

Texas A & M University - Commerce

School of Social Work

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

Summer I Session 2016

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION** This course explores the evolution and current development of social work practice in Cuba through building knowledge links between political processes, economic constraints and the actual implementation of public policies. Focus is on how 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 study abroad experience, the students will learn about the cultural, historical and political context for preparation of the Cuban experience and upon returning from the trip, provide the context for translating the Cuban 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 Cuba. Working in conjunction with various social service projects in areas of health, mental health, aging, child welfare and ecology 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
<b>Reflection Journal</b>	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)
<b>Digital expression:</b> Word Press Blog (Graduate Students)	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)
<b>Digital expression:</b> Power point poster (undergraduate students)	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)
<b>Photo-Voice Reception</b>	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 Cuba
- 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**

<b>COMPETENCY AGP 2.1.4</b>									
<b>DEMONSTRATE THE ABILITY TO BUILD STRENGTHS BASED ON MUTUAL ENGAGEMENT WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS</b>									
<b>PRACTICE BEHAVIOR</b>					<b>PRACTICE BEHAVIOR</b>				
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
<b>COMPETENCY AGP 2.1.3</b>									
<b>DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT TO STRATEGIES THAT ADDRESS DISCRIMINATION, REDUCE DISPARITIES AND PROMOTE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE</b>									
<b>PRACTICE BEHAVIOR</b>									
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**

<b>COMPETENCY BSW 2.1.4</b>									
<b>ENGAGE DIVERSITY AND DIFFERENCE IN PRACTICE</b>									
<b>PRACTICE BEHAVIOR</b>					<b>PRACTICE BEHAVIOR</b>				
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
<b>COMPETENCY BSW 2.1.5</b>									
<b>ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE</b>									
<b>PRACTICE BEHAVIOR</b>									
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 Cuban culture is grounded in a Communist perspective with a focus on a collective whole, differing 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 <b>All Students will be able to:</b>
June 4th (Saturday)	TRAVEL DAY (students will travel to Miami and spend the night prior to leaving for Cuba on the following day)	Introduction  Review Syllabus  Cultural Assimilation Pretest  Travel Orientation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Verbalize goal of comparative policy and cultural awareness for the trip.</li> <li>2. Describe challenges and opportunities of international travel.</li> <li>3. Describe and discuss safety issues related to international travel</li> </ol>
June 5th (Sunday)	DEPART/ARRIVE CUBA	Group travel  Arrive in Havana  Urban Gardening Community Project and Farm  Information Session with guides  Cannon Blas Ceremony	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate skills in international travel</li> </ol>

May 6th (Monday)	CULTURAL EXPLORATION	Walking tour of Old Havana  Visit Community Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ArteCorte</li> <li>• Convento de Belen</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe historical and political development of Havana</li> <li>2. Discuss the collectivism of community projects developed among the people –without government support</li> </ol>
May 7th (Tuesday)	DEPART FOR SANTA CLARA	<p>Visit the Che Memorial</p> <p>Visit the University of Santa Clara and exchanged with Professors</p> <p>Check into Hotel Los Canyes</p> <p>Visit a CDR (Local block association)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compare and contrasts higher education between Cuba and the United States</li> <li>2. Describe social work education from the Communist perspective</li> </ol>
May 8 <sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)	COMMUNITY PROJECTS	<p>Visit community art project, NaturArte</p> <p>Visit Abuela de Fiesta, a center for Senior Citizens</p> <p>Performance by Baile de Danzon</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the efforts made by the community in respect to the environment and preservation</li> <li>2. Identify and discuss cultural differences in caring for the aged and disabled in Cuba</li> <li>3. Compare and contrast physical facilities where aged and disabled receive care in Cuba with local facilities in Texas</li> </ol>

<p>May 9<sup>th</sup> (Thursday)</p>	<p>CULTURAL EXCHANGE</p>	<p>Depart for Trinidad Walking tour of Trinidad Visit Callejon de Hamel</p>	<p>1. Discuss differences in cultures within Cuba (Cuban and Afro-Cuban socio-culture)</p>
<p>May 10<sup>th</sup> (Friday )</p>	<p>HEALTH  EDUCATION</p>	<p>Visit a polyclinic  Visit Proyecto Paloma – a project that uses dance for therapy of domestic violence and members of the LGBT community  Visit University of Havana and interact with social work students  Visit Children’s theater group and health promotion project</p>	<p>1. Describe the Cuban Healthcare System  2. Compare and contrast intervention approaches between Cuba and the United States with vulnerable populations  3. Describe the educational focus of social work at University of Havana</p>

June 11 <sup>th</sup> (Saturday)	ECOLOGY	All day excursion to Las Terrazas – an intentional eco-community	1. Discuss rural community, education and health care
June 12 <sup>th</sup> (Sunday)	HISTORICAL CULTURE	Visit the Museum of the Revolution  Farewell Dinner	1. Describe how historical and political foundations shape human behavior
June 13 <sup>th</sup> (Monday)	DEPART/RETURN TO U.S.	Day of Travel	
Week of 13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup>	TBD		
Week of 20 <sup>th</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup>	TBD		
Week of 27 <sup>th</sup> – July 1 <sup>st</sup>	TBD		
TBD	CULTURAL PHOTO RECEPTION  Presentation of Costa Rica Experience		(1) Students will 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.

\*\*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