Social Work 200

Inequality in American Political and Social Policy

3 Units

“The ultimate tragedy is not oppression and cruelty by the bad people, but the silence over that by the good people.”
- Martin Luther King, Jr

“You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.”
- Angela Davis

Spring Semester 2021

Instructor: Bo-Kyung Elizabeth Kim, MSW, PhD
E-Mail: bkelizak@usc.edu
Telephone: (213) 740-8018
Office: SWC 218 or by Zoom
Office Hours: Wed/Noon-1pm or by appointment
Course Day: Mondays & Wednesdays
Course Time: 10-11:50am
Course Location: Virtual

I. Course Prerequisites

None

II. Catalogue Description

Historic and philosophical roots of inequality for minority groups in the United States and implications for public policy. Not available for major credit.

III. Course Description

The major aim of this course is to acquaint students with the historic and philosophical roots of social inequality in the United States and their implication for political and social policy as it relates to social injustice.

The course is organized chronologically around a perspective that acknowledges the diversity of the American population in terms of a variety of groups that experience inequality in status and opportunity, including African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latinx, Native Americans, women, gay men and lesbian women, and other special populations.
Although the course stresses the structural roots of inequality, it focuses on the personal and collective strengths of diversity in American political and social life. This perspective explicates the contributions of social groups to the broader political and economic structures and processes in American life.

**IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective #</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Understanding of institutionalized disadvantage and inequality in American life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The ability to understand and analyze how political, economic, and social policies have been shaped by institutional inequality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The ability to understand the significance of personal and cultural values and attitudes in the evolution of American political, economic and social policies, political institutions and public behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Understanding of the personal and collective strengths of diverse populations and their contributions to American public life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Apply an intercultural competence lens to identify and understand major forms and consequences of systemic oppression and social injustice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**V. COURSE FORMAT / INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS**

The format of the course will consist of didactic instruction and experiential exercises. These exercises may include the use of videos, role-play, or structured small group exercises. Material from the field will be used to illustrate class content and to provide integration between class and field. Confidentiality of material shared in class will be maintained. As class discussion is an integral part of the learning process, students are expected to come to class ready to discuss required reading and its application to theory and practice.
VI. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES & GRADING

Reflection Journal (20%): Students will keep a weekly Reflection Journal throughout the semester, adding responses and reflections based on weekly or biweekly prompts provided by the professor. The Reflection Journal is meant to help students critically assess the topics discussed in class as pertinent to their own lives and the lives of others. This assignment will further students’ personal growth as well as help students prepare for their mid-term and final exams.

Mid-term (20%) and Final (25%) Exams: Students are required to complete take-home mid-term and final exams. Both will be presented in essay format.

Class Presentation (20%): All students are expected to make a class presentation on pertinent issues that reflect a contemporary issue of inequality and the search for solutions (e.g., public policy, social movement). Students will select a topic, with professor approval, and make a presentation to the class. The presentation is to be supported by evidence and data from scholarly books and journals, popular media, and special interest publications. The purpose of the presentation is to help students clarify their personal values and develop the necessary skills to take informed positions through critical thinking.

Class Participation (15%): Students are expected to participate in class, raising critical questions and offering insights based on course content in a respectful manner. Grades will be calculated based on the following percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Journal</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Examination</td>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students are expected to demonstrate critical thinking, grasp of key concepts, and ability to integrate multiple sources of information through their questions and comments in class and during small-group exercises aligned with subject matter explored during specific course sessions.

Class grades will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Grades</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.85 – 4</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.60 – 3.84</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.25 – 3.59</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.90 – 3.24</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.60 – 2.87</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93 – 100</td>
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<td>90 – 92</td>
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<td>87 – 89</td>
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<td></td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within the School of Social Work, grades are determined in each class based on the following standards which have been established by the faculty of the School:

(1) Grades of A or A- are reserved for student work which not only demonstrates very good mastery of content but which also shows that the student has undertaken a complex task, has applied critical thinking skills to the assignment, and/or has demonstrated creativity in her or his approach to the assignment. The difference between these two grades would be determined by the degree to which these skills have been demonstrated by the student.

