SOCW 523: Self-Conscious Traditionalism in Indigenous Social Work Practice

THIS IS A SAMPLE OUTLINE. ACTUAL COURSE OUTLINE MAY VARY IN STRUCTURE, REQUIRED READINGS, TEXTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Course Description / Introduction

Self-Conscious Traditionalism in Indigenous Social Work Practice (SW 523) is a course designed to allow students to explore and develop their social work practice focusing on Indigenous teachings and ways of knowing and being. It is intended to help students develop and integrate contemporary and traditional approaches to social work practice, including helping and healing.

Course Overview

SW523 focuses on social work practice from an Indigenous perspective. This course creates space for students to explore traditional teachings that have guided the way Indigenous people have looked after their children and families since time immemorial. For example, the Hul’quimi’num Mustimuxw have a teaching uy’skwuluwun – to be of a good mind and spirit – how would this teaching transfer to our contemporary practice? Or, similarly, nutsa maat – which teaches us that we are all one - how would that impact our practice? In other teachings the use of All My Relations is used to remind us that we are related to all beings and have sacred obligations to be kind and respectful to life around us. In this course we encourage students to reflect on their own culture and tradition and explore what teachings can influence and/or shift their contemporary practice. As students come from various backgrounds and varying levels of cultural and traditional knowledge, contact with Elders and Knowledge Keepers will be necessary to learn, develop and integrate cultural and traditional teachings.

Through this course we will explore topics such as current theories and models of social work practice and research, values and ethics, the role of community in our practice, spirituality, and healing. An exploration of these topics will support students to further develop their identity as Indigenous social work practitioners; reflect on the values and beliefs that guide not only social work practice, but also their own practice; develop and integrate a human rights and social justice perspective of Indigenous social work practice. The landscape of Indigenous people across Canada is diverse and this will allow students to explore this diversity and difference through a lens of decolonization and resurgence of traditional teachings. Students will develop skills in critical thinking, including the ability to critically analyze assumptions, injustices and inequalities that play out in social work practice across Canada.
Prerequisites

Students must be admitted to MSW program and be accepted by Graduate Studies or be admitted through instructor permission under the Western Dean’s agreement from other institutions.

Course Goals & Objectives:

- Develop identity as a professional Indigenous social worker
- Explore Indigenous social work practices
- Critically examine how knowledge is constructed and its influence on practice
- Compare and contract Indigenous and western values and ethics
- Explore the responsibility social workers have in advancing human rights and social justice
- Explore the role of family, community, and nation in practice
- Develop skills in critical thinking and the ability to critically analyze

Confidentiality:

Through course contact and assignments you will learn other students’ names and their views. All such information should be treated as confidential, just as you would in a regular classroom. Course communication and materials should not be forwarded to people not registered in the course. People not registered for the course cannot be invited to join discussion groups.

Community, agency, and client information: Community, agency, and client information should be treated respectfully. Be sure to remove all client identifying information in your postings to discussion forums. Please note that in some highly visible situations, it may be necessary to modify certain biographical details and locations to mask the identity of the persons, agencies, or communities involved. All discussions that occur as part of this course are to be kept confidential and not used outside of the course context.

Course Texts


Supplemental Readings

There will be additional readings on the CourseSpaces site for 523 to support students in their integration of knowledges gained through the book, postings and other external references. These are supplemental not required readings.

Forum 1: Introductions & Check-in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Chapter 1:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Starting at the Beginning</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Chapter 2:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Self is always First in the Circle</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Chapter 3:</th>
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<td>Current Theories and Models of Social Work as Seen through an Indigenous Lens</td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Chapter 4:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Centring all Helping Approaches</td>
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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Chapter 5:</th>
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<td>Values and Ethics - <strong>Assignment 1 due</strong></td>
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<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Chapter 6:</th>
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<td>Holistic or Wholistic Approach</td>
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|        | **Forum 2: Role of Values & Ethics in Social Work Practice** |

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<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Chapter 7:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Answers are in the Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Chapter 8:</td>
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<td>Spirituality – <strong>Assignment 2 due</strong></td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Chapter 9:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Healing Justice</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Chapter 10:</td>
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<td>Caring for Families, Caring for Children</td>
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<td><strong>Forum 3: Caring for Families &amp; Children</strong></td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Chapter 11:</td>
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<td>Pedagogy</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Chapter 12:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Chapter 13:</td>
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<td>We are all Related</td>
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<td><strong>Chapter 14:</strong></td>
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<td>The End of the World as We Know It – <strong>Assignment 3 Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Forum 4 Closing Circle</strong></td>
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Assignments & Grading Structure

