TCU DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
SOWO 30583: ISSUES IN DIVERSITY

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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 1-3 or by appointment

PURPOSE:
The purpose of this class is to give you a beginning awareness of the cultural variety in today’s changing global society, so you can understand better both yourself and the world in which you live. You will learn about different ethnic, religious, and cultural groups as well as gender, sexual orientation, age, and ability differences. You will be helped to distinguish between myth and reality about differences and similarities. Through this learning, students can use their awareness to fulfill the NASW Code of Ethics mandate for social workers to become change agents to eliminate oppression and educate those around them. A major focus in the class is on critical thinking which includes the ability to analyze different perspectives on issues and the ability to take and defend stands on those issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
At the end of the class, students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the impact of societal problems on and social work’s commitment to ethnic minorities of color, women, lesbians and gay men, and other oppressed populations
2. Understand the elements and stages of diversity including facts about and aspects of cultural groups within that diversity
3. Appreciate the variety within each population studied
4. Understand the historical context of oppression based on difference, and the social problems that result from it
5. Understand how the profession of social work has addressed oppression historically through its Code of Ethics and curriculum mandates
6. Comprehend the impact of social, political, and economic forces that affect the individual, group, and community functioning of various cultural groups
7. Critically evaluate the arguments for and against inclusion, affirmative action, cultural pride and separation, and other issues in the field and develop reasoned arguments for their positions on those issues.

TEXT:
TEACHING STRATEGIES:

The class will include speakers, activities, group presentations, and interaction as well as lecture and traditional presentation of material. However, it is not a traditional class. The nature of diversity work requires an emphasis on group activities and work with others. You are expected to be involved and to work with your classmates. That means attending class.

REFERENCES:

For students who want a reference list or other resources, there is a comprehensive bibliography on reserve in the Social Work library or in any of our offices.

*IMPORTANT DATES:

Disability exercise ................................................................. April 16
Midterm due ................................................................. March 5
Final ................................................................. Monday, May 5 (11:30)

GRADING PERCENTAGES:

Disability exercise ................................................................. 30%
Attendance ................................................................. 10%
Midterm ................................................................. 30%
Final ................................................................. 30%

Movie reviews

ATTENDANCE:

All students will begin the semester with 100 points. Each absence will reduce the final absence grade by 5 points. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. If you are not present then, you will be marked absent. If you leave during class you will be counted absent. Attendance counts as 10% of the final grade.

**KEY ISSUE**

This class is dependent on participation. You are expected to be involved in class discussion and sharing. This class requires that you risk and there may be times where what you say is not comfortable or easy. We must all believe that this classroom is a place where that risking is protected. For that reason, respect and confidentiality are mandated.
There may be some change in the outline as we cover the material. Themes and issues are the important areas of focus. There will be other readings also.

**Week I (1/12) Section 1**
Overview of course content and requirements
Introduction to diversity

**Week II (1/19)**
Common elements of oppression
Prejudice and discrimination

**Week III (1/26) & IV (2/2)**
Cross cultural differences and communication styles
Ethnocentrism and group membership

**Week V (2/9) & VI (2/16)**
Ethnicity and Racism

**Week VII (2/23)**
Religion and differences in beliefs

**Week VIII (3/1) Section 4**
Gender differences
Sexism

**Week IX (3/8) Section 6**
Learning and physical differences
Disability issues & the ADA

**Midterm due**

**Week X (3/22) & XI (3/29) Section 5**
Differences in sexual orientation
Lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals
Heterosexism

**Week XII (4/5)**
Age & Ageism

**Week XIII (4/12) Section 7**
Class differences and elitism

**Week XIV (4/19)**
Harassment, hate crimes, language issues
Diversity Burnout

**Week XV (4/26) Section 8**
Strategies for empowerment & conflict resolution
How to begin the dialogue at TCU
Wrap-up and evaluation

*Comprehensive Final Exam (May 5 at 11:30)*
ASSIGNMENTS

Grading will be based on:

- Quality of presentation & preparation
- Accuracy of assignment related to the stated expectations
- Thoroughness, inclusiveness, thoughtfulness, and critical thinking

