

# Introduction to Social Work 1AA3: So You Think You Can Help

* Course Information: Sept 8 - Dec 9, 2020, Mondays, 7-10 p.m.

Please note: This course is asynchronous and is not meeting on Monday from 7-10 p.m. as opposed to what’s noted on the course timetable. Please see Course Format section below for more details.

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* Office hours: by appointment
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# Course Overview

## Course Description:

In this introductory course we will explore the idea of ‘helping’ in a world shaped by a wide range of ongoing forms of violence and struggle. We will critically engage with various understandings and ideas about help, and how these different ideas influence who is defined as one who ‘helps’ and as one who ‘requires help’, as well as what help looks like. We will spend time exploring our own assumptions about help and the issues and people we believe need help. In the process, we will examine the messy relationship between the common desire to be good and useful people and the ways in which our own lives are interwoven with the many inequalities of the world. In these various ways, we will approach help as a question rather than a fact.

## The desire to help and to make things better is a motivating factor for many wishing to enter the field of social work and other helping fields. It underlies all social work interventions; at all levels of intervention (e.g., individual, family, group, communities). In this course we examine a number of ideas, constructs and theories that, while

## foundational to social work practice, policy, education and research can also be readily taken into other fields, disciplines and professions.

## Course Objectives:

1. Examine and critique mainstream understandings and representations of social problems and the underlying ideas, values and power structures by using examples from lectures, readings or experiences in group discussion.
2. Begin to recognize frameworks for understanding social problems and evaluate their effectiveness through critical reflective writing.
3. Identify how helping approaches are influenced by the current and historical socio-political context that tend to define who provides and receives help by engaging with a variety of course materials demonstrated in discussion and writing assignments.
4. Critically analyze how help impacts those in receipt of these interventions influenced by social institutions and their underlying ideas, values and power structures in a written critical analysis.
5. Recognize and discuss the different structures and ideas that are involved in, and influence how we provide help through course assignments.

Course objectives for university foundations: By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Critically engage with course material/readings by identifying keywords and main points, summarizing, and raising and responding to questions through discussions and presentations.
2. Demonstrate your academic writing skills by producing an essay with a clear topic, thesis statement, paragraph structure, and conclusions; strong academic sources; and proper citations.
3. Use your critical reflection skills to draw connections between course material, the broader social context, and your own experiences/perspectives and desire to help/be helpful and consider how you might apply this learning in your life.

The basic assumptions of this course concur with the broader curriculum context set by the **School of Social Work's Statement of Philosophy**:

*As social workers, we operate in a society characterized by power imbalances that affect us all. These power imbalances are based on age, class, ethnicity, gender identity, geographic location, health, ability, race, sexual identity and income. We see personal troubles as inextricably linked to oppressive structures. We believe that social workers must be actively involved in the understanding and transformation of injustices in social institutions and in the struggles of people to maximize control over their own lives.*

## Course Format

Information will be presented asynchronously through short, recorded lessons, supplemented with analysis of readings or video content and online discussion.

There will be no synchronous components to the course and material will be posted on avenue to learn each Monday during regularly scheduled course time of 7:00pm – 10:00pm. Students can engage asynchronously with the course material at their own pace each week.

## Required Texts:

There are no required textbooks for this course.

Instead, this course uses readings, media, and other source material that will be available through the library, on-line, or accessed by hyperlink from an electronic copy of this course outline. For some of these readings, you will need to enter your Mac ID. It is possible that some online journal links will “expire” during the course, in which case students should access the relevant online journal through the McMaster Library to retrieve an updated link.

Please note that the reading list on this outline may change over the course of the year. Please check Avenue to Learn for the most updated information on readings. In addition, the instructor and guest speakers will also suggest additional readings as the course proceeds. Students are also expected to be proactive learners and independently seek out additional readings and other knowledge over the duration of the course and to integrate these with the concepts presented in class.

# Course Requirements/Assignments

## Requirements Overview and Deadlines

1. Critical Reflection Paper (10% of final grade) Due: September 28th, 2020
2. Social Problem Response (10% of final grade) Due: November 2nd, 2020
3. Avenue to Learn Discussions (5 discussions, 8% per discussion, 40% of final grade)
4. Critical Analysis Paper 20% Due: November 30th, 2020
5. Participation Quiz (20% of final grade) each week for 10 weeks (2% per quiz)

## Requirement/Assignment Details

### Critical Reflection Paper (10% of final grade)

* + Due September 28th, 2020 by 11:59pm
  + To be submitted electronically on Avenue to Learn in .doc or .docx format
  + TA’s will grade the paper. Feedback will be provided to students if requested.
  + Additional details will be discussed in class and posted on Avenue to Learn.

### Social Problem Response (10% of final grade)

* + Due November 2nd, 2020 by 11:59pm
  + To be submitted electronically on Avenue to Learn in a Flipgrid audio/video file or .doc or .docx format
  + TA’s will grade the submission. Feedback will be provided to students if requested.
  + Additional details will be discussed in class and posted on Avenue to Learn.

### Avenue to Learn Discussion (40% of final grade) based on 5 discussion topics (8% each).

* + Each discussion topic will be open for 2 weeks, and will open at 7:00pm on Monday’s, and close 2 weeks later on Monday’s at 11:59pm.
  + Students will participate in groups of 10 with their TA
  + Discussion will take place on either Avenue to Learn or using Flipgrid.
  + In the first week students will contribute an original post, followed up in the second week by responding to their peers posts
  + Marks will be given based on participation and quality of their contribution to the discussion

### Critical Analysis paper (20% of final grade)

* + Due November 30th at 11:59pm
  + To be submitted electronically on Avenue to Learn in .doc or .docx format
  + TA’s will grade the paper. Feedback will be provided to students if requested.
  + Additional details will be discussed in class and posted on Avenue to Learn.

### Participation Quiz’s (20% of final grade) once a week for 10 weeks (2% per quiz)

* + Each week students will complete a quiz based on the lessons and materials provided.
  + Quiz’s will be conducted on avenue to learn and the purpose is for students to assess their learning of the course materials where marks will be assigned for participation in the quiz’s not for the accuracy of the answers provided

# Assignment Submission and Grading

## Form and Style

* All written assignments will be submitted via Avenue to Learn.
* Written assignments must be typed and double-spaced and submitted with a front page containing the title, student’s name, student number, tutorial section, TA name, and the date. Number all pages (except title page).
* Paper format must be in accordance with the current edition of American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual with particular attention paid to font size (Times-Roman 12), spacing (double spaced) and margins (minimum of 1 inch at the top, bottom, left and right of each page) as papers not meeting these requirements may not be accepted for grading.
* Students are expected to make use of relevant professional and social science literature and other bodies of knowledge in their term assignments. When submitting, please keep a spare copy of your assignments.

## Avenue to Learn or Courses with an On-line Element

## In this course, we will be using Avenue to Learn and Flipgrid. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss with the course instructor.

We will use ‘Avenue to Learn’ for many purposes so it is important that you access it frequently. Through Avenue to Learn we will distribute additional information about course assignments and expectations; inform students about changes to assigned readings; update students on guest presenters; share links to required and optional on-line sources. Assignments will be accessed and submitted through Avenue to Learn. Class cancellations will also be announced through Avenue to Learn.

Please do not email the instructor or Teaching Assistants (TA) from Avenue as the email function does not allow us to respond to emails. Please use only collvec@mcmaster.ca to email the course instructor. TA emails will be shared on Avenue to Learn.

Students who are unfamiliar with the ‘Avenue to Learn’ system should familiarize themselves with the system as soon as possible; if you have any questions review the online tips and the ‘esupport’ help available on the McMaster ‘Avenue to Learn’ webpage. If a solution is not found, please seek immediate assistance by contacting the TA or instructor.

## Submitting Assignments & Grading

Assignments will be submitted on Avenue to Learn. Feedback and grades will also be made available via Avenue to Learn

## Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last five digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

## Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

# Student Responsibilities

* Students are expected to contribute to the creation of a respectful and constructive learning environment. Students should read material in preparation for class, attend class on time and remain for the full duration of the class. A formal break will be provided in the middle of each class, students are to return from the break on time.
* In the past, student and faculty have found that non-course related use of laptop computers and hand-held electronic devices during class to be distracting and at times disruptive. Consequently, during class, students are expected to only use such devices for taking notes and other activities directly related to the lecture or class activity taking place.
* Please check with the instructor before using any audio or video recording devices in the classroom.

## Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

* Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
* Improper collaboration in group work.
* Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

## Authenticity/Plagiarism Detection

In this course, we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an

electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the [Turnitin.com Policy](file:///C:\Users\Lorna\Documents\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\J07G1XFK\www.mcmaster.ca\academicintegrity).

## Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the *Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities* (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

## Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

## Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

## Accessibility Statement

The School of Social Work recognizes that people learn and express their knowledge in different ways. We are committed to reducing barriers to accessibility in the classroom and working towards classrooms that welcome diverse learners. If you have accessibility concerns or want to talk about your learning needs, please be in touch with the course instructor.

## Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office *normally within 10 working days* of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, they may not reply.

### Extensions and Incomplete Courses

Extensions

All instructors understand that life situations sometimes make it very difficult to hand in an assignment on the date it is due. If you need more time to complete an assignment, talk with your instructor – in advance of the assignment deadline! Once you and your instructor have agreed on a new due date, it is your responsibility to submit your assignment on time. If you find yourself unable to meet deadlines in more than one course, please reach out to Tammy Maikawa, Administrator ([millet@mcmaster.ca](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) ) or Sandra Preston, Undergraduate Chair ([prestosl@mcmaster.ca](mailto:prestosl@mcmaster.ca) ). We are here to support you to think about options (such as reducing your course load) that can take the stress off and contribute to your success in the program overall.

Incomplete courses

If you are not able to complete all of your assignments by the end of term, you have the option of contacting the instructor to request an Incomplete (INC) on the course. If the instructor agrees, (taking into account the amount of outstanding coursework and the time it will likely take to complete), the instructor will enter the grade you have so far in the course (the default grade) and the course will appear in Mosaic as INC (incomplete).

The School’s requirements for completing courses depend on a) the nature of the course (whether it is a foundation course\*, or a social and political context course) and b) when you are hoping to start placement. For example, a student who has an incomplete in a foundation course cannot start placement. Please see the [Policy on Extensions and Incompletes in the BSW Program](https://socialwork.mcmaster.ca/resources/undergraduate-resources/policy-on-extensions-and-incompletes-november-2019.docx/view) for more details.

At approximately 52-60 days after the end of term, the Mosaic system will automatically change an INC to the default grade. Depending on the default grade, this might affect your standing or progress in the program.

*As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your progress in the program, please connect with Tammy Maikawa, Administrator (*[*millet@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) *) or Sandra Preston, Undergraduate Chair (*[*prestosl@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:prestosl@mcmaster.ca)*).*

# Course Weekly Topics and Readings

## Week 1: September 14th, 2020

Topics:

* Introduction and Thinking Critically

Readings & Materials:

* No Readings or Materials

## Week 2: September 21th, 2020

Topics:

* Unpacking Helping – Representations of Helping

Readings & Materials:

* Burr, V. (2003). Social constructionism (2nd ed.). *What is social constructionism?* (pp. 1-24). New York, NY: Routledge

## Week 3: September 28th, 2020

Topics:

* Socio-political Context of ‘Help’: Charity and Moral Models

Readings & Materials:

* Farwell, M., Shier, M., & Handy, f. (2019). Explaining trust in Canadian charities: The influence of public perceptions of accountability, transparency, familiarity and institutional trust. *Voluntas*, 30, 768-782.
* BBC (2014). Ethics Guide: Arguments Against Charity. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/charity/against_1.shtml>

## Week 4: October 5th, 2020

Topics:

* Socio-political Context of ‘Help’: Medical Model

Readings & Materials:

* McCulloch, A., Ryrie, I., Williamson, T. & St. John, T. (2005). Has the medical model a future? *Mental Health Review*, 10, (1), pp. 1–11.
* Ashcroft, R., McMillan, C., Ambrose-Miller, W., McKee, R., & Belle Brown, J.(2018). The emerging role of social work in primary health care: A survey of social workers in Ontario family health teams. *Health & Social Work*, 43(2), 109-117.
* By Happenchance, (2018, August 18). What is the medical model? And why do people hate it so much? Retrieved from <https://www.byhappenchance.com/blogroll/what-is-the-medical-model>

## Week 5: October 12th, 2020 – Winter Intersession – No Readings or Materials

## Week 6: October 19th, 2019

Topics:

* Socio-political Context of ‘Help’: Social Welfare and Other State Sponsored Models

Readings & Materials:

* Macdonald, D. (2017). *Ontario needs a raise: who benefits from a $15 minimum wage?* Retrieved from Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
* Pennisi, S., Baker Collins, S. (2017). Workfare under Ontario Works: Making sense of jobless work. *Social Policy & Administration*, 51(7),1311-1329.

