

# Social Work 700 Critical Approaches to Practice and Leadership

* January 13th, to April 14th, 2021, Wednesdays, 11:30am-2:20pm.
* Classroom: synchronous, online
* Instructor: Ann Fudge Schormans
* Office hours: By appointment
* Email: [fschorm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:fschorm@mcmaster.ca)
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# Course Overview

## Course Description:

This course critically analyzes social work practice and leadership including discourse, practice theories and the nature of practice knowledge. Issues such as shifting sources and forms of professional power and authority are also examined. There is ongoing attention to questions of ethics throughout the course.

## Course Objectives:

The course emphasizes the integration of theory and practice, and an understanding of the social and political contexts in which social work operates. By the end of this course you should have a critical understanding of:

1. What power is and why we need to pay attention to it.
2. The relationship between power, theory and practice/leadership.
3. Why service users' knowledge and theory are crucial in social work.
4. A number of specific theoretical frameworks that practice/leadership is based upon and the intersections between different frameworks.
5. The worldviews, political perspectives, epistemologies and ontologies that underpin social work practices/leadership and theories.
6. How historical and current social-political contexts shape you (as a social worker) and your work.
7. The need for attending to ethical questions and tensions in your work.

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

This course has been organized as a series of seminars and is intended to create a participatory, dialogical and collaborative environment for collective & mutual learning. Information will be presented, shared and developed through a mix of short lectures, individual and group work, small and large group discussions, and (possibly) guest presentations.

In that we will be online this term, our discussion in the first class will address the synchronous and asynchronous elements of this course. We will discuss and negotiate the length of time we meet synchronously each week, using Zoom. We will also spend time discussing the use of zoom and ideas for ensuring ‘zoom fatigue’ is attended to (for example, cameras turned on/off, frequency of breaks, etc), as well as alternative ways of participating in a virtual course. Students may also be working in small groups, both synchronously (as part of the scheduled class) and asynchronously (as part of an assignment).

As adult learners, students are encouraged to think critically and connect classroom discussion with their own personal, professional and political experiences in the field of social work. Students are also expected to take responsibility as active participants throughout this learning process.

The bulk of each class meeting will be used to clarify, discuss, and critically examine the readings and course constructs and themes. Students are expected to take responsibility for summarizing the key themes of the articles, identifying theoretical, practical and ethical issues, and reflecting on their own professional practice and research.

For the winter term, all meetings will be held using Zoom. Zoom links will be posted to Avenue to Learn.

## Required Texts:

There are no required texts for this course. All materials will be supplied by the instructor and/or posted on Avenue to Learn.

## Additional Suggested Readings

Any additional suggested readings will be supplied by the instructor and/or posted on Avenue to Learn.

# Course Requirements/Assignments

## Requirements Overview and Deadlines

Grades for the course will be based on the fulfilment of the following requirements:

1. One in-class assignment (30%): Assignment will be started in Week 4 (February 3rd, 2021) and is due before start of class in Week 5 (Feb. 12, 2021). Can be completed individually, in pairs or small groups (**5 maximum**).
2. Critical Reflection on Practice Tension Paper (10-12 pages, not counting title page or references) or Presentation (length tbd) (35%). Papers are due anytime up to March 10th, 2021. Presentation dates will be determined in class. Papers and presentations can be completed individually, in pairs or small groups (ideally, **no more than 3**).
3. Critical Practice Paper (10-12 pages, not counting title page or references) (35%), due anytime up to April 20th, 2021. This assignment is to be completed individually.

\*Note: students have the option of submitting assignments in written form, as an audio or video recording, or in another alternative format. We will discuss this at the first class. Students choosing an alternative format should discuss this with the instructor prior to their completion of the assignment.

## Requirement/Assignment Details

*Full assignment details will be posted to Avenue to Learn.*

### In-class assignment (Week 4)

* + following a short lecture, students will work individually, in pairs or small groups on an assignment related to the focus area of that day’s class (Knowledge, Power and Practice/Leadership)
  + prior to the class, students are required to read the assigned readings for the week, as well as supplementary materials and a short list of questions for consideration that will be posted on A2L. While no other reading or preparation is required, students will be required to draw on other knowledges they have (e.g., from this and other courses, social work experience, lived experience, general knowledge, etc) to complete the assignment

### 2. Critical Reflection on Practice/Leadership Tension Paper or Presentation – students will be required to share a case study that highlights:

* + a challenge or tension that they have experienced in their own practice
  + the process they engaged in as they attempted to resolve this tension
  + and reflections and questions they continue to have about their experience
  + this could include a tension in using a specific theoretical frame and/or practice or leadership modality, in their ability to support a service user, or collegial/organizational relationships, etc.
  + students will be required to describe the tension, their thought processes and the feelings they had throughout the process drawing on course themes, readings and discussions
  + incorporate as well, the ways that who they are (as an individual, community member, social worker, etc.) impacted, influenced or shaped their thoughts, feelings, and actions in this case
  + make use of class readings and discussions, as well as relevant professional and social science literature and other bodies of knowledge in this critical reflection (ideally, all source material should be current unless it is a seminal piece)

3. Critical Practice/Leadership Paper

* In this exercise, students have an opportunity to critically reflect on their own values, ideas, tensions and questions regarding social work practice/leadership as related to three practice protocols at play in the current context.
* Students will be provided three protocol options to choose from for this assignment.
* Students will be required to make use of class readings and discussions, as well as relevant professional and social science literature and other bodies of knowledge in this critical reflection (ideally, all source material should be current unless it is a seminal piece).

\*Note: students have the option of submitting assignments in written form, as an audio or video recording, or in another alternative format. We will discuss this at the first class. Students choosing an alternative format should discuss this with the instructor prior to their completion of the assignment.

# Assignment Submission and Grading

## Form and Style

* Written assignments must be typed and double-spaced and submitted with a front page containing the title, student’s name, student number, 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).
* 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.
* If submitting an audio- or videotaped report, students must speak to the instructor regarding time length of the recording.
* Any other alternative formats must be discussed with the instructor well in advance of the submission date.

## Avenue to Learn

In this course, we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names; usernames for 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.

## Submitting Assignments & Grading

Please submit assignments by the beginning of the class in which the assignment is due, or before midnight if the due date does not coincide with a class. Text-based assignments are to be submitted on A2L. Alternative assignment formats (e.g., audio / visual / arts-based are to be submitted to the instructor: [fschorm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:fschorm@mcmaster.ca)

If you require an extension, please discuss this with the instructor in advance of the assignment due date.

Additional assignment information will be available on 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.

In that we are all participating in the course remotely this year, the following possibilities exist for return of graded materials in this course:

1. Submit/grade/return assignments electronically (via A2L or email – we will discuss this in the first class).

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class and/or in negotiation with the instructor.

## Extreme Circumstances

Please note: In response to challenges created by the pandemic, the instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term, this includes readings, assignments and activities – this will, however, be done in consultation with the students.

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 (if possible). While breaks will be provided in each class, students are invited to move around or take other short breaks as necessary. Students are to return from any 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. This is true for synchronous zoom classes as well. 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. During synchronous Zoom class time, students using their laptops to take notes must mute their microphones.

## Attendance

In this seminar class students learn not only from the course materials, but also from engagement with their peers and the course instructor. Should you be unable to attend a particular class, please advise the course instructor ahead of the class.

## 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) Print URL <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

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

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.

The School of Social Work requests and expects that:

* Instructors inform students about what they will record, when they will record, and what they will do with the recording
* Students who wish to record contact the instructor first. This is so the instructor can inform the class when permission has been given to a student to record (the identity of the student will be kept confidential by the instructor).
* Recordings by students are used for personal study only, and not shared with anyone else, and are deleted when no longer needed for personal study
* There will likely be times when students or guest speakers share personal or sensitive information. In this circumstance we expect everyone to stop recording. The instructor (or student or guest sharing) may also ask for recording to stop, and we expect everyone to respect such a request.

# Course Weekly Topics and Readings

All Term 2 Zoom links will be posted on Avenue to Learn

\*Please note, the readings may change prior to the start of term, and may change again following the discussion we have in the first class.

## Week 1: January 13, 2021

### Topics:

### Introduction to course, weekly topics, themes and assignments, as well as discussion related to use of zoom.

* Students are also invited to email the instructor to set a time to meet should they have additional questions.

## Week 2: January 20, 2021

### Topics:

* What is Critical Social Work Practice/Leadership?