(2) A grade of B+ will be given to work which is judged to be very good. This grade denotes that a student has demonstrated a more-than-competent understanding of the material being tested in the assignment.

(3) A grade of B will be given to student work which meets the basic requirements of the assignment. It denotes that the student has done adequate work on the assignment and meets basic course expectations.

(4) A grade of B- will denote that a student’s performance was less than adequate on an assignment, reflecting only moderate grasp of content and/or expectations.

(5) A grade of C would reflect a minimal grasp of the assignments, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement.

(6) Grades between C- and F will be applied to denote a failure to meet minimum standards, reflecting serious deficiencies in all aspects of a student’s performance on the assignment.

VII. REQUIRED AND SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS & RESOURCES

NO Required Textbooks

All readings will be available through ARES or course website.

Recommended Guidebook for APA Style Formatting

**Note:** Readings published before 2000 have been carefully scrutinized and are included in the syllabus because they provide key or seminal information for the overall course content. Additional required and recommended readings may be assigned by the instructor throughout the course.
# Course Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Introduction to course: Telling “My” Story  
A look into ourselves and positionality | Human Trafficking Awareness Month | |
| 2    | Race and Racism  
Privilege, Power, and Oppression, Part 1 | | Black History Month |
| 3    | Defining Inequity: Understanding race and racism in America  
Privilege, Power, and Oppression, Part 2 | | |
| 4    | Race as a social construct in the United States  
Historical context of race in the United States | | |
| 5    | Historical context of race in the United States, cont’d.  
Citizenship | | |
| 6    | Class and Classism  
Housing | | |
| 7    | Poverty and Punishment  
Crime and Punishment | | |
| 8    | Education  
Midterm Review | | |
| 9    | Health | | |
| 10   | Diversity and Social Justice  
Transformative Healing | | |
| 11   | Empowerment  
Anti-Oppression | | |
| 12   | Social Work, The Past  
Social Work, The Future | | |
| 13   | Presentations  
Presentations, Course Review | | |

**STUDY DAYS / NO CLASSES**

**FINAL EXAM DUE: MAY 10**
## Course Schedule—Detailed Description

### INTERSECTIONALITY AND PRIVILEGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1a: Introduction to course: Telling “My” Story</th>
<th>January 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to course: Course Syllabus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Story: Understanding “Me” in society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Unit relates to course objectives 1 - 3.

**Required Readings:**

Audrey Lorde “A Litany for Survival” [https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/147275/a-litany-for-survival](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/147275/a-litany-for-survival)


**Task:**

Add “My Story” to Reflection Journal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1b: A look into ourselves and positionality</th>
<th>January 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest lecture by Librarian Alyssa Brissett</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A look into ourselves and our social positioning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersectionality Map</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Unit relates to course objectives 1 - 3.

**Required Readings**


**Recommended:**

The urgency of intersectionality – TED talk by Kimberle Crenshaw: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akOe5-UsQ2o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akOe5-UsQ2o)


**Task:**

Add “Intersectionality Diagram” to Reflection Journal
Unit 2a: Race and Racism

**Topics**
- February – Black History Month
- Beyond the individual: Introduction to power and oppression
- Why the focus on race? Guest lecture by Dr. Terence Fitzgerald

This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 3, 4, 5.

**Required Readings**


Unit 2b: Privilege, Power, and Oppression, Part 1

**Topics**
- Privilege, Power, and Oppression in intersectionality
- Seeing privilege, power, and oppression in “my” life

This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 4, 5.

**Required Readings**


**Recommended:**


**Task:**

Add “Your experiences of Privilege, Power, and Oppression” based on your intersectionality diagram to *Reflection Journal*
Unit 3a: Defining Inequity: Understanding race and racism in America

Topics
- Defining Inequity
- Understanding the role of racism in America

This Unit relates to course objectives 1-3.

Required Readings


February 15 President’s Day – NO CLASS

Unit 3b: Privilege, Power, and Oppression, Part 2

Topics
- Systemic nature of privilege, power, and oppression
- Privilege circle

This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 4, 5.

