

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
MSW PROGRAMME
2007/2008**

**MSW 800: TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SOCIAL WORK: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY
AND PRACTICE PERSPECTIVES**

INSTRUCTORS:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a theory based yet hands-on course with two interconnected objectives: to provide participants with an understanding of, and skills to implement critical pedagogy and indigenously informed teaching methodologies in the classroom; and, to help participants identify and enhance the adaptation of local/indigenous knowledge into the social work profession. Critical pedagogy is an antithesis of traditional pedagogy approaches that emphasized the teacher as knowledge broker and the student as receiver of knowledge. Traditional teaching and learning work was about content mastery. The “new” pedagogy – sometimes referred to as critical pedagogy or social constructivism - emphasizes the student as learner in a social context and knowledge as produced within a social context. In this course, participants will be given tools that will help them critique, and move away from dominant traditional pedagogical approaches to learning about and implementing this student-centered pedagogy and learn to work towards accommodating individual differences and building social systems.

Knowledge is socially constructed and is located within varying socio-political contexts. The knowledge utilized in many social work classrooms draws heavily from western knowledge with its conceptions of addressing individual and community social issues. This course will address the complex ways in which indigenous African and non-African worldviews and paradigms can be juxtaposed, combined and/ or held in tension for the local classroom. The pedagogy that characterizes much of the teaching at the post-secondary level is presently inadequate for evaluating the opportunities and the dangers of foreign/western based social work models and knowledge. Insights from student-centered social work contexts along with ground-breaking work with indigenous ways of teaching and learning provide the basis for the resources that will be used in this seminar.

A GUIDE TO COURSE FORMAT AND FRAMEWORK

Readings: The assigned readings vary in their levels of difficulty; some may be quite difficult but there is also material that can be read fairly quickly. The point of all this reading is to gain some understanding of how various researchers and theorists discuss the thematically organized social work issues and to use their arguments to help uncover personal beliefs about socio-economic and political issues – especially as they relate to social work. Our expectation is not that you memorize what these various authors say but that you use the readings to explore your reactions to what you have read, to think about how it confirms or challenges your assumptions about social work paradigms, how it helps you examine your own educational and social work experiences, how you might try new strategies and how it helps you question your professional practices. In effect, we want you to use the readings to begin reflecting on what you believe about learning and engaging in social work practice given the social and cultural nuances of your locale.

Self as informant: these readings are just one way of helping you explore social work paradigms and theories. We will also be using ourselves as informants. This means that we will be examining ourselves as learners, as readers and as writers to check the validity of the ideas presented in the readings, that is, to use ourselves as lenses to examine the theory.

Learner as informant: another vehicle for helping you develop as a reflective practitioner will be to work with students in the course, to engage them as informants to help you (and them) understand course material (mainly through discussions, email, and presentations).

Writing: with each assigned text, we will be asking you to reflect, in writing, on what you have been reading. The purpose of this reflective writing is to help you clarify your ideas and raise issues from the readings that are of concern for you. To help with this, you may want to consider asking yourself the following questions about the readings:

- Does it make sense?
- Do I understand?
- What helped me understand?
- Is this true for me as a learner/social worker?
- How does this connect to theories I have read before in the subject matter?
- Is this consistent with my beliefs as a learner/social worker?
- Is this what happens in my practice – e.g. in my social work practice?
- What questions does it raise about my own reading/writing/teaching?

Therefore, the overall framework of this course includes lectures, presentations/ and/ or workshops, discussions, and critical inquiry into social work practices. The material and learning experiences you will be exposed to are based on three principles:

- Teaching and learning are aspects of the same process;
- Your view of social work affects how you approach the practicum component of your learning to practice;
- Reflective construction is necessary for the development of social work expertise; and,
- Your personal history of addressing social issues will affect your work as a social work practitioner.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course will be conducted as a seminar. Students are expected to do the prescribed readings for the daily topics and to actively participate in class discussions. There will be three **types** of assignments:

- The **first** type of assignment is a response/reaction paper on the key assigned daily readings. These response papers will follow the guide of the first day theme on critical reading, thinking and writing. A response paper is **not** a summary of the readings; rather, it serves to highlight the main points, critique the readings and is used to connect the readings and class discussion to one's personal/political experiences and stances.
- The **second** type of assignment concerns an application of the conceptual framework of the course to local social issues. Together we will do an analysis of a social problem within a given geopolitical or cultural context. As a class, we will begin by analyzing ways in which the history of social work is presented in order to hone our understanding of the intersections of culture, politics, education, consequently looking at the presentation of indigenous knowledge in social work practice. Following this analysis, students will engage in their own analysis of given social problem and use text to define, analyze
- The **third** type of assignment regards your learning-teaching portfolio in which you will reflect as well as analyze your journey in becoming a critical informed practitioner. **Statement of teaching philosophy.** This statement should run 1000-1500 words and be suitable for inclusion in a teaching portfolio.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Our regular schedule for our daily meetings will look like this:

9:00 am- 10:00 am	Professor presentation on key concepts from readings seminar discussion on the assigned readings
10:00 am- 11:00 am	Discussion on the assigned readings
11:00 am-12:00 pm	Activity relating to assigned readings
12:00 pm-1: 00 pm	Break
1:00 pm-3:00 pm	Teaching workshop/presentations/ critical collaborative work
3: 00 pm- 5:00 pm	Learning log entries; readings; reflections; assignments

Our scheduled break is intentionally long enough to allow us all to find and eat lunch, use the restroom, stretch our legs, etc. in the middle of what is admittedly a long class session. Please do not try to stretch those sixty minutes into sixty five or seventy.