## Week 7: October 26th, 2020

Topics:

* Understanding Social Problems

Readings & Materials:

* Lyon-Callo., V. (2012). Homelessness or the violence of poverty and exploitation: Does it matter? *Rethinking Marxism*, 24(2), 215-220.
* McIntyre, L., Tougas, D., Rondeau, K., & Mah, C.L. (2016). ‘In’-sights about food banks from a critical interpretive synthesis of academic literature. *Agriculture and Human Values.* 33(4). 843-859.
* Michailakis, D. & Schirmer, W. (2014). Social work and social problems: A contribution from systems theory and constructionism*, International Journal of Social Welfare*, (23), 4, 431-442
* Haggerty, R. (2013, December 19) How *to solve a social problem* [video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVylRwmYmJE>

## Week 8: November 2nd, 2020

Topics:

* Experiences of “help” and being “helped”

Readings & Materials:

* Garland-Thomson, R. (2017). Building a World with Disability in It. In Waldschmidt A., Berressem H., & Ingwersen M. (Eds.), Culture – Theory – Disability: Encounters between Disability Studies and Cultural Studies (pp. 51-62).
* Seth, P., Slark, M., Boulanger, J., & Dolmage, L. (2015). Survivors and sisters talk about the Huronia class action lawsuit, control, and the kind of support we want. *Journal on Developmental Disabilities*. 21, (2), 60-68.
* Annie Elainey. (2018, March 28). What does it mean to “overcome” disability? [video file]. *YouTube*. Received from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aV6U3nf8RB0&list=PLzbLZiJEtlO4PDmRBLcNDsdbXZ3icMLPd&index=1>

## Week 9: November 9th, 2020

Topics:

* Experiences of “help” and being “helped”

Readings & Materials:

* Alberton, A., Angell, B., Gorey, K., & Grenier, S. (2020). Homelessness among Indigenous peoples in Canada: The impacts of child welfare involvement and educational achievement. *Child and Youth Services Review,* 111, 1-9.
* CBC News: The National (2015, June 2) *Stolen Children: Residential School Survivors Speak [*video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdR9HcmiXLA>

## Week 10: November 16th, 2020

Topics:

* Help & Intersectionality

Readings & Materials:

* Carbado, D.W., Crenshaw. K.W., Mays, V.M., & Tomlinson, B. (2013). Intersectionality: Mapping the movements of a theory. *Du Bois Review,* 10(2). 303-312.
* Ferguson, S. (2014, September 29). *What is Privilege?* Retrieved from <https://everydayfeminism.com/2014/09/what-is-privilege/>
* Ngozi Adichie, C. (2009, July) The *danger of a single story* [video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en>

## Week 11: November 23rd, 2020

Topics:

* International Systems of Help

Readings & Materials:

* Heron, B. (2006). Critically considering international social work practica. *Critical Social Work. 7(2).*
* Richey, L. A., & Ponte, S. (2008). Better (Red)™ than Dead? Celebrities, consumption and international aid. *Third world quarterly*, *29*(4), 711-729.

## Week 12: December 2nd, 2019

Topics:

* Can Help Be Helpful?

Readings & Materials:

* Dunn, E. (2019, April) *Helping others makes us happier: But it matters how we do it* [video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_dunn_helping_others_makes_us_happier_but_it_matters_how_we_do_it>
* Benjamin, A. (2017). Doing anti-oppressive social work: The importance of resistance, history, and strategy. In D. Baines (Ed.), *Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice: Social Justice Social Work* (pp.). Blackpoint, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

## Week 13: December 7th, 2020

Topics:

* Course Reflection & Wrap Up

Readings & Tutorials:

* No readings for this week.

## Additional Resources

Additional Resources will be shared on Avenue to Learn.