1. DISABILITY EXERCISE

- In groups of 4-6, experience disability on the TCU campus.
- Check out a wheelchair at the Academic Services Office.
- In the wheelchair, go to the following locations (in any order) and follow instructions.
- Do not use steps. Do not go off curbs. Use only ramps; and go nowhere that a wheelchair cannot go
  a. Go to the Office of Disability Services to check out the wheelchair. List what services are available for students with disabilities
  b. Get into the library from the disabled entrance. List 1 article from the 1990 edition of the journal Social Work and list 1 article from the most recent Social Work (2002)
  c. Go to the Bookstore. Find the text for SOWO 20833.
  d. Go to Eden's Greens and get a drink or lunch by going through the line.
  e. Go to your Religion class in Beasley 205.
  f. Go to Miller Speech & Hearing Clinic. Observe the facility as a person with a disability. Call first to make sure they can accommodate you.
  g. Go to the Pete Wright/Tom Brown complex or Foster Hall. What things have been done to make it accessible?
  h. Use the bathroom on the second floor of the Student Center
  i. Go to the Social Work office. How accessible are the offices there?
  j. Return the wheelchair to the Academic Services Office.

- Write a 6-8 page paper (one paper per group) about your experience and describe each area including any difficulties.

The paper includes 3 specific areas:

1. Description (30%)
   - The students in your group
   - Each stop and your experiences
   - Location of buildings and placement of elevators
   - Condition of sidewalks regarding ease of movement for wheels
   - Traffic patterns (pedestrian and car)
   - Accessibility of ramps (where are they and are they wide enough)
   - Access to buildings (are there instructions or signs)
2. **Analysis (40%)**
   - Are there problem areas on campus that need to be addressed?
   - What, if any, problems were experienced at each stop?
   - What knowledge did you gain about disability?
   - How did your wheelchair experience compare with your daily life outside the chair?
   - Analyze the effectiveness of legal accessibility vs. actual accessibility
   - Critically evaluate how well people with disabilities can function on the TCU campus.

3. **Solutions and recommendations (30%)**
   TCU is legally accessible and complies with all federal law.
   - Find resources on campus (e.g. Larry Garrison, Will Stallworth, etc.) and make an appointment to discuss your concerns and recommendations for the university based on your position on the debate between legal accessibility and actual accessibility.
   - Make suggestions for the campus based on your ride and your discussion with campus resources. Use your readings as support for your suggestions.

The paper is due at the beginning of class on April 16, 2003

2. **MIDTERM EXAM**
The midterm exam will be a take-home exercise. Students will work in groups to apply class material to specific diversity issues and demonstrate critical thinking about those issues. More specific detail will be provided during the semester. Students must work in groups of 4-8.

The midterm is due at the beginning of class on March 5, 2003

3. **FINAL EXAM**
The final exam is comprehensive and will include objective and essay questions. It may include a group component.

4. **QUIZZES**
There will be several quizzes over the semester to ensure you are doing the reading for the class. These will be averaged and the average will count as 20% of your grade. You may drop one quiz grade. Bring green scantrons to class every week!

**REMEMBER:**
Your assignments are interesting and challenging. You have flexibility in choosing them but you need to think about them and begin to plan early. Doing these at the last minute will undermine their effectiveness. You must work in groups for the assignments. All members of the group must experience the assignment. Be careful to carry your responsibility.
ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY:
- Students should familiarize themselves with the Academic Conduct Policy in the University Calendar/Student Handbook. Any student violating the Academic Conduct Policy may receive a 0 on any assignment in question and the student's academic dean will be notified in writing.
- Social work majors are also bound by the NASW Code of Ethics (see Student Handbook.) Violation of the Code of Ethics is grounds for dismissal from major.
- Writing is an integral part of the social work curriculum. Students who wish to use any paper or research topic for more than one assignment must receive permission from each instructor. Using the same paper or a very similar paper for assignments in different courses is unacceptable and, if discovered, will result in a grade of 0 on the paper in question (for all classes involved).

