited to: implementation of a no-contact order, course/classroom assignment changes, and other academic support services and accommodations. If you need to request such accommodations, please direct your request to Kim Webb, Director of the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center, or Jen Durham Austin, Support Services Counselor. Both Kim Webb and Jen Durham Austin are confidential resources; however, requests for accommodations will be shared with the appropriate University administration and faculty. The University will maintain as confidential any accommodations or protective measures provided to an individual student so long as it does not impair the ability to provide such measures.
If a student comes to me to discuss or disclose an instance of sexual assault, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, or if I otherwise observe or become aware of such an allegation, I will keep the information as private as I can, but as a faculty member of Washington University, I am required to immediately report it to my Department Chair or Dean or directly to Ms. Jessica Kennedy, the University's Title IX Director. If you would like to speak with directly Ms. Kennedy directly, she can be reached at (314) 935-3118, jwkennedy@wustl.edu, or by visiting the Title IX office in Umrah Hall. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards or by contacting WUPD at (314) 935-5555 or your local law enforcement agency. See: Title IX

You can also speak confidentially and learn more about available resources at the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center by calling (314) 935-3445 for an appointment or visiting the 4th floor of Seigle Hall. See: RSVP Center

Bias Reporting: The University has a process through which students, faculty, staff and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University's Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. See: brss.wustl.edu.

Mental Health: Mental Health Services' professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect the academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety and depression. See Mental Health Resources.

Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI): The Center of Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) supports and advocates for undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students from underrepresented and/or marginalized populations, creates collaborative partnerships with campus and community partners, and promotes dialogue and social change. One of the CDI's strategic priorities is to cultivate and foster a supportive campus climate for students of all backgrounds, cultures and identities. See: diversityinclusion.wustl.edu/

Additional Issues or Concerns: If you feel that you need additional supports in order to be successful in your time at Brown, beyond the mentioned accommodations, please contact your Academic Advisor or Danielle Bristow, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs. They can assist you in navigating a myriad of concerns.

VI. Text/Required Readings

The following texts are required:

Course Readings on Canvas


VII. Organization of the Course

Each week I will lecture and present material for approximately the first half of class. The second half will be devoted to class participation and discussion. Hopefully, this will maximize the learning experience for us all. In addition, several guest lecturers and documentaries will be
utilized throughout the semester. These are intended to supplement the material covered in class, and to stimulate further discussion.

VIII. Role of Instructor and Students

The role of the instructor is to make this class a dynamic, challenging, and enriching learning experience for each student in the course.

The role of students is seen as vital in helping all of us to learn and develop our thinking and arguments regarding the social, economic, and political environments. Active class participation is expected, with that participation leading to insights, questions, and ideas. Completing the required readings each week is expected, as is turning in the take home exams on time.

IX. Assignments and Grading Criteria

1) Notes on Readings (25% of total grade)

In order to make the class more interesting, stimulating and relevant, a great deal is expected from each of you in the way of reading and class participation. Reading the assigned material prior to class is a prerequisite for intelligent class participation. To help in this process, you will be asked to turn in each week a set of notes that you have taken on the assigned readings. These should, first, describe and synthesize what in your opinion are the main points and themes of the week’s readings. Second, the notes should include your personal reactions and ideas regarding these themes and any other issues raised in the readings that you would like to comment on. By doing this, you will have an excellent set of notes at the end of the semester, as well as being prepared for every lecture and discussion. In addition, these notes should prove quite helpful in constructing your answers to the take home exams. My overall goal in terms of class discussion is to encourage participation from every member of the class, and to have that participation add to both your learning as well as mine.

2) Two Take Home Exams (50% of total grade)

The second portion of your grade will be based upon two take home exams. Each exam will be worth 25 percent of your grade, and will consist of two general questions which you will have two weeks to work on. The questions are intended to stimulate well thought-out arguments that require you to pull together the material discussed in the lectures, the readings, and in our discussions. Further details will be given in class.

3) Group Project and Presentation (25% of total grade)

The final part of your grade will involve a group project in which you will be asked to orally present arguments, evidence, and discussion points that apply a person-in-environment perspective in order to better understand and address a specific problem facing the clients of social workers. This project is designed to stimulate your thinking as well as the thinking of those in class as to how the perspective taken in this course is relevant to social work practice. Additional details regarding the specifics of the group projects will be given during the semester.

X. Competency Alignment to Assignments and Course Activities

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<th>Graded Assignments</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Course Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>C1, C2, C3, C4</td>
<td>Knowledge, Cognitive Processes, Affective Processes, Values</td>
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</tbody>
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XI. Course Outline and Reading Assignments

It is recommended that you read the material under each heading in the order that it is listed.

Introduction - August 27

THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Person-in-Environment and Demographic Overview - September 10


Changing Family - September 17


Women in the Labor Force - September 24

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The Changing Economy and Economic Inequality - October 1


Economic Insecurity - October 8


First Take Home Exam Handed Out October 1, Due October 22

Discussion of Exams and Group Projects - October 22

Economic Insecurity - October 29


Economics and Residence - November 5


THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Conservative and Liberal Perspectives - November 12


"Remarks by the President to the NAACP Centennial Convention.” Obama, 2009, and “Remarks by the President on Economic Mobility.” Obama, 2013. On Canvas.

Social Work and Political Change - November 19


Group Project Presentations - November 26 and December 3

Second Take Home Exam Handed out on November 26, Due on December 10