Required Readings


Interview with Jane Elliott: [https://www.facebook.com/justinbaldoni/videos/1994207297377888/](https://www.facebook.com/justinbaldoni/videos/1994207297377888/)

Recommended:

Systemic inequity: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa1qAhTugkM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa1qAhTugkM)

The Angry Eye: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnNQxTZTMtM&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnNQxTZTMtM&feature=youtu.be)

Task:

Add “Reflections on acknowledging privilege (the challenge, struggle, resistance, and transformation)” to *Reflection Journal*
Unit 4a: Race as a social construct in the United States February 22

Topics
■ Race as a social construct in the United States
■ Understanding race and racist ideas

This Unit relates to course objectives 1-3, 5.

Required Readings


Unit 4b: Historical context of race in the United States February 24

Topics
■ Historical context of race in the United States
■ How the US stole Native American children: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGqWRyBChhw

This Unit relates to course objectives 1 – 3, 5.

Required Readings


Recommended:

de las Casas, Bartolome (1552). A short account of the destruction of the Indies. https://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/slatta/hi216/documents/dlascasas.htm#1link


Task:

Add “What did you learn about American History?” to Reflection Journal
Unit 5a: Historical context of race in the United States, cont’d.  March 1

Topics
- Historical context of race in the United States

This Unit relates to course objectives 1 – 3, 5.

Required Readings
Paul Finkleman, "Making a Covenant with Death: Slavery and the Constitutional Convention


Unit 5b: Citizenship  March 3

Topics
- Understanding the meaning of citizenship
- What makes a citizen?
- What is American?

This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 3, 4, 5.


Recommended:


Task:
Add “Are you American? Do you feel American? What is being American to you?” to Reflection Journal
Unit 6a: Class and Classism  March 8

Topics
- Poverty in the US
- Wealth inequality

This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 4, 5.

Required Readings


Unit 6b: Housing  March 10

Topics
- Housing and Homelessness
- Racial segregation
- Guest lecture by Dr. Chyna Hill

This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 2, 3, 5.

Required Readings


Recommended:

Task:
Add “What intersectionality do you see in the struggles of poverty and homelessness?” to Reflection Journal

Unit 7a: Poverty and Punishment  March 15

Topics
- Social control of the poor

This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 2, 3, 5.

Required Readings


**Unit 7b: Crime and Punishment**

**Topics**
- Institutional inequality in the justice system
- Unequal punishment: Unfair and unjust system
- Guest lecture by Unchained Scholars, Mr. Yehudah Pryce & Dr. Genevieve Rimer

This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 4.

**Required Readings**


**Recommended:**


**Task:**

Add to *Reflection Journal*: TBA

**Unit 8a: Education**

**Topics**
- Segregation of public schools: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7O7BMa9XGX8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7O7BMa9XGX8)
- Exclusionary education

This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 2, 4.

**Required Readings**


Brown v Board of Education, access at: http://www.nationalcenter.org/brown.html

Recommended Readings


Unit 8b: Midterm Review

Topics
- Midterm Review

MID-TERM EXAM DUE: March 29

Unit 9a: Health

Topics
- Racial stress/trauma and the body
- Racism in healthcare
- Guest lecture by Dr. Tyan Parker-Dominguez

This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 2, 4.

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Task:

Add “How has COVID-19 affected you and your family? Reflect on the role of systemic inequity in the COVID-19 pandemic” to Reflection Journal

RESISTANCE, OPPORTUNITY, AND CHANGE

Unit 9b: Diversity and Social Justice
Topics
- Value added
- Inclusion
- Guest lecture by Dr. Melissa Singh
This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 2, 4, 5.

Required Readings


Unit 10a: Transformative Healing
Topics
- Internalized oppression
- Liberation and healing
This Unit relates to course objectives 1 - 5.

Required Readings


http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/blacklib/

Recommended:


Freeman, J. (1971). The Women's Liberation Movement: It's Origins, Structures and Ideas, access at:
http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/womlib/

April 7 Spring Wellness Day – NO Class
Unit 10b: Empowerment  
April 12  
Topics  
- Origins of empowerment theory  
- The role of empowerment  

This Unit relates to course objectives 1 - 5.

Required Readings  

Unit 11a: Anti-oppression  
April 14  
Topics  
- Allyship, Accomplice, and Anti-racist  
- Lifelong learning and work  
This Unit relates to course objectives 2, 3.

