

Texas A & M University - Commerce

School of Social Work

SWK 497/597: Social Work in Costa Rica (*tentative syllabus*)

May Mini Semester 2015 (05/18 – 06/03)

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| INSTRUCTOR | Rebecca Judd Ph.D., LMSW-IPR Instructor of record |
| OFFICE LOCATION | 311 Henderson |
| OFFICE HOURS | TBD |
| VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS | TBD |
| CONTACT INFORMATION | Office Number: 903-468-8190 Rebecca.judd@tamuc.edu |
| COURSE DESCRIPTION | This course explores the evolution and current development of social work practice in Costa Rica through building knowledge links between political processes, economic constraints and the actual implementation of public policies. Focusing on how modern and evolving bureaucracies along with cultural and institutional frameworks of a given political system dictate the ways in which governments work and interact with the public/private sector. |
| COURSE RATIONAL | A significant shift has been occurring in the United States over the past several decade and according to the State Comptroller's Office of Texas, the Hispanic population in 2006 constituted 35.7% of Texans. By 2020 the Texas Hispanic population is expected to outnumber the White population. Through this experience, the students will learn about social work and the welfare system in Costa Rica. In the United States, the course will provide the cultural, historical and political context for preparation of the Costa Rica experience and upon return, provide the context for translating the Costa Rica cultural and language experience to work with other subpopulations of Latino immigrants in the United States. |

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to prepare students with knowledge, skills and abilities in social welfare practices for transnational work in the United States with individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Students will be provided with a general perspective on social work and social work policy in Costa Rica. Working in conjunction with Texas A & M Soltis Research & Education Center and site visits to various social service agencies in areas of health, mental health, aging, child welfare and criminal justice students will explore issues of political and economic development, environmental social movements, history and culture.

Upon Completion of this Course, all students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interconnectedness of global dynamics (issues, processes, trends and systems) within the following skill sets:

- **Communicate** their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences
- **Discuss** the extent to which a culture's structure and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, create or enhance privilege and power
- **Identify** the influence of personal bias and values in working with diverse groups
- **Engage** in practices that advance social and economic justice
- **Articulate** in-depth knowledge of strengths and challenges related to social issues in Costa Rica
- **Analyze** theoretical frameworks such as social development, globalization from below and human rights to welfare practice in a comparative format between Costa Rica and the United States

ASSIGNMENTS

| Assignment | Activity | Criteria |
|---|---|--|
| Reflection Journal | Travel journal that will include daily critical reflections on assigned readings, videos, individual and panel guest lecturers/presentation, active learning experiences and site visits to governmental and nongovernmental organizations | 20% of grade (grading rubric to be provided) |
| Digital expression: <i>Word Press Blog</i> <i>(Graduate Students)</i> | MSW Students will create and maintain a blog that integrates readings on assigned topics and their experience in Costa Rica. <i>Topics may include:</i> Human Rights; Social Justice in the Educational System; Prison System; Evolving Capitalism and Corporate Social Responsibility; Comparative analysis of Marxist paradigm and influence on SW profession in Costa Rica and Western SW paradigms; Aging in Costa Rica - role of individual, family and government; Child Welfare: focus of family in children's rights: Comparative analysis of legal and illegal immigration in Costa Rica and the United States; critically analyze strategies - policies, programs, and social action - in terms of their ability to promote sustainable human development and human rights. | 50% of grade (grading rubric to be provided) |
| Digital expression: Power point poster <i>(undergraduate students)</i> | Students will choose one topic (provided by instructor) and develop a power point poster presentation on the topic | 50% of grade (grading rubric to be provided) |
| Photo-Voice Reception | Students will be assigned various topics to guide picture taking (i.e. examples of economic policies; religious representations; cultural experiences) throughout the trip. Each student will choose one photo that represents a significant experience/understanding for him/her and will write a brief essay about the meaning of the photo. Chosen photos and essays will be displayed at the Cultural reception held on June 1st for the campus community | 30% of grade (grading rubric to be provided) |

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course MSW students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between social policy and social and economic justice
- Apply strength and empowerment strategies with diverse populations
- Articulate a self-awareness of bias and prejudices held towards individuals from diverse cultures

Upon completion of this course BSW students will be able to:

- Describe differences in social policy between the United States and Costa Rica
- Use self-reflection to identify and manage values for guiding practice
- Engage individuals from diverse cultures with dignity and respect

MSW PRACTICE BEHAVIORS/OPERATIONALIZATION/MEASUREMENT SCALE

| COMPETENCY AGP 2.1.4 | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---|---|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| DEMONSTRATE THE ABILITY TO BUILD STRENGTHS BASED ON MUTUAL ENGAGEMENT WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS | | | | | | | | | |
| PRACTICE BEHAVIOR | | | | | PRACTICE BEHAVIOR | | | | |
| AGP 4.1 | Refrains from acting upon biases and values as they relate to a diverse group | | | | AGP 4.3 | Applies strengths and empowerment strategies as with diverse groups | | | |
| Aggregated Performance: Observation of behavior; written reflections in journals; peer evaluation; content of online blog | | | | | Aggregated Performance: Observation of behavior; written reflections in journals; peer evaluation; content of online blog | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Did not Meet Expectations | Met Minimal Expectations | Met All Expectations | Exceeded Expectations | Achieved Excellence | Did not Meet Expectations | Met Minimal Expectations | Met all Expectations | Exceeded Expectations | Achieved Excellence |
| COMPETENCY AGP 2.1.3 | | | | | | | | | |
| DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT TO STRATEGIES THAT ADDRESS DISCRIMINATION, REDUCE DISPARITIES AND PROMOTE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE | | | | | | | | | |
| PRACTICE BEHAVIOR | | | | | | | | | |
| AGP 2.1.5 | Actively promotes opportunities and participation of diverse clients | | | | | | | | |
| Aggregated Performance: Observation of behavior; written reflections in journals; peer evaluation; content of online blog | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Did not Meet Expectations | Met Minimal Expectations | Met All Expectations | Exceeded Expectations | Achieved Excellence | Did not Meet Expectations | Met Minimal Expectations | Met All Expectations | Exceeded Expectations | Achieved Excellence |

