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 of 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

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities
Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

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 (1) describe social problems, (2) understand causes for social problems and (3) 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: (1) formulated and operationalized; (2) how best available evidence can be located; (3) critically evaluated; and (4) 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 and Secretary of State Records.
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: Academic integrity in the completion of tests, oral presentations and written assignments (including statistical syntax) is expected. Violations of academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism) are very serious offenses. Violations will result in notification to the Assistant Dean for the appropriate (MSW or MPH) program and may result in referral to the Academic and Professional Integrity Committee, which could lead to dismissal from the program. Please review and adhere to the entire set of Academic Integrity guidelines in the student handbook on Inside Brown:

Student Handbook 2017-2018

Accommodations: If you have a learning disability, sensory, or physical disability or other impairment, and you may need special assistance in lectures, reading, written assignments, and/or exam taking, please contact the Brown School Director of Student Affairs who can provide coordination of accommodations at Washington University and the Brown School. The
Disability Resource Center, a University-wide resource, provides diagnostic and academic accommodations support and referrals.

**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), a University-wide resource which 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 which 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 include such activities as 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 will be at the discretion of the instructor, unless this is an accommodation approved by Disability Resources.

Nonacademic use of laptops and other devices is distracting and seriously disrupts the learning process for everyone. Neither computers nor other electronic devices are to be used in the classroom during class for non-academic reasons. This use includes emailing, texting, social networking, and use of the Internet. The 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 points, a loss of the privilege of computer 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 (kim_webb@wustl.edu), Director of the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center. Ms. Webb is a confidential resource; 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) 935-8761 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 shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth

Additional Issues or Concerns: If you feel that you need additional supports in order to be successful in your time at Brown, beyond the afore mentioned accommodations, please contact Essie Rochman, Director of Student Affairs at erochman@wustl.edu. She can assist you in navigating a myriad of concerns. Her office is in Brown Hall, room 320.

VI. READINGS

Textbooks:


All other readings will be provided.
You will also need a simple calculator for the course (can be the calculator on phone or laptop).

VII. ROLE OF FACULTY AND STUDENT

Class Attendance: You are expected to attend class. Please contact me as soon as possible if an emergency comes up or if you will be out of town during a scheduled class time.

Class Participation & Professional Investment: Class participation is central to learning in this course and is part of your final grade. Please come to class prepared and ready to discuss the
readings and participate in activities. **Disagreement with my position on any particular issue will NOT affect your grade.**

**Extra Credit or Rewrites:** Please do not ask if you can rewrite an assignment or get extra credit—I do not allow either.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments are not accepted and will be given the grade of zero unless you have an emergency situation. Assignments are deemed late if they are **five minutes past the due time on the due date.** Please contact me as soon as possible if you have an emergency would prevent you from turning in the assignment on time.

**Email:** Please check your email regularly. This is the primary way I will communicate with you outside of class.

**Writing Help:** Writing is a skill and good writing is required for the receipt of a high grade. I highly recommend you submit drafts of your papers to the Writing Center to ensure the proper use of grammar, thoroughness of thought and clear expression of ideas.

**Preferred Name:** If you would like to use a name other than your legal name for the purposes of this course and your time at Brown, please let me know. Washington University recognizes that many students prefer to use names other than their legal ones to identify themselves. As long as the use of this preferred name is not for the purposes of misrepresentation, the university acknowledges that a “preferred name” can and should be used where possible in the course of university education and communication. This policy is limited to first names and not surnames or family names. The university will attempt to display preferred first name to the university community where feasible and appropriate and make a good faith effort to update reports, documents and systems accordingly. As such, the student’s preferred first name may be used in the university directory, communications (e.g., press release to hometown newspapers), class rosters and other documents, except where the use of official name of record is required. The student’s official name of record will remain unchanged in all university-related systems and reports. [NOTE: A preferred name will not be shown on certain records, including paychecks, payroll records, transcripts, enrollment verification, medical records, financial aid documents and other records which require use of an official name of record. Students who wish to change their official name of record must submit official documentation (e.g., court order, divorce decree) directly to the Office of the University Registrar and Human Resources, if also employed.]

**VIII. COMPETENCY ALIGNMENT TO ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE ACTIVITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Assignments</th>
<th>Competency/Competencies</th>
<th>Dimension/Dimensions Measured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News Analysis on Economics</td>
<td>C3,C6,C8,C9</td>
<td>Cognitive and Affective Processes, Skills, Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Analysis on Economics and Politics</td>
<td>C3,C6,C8,C9</td>
<td>Cognitive and Affective Processes, Skills, Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Analysis on Economics, Politics and Social</td>
<td>C3,C6,C8,C9</td>
<td>Cognitive and Affective Processes, Skills, Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Strategic Plan</td>
<td>C1,C2,C3,C4,C5,C6,C7,C8,C9</td>
<td>Values, Cognitive and Affective Processes, Skills, Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>C1,C2,C3,C4,C5,C6,C7,C8,C9</td>
<td>Cognitive and Affective Processes, Skills, Knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Class Activity: Environmental Justice Case Study
Competency/Competencies: C1,C2,C3,C5,C6,C7,C8,C9
Dimension(s) Measured: Values, Cognitive Affective Processes, Skills, Knowledge

IX. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Assignments:
A. Class Participation: You will be evaluated by your participation in classroom dialogue and activities.
25% of final grade

B. News Analyses: You will choose and analyze news articles (from newspaper, online media source, etc.) as follows:
• Choose a current news article and draw a people map. Then analyze the various people based on economic theories and pressures discussed in the readings and in class. Explain the choices in predictioneering terms of Bueno de Mesquita and Fisher.
  Due at the start of class, March 19.
• Choose a current news article and draw a people map. Then analyze the various people based on political theories and pressures discussed in the readings and in class. Make sure to include multiple political positions. Explain the choices in predictioneering terms of Bueno de Mesquita.
  Due at the start of class, April 9.
• Choose a current news article and draw a people map. Then analyze the various people based on social theories and pressures discussed in the readings and in class. Explain the choices in predictioneering terms of Bueno de Mesquita.
  Due at the start of class, April 23.