ATTENDANCE:
- The nature of the learning experience is such that regular attendance and participation is essential. Excessive absences can hinder your learning and adversely affect your grade. Students are encouraged to attend all classes. Avoid doctor/dentist appointments during class time. They are not acceptable absences.
- Each instructor may determine specific attendance policies and reserves the right to notify the Dean of Campus Life about excessive absences.

DISABILITY POLICY:
- Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. The full policy is available in the University Calendar/Student Handbook.
- Each eligible student is responsible for presenting letters to social work faculty members from the Coordinator of Academic Services for Students with Disabilities no later than two calendar weeks following the first day of classes for the academic term.
- Faculty will make every effort to provide students with the support necessary to succeed in the class.

GRADING:
- Grading will be done on a ten (10) point scale (e.g., 91-100=A, 81-90=B, etc.). All assignments including essay tests and papers will be graded according to this point/percentage system. Objectives and grading criteria for such assignments will be made clear well in advance of the due date.
- An average grade is considered a C. Above average performance is a B and is expected. Only superior performance merits an A grade.
- All assignments must be completed and turned in before a grade will be assigned. Late assignments will be marked down 10 points per day (including weekends).
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date due unless otherwise noted.
- If you choose to contest a grade assigned, you must do so in writing according to the instructor’s syllabus. This includes grades on assignments and tests as well as final course grades.
- If you feel you deserve an Incomplete (I) grade, you must request it in writing providing justification for such a grade.
- Make-up exams will be arranged by individual instructors. Students must provide
documentation for the absence in order to schedule make-up exams.

PARTICIPATION:
- As social workers, other helping people, and as citizens it is important that you be able to speak out to advocate for clients and to address issues. Participation is also important for sharing and discussion of ideas in class. However, the quality of participation is significant. **Just talking is not effective participation.** Sharing and debating ideas and offering solutions are important components of participation.
- **Respect** is an important component of participation. You may disagree with the opinions of other students and faculty but you must respect their contributions to class.
- Participation may be used as part of the final grade depending on the instructor.

PROFESSIONALISM
Social work majors are preparing to be professionals and are expected to behave as such in the classroom. This includes:
- **Participation.** Students are expected to attend class and to be prepared to contribute. Self-awareness is crucial so that you know how best to contribute. Learning to be assertive is important to participation.
- **Respect.** There will be different ideas about the material presented in class. You can argue and disagree but you must do so with respect for your peers and for the instructor.
- **Responsibility.** Professional behavior includes coming to class on time, turning in assignments when they are due, and following through on commitments.
- **Confidentiality.** Classes often demand participation and sharing which is personal in nature. It is important that students feel comfortable and safe in class. Students are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and to respect the confidence of their peers.

Other majors in social work classes are expected to adhere to these behaviors as well.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:
- All written assignments **must** follow American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines, including citing references obtained from the Internet. Students can purchase the *APA Publication Manual* at the TCU Bookstore or use the library or the University Writing Center for APA reference information. A brief user guide is on reserve in the Social Work office.
- It is important that students communicate effectively in writing. If a student's writing skills adversely affect the work turned in, the students will be referred to the University Writing Center.
- All students need to pay careful attention to correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar before turning in written work. **Proofread and use spellcheck!**
E-MAIL REFERENCES

American Civil Liberties Union  www.aclu.org
Citizens Unit on Race & Equality  www.cire.org
Government Information Locator Service: info.er.usgs.gov/gils/index.html
Hate crimes and issues  www.fear.org
Influencing State Policy  www.isp.org
Library of Congress  www.lcweb@loc.gov
Michigan Poverty Program  www.ssw.umich.edu/poverty
NAACP  www.naaccp.org
NASW:  www.socialworkers.org
NASW/TX:  www.naswtx.org
New Federalism  newfederalism.org
People for the American Way  www.pfaw.org
Policy Information Exchange Online Website:  www.pie.org
Southern Poverty Law Center  www.tolerance.org
Texas Legislature  www.capitol.state.tx.us or  www.house.state.tx.us/
Urban Institute  www.urban.org
VoteSmart (congressional voting records):  www.vote-smart.org/