WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY
Graduate Social Work Department
SWG 590: Special Topic
Human Rights and Social Work: Responding to Domestic and International Crises

Syllabus

I.   **Course Instructor:**
       Christina Chiarelli-Helminiak, MSW, PhD
       Reynolds Hall, Room 205
       Email: cchiarelli-helminiak@wcupa.edu

II.   **Credit Hours**: Three graduate credit hours

III.   **WCU, MSW Program Mission Statement, Goals, and Definition of the Concentration**

Mission Statement

        The Graduate Social Work Department provides a quality, affordable, and accessible Master of Social Work Degree in preparation for a career in an evolving, complex, technological, and global society. It prepares graduates who can think critically, communicate effectively, embrace diversity, practice ethically, respond to the needs of vulnerable and oppressed populations, are committed to social justice, and are competent to practice with individuals and families.

Program Goals

- Provide a quality Master of Social Work Program in accord with the standards of the Council on Social Work Education and the PA State System of Higher Education.
- Prepare graduates to practice competently and ethically with individuals and families.
- Prepare graduates to think critically, communicate effectively, and engage research in the practice of social work.
- Prepare graduates to practice social work with a commitment to social justice.

Definition of the Concentration

Direct Practice with Individuals and Families is an approach to social work grounded in human rights and social justice. Graduates of the West Chester University MSW Program are trained to work with individuals and families using strengths-based, research-informed and community-oriented assessment, intervention and evaluation skills to enhance resiliency, support recovery, and build capacity.

IV.   **Course Description:**

This course will provide the theoretical, conceptual, and practical foundation for social workers to engage in a human rights-based approach to social work. Students will gain an understanding of how the international human rights principles can be applied to social work practice in domestic and international settings, particularly in crisis situations. A number of historical and current cases from a variety of countries will be used to examine how social workers can both advocate for and respect human rights in a manner that promotes recovery, resiliency, and capacity building.

V.   **Theoretical Framework**

        The West Chester University MSW Program strives to be on the cutting edge of theory-driven and research-informed practice. To this end, the program takes an integrative approach to social work practice with individuals, families, and communities. This approach incorporates a number of theories, perspectives, and models for practice with the various levels of social systems, depending on mutually identified strengths, needs, and goals. What is central to this approach is the importance of a collaborative relationship between the social worker and those served, building on strengths and working together to affect meaningful and socially just change. The theories and models incorporated include, but are not limited to: attachment theory, a developmental perspective, the ecological perspective, conflict theory,

1

the empowerment perspective, feminist theory, crisis theory, the risk/resiliency model, the social justice perspective, the social action model, social constructivist theory, social exchange theory, social learning theory, social systems theory, theories of social change, and the strengths perspective.

VI.   Course Learning Outcomes

The WCU Graduate Social Work Department has adopted a competency-based, outcome performance approach to its curriculum consistent with the Educational and Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2008). Competencies are measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. Each course is designed to provide students the opportunity to develop and demonstrate certain core competencies through measurable practice behaviors. The following table lists the CSWE Competencies, Practice Behaviors, and assignments that measure these expected outcomes.

Assignment	Course Outcomes/ Behavioral Indicators Measured	% of Grade
*Daily Reflective Journal	**FPB 2** Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development **FPB 15** Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups **FPB 16** Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference shaping life experiences	40%
*Group Presentation	**FPB 19** Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice **FPB 20** Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice **FPB 25** Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being	35%
Class exercises and participation	**FPB 4** Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication **FPB 7** Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice **FPB 11** Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom **FPB 19** Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice	25%

* Denotes assignments that assess student outcomes and gauge teacher effectiveness for maintaining CSWE and Middle States accreditation.

VII.   Instructional Methodology

The teaching methods in this course will include lecture, large group discussion, and small group discussion, analysis of case materials, audio/visual aids, simulations, and group exercises for an active learning environment. Students will also be called upon to present their observations and scholarly analysis in experience with working with a group, organization, or community in formal presentations. Knowledge of the reading assignments is expected for class participation.

VIII.   Course/Classroom Expectations

- *Class attendance* – Students are expected to attend the entire class each session every week. Timeliness is expected. More than two absences or repeated lateness will result in a lower overall grade. Students are expected to notify the instructor prior to any absences or late arrivals and must get missed material from classmates.

- *Course readings* – Students are expected to complete and be prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Class discussions and lectures are designed to be an integration of course material, not a review of all required readings. Students are accountable for assigned material not covered in class.

- *Respectful interactions* – Students are expected to interact with instructors and peers in a respectful, professional manner (e.g. active listening in class, use of non-discriminatory language, use of constructive

2

debate and feedback, appropriate and professional use of email). Please refrain from use of electronic media including mobile phones or laptops to communicate with others during class time.

If a student is on call, please inform the instructor prior to class and put phone on silent during class.