GUIDE TO MARKING/GRADING

In evaluating how your performance in assignments we will use the following "grid" as a guide to your grade.

Characteristics	Proficient Development	Limited Development	Not Evident
1. Identification of a significant idea			
2. Compared with/ informed by other			

readings			
3. Clear articulation of what was learned			
4. A clearly written question, comment and quote for class discussion			
5. Connection to other readings or class discussion			
6. Inclusion of personal experiences (e.g. are appropriate for topic)			
7. The thoughtfulness of responses – moves beyond the superficial; relates topic to own self-development; etc.			
8. Conclusions drawn show understanding of the teaching/learning process			

- A: includes first 4 characteristics and at least 3 of the remaining characteristics
 B: includes first 4 characteristics and at least 2 of the remaining characteristics
 C: includes first 4 characteristics and at least 1 of the remaining characteristics

REQUIRED TEXT: Assigned readings

There is no text book. The specific readings for each session are identified in the course outline. A course kit with all required readings will be provided.

DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Date	Topic and Readings
December 10 & 11, 2007	<p>Introduction to Critical Pedagogy and Critical Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of theme (purpose, content, operation structure and expectations) • Introduction to theme topics/concepts and ideological framework • Reading texts; examples, and exercises <p>Introduction to Global Standards for Education and Training of the Social Work Profession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining the meaning and practice of ethics • Examining values and standards <p>Required Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kurkland, D. (1995) <i>I Know What it Says... What Does it Mean? Critical Skills for Critical Reading</i>. Wadsworth Publishing, Belmont, California. • Hitchcock, D (1983). <i>Critical Thinking: A Guide to Evaluating Information</i>. Methuen Publications: Agincourt, Ontario. • McGregor, S. (2003). Critical discourse analysis: A primer. <i>Kappa Omnicron Nu, Forum</i>. Retrieved from http://www.kon.org/archives/forum/15-1/mcgregor_print.doc • Simon, R (1992). <i>Teaching against the Grain: Texts for a Pedagogy of Possibility</i>. (Critical Studies in Education and Culture Series). Bergin & Garvey, New York, NY. • Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession (2004). Vishanthie Sewpaul (IASSW Chair) and David Jones (IFSW Co-Chair) http://www.iassw-aiets.org/ <p>Key concepts/questions for examination</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Critical pedagogy</i> - a practical approach to teaching, learning, and research that emphasizes teaching through critical dialogue and dialectical analysis of everyday experience. It is about teaching through praxis. b. <i>Critical thinking</i> - Critical thinking requires critical skills which are important not only for detecting flaws but also for recognizing good arguments and sound claims. Hence, you should be learning not only to detect flaws, but also to recognize good arguments, arguments which give you good reasons for accepting their conclusions. c. <i>Critical literacy</i> – ways of reading, writing and talking about texts that moves beyond personal associations to broader political and social undertakings. d. <i>Discourses</i> – ubiquitous ways of knowing; valuing and experiencing the world. e. <i>Code breaker, text participant, text user; text analyst</i> – all literacy skills that are critical for learners to develop in order to use text effectively in their own individual and collective interests, across a range of

	<p>discourses, texts, and tasks.</p> <p>Critical issues/questions for reflection and examination</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Why are ethics and values critical to the profession and what are some of the current debates? How can values, ethics and standards be framed to reflect the local rather than the global? What is the relationship between social workers and service users? <p>Exercises & Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Using the OMSITOG approach – that is, the seven steps procedure to critically assessing what you read (Hitchcock); and, Using Critical Discourse Analysis to understand the meanings of words spoken and written by others (McGregory). <p>Exercises and Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying values within social locations and history Understanding the connections between personal values and social work practice
<p>December 12 & 13, 2007</p>	<p>Indigenous Knowledge, Indigenous Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining “indigenous” knowledge (culture, language, the locale) Defining knowledge <p>Social Work Practice: Applications of Indigenous knowledge practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social work and social justice: indigenization? Roles of social workers – agents of control or change? <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Osei-Hwedie, K. (1996) The Indigenization of Social Work Practice Education in Africa: The Dilemma of Theory & Method’, <i>Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk</i> 32(3):215–25. Anucha, U. (2007). Exploring a New Direction for Social Work Education and Training in Nigeria. <i>Social Work Education</i>, 1-14. Moldovan, V. & O, Moyo. (2007). Contradictions in the ideologies of helping: Examples from Zimbabwe and Moldova. <i>International Social Work</i> 50(4), 461-472. <p>Critical issues/questions for reflection and examination</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent and in what ways can indigenous knowledge help African social workers address the major social issues of the 21st century such poverty, unemployment and the consequences of the HIV/AIDS pandemic?

**December
14, 2007**

A New Direction for Social Work Education in Africa?

- Dlamini, S. Nombuso (2007) *Introduction. New Directions in African Education*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press.
- Mupedziswa, R. (1992). Africa at the Crossroads: Major challenges for Social Work Education and Practice *Journal of Social Development in Africa* Vol.7 No. 2, 19-38

Critical issues/questions for reflection and examination

- a. What new/current approaches exist for re-visioning social work education and practice in Africa?
- b. How can social work education in Africa develop and adopt new approaches that can support the transformation of social work globally?