SWO 599: Gender, Race, and Criminal Justice: A Social Work Perspective

University of Southern Maine
School of Social Work
Fall 2020

Rachel C. Casey, PhD, MSW
Assistant Professor

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course outlines dominant and alternative theoretical approaches to conceptualizing justice in response to individual and group harms. Using intersectional feminism and social work values as guiding frameworks, the course explores multiple historical and contemporary issues related to criminal justice. Intervention strategies grounded in feminist, restorative, and transformative approaches are considered as possible responses to current issues of gender and justice.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
At the end of this course students should be able to:

| Interrogate personal and professional biases related to crime, deviance, and justice-involved people. | Identify dominant theoretical approaches to conceptualizing justice and articulate their impact on marginalized populations. | Demonstrate content knowledge expertise in at least two issue areas related to gender and justice. | Design appropriate social work interventions for justice-involved populations. |

COURSE MATERIALS
I recommend students purchase the following texts, which feature required readings:

COURSE LEARNING UNITS

I. Theoretical Foundations
   A. Feminism, Intersectionality, and Social Work
   B. Social Constructions of Deviance and Justice
   C. Current Approaches to Justice

II. Issues of Gender and Justice
   A. Blackness and (In)Justice
   B. Women and (In)Justice
   C. Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence
   D. Sexual Assault
   E. Reproductive Justice
   F. Queerness and (In)Justice
   G. Sex Work and Trafficking

III. Social Work Practice Responses
   A. Feminist Social Work Practice
   B. Abolition
   C. Restorative Justice
   D. Transformative Organizing

COURSE FORMAT & STRUCTURE

This course is being presented in an asynchronous online format, using Brightspace as a platform. Our course calendar will adhere to a weekly schedule, beginning on Mondays and ending on Sundays. Course materials for each week will become available no later than 12:01am on Monday mornings. Students are expected to complete their review of weekly course materials by the following Sunday. Major assignments are also due at 11:59pm on Sunday during the week in which they’re listed on the course calendar.

During Course Learning Unit II Issues of Gender and Justice, students will be required to participate in weekly discussion boards on Brightspace. Initial posts will be due by 11:59pm on Thursdays, and comments to peer posts will be due by 11:59pm on Sundays. The expectations for discussion board participation is described in detail below in the instructions for the “Weekly Participation” assignment.

Due to the unprecedented challenges related to public safety as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, I expect this semester will require significant flexibility and adaptability from faculty and students alike. I hope that you will provide me with candid feedback about how the course format is working for you (or not), and I welcome suggestions for possible improvements to any element of the course.
ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT TITLE</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>% of OVERALL GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus Agreement Form</td>
<td>9/6/2020</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction Video</td>
<td>9/6/2020</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Reflection Project</td>
<td>9/20/2020</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness-Raising Project</td>
<td>11/15/2020</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Project</td>
<td>12/18/2020</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SYLLABUS AGREEMENT FORM

Please carefully read the syllabus in its entirety and watch the video of the instructor reviewing the syllabus available on Brightspace. Once any questions you have about the syllabus have been answered to your satisfaction, please complete the Syllabus Agreement Form on Brightspace to indicate that you understand the requirements and expectations for the course. Completion of this assignment will earn the full 100 points available.

*This assignment comprises 1% of overall course grade.*

INTRODUCTION VIDEO

Let’s get to know each other a little better! In the designated Discussion Board Topic, create a thread featuring a video note that introduces yourself to the class. The video should be no longer than two minutes in length. In the video, please address the following:

- Your name and pronouns
- Why you have chosen to take this course
- A fun or interesting fact about yourself
- Your thoughts and feelings about online learning

Step-by-step instructions on how to add a video note to a discussion board can be found [here](#). Completion of this assignment will earn the full 100 points available.