### Readings:

* Duchinsky, R., Lampitt, S., & Bell, S. (2016). Introduction. *Sustaining Social Work, Between Power and Powerlessness*, Palgrave, pp. 1-12.
* Campbell, C., Baikie, G. (2012). Beginning at the Beginning: An exploration of critical social work. *Critical Social Work, 13*(1), 67-81.
* Lappé, F. M. and Marchese, D. (Dec. 22nd, 2019). Frances Moore Lappé on the power of democratic participation. ‘We have to work on courage. This is the time to do what scares us.’ *New York Times Magazine, pp. 13-15.*

(to be distributed by the instructor)

## Week 3: January 27, 2021

### Topics:

* Reflecting on the Current Context of Social Work Practice: Evidenced Based Practice, Neoliberalism, and Precarity
* ***Sign up for Class Presentations***

### Readings:

* Plath, D. (2006) Evidence-Based Practice: Current Issues and Future Directions. *Australian Social Work, 59* 1), 56-72.
* Holly Echo-Hawk M.S. (2011): Indigenous Communities and Evidence Building. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, 43*(4), 269-275.
* Garrett, P.M. (2019). What are we talking about when we talk about ‘Neoliberalism’? *European Journal of Social Work, 22*(2), 188-200.

## Week 4: February 3, 2021

### Topics:

* Knowledge, Power and Practice/Leadership
* ***In-class assignment***

### Readings:

*For this week, please read three of the following readings:*

* Duchinsky, R., Lampitt, S., & Bell, S. (2016). Chapter 1. *Sustaining Social Work, Between Power and Powerlessness*, Palgrave, pp. 13-34.
* Gilbert. T. and Powell, J.L. (2010). Power and Social Work in the United Kingdom: A Foucauldian Excursion**.** *Journal of Social Work, 10*(1), 3-22.
* Todd, S. (2011) “That Power and Privilege Thing”: Securing Whiteness in Community Work, *Journal of Progressive Human Services, 22*(2), 117-134
* Fudge Schormans, A. (2015). Corroding the comforts of social work knowing: Persons with intellectual disabilities claim the right of inspection over public photographic images. *Social work artfully: Beyond borders and boundaries*, 173-188.
* Beresford, P. (2012). The Theory and Philosophy Behind Service User Involvement in *Social Care, Service Users and Service User Involvement*. Beresford, P. and Carr, S. (Eds). pp.21-37. Research Highlights no.55, Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
* George, P., Coleman, B., & Barnoff, L. (2007). Beyond "providing services" - Voices of service users on structural social work practice in community-based social service agencies. *Canadian Social Work Review, 24*(1), 5-22.

## Week 5: February 10, 2021

### Topics:

* Ethics and Clinical Practice/Leadership
* ***In-class assignments due prior to the start of class.***

### Readings:

*For this week, please read three readings from this list.*

* Baril, A. (2017). The Somatechnologies of Canada’s Medical Assistance in Dying Law: LGBTQ Discourses on Suicide and the Injunction to Live. *Somatechnics, 17*(2), 201-217.
* Fine, M. & Teram, E. (2013) “Overt and Covert Ways of Responding to Moral Injustices in Social Work Practice: Heroes and Mild-Mannered Social Work Bipeds”. *British Journal of Social Work, 43*, 1312-1329.
* Frazee, Catherine. (January 31st, 2020).Remarks for END OF LIFE, EQUALITY & DISABILITY: A NATIONAL FORUM ON MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

<https://vimeo.com/388515714?ref=fb-share&fbclid=IwAR1A8MlYtFYWVV6ninQ7_Liuavo8xzdo5Bi4NZx2XfhMnXBPFx8taqYO1GM>

* Rossiter, A. (2011) “Unsettled Social Work: The Challenge of Levinas’s Ethics” *British Journal of Social Work, 41,* 980-995.
* Shildrick, M. (2015). Death, Debility and Disability. *Feminism & Psychology, 25*(1), 155-160.
* Weinberg, M. (2010). “The Social Construction of Social Work Ethics: Politicizing and Broadening the Lens” *Journal of Progressive Human Service, 21*, 32-44.

**Week 6: February 17, 2021**

### No class, Midterm Break

## Week 7: February 24, 2021

### Topics:

* (Dis)Ability theories and practices

### Readings:

* Prince, J. (2016). Reconsidering Knowledge and power: Reflections on Disability Communities and Disability Studies in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies, (5)*2.
* Poole, J.M., Jivraj, T., Arslanian, A., Bellows, K., Chiasson, S., Hakimy, H., Pasini, J., & Reid, J. (2012) “Sanism, ‘Mental Health’, and Social Work/Education: A Review and Call to Action.” *Intersectionalities, 1*, 20-36.
* Mingus, M. (2018). “Disability Justice” is Simply Another Term for Love. <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2018/11/03/disability-justice-is-simply-another-term-for-love/>

\*You can read the transcript of this keynote or watch the video – both are available at this link.

## Week 8: March 3, 2021

### Topics:

* Critical Race Theories and Practices/Leadership

### Readings:

* Almeida, R.V., Marie Werkmeister Rozas, L.M., Cross-Denny, B., Kyeunghae Lee, K., & Yamada, A.M. (2019) Coloniality and Intersectionality in Social Work Education and Practice, *Journal of Progressive Human Services, 30*(2), 148-164, DOI: 10.1080/10428232.2019.1574195
* Erevelles, N., & Minear, A. (2010). Unspeakable Offenses: Untangling Race and Disability in Discourses of Intersectionality. *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies, 4(*2), 127-145.
* Lee, E. and Bhuyan, R. (2013). Negotiating within Whiteness in Cross-Cultural Clinical Encounters. *Social Service Review, 87(*1), 98-130

## Week 9: March 10, 2021

### Topics:

* Indigenous Theories and Practices
* ***Critical Reflection Papers due.***

### Readings:

* Absolon, K. (2010). Indigenous wholistic theory: A knowledge set for practice. First Peoples Child & Family Review, 5(2), 74-87.
* Stevens. N. (2010) “From the Inside Out: Spirituality as the Heart of Aboriginal Helping in [spite of] Western Systems” Native Social Work Journal. 7. 181-197.
* Stientstra, D., & Ashcroft, T. (2010). Voyaging on the Seas of Spirit: an ongoing journey towards understanding disability and humanity. *Disability and Society*, 25(2), 191- 203.

## Week 10: March 17, 2021

### Topics:

* Critical practices, gender and sexuality

### Readings:

* Freud, Sophie (1999) “The Social Construction of Normality”. *Families in Society, 80*(4), 333-339.
* Alaers, J. (2010) “Two-Spirited People and Social Work Practice: Exploring the History of Aboriginal Gender and Sexual Diversity”. *Critical Social Work, 11*(1). 63-79.
* Burdge, B.J. (2007) “Bending Gender, Ending Gender: Theoretical Foundations for Social Work Practice with the Transgender Community”. *Social Work, 52*(3). 243-250.

## Week 11: March 24, 2021

### Topics:

* Critical Practices: Narrative Approaches to Practice

### Readings:

* Roscoe, K. D., Carson, A.M., & Madoc-Jones, L. (2011). Narrative Social Work: Conversations between Theory and Practice. *Journal of Social Work Practice, (25)*1, 47–61.
* McGinty, C. (2017). A Critical and Maternal Narrative Approach to Practice, Enhancing Recognition and Solidarity with Ambivalent Representations, *Practice,* DOI: 10.1080/09503153.2017.1294151
* tbd

## Week 12: March 31, 2021

### Topics:

* Critical Practices: Trauma Informed Care

Readings:

* Hopper, E.K., Bassuk, E.L. and Olivet, J. (2010). Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Service Settings. *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal, 3*, 80-100
* Scarpino, G. (2007) “Resilience and Urban Aboriginal Women”. *Native Social Work Journal, 6,* 33-55
* <http://trauma-informed.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Trauma-informed_Toolkit.pdf>

## Week 13: April 7, 2021

### Topics:

* Critical Practices: Critical Approaches to Practitioner Research

Readings:

### Chapter 4 Sustaining Social Work

* MacRae, M., Smith, M. & Cree, V.E. (2016). The Role of Practitioner Research in Developing Cultures of Learning in Children and Families Social Work. *Practice: Social Work in Action, 28*(3):181-197.
* Healy, K. (2001). Participatory Action Research and Social Work: A critical appraisal. *International Social Work, 44*(1), 93-105.

## Week 14: April 14, 2021

### Topics:

* Re-visiting Critical Social Work
* ***Remember, final papers are due anytime up to April 20, 2021.***

### Readings:

Choose one of the following readings:

* Stepney, P. (2006) “Mission Impossible? Critical Practice in Social Work”, *British Journal of Social Work, 36,* 1289-1307.
* Hyslop, I. (2012). Social work as a practice of freedom. *Journal of Social Work*, *12*(4), 404-422.
* Wilson, G. (2013) “Evidencing Reflective Practice in Social Work Education: Theoretical Uncertainties and Practical Challenges”. *British Journal of Social Work, 43,* 154-172.

## Additional Resources

Additional resources will be posted on Avenue to Learn.