Each analysis should include relevant people maps and BDM predictioneering steps.
Each paper is worth 10%, totaling 30% of your final grade.

C. Final Project: Details for the final project will be discussed in class.
May 14 at the start of class.
Turn in project in hard copy, not uploaded.
The final project is worth 45% of your final grade.

Grading criteria for all assignments
Grading is based on the quality of the work you turn in. If you have questions about how to do an assignment or wish to get feedback on your assignments, please make an appointment to see me. Once a grade is given, it will not be changed. Only individuals who do superior work will be assigned the grade of “A.” All written assignments should be written in accordance with the relevant APA style guidelines and employ correct grammar and spelling. If you need help writing or formatting your paper, please make an appointment with the Writing Lab to get assistance.
Grading Scale

95% -100 A
90%-94% A-
87%-89% B+
84%-86% B
80%-83% B-
77%-79% C+
74%-76% C
70%-73% C-
Below 70% F

Grading Rubric

Your assignments will be graded using the following rubric:
40%--the quality of your analysis and the depth of understanding that you demonstrate
30%--the clarity of your expression, response to the questions posed and organization of your ideas
20%--your use of proper grammar, spelling and the overall professional presentation of your paper.
10%--your use of references and resource materials (as appropriate for the assignment).

X. COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: January 22
Introduction to the Course

Readings: None

Week 2: January 29
No Class Due to U.S. Labor Day Holiday

Week 3: February 5
The Smog

Required Readings:
• Bloom, Ester (2017, May 26). Eighty Percent of Millennials Say They Want to Buy a Home, But Most Have Less Than $1,000 Saved. From http://www.cnbc.com/2017/05/26/most-millennials-want-to-buy-a-home-but-about-half-have-nothing-saved.html

Week 4: February 12
Through the Looking Glass—Game Theory 101

Readings:
• Bueno de Mesquita, Chapters 4 and 5.
• Fisher, Chapters 1 and 2.

Week 5: February 19
The Mad Hatter--Game Theory 102

Readings:
• Bueno de Mesquita, Introduction and Chapters 1, 2 and 3.
• Fisher, Chapters 3 and 7.

Week 6: February 26
Economics, Budgeting and Gaming

Readings:
• Krugman, Paul (2011, December 29). Keynes was Right. From http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/30/opinion/keynes-was-right.html?adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1405782137-s/oUTtSUZ6Im21Mesqyv9Q

Week 7: March 5
Applied Economic Predictioneering—Access to Food

Readings:

• Fisher, Chapter 4.
• Missouri Hunger Atlas. From http://foodsecurity.missouri.edu/projects/missouri-hunger-atlas/
• Tirado Gilligan, Heather (2014, February 10). Food Deserts Aren’t the Problem. From http://www.slate.com/articles/life/food/2014/02/food_deserts_and_fresh_food_access_aren_t_the_pr oblem_poverty_not_obesity.html


• Smith, Adam and Dampe, Stewart (2014, July 2). Food Deserts or Just Desserts. From https://fee.org/articles/food-deserts-or-just-deserts/

More readings may be assigned.

Week 8: March 12
No Class Due to Spring Break

Week 9: March 19
Basics of Politics, Political Parties and Philosophies

Readings (skim these):
• The Democratic Party Platform. At https://www.democrats.org/party-platform
• The Republican Party Platform. At https://www.gop.com/the-2016-republican-party-platform/
• The Libertarian Party Platform. At http://www.lp.org/platform

Week 10: March 26
Applied Power, Politics and Gaming

Readings:
• Bueno de Mesquita, Chapters 7 and 8.
• Fisher, Chapter 6.

Week 11: April 2
Playing Games—Legalization of Marijuana

Readings:
More readings may be assigned.
**Week 12: April 9**

**Applied Social Theory and Decision Making**

Readings:
- Bueno de Mesquita, Chapters 6 and 10.

**Week 13: April 16**

**Playing Games—Gun Rights**

Readings:
• Lee, Marie Myung (2013, September 23). When Mental Illness Meets U.S. Gun Culture. From http://www.thenation.com/blog/176312/when-mental-illness-meets-us-gun-culture#
• Seitz-Wald, Alex (2013, January 9). Meet the Sandy Hook Truthers. From http://www.salon.com/2013/01/09/the_worst_sandy_hook_conspiracy_theory_yet

More readings may be assigned.

Week 14: April 23
Playing Games—Immigration Reform

• Manuel Krogstad, Jens (2016, October 14). Key Facts About the Latino Vote in @016. From http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/14/key-facts-about-the-latino-vote-in-2016/

More readings may be assigned.

Week 15: April 30
Class Presentations

Week 16: May 7
Class Presentations

Week 17: May 14
Class Presentations