BSW PRACTICE BEHAVIORS/OPERTIONALIZATION/MEASUREMENT SCALE

| COMPETENCY BSW 2.1.4 | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---|---|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| ENGAGE DIVERSITY AND DIFFERENCE IN PRACTICE | | | | | | | | | |
| PRACTICE BEHAVIOR | | | | | PRACTICE BEHAVIOR | | | | |
| BSW 4.1 | Treats diverse clients with dignity and respect | | | | AGP 4.5 | Has sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups | | | |
| Aggregated Performance: Observation of behavior; written reflections in journals; peer evaluation; content in power point presentation assignment | | | | | Aggregated Performance: Observation of behavior; written reflections in journals; peer evaluation; content in power point presentation assignment | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Did not Meet Expectations | Met Minimal Expectations | Met All Expectations | Exceeded Expectations | Achieved Excellence | Did not Meet Expectations | Met Minimal Expectations | Met all Expectations | Exceeded Expectations | Achieved Excellence |
| COMPETENCY BSW 2.1.5 | | | | | | | | | |
| ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE | | | | | | | | | |
| PRACTICE BEHAVIOR | | | | | | | | | |
| BSW 5.2 | Recognizes the global interconnections of oppression and is knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights | | | | | | | | |
| Aggregated Performance: Observation of behavior; written reflections in journals; peer evaluation; content of online blog | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Did not Meet Expectations | Met Minimal Expectations | Met All Expectations | Exceeded Expectations | Achieved Excellence | Did not Meet Expectations | Met Minimal Expectations | Met All Expectations | Exceeded Expectations | Achieved Excellence |

*Tentative Course Schedule

Social Work in Costa Rica embraces a Brazilian model with a Marxist paradigm. The focus is on human rights and social justice that differs from an individual, direct practice focus. The culture reflects the collective good for groups, as opposed to individual autonomy. The ability to experience this allows students to step out of the Western paradigm and recognize the strengths in this perspective. Experiential activities are designed to allow students to experience this culture, allowing them to work with and advocate for clients in Western society whose values and cultures are those that reflect a collective approach as opposed to individualistic.

| Date | Venue | Topic/Activity & Assignments | Student Learning Outcomes All Students will be able to: |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| May 18 th (Monday) | ONLINE VENUE | Introduction Review Syllabus Cultural Assimilation Pretest Travel Orientation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verbalize goal of comparative policy and cultural awareness for the trip. 2. Describe challenges and opportunities of international travel. 3. Describe and discuss safety issues related to international travel |
| May 19 th (Tuesday) | DEPART/ARRIVE COSTA RICA | Group travel Arrive in San Jose | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate skills in international travel |
| May 20 th (Wednesday) | CULTURAL EXPLORATION | Visit Central Market; National Museum Visit IAFA | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe cultural traditions, market economy in Costa Rica within the context of emerging capitalism. |

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| May 21st (Thursday) | VISIT AREA SOCIAL SERVICIES IN SAN JOSE | Visit AGECO, learn about services for the aging in Costa Rica | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and discuss cultural differences in caring for the aged and disabled I Costa Rica that has a focus of family centered care with Western philosophy of again. 2. Compare and contrast physical facilities where aged and disabled receive care in Costa Rica with local facilities in Texas. |
| May 22 nd (Friday) | VISIT UNIVERSITY OF COSTA RICA VISIT SEMI- INSTITUTION | Social Work in Costa Rica Social Work Education Evening: Group Discussions; | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compare and contrast social work education from a Marxist perspective in Costa Rica with the Western Model. 2. Discuss cultural and values differences espoused in Costa Rica Social work Practice and Western Social Work |
| May23rd (Saturday) | TRAVEL TO SOLTIS CENTER ECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILTY: VISIT NATIONAL PARK AND COFFEE PLANTATION | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the economic and financial institutions and correlate with human services policy and sustainable development |
| May 24 th (Sunday) | Guided Hike of Rain Forest La Fortuna: National Park | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Link ecological theory and perspective with human development and sustainable social policy |

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| May 25th (Monday) | VISIT PANI Ciudad Quesada (Child Welfare) | Evening: Group Discussions | |
| May 26th (Tuesday) | VISIT AREA SCHOOLS: Chachagua School & San Francisco School | | |
| May 27th (Wednesday) | DEPART/RETURN U.S. | Day of Travel | |
| May 28th (Thursday) | ON-LINE CLASS | Reflections of Trip Interactive Discussion online | |
| May 29th (Friday) | ON-LINE CLASS | Development of Digital Expression Assignment | |
| May 30th | | | |
| May 31st | | | |
| June 1st (Monday) | CULTURAL PHOTO RECEPTION Presentation of Costa Rica Experience Post-Test | | (1) Students will be present for and have one photo of their choice displayed at an open reception for campus and community. Each student will complete a narrative about the cultural experience the photo represents. |
| June 2nd (Tuesday) | ON-LINE CLASS | | |
| June 3rd (Friday) | ON-LINE CLASS | | |

** The schedule is dependent upon coordination with the Soltis Center and the various social service agencies

** Cultural activities will include experiencing the market place, agriculture/coffee production

** Each evening there will be group activities to process the experiences of the day