Required Readings  
Allyship in social work: [https://socialwork.tulane.edu/blog/allyship](https://socialwork.tulane.edu/blog/allyship)  
Decolonization is for everyone [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QP9x1NnCWNY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QP9x1NnCWNY)

Unit 11b: Social Work, The Past  
April 19  
Topics  
- Historical context of social work  

This Unit relates to course objectives 1, 2, 3, 5.

Required Readings  
History of Social Work [https://ssw.umich.edu/about/history/brief-history-of-social-work](https://ssw.umich.edu/about/history/brief-history-of-social-work)  
### Unit 12a: Social Work, The Future

**April 21**

**Topics**
- Critically assessing social work
- Towards building the future of social work

This Unit relates to course objectives 1 - 5.

**Required Readings**


### Unit 12b: Presentations

**April 26**

### Unit 13a: Presentations/Review of Class

**April 28**

### STUDY DAYS / NO CLASSES

**May 1-4**

### FINAL EXAM DUE

**May 10**
University Policies and Guidelines

VIII. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend every class and to remain in class for the duration of the unit. Failure to attend class or arriving late may impact your ability to achieve course objectives which could affect your course grade. Students are expected to notify the instructor by email (bkelizak@usc.edu) of any anticipated absence or reason for tardiness.

University of Southern California policy permits students to be excused from class for the observance of religious holy days. This policy also covers scheduled final examinations which conflict with students' observance of a holy day. Students must make arrangements in advance to complete class work which will be missed, or to reschedule an examination, due to holy days observance.

Please refer to Scampus and to the USC School of Social Work Student Handbook for additional information on attendance policies.

IX. ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

X. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [http://sarc.usc.edu/](http://sarc.usc.edu/)

**Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086**
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [https://equity.usc.edu/](https://equity.usc.edu/)

**Bias Assessment Response and Support**
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/)

**Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710**
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/)

**Diversity at USC – [https://diversity.usc.edu/](https://diversity.usc.edu/)**
Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

**USC Emergency Information**
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

**USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.**
Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

**XI. STATEMENT ABOUT INCOMPLETES**

The Grade of Incomplete (IN) can be assigned only if there is work not completed because of a documented illness or some other emergency occurring after the 12th week of the semester. Students must NOT assume that the instructor will agree to the grade of IN. Removal of the grade of IN must be instituted by the student and agreed to be the instructor and reported on the official “Incomplete Completion Form.”

**XII. POLICY ON LATE OR MAKE-UP WORK**

Papers are due on the day and time specified. Extensions will be granted only for extenuating circumstances. If the paper is late without permission, grade will be affected.
XIII. Policy on Changes to the Syllabus and/or Course Requirements

It may be necessary to make some adjustments in the syllabus during the semester in order to respond to unforeseen or extenuating circumstances. Adjustments that are made will be communicated to students both verbally and in writing.

XIV. Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (Optional)

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 2008 NASW Delegate Assembly [http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/Code/code.asp]

Preamble

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession’s focus on individual well-being in a social context and the wellbeing of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. “Clients” is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals’ needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession’s history, are the foundation of social work’s unique purpose and perspective:

- Service
- Social justice
- Dignity and worth of the person
- Importance of human relationships
- Integrity
- Competence

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.
XV. COMPLAINTS

If you have a complaint or concern about the course or the instructor, please discuss it first with the instructor. If you feel cannot discuss it with the instructor, contact your advisor and/or MSW Chair Dr. Tyan Parker Dominguez for further guidance.

XVI. TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN THIS COURSE (OPTIONAL)

- Be mindful of getting proper nutrition, exercise, rest and sleep!
- Come to class.
- Complete required readings and assignments BEFORE coming to class.
- BEFORE coming to class, review the materials from the previous Unit AND the current Unit, AND scan the topics to be covered in the next Unit.
- Come to class prepared to ask any questions you might have.
- Participate in class discussions.
- AFTER you leave class, review the materials assigned for that Unit again, along with your notes from that Unit.
- If you don't understand something, ask questions! Ask questions in class, during office hours, and/or through email!
- Keep up with the assigned readings.

*Don’t procrastinate or postpone working on assignments.*