- *Timely completion of written assignments* – Students are expected to complete written assignments in a timely manner. Late assignments will only be accepted with *prior* approval from the instructor. 1 point will be deducted for each day an assignment is late.

- *Professional quality of written assignments* – Students are expected to produce professional quality work. This includes using non-sexist and inclusive language, not engaging in plagiarism (intended or unintended), giving credit to original author(s) for concepts and ideas that are not the student's own, and using scholarly references to support one's ideas in APA format. APA manuals are available for purchase at the WCU bookstore. The following is the complete citation for the manual:

   American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

   An excellent online resource for APA style is available through the OWL (Online Writing Lab) at Purdue University: http://owl.english.purdue.edu.

- *Plagiarism* – Plagiarism is a serious violation of West Chester University's Academic Integrity Policy and can result in expulsion from the University. Students admitted to West Chester University for a Master's degree in social work are expected to have a clear understanding of plagiarism, including its consequences and how to avoid it. Any student who does not feel prepared to submit graduate-level work that is properly cited must take it upon themselves to become familiar with standards of citation and documentation.

- *Support* - Students who need academic support are expected to take advantage of the University's Writing Center services, including on-line and in-person tutorials: http://www.wcupa.edu/_academics/writingcenter/. Course instructors are also available during office hours for additional help with course assignments or content.

- For questions regarding Academic Integrity, the No-Grade Policy, Sexual Harassment, or the Student Code of Conduct, students are encouraged to refer to their department's handbook, the Graduate Course Catalogue, the Rams Eye View, or the University website. Please understand that improper conduct in any of these areas will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the classroom and/or a failing grade.

- **ADA Policies**
   We at West Chester University wish to make accommodations for persons with disabilities. Please make your needs known by contacting your academic advisor or department chairperson and/or the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities at x3217. Sufficient notice is needed in order to make the accommodations possible. The University desires to comply with the ADA of 1990.

   Self-Care: Social work is field where professionals may experience "secondary trauma" or "burnout" due to the high stress levels related to listening to stories of hardship and oppression. Topics in social work classes may be relevant to an experience a student has survived in their own life. Each student is encouraged to involve themselves in healthy activities outside the classroom (i.e., talking with a trusted friend, exercise, crafts, photography, etc.). Students who find themselves overwhelmed with any issues addressed in class are encouraged to speak with the instructor, their advisor, and/or to seek assistance from the WCU Counseling Center.

IX.   Texts
Recommended:
Wronka, J. (2008). *Human rights and social justice: Social action and service for the helping and health
    professionals.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Required and supplemental readings may be posted on electronic reserve, D2L, or may be retrieved via the EBSCO Host database on the library site.

X.   Assignments.
All assignments are required to be in proper APA format. Professional style, format, and organization; integration of course concepts; and implications for social work practice are expected. Additional information is provided on the individual assignment rubrics. All final submissions of assignments are to be submitted via DropBox as a .pdf.

Daily Reflective Journal *(due January 12)*
Each night after class, write a brief reflection on the readings and class discussions. The reflection should be at minimum 2-pages for each day (for a minimum total of 10 pages). Your reflections should include a response (at least in part) to the following questions:

- Day 1: How have the readings begun to shape or reshape your understanding of human rights?
- Day 2: It is often cited that since its inception social work has been a human rights profession. Reflecting on the readings and class discussions for Unit 2 assess whether or not you think this statement accurately portrays the profession (in its ideals and practices).
- Day 3: Identify a human rights related issue in your practice. Apply at least one of the human rights treaties to the issue, discussing what principles apply and how. Discuss ways in which you would address the issue using a human rights approach. Include both micro and macro actions.
- Day 4: Identify a human rights violation in your locality or in the state of Pennsylvania. Identify how social workers (and allied professionals if relevant) should be involved to advance human rights advocacy on this issue.
- Day 5: Thinking about Healy (2008), our other readings, and class discussions for the week, do you see yourself engaged (or could you see yourself engaged) in human rights work as a social worker? How will you care for yourself in your social work practice?

Group Presentation: *Applying a Human Rights Lens to National Association of Social Workers* Social Work Speaks *Policy Statements (January 9)*
Since 2008 the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the accreditation body for social work in the United States, has called upon educational institutions to integrate human rights concepts and practices into curricula, including field education. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has also recognized the role for human rights and social work in its policy statement on "International Policy on Human Rights." One limitation of NASW approach has been that it segregates human rights into the realm of "the international" and does not systematically address human rights dimensions of the varied policy statements included in *Social Work Speaks* (2012).

