A. Course Catalogue Description

“Of all the forms of inequality,” Dr. Martin Luther King once proclaimed, “injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.” While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights identifies health and health care as fundamental human rights, in the United States and elsewhere, acute health disparities continue to exist on basis of socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and ability. This course applies the principles of social justice to an examination of American health disparities. Using contemporary literature from moral philosophy and evidence-based science, this course engages students in fundamental questions of social justice in public health and health policy making, including: Who is responsible for health and health disparities? Which goods should be subject to considerations of justice and is health a special good? What is a fair share of these goods? Who does “everyone” include? “How do we understand if the outcomes of a policy are fair and satisfying for all?” It is a hybrid course that will include, but not be limited to topics such as social determinants of health, community health, homelessness, drug addiction, adolescent health, sexual and reproductive risks, poverty and other contextual problems of equal importance for Belize and the USA. The course is designed to provide students with theoretical principles, methods, and skills essential to understand and evaluate policy decisions and the consequences of them for the American people. Emphasis is placed on the role of the human service practitioner (social work) in promoting and advancing social justice in health.

B. Student Learning Outcomes

The Council on Social Work Education requires that accredited social work programs follow the CSWE Educational Policy and Standards that comprise nine competencies as follows:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Specifically, while this course addresses all nine competencies in some regard, the main focus in this course will be on competencies 3, 4, and 6.
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand how health equity is perceived within an ethical framework as a social justice approach. They should assess ethical issues in relation to health care policy and health outcomes in either country.

• Identify and discuss ethical questions integral to social justice in public health
• Identify the history of health and health care policy in the United States (U.S.) or Belize, particularly as it has resulted in disparate health care access and health outcomes across race, class, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc. Or a comparative analysis between the two countries
• Assess health care policies from a health equity framework, with particular attention to health care reform and its implications for health disparities (where applicable)

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence informing practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They should also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

• use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
• apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
• use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness.

Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:
• apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-
environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with
clients and constituencies; and

• use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse
clients and constituencies.

C. My Assumptions

D. Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials

There is no required textbook for this course; all required readings will be available online and
through the UTA Library.

E. Additional Recommended Textbooks and Other Course Materials

Travel Journal—Students are required to bring a journal or notebook to write in during the trip to
reflect on places that they will visit and interactions that they will have during their time in
Belize. This documentation is also the basis for the corresponding assignments in the course.

• Fleischacker Samuel. *A Short History of Distributive Justice*. Cambridge, Massachusetts:


F. Descriptions of Major Assignments and Examinations

i. Daily Journals and Reflections (20% of total grade)

Daily journals will focus on the specific skills that are learned and how they can be applied in
practice settings. Students will be asked to critique their performance while abroad. They will
chronicle their daily activities and interactions and use the journals to develop the reflective
digital storytelling assignment below. This is the prologue for the digital storytelling, establishing
the body of work that follows. The journal will also be the post script for the stories explaining
the reflective digital storytelling video.

ii. Daily Briefs (5% of total grade)

Each end of day, students will provide a 3-5 minute analysis (briefs) of their daily observations
and interactions. A summary of what was important in the day, lessons learned and how to grow
going forward. Each student will make at least 1 presentation (verbal and informal)

ii. Reflective Digital Storytelling Video (20% of total grade)
Each student will create a 3-5 minute video in which they must reflect on their learning before, during and after the 2-weeks of living in Belize, and tell stories using their voice. A good way to prepare for this is to be intentional and document every interactions you have with people, agencies, or the environment of Belize. Collect photos and video clips, journals, etc during your stay abroad. At the end of the two weeks, students will submit their final videos using the CANVAS online platform.

Addresses competencies 3, 4, and 6.

iii. Discussion Forum (25% of total grade).

A key feature of this course is that the international experience, even if it’s only two weeks, opens up the student’s perspective and outlook. Every student should experience some sort of international travel, be challenged personally and academically. Thus, each module has two parts: (1) a Round-of-Questions and (2) Discussion. The intentions of the Round-of-Questions is to ensure every student has completed the readings. For the Round-of-Questions, each student will prepare at least one question ahead of time about the readings and share it in Canvas each week (starting on the 3rd week following the trip). This question(s) should be pretty specific, and it should focus on the readings. For example, “I don’t understand why the author argues that social workers should take on this role:_____, because from my experience it is much more appropriate to take on this other role:____?” Or “Why does the intervention in the first article take this approach:___, but the intervention in the second article takes this different approach:_______?” As you can see, “WHY” questions are good questions. When you respond, you don’t need to know the answers, but you will be expected to clarify your questions.

The overall goal of the course is to infuse ideas on how social work is an applied profession that fits different settings to impact culture, economy and social welfare policies.

Therefore,
1. Ask at least one question based on the readings.
2. Comment on at least two postings
3. Demonstrate thoughtfulness and analytical skills.

Addresses competencies 3, 4, and 6.

iv. Foundation Paper (30%). The purpose of the Foundation Paper is to ensure you comprehensively understand health policy and social justice issues. It should address health disparities from the role of social worker practitioner. Pick any health policy issue that interested you on your trip. Develop a well researched 8 page paper, double spaced (excluding reference page) to address this issue guided by the outline below:

i. What is the health policy issue? Provide a snapshot of the health issue you are seeking to address, its magnitude, and consequences? [3-Points].

ii. What are the benefits of addressing the specific issue or the costs of ignoring it? To whom? How much? Who says the specific issue is important? [2-Points].
iii. How has this issue been addressed in the past? How is it being addressed now? What are the most sustainable ways of addressing this health issue, and what is the research supporting that approach? [3-Points]

iv. Can you identify individuals who are mostly affected by this problem in the US; how about in Belize, who are they? How are they affected? [6-Points]

Utilizing the Social Determinants of Health framework by HealthyPeople 2020 (1st week folder), how would you integrate the the five key areas (determinants) into future health-care policy issue you have stated above [10-Points]

v. Recommendations. Provide your recommendations based on a researched data you have found [4-Points]

vi. Conclusion. Summarize and make conclusions that are consistent with the findings in your research [2-Points].

Addresses competencies 3, 4, and 6.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily Journals</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective Digital Storytelling Video</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions Forum</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation paper</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide at least a 3-5 minute daily briefs (at least once during student stay in Belize). These are interactive observations.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>October 17-29</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong>: Overview of the U.S. Health Care System</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Module 3 November 04</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong>: Health Equity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Module 4 November 11</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong> Social Determinants of Health</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Modules 5 November 18</td>
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## I. Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Required Readings and Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-departure orientation</td>
<td>See</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1 &amp; 2 10/17-29</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in activities, journal the interactions, take photos and videos explaining specific information gathered and skills acquired. <strong>Assignment:</strong> Student will provide verbal (3-5 minutes) Briefs at the end of the day, at least once during their stay to narrate their interactions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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| 7  
**Assignment: Discussion board (See pg. 4 above).**  
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2013.01.002  
**Assignment: Discussion board (See pg. 4 above).**  
  |
| 8  
12/2-12/11 | Final Projects: journals, videos and final paper submission | **Wrap up:**  
1. A complete typed up journal documentation sequenced by dates, activities and interactions in Belize, as well as reflections at return. Should not exceed 5 pages single spaced  
2. A brief 3-5 video reflection about health policy and social justice in the context of your study abroad.  
3. Final paper submission (please see outline on page 4 and 5.)