*This assignment comprises 1% of overall course grade.*
JUSTICE REFLECTION PROJECT

Assignment Description:

Responsible, effective social work involves praxis, alternating engagement in critical reflection and thoughtful action. Before delving into learning about specific issues of gender and justice, this assignment provides an opportunity to reflect on your own experiences, thoughts, feelings, biases, and privileges vis-à-vis the dynamic concept of justice.

Assignment Instructions:

- Create an artifact (e.g. art piece(s), podcast, video, etc.) or write a brief paper that demonstrates your personal reflections on the concept of justice:
  - Provide your own definition of “justice.” Compare and contrast your definition with the notion of retributive justice that undergirds the U.S. justice system.
  - Discuss how your own intersecting identities and life experiences have shaped your beliefs about the concept of justice and the actual U.S. justice system.
  - Identify any biases you hold regarding justice-involved people, agents of the U.S. justice system or the justice system itself.
  - Describe your plan for practicing self-care as we explore the challenging topics covered in Unit II of this course.

Grading Rubric:

- Depth and Sophistication of Critical Thinking – 40 points
- Extensiveness and Depth of Creativity – 30 points
- Clarity of Written and/or Visual Communication – 30 points

This assignment comprises 10% of overall course grade.

AWARENESS-RAISING PROJECT

Assignment Description:

One component of social justice advocacy is raising public awareness about important issues. Social workers may be tasked with designing and implementing public outreach campaigns aimed at raising awareness in order to challenge misconceptions about marginalized groups, unify stakeholders, or advocate for specific policy changes. This assignment allows you to exercise creativity while developing additional content area expertise and building relevant social work practice skills.
Assignment Instructions:

Design a public outreach campaign to raise awareness about a topic related to the intersection of gender and justice. You may focus on one of the topics covered in Unit II of the course, or another topic of interest to you. This project will consist of two components: 1) a written description of your awareness-raising strategy and, 2) the materials that would be hypothetically disseminated during the campaign (e.g. social media posts, billboard design, flyers, videos, etc.).

- Review this handbook about raising awareness through public outreach campaigns
  - The handbook is designed to support civil society organizations (CSOs) in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the United Nations, but the concepts can be applied universally.
- Write a three-to-four page paper that outlines the following six pieces of information about your awareness-raising strategy:
  - Goal or problem to be addressed
    - (i.e. lack of awareness, common misconceptions, etc.)
  - Short-term objectives you aim to achieve
    - (i.e. “after encountering this campaign, a person will be able to…”)
  - The group(s) toward which you plan to target the campaign
  - The key messages you wish to convey through the campaign
  - The methods or tools you will use to deliver the messages
  - Plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the campaign
- Create the material(s) that would hypothetically be disseminated during the campaign
  - Use any tools (manual or digital) you like to create these materials.
    - Graphic Design Resources:
      - Canva
      - Piktochart
    - Video Making Resources
      - Kaltura
      - Shotcut

Grading Rubric:

- Depth and Sophistication of Critical Thinking – 25 points
- Thoroughness and Accuracy of Issue-Related Content – 25 points
- Extensiveness and Depth of Creativity – 25 points
- Clarity of Written and/or Visual Communication – 25 points

This assignment comprises 24% of final course grade.
INTERVENTION PROJECT

Assignment Description:

This course culminates in the intervention project assignment, which requires students to draw upon their learning from across the three course units to issue a specific critique of current approaches to justice and propose an alternative justice response vis-à-vis a specific issue related to gender. You may choose to focus on the same topic you chose for the awareness-raising project, but this is not required.

Assignment Instructions:

Drawing upon your learning in course Unit III, design an intervention grounded in an alternative approach to justice, such as abolitionism, restorative justice, or transformative organizing.