For this assignment, either in small groups (no more than three students in a group) or individually, choose one NASW policy statement to address in a critical commentary/brief. *Small group work is encouraged, as discussion/dialogue may yield deeper insights into how to apply a human rights framework to the chosen policy statement.*

Prepare a formal 30 minute presentation in which you:
- Provide background on the social issue the policy statement is addressing.
- Highlight with specific reference to human rights treaties and related documents how the issue could be reframed or more fully understood from a rights-based perspective.
- Draw upon at least four different human rights documents in your critique/analysis, elaborating on how attention to human rights standards may strengthen NASW's official response to the particular issue.
- Finally, rewrite and/or expand upon the final section of the policy statement regarding action steps as a "proposed" revision that could be submitted to the original authors of the statement for consideration.
- Include appropriate references (in APA format).

I will allow for some class time for group work and to help troubleshoot specific questions, show you how to find relevant documents, etc. This part of the class will be run as a "workshop" to build your capacity to locate, identify, analyze, and apply human rights concepts and practices to a specific social work policy issue. You will need to bring laptops/tablets to class each day to prepare the presentation.

During the last session each group will present its key insights into the policy statement and share a copy of the specific recommendations the group drafted. After each presentation the class will provide feedback and raise questions. I will also provide written feedback/questions to consider as you finalize revisions. Following Unit 5, you will have one week to integrate feedback, make edits, and turn in a revised version of the assignment. Final assignments are due on Friday, **January 16** at 5pm.

6. **Class Activities and Participation**
Students are expected to actively participate in class discussion and exercises**.** Class participation includes quality engagement in active learning activities, small group and dyad discussions, and D2L. Your participation should communicate evidence of reading and contribute relevant resources to the discussions.

Prepare one discussion question generated from the readings for each day to be used in small group discussions during class.

XI.   **Grading Scale:**

This class adopts the grading system from WCU Graduate Studies.
http://www.wcupa.edu/_information/official.documents/graduate.catalog/acadinfo.htm#grading

A = 94 – 100	B+ = 87 - 89	C+ = 77 – 79	F = Below 70
A- = 90 – 93	B = 84 - 86	C = 75 – 76	
	B- = 80 – 83	C- = 70-73	

XII.   **Course Outline:**

Unit 1 – January 5
Topics:
- Introduction to Human Rights
- Overview of Civil, Political, Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights
- Social Work as a Human Rights Profession
- U.S. Exceptionalism
- Racism as a Human Rights Issue

READ IN ADVANCE:
Healy, L. (2008). Exploring the history of social work as a human rights profession. *International Social Work, 51(6),* 735-748.
National Association of Social Workers. (2006). *Oppose torture in any form*. Retrieved from http://www.socialworkers.org/diversity/intl/092206b.asp
Pollack, D., & Rosman, E. (2012). An introduction to treaties for international social workers. *International Social Work, 55(3*), 417-427.
United Nations. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights*. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/
United Nations. (1965). *International convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination*. Retrieved from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx

Recommended reading:
Andrews, P.E. (2009). South Africa. In D. P. Forsythe (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Madikizela, P.G. (2003). *A human being died that night.* New York: Mariner Books.
Human Rights Watch. (2012). United States. In *World Report 2012*, 1-9. Retrieved from

http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/wr2012.pdf

King, M. L. (1963). *Letters from a Birmingham jail*. Retrieved from http://mlk-
kpp01.stanford.edu/kingweb/liberation_curriculum/pdfs/letterfrombirmingham_wwcw.pdf

Urban Justice. (2008). *Race realities in New York City*. Retrieved from
http://www.ushrnetwork.org/sites/default/files/26_new_york.pdf

Unit 2 – January 6
Topics:
- Human rights, values, and social work ethics
- The UN Human Rights System
- Rights of immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees
- A rights-based approach to social work practice

READ IN ADVANCE:

National Association of Social Workers. (2003). International policy on human rights. In *Social work speaks* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

International Federation of Social Workers. (2014). *Statement of ethical principles*. Retrieved from http://ifsw.org/policies/statement-of-ethical-principles/

United Nations. (1990). *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.* Retrieved from http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/cmw.htm

United Nations. (1951; 1967). *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*. Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html

Recommended reading:

Androff, D. (2012). Deaths in the desert: The human rights crisis on the U.S.-Mexico border. *Social Work, 52(2)*, 165-173.

Berthold, S. M. (2007). Transcultural approaches in working with traumatized refugee and asylum-seeking children, youth and their families. In N. Cohen, T. Tran, & S. Y. Rhee (Eds.), Multicultural approaches in caring for children, youth, and their families (pp. 269-311). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Blake, J. (2010). Commentary, Welcoming women: Recent changes in U.S. Asylum Law, *Mich. L. Rev. First Impressions, 109(58),* 71-75.

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies (n.d.). *Background on gender and asylum issues*. Retrieved from: http://cgrs.uchastings.edu/background.php

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies (n.d.). *Fauziya Kassindja & the struggle for gender asylum*. Retrieved from: http://cgrs.uchastings.edu/about/kasinga.php

Fabri, M. R. (2011). Best, promising and emerging practices in the treatment of trauma: What can we apply in our work with torture survivors? *Torture*, 21(1), 27-38.