Assignment #1: The Self Is Always First in the Circle
Grade: 20%
Due Date: Week 4
Length: 6-8 double-spaced pages

Purpose:
The purpose of this assignment is to:

- Consider your location and positionality in regards to social work practice
- Identity the role of ‘Self’ in practice
- Present your paper in a concise & succinct way

Format:
This assignment is worth 20% of your overall mark. Write your own The Self is Always First in the Circle paper using the same headings as Baskin’s uses in Chapter 2 and describe your journey under each heading:

- Introduction
- Let’s Begin with Me
- Self-Reflexivity
- Help for the Helpers/Self-Care
- Protection from Isolation
- Turning Anger into Activist Power
- Conclusion

It is not necessary to use any external references however if you choose to please use APA style.

Assignment #2: Values & Ethics
Grade: 20%
Due Date: Week 7
Length: 8-10 double-spaced pages
Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment is to:

- Consider values and ethics from your personal perspective
- Integrate values and ethics from the cultural teachers, Elders and knowledge keepers in your life

Format:

This assignment is worth 20% of your overall grade. You will write your own paper that reflects the values and beliefs that you have been taught from an Indigenous perspective. Using the format in Baskin’s Chapter 5:

- Introduction
- Framework for Writing about Values and Beliefs
- From an Ethical Place
- Moving Away from Individualism
- Relationships
- Wholeness
- Learning
- Seven Grandfathers (or your specific traditional teachings)
- Conclusions
- References

For this paper, you may need to speak with your Elders and/or knowledge keepers to discuss traditional values and beliefs and the topics identified in this chapter. You can use the personal communications as references for this paper and need 8-10 external references in total. Please use APA style.

Assignment #3: Putting Self-Conscious Traditionalism into Indigenous Social Work Practice

Grade: 40%

Due Date: Week 12
Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment is to:

- Describe what self-conscious traditionalism means to you, and how you will ‘put’ that into your social work practice with Indigenous children and family.
- Reflect how you will integrate tradition into your social work practice
- **If applicable draw from your SW 521 Portfolio with a focus on social work practice**
- Include in your paper, any concerns you have about integrating Indigenous traditions into practice
- Analysis of external sources from Indigenous literature that aligns with or supports your claim (you may use the resources in this course, but are also required to include 8-10 external sources)
- Provide a self-reflection of how you arrived at your knowing
- Ability to present your ideas in a clear and concise manner.

** If you did not take SW521 the assignment we are referring to is a personal framework for research and practice that included values, ethics, protocols and teachings. Please consult with your instructors for clarification if necessary.

Format: This assignment is worth 40% of your overall grade. Please use APA style, and include 8-10 external references. You can be as creative with this assignment as you like. If you would like to engage in a project other than a written paper, please contact us and we can agree on an alternative creative project. If you choose this alternative you will need to include text to explain your method and guide your instructors.

Assignment #4: Forum Posts

Grade: 4 x 5% (total 20% of overall grade)

Due Date: See below

Purpose:

The purpose of the forum posts is to:

- Create an opportunity for students to share their ideas with each other.
- Provide opportunities for students to synthesis and analysis specific topics throughout the course.
- Create a space where students communicate with each other
- Provide a place where students can incorporate the ideas we are learning into practice.

Format: This assignment is broken into four parts or four forum posts. You must share your forum post during the week of the post – for example, Forum #1 must be posted sometime through week 1. Each forum post will have a topic that you will be asked to reflect on.
Remember that the focus of this course is on practice. We encourage you to share, from your perspectives, what works well for you and what is challenging. In other words, this is a space for you to share critical thoughts with each other. There are so many opportunities for you to learn from each other, and forum posts really supports that learning.

- Each post should be a MAXIMUM of 250 words (if it is longer than 250 words you need to let us know which 250 words to read!).

Forums:

Forum #1: Introduction and Check-in
Week 1

Forum #2: Role of Values & Ethics in Social Work Practice
Week 5

Forum #3: Caring for Indigenous Children & Families
Week 9

Forum #4: Closing Circle
Week 13

Students with Disabilities

The following statement is taken from the School of Social Work Policy and Procedure Manual:

“The School of Social Work, in its commitments to feminist, First Nations, and anti-oppressive practice should endeavor to take a pro-active role in providing an inclusive environment for all students, including students with disabilities. The School will continue raising awareness of ableism among its faculty, staff and the larger community.
If you have a disability or specific learning need as a result of a disability please contact me. I am more than happy to ensure that you experience success in this course. Please be advised, as well, that there are support resources available to you through the university, and I encourage you to contact the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (http://rcsd.uvic.ca/).