- Create an artifact (e.g. art piece(s), podcast, video, etc.) or write a paper outlining your intervention. The intervention could be a micro-level one, such as a victim-offender dialogue for a specific case, or a macro-level one such as a piece of proposed legislation.
  - Provide an overview of the intervention, highlighting any specific strategies that will be employed. Provide evidence of the potential effectiveness of these strategies, using the social work literature to support the discussion.
  - Provide a rationale for the choice of intervention, articulating why this intervention is appropriate for addressing the specified gender justice issue.
  - Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention, making note of what resources would be necessary to ensure success.
  - Compare and contrast this intervention with existing approaches. Describe how this intervention will address shortcomings in the existing justice system.

Grading Rubric:

- **Depth and Sophistication of Critical Thinking** – 25 points
- **Thoroughness and Accuracy of Issue-Related Content** – 25 points
- **Extensiveness and Depth of Creativity** – 25 points
- **Clarity of Written and/or Visual Communication** – 25 points

This assignment comprises 24% of overall course grade.
This course is being presented in an asynchronous online format, using Brightspace as a platform. Our course calendar will adhere to a weekly schedule, beginning on Mondays and ending on Sundays. Course materials for each week will become available no later than 12:01am on Monday mornings. Students are expected to complete their review of weekly course materials by the following Sunday. Major assignments are also due at 11:59pm on Sunday during the week in which they’re listed on the course calendar.

During Course Learning Unit II Issues of Gender and Justice, students will be required to participate in weekly discussion boards on Brightspace. Initial posts will be due by 11:59pm on Thursdays, and comments to peer posts will be due by 11:59pm on Sundays. The expectations for discussion board participation is described in detail below in the instructions for the “Weekly Participation” assignment.

**WEEKLY PARTICIPATION**

**Assignment Description:**
As described above under “Course Format & Structure,” this course is being presented in an asynchronous online format, using Brightspace as a platform. All interaction will take place virtually via the course Brightspace page. Students will individually interact with course materials, such as readings, podcasts, and documentary films. During Course Learning Unit II Issues of Gender and Justice, students will interact with one another through Discussion Board forums on Brightspace.

**Assignment Instructions:**
Our course calendar will adhere to a weekly schedule, beginning on Mondays and ending on Sundays. Course materials for each week will become available no later than 12:01am on Monday mornings.

*Individual Interaction with Course Materials*
Students are expected to complete their review of weekly course materials by the following Sunday. Major assignments are also due at 11:59pm on Sunday during the week in which they’re listed on the course calendar. Brightspace will automatically track whether you have viewed all the required course materials.
Interactions with Peers via Discussion Boards

- During weeks requiring Discussion Board posts (indicated on the Course Calendar), initial posts will be due by 11:59pm on **Thursdays**, and comments to peer posts will be due by 11:59pm on **Sundays**.
- There will be one Discussion Board forum corresponding to each weekly topic. Within the forum, there will be a few topics created by the instructor offered as prompts for your initial discussion board post. You need only reply to one topic.
- Posts should be one to two paragraphs in length and include at least two citations to either course materials or external sources.
- Posts must end with a relevant critical question (i.e. a question without a simple “yes or no” answer) that can serve as a “jumping off point” for peers responding to the post.
- Comments in response to peer posts should be at least one short paragraph and should aim for critical, meaningful engagement. Avoid commenting on the style of writing itself, but instead focus your response on the content of the post.

Grading Rubric for Discussion Board Posts and Comments:

Students will receive feedback on their discussion board posts, which will be assigned points according to the following grading rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
<th>Qualitative Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>In addition to meeting the minimum assignment requirements of length and use of citations, these posts and comments will demonstrate sophisticated critical thinking and analysis, communication, creativity, and/or self-awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>These posts meet the minimum assignment requirements of length and use of citations as well as satisfactory critical thinking and communication. Areas for potential improvement include creativity or self-awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>These posts do not meet the minimum assignment requirements of length and use of citations, and/or significant improvement is needed in the areas of critical thinking, communication, and/or self-awareness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Opting Out**