Harding, S., & Libal, K. (2012). Iraqi refugees and the humanitarian costs of the Iraq war: What role for social work? *International Journal of Social Welfare, 21(1),* 94-104.

Healy, L. (2007). Universalism and cultural relativism in social work ethics. *International Social Work, 51(1)*, 11-26.

Humphries, B. (2004). An unacceptable role for social work: Implementing immigration policy. *British Journal of Social Work, 34(1),* 93-107.

Ortiz, D. (2001). The survivors' perspective: Voices from the center. In E. Gerrity, T. M. Keane, & F. Tuma (Eds.), *The mental health consequences of torture* (pp. 13-64). New York: Klewer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Vongkhampra, E.G., Davis, C., & Adem, N. (2010). The resettling process: A case study of a Bantu refugee's journey to the USA. *International Social Work*, 54(2), 246-257.

Wronka, J., & Staub Bernasconi, S. (2012). Human rights. In K. Lyons, T. Hokenstad, M. Pawar, N. Huegler, & N. Hall (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of International Social Work* (pp. 70-84). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.

Unit 3 – January 7
Topics:
- Social and economic rights
- The right to access health care, right to food, and right to housing
- Rights-based approaches to examining social protection policies

- Non-discrimination and equality as human rights principles
- Tackling heterosexism and ableism as human rights concerns

READ IN ADVANCE:
United Nations. (1966). *International covenant on economic, social and cultural rights.* Retrieved from
http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx
Yogyakarta principles: Principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity. (2007). Retrieved from: http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles_en.pdf

Recommended reading:
Bailey, G. (2011). Human rights and sexual orientation. In L.M. Healy & R.J. Link (Eds.), *Handbook of international social work: Human rights, development and the global profession* (pp. 464-471). New York: Oxford University Press.
Chilton, M., Rabinowich, J., Council, C., & Breaux. (2009). Witnesses to hunger: Participation through photovoice to ensure the right to food. *Health and Human Rights, 11(1)*, 73-85.
Hutchinson, G.S. (2011) Human rights of people with disabilities. In L.M. Healy & R.J. Link (Eds.), *Handbook of international social work: Human rights, development and the global profession* (pp. 459-463). New York: Oxford University Press.
Mishra, R. (2005). Social rights as human rights: Globalizing social protection. *International Social Work, 48(1),* 9-20. New York University International Human Rights Clinic. (2013). Nourishing change: Fulfilling the right to food in the United States. Retrieved from: http://chrgj.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/05/130527_Nourishing-Change.pdf
Social Justice Coalition. (2012). *16 million without basic sanitation on human rights day*. Retrieved from http://www.sjc.org.za/posts/16-million-without-basic-sanitation-on-human-rights-day
Staub-Bernasconi, S. (2007). Economic and social rights: The neglected human rights. In E. Reichert (Ed.), *Challenges in human rights* (pp. 138-161). New York: Columbia University Press.
United Nations. (2013). Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Ms. Maria Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona on the right to participation of people living in poverty. Retrieved from: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx

Unit 4 – January 8
Topics:
- Women's human rights
- Public and private spheres—State accountability for gender-based violence
- Children's human rights
- Employing a rights-based approach to social work practice with women and children

READ IN ADVANCE:
United Nations. (1979). *Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women*. Retrieved from
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm
United Nations. (1979). *Convention on the rights of the child.* Retrieved from
http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx
United Nations. (1993). *Declaration on the elimination of all forms of violence against women*. Retrieved from
http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm

Recommended reading:
Berthold, S. M., & Fischman, Y. (2014). Social work with trauma survivors: Collaboration with interpreters. Social Work, 59(2), 103-110. doi: 10.1093/sw/swu011
Human Rights Watch. (2011) *He loves you, he beats you": Family violence in Turkey and access to protection*. Retrieved from http://www.hrw.org/reports/2011/05/04/he-loves-you-he-beats-you-0
Human Rights Watch (2010). *My so-called emancipation: From foster care to homelessness for California youth*. Retrieved from http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/us0410webwcover.pdf

September 2014

Jewell, J. R., Collins, K. V., Gargotto, L., & Dishon, A. J. (2009). Building the unsettling force: Social workers and the struggle for human rights. *Journal of Community Practice*, 17: 309-322.

Lewis, M. (2011). The human rights of children in conflict with the law: Lessons for the US human rights movement. In S. Hertel & K. Libal (Eds.), *Human rights in the United States: Beyond exceptionalism* (pp. 255-273). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Libal, K., Mapp, S.A., Ihrig, E. & Ron, A.V. (2011). Commentary: The convention on the rