Social Work 521 – Indigenous Perspective on Knowing and Researching

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

Calendar Description: This course will explore the dimensions of Indigenous ways of knowing that influences research with Indigenous communities. Students will explore how, and from where, their own knowing emerges as well as critically examine how knowledge is constructed within the larger society. The course focuses on the layers and multitudes of relationships that the self experiences with others and the world including the many ways in which power, culture, ethics, protocols, language, place and spirit shapes knowledge. Students will have an opportunity to apply this knowing to their personal knowing and researching values and framework.

Course Objectives:
• Examine the role of relationship in constructing knowledge within an Indigenous context
• Explore Indigenous ways of knowing
• Critically examine how knowledge is constructed and its influence on research
• Explore Indigenous conceptual models and their application to knowing/being.
• Analyze the relationship with, and influence of, power, place, culture, language, environment, ethics, protocol and spirit in shaping worldview
• Explore the responsibility and reciprocity to family, community, nation when carrying-out research
• Examine how the relationship to family, community, nation and earth influences knowing/being and Indigenous research practice
• Compare and contrast western methodologies in relation to Indigenous approaches to researching
• Identify and apply practical tasks associated with research (e.g. library searches)
• Articulate the basis of one’s personal way of knowing and how this knowing applies to a personal framework for knowing and researching

Weekly Topics with readings:

Week 1 Sept 5 Introduction
Week 2 Sept 12 The Philosophical Concepts of Uy’skwuluwun and Heshook-ishTsawalk and the Relationship between Knowing/Being and Researching
• Thomas, Robina (unpublished) Uy’skwuluwun - Principles for Indigenous Research.

**Week 3 Sept 19**  The Role of Self, Family, Community and Nations in Indigenous Knowing/Being and researching

**Week 4 Sept 26**  Exploring the Self, Family, Community & Nation in your own Knowing/Being and applying this to your personal framework of knowing and researching.

**Week 5 Oct 3**  Community Research No class

**Week 6 Oct 10**  Situating Indigenous Research within Culture, Language and Spirit

**Week 7 Oct 17**  Assignment 1 is due  Exploring Culture, Language and Spirit in your own Knowing/Being and applying this to your personal framework of knowing and researching

Week 8 Oct 24  Situating Indigenous Research within Environment & Place

Week 9 Oct 31  Locating Power, Protocol and Ethics in your own Knowing/Being & applying to your personal framework of knowing and researching

Week 10 Nov 14  Exploring Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Research Methodologies

Week 11 Nov 21  Class Presentations
Week 12 Nov 28  Closing Circle

Assignments/Learning Activities & Due Dates:

Assignment #1: Community Research Interview Reflections
Grade: 25%
Due Date: October 17th, 2008
Length: 10 pages
Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to:
• Explore various Indigenous research activities in your community
• Develop questions based on first few weeks of class to ask a community researcher
• Discuss research approaches, frameworks, philosophies, methods and protocols involved in these research projects and the expected outcomes
• Situate this research in what you are learning in this course by providing a critique of what you learned and observed during this field trip
**Grading will be based on how the purpose of the assignment is addressed in your reflection paper.

Assignment #2: Article Critique
Grade: 25%
Due Date: Day of Presentation
Length: 2 page written critique
15 minute presentation & 15 minutes questions and answers

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to:
• Critique 1 article, of your choice, from the readings
• Ability to present your critique in a concise & succinct way
• Analyze the author’s point of view
• Assess the purpose of each document.
• Examine how Indigenous experience is constructed (particularly in the published, academic article)
• Identify the author’s location and how this may influence the writing
• Explain why you agree or disagree with the process and findings of the research document(s)
• Compare your own knowing (based on experience and location) with author’s analysis
Format:
This article critique comprises 25% of your overall mark and is completed in two parts: 1) a class presentation and, 2) a written critique.
Your paper should be 2 pages in length
- Your paper should include appropriate citations and references using APA style format
- Your article critique should illustrate your analysis of the author’s stance and location. Your critique should also integrate your stance and location in relation to the research documents. Descriptive information about the authors (name, title of article) as well as an integration of the author’s location (or comment as to whether she or he located)
- Your own location and knowing that you bring with you in analyzing the documents
- Analysis of the key points of the documents
- Analysis of how Indigenous knowledge is constructed or included in the document
- Explanation of your knowing in relation to article (do you agree with them or not) and why
- Identification of your learnings.

**Grading Criteria: 10% class presentation and 15% written critique
A grade will be assigned based on the extent to which you can demonstrate:
- Descriptive content
- Evidence of analytical thinking
- Reflection of your own knowing
- Comparative analysis
- Ability to write in clear and organized manner
- Ability to stay within the page limitation

Assignment #3: Personal Framework of Knowing and Researching
Grade: 50%
Due Date: November 21
Length: 15 minute Presentation (5 minutes questions & answers) 12-15 pages

Purpose:
The purpose of this assignment is to:
- Develop personal framework of knowing and researching (graphic illustration)
- Integrate your own way of knowing into a conceptual framework/model
- Provide a 12-15 page paper on your way of knowing/being (theory)
- Apply your own way of knowing/being to your research framework
- Identify how this way of knowing will impact your research practice (such as choice of methodology)
- Provide a self-reflection of how you arrived at your knowing
- Analysis of external sources from Indigenous research literature that aligns with or supports your claim
- Demonstrate your ability to stay within time constraints (15 minutes)
- Ability to present your ideas in a clear and concise manner.

Format:
This assignment has 2 parts.
The first part is to develop a conceptual model (graphic illustration) of your personal framework of knowing and researching and to write a paper illustrating the rationale behind your model.

**Instructions:**
The purpose of this assignment is to identify your personal framework of knowing and researching and prepare and write a theory paper explaining your conceptual model. The Four Posts of the Big House is one example among many conceptual models of knowing. The second component of this assignment is to present your conceptual model to the class and share what experiences that have led you to this knowing/being.

**Grading Criteria:**
A grade will be assigned based on the extent to which you can show:
- Illustration of a conceptual model in graphic form
- Evidence of why your model includes what it does
- Reflection of your own knowing
- Use of external sources to augment your claims
- Ability to write in clear and organized manner
- Ability to stay within the page limitation
- Ability to present your ideas in a clear and organized manner