The topics addressed Course Learning Unit II may be emotionally or psychologically difficult for some, especially during this time of collective trauma related to the pandemic. As such, **students are allowed to “opt out” of up to two of the seven weeks of Unit II.** If you choose to “opt out,” you will not be expected to review the posted materials, nor complete the discussion board posts. Please notify the instructor at the beginning of the week if you have decided to use this option. This means, **students will need to complete only five discussion posts and comments throughout the semester to meet the requirements for this assignment.** Please note, the gradebook in Brightspace will show a score of “0” for weeks during which a student opts out; these scores will be “dropped” from the calculation for the Weekly Participation grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Component</th>
<th>% of Assignment Grade</th>
<th>% of Overall Course Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with Course Materials</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Posts and Comments (x5)</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This assignment comprises 40% of the final course grade.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Weekly Participation Activities (available on Brightspace)</th>
<th>Assignment(s) Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1:</strong> Feminism, Intersectionality, and Social Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8/31 to 9/6      | Read Gillis & Jacobs (2017)  
Watch Crenshaw TED Talk  
Read Thompson (2002)  | Syllabus Agreement Form Introduction Video |
| **Week 2:** Social Constructions of Deviance and Justice |
| 9/7 to 9/13      | Watch “Theory & Deviance” Video  
Read Schneider & Ingram (1993)  
Watch Kelly TED Talk  
Read Melton (2014)  
Read Reisch (2002)  | --- |

SWO599 Gender & Justice Syllabus
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3: Current Approaches to Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/14 to 9/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4: Blackness and (In)Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/21 to 9/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5: Women and (In)Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6: Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/5 to 10/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7: Sexual Assault and Harrasment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/12 to 10/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 8: Reproductive Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/19 to 10/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# SWO599 Gender & Justice Syllabus

## Week 9: Queerness and (In)Justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10/26 to 11/1 | Read Valcore (2019)  
Read Goff (2017)  
Listen to “Panic Defense” Podcast  
Listen to NPR Podcast  
Read Barnett et al (2018) | Discussion Board                      |

## Week 10: Sex Work and Trafficking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11/2 to 11/8 | Read Gerassi (2015)  
Listen to “Cecilia” Podcast  
Listen to “Jessica” Podcast  
Read AF3IRM (2020)  
Read Chen (2015)  
Read Contrera (2019) | Discussion Board                      |

## Week 11: Feminist Social Work Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11/9 to 11/15 | Read Kelland (2016)  
Read Eyal-Lubling & Krumer-Nevo (2016)  
Read Dominelli (2002) | Awareness-Raising Project              |

## Week 12: Abolition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11/15 to 11/22 | Read Davis (2003) Ch. 6  
Read Abolitionist Toolkit  
Read Schrader (2017)  
Watch “For Harriet” Video | ---                                    |

## THANKSGIVING WEEK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/23 to 11/29</td>
<td>No Course Activities or Assignments Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Week 13: Restorative Justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11/30 to 12/6 | Watch “Restorative Justice” Video  
Read Zehr (2015) Chs. 2 & 3  
Read Davis (2019) Ch. 6  
Read Maine-Wabanaki REACH Report | ---                                    |

## Week 14: Transformative Organizing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 12/7 to 12/11 | Read “Transformative Organizing”  
Read Williams (2013) | ---                                    |
Read Menaken (2017) Ch. 18

**Finals Week:** Intervention Project Due by 11:59pm on Friday, 12/18

### COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY


https://medium.com/@hawaii_78988/fuck-work-internalizing-neoliberal-feminism-6ec83d0781e


Contrera, J. (2019, December 17). *He was sexually abusing underage girls. Then, police said, one of them killed him*. The Washington Post.  


Famuyiwa, R. (Director). (2016). *Confirmation* [Film]. HBO Films.

For Harriet. (2020, June 5). *So after we abolish prisons and policing...then what?: A Black feminist dialogue* [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4ofj__h7ss](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4ofj__h7ss)


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akOe5-UsQ2o

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvhOm8THysM


https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/incarcerated-women-and-girls/


https://www.gutenberg.org/files/14975/14975-h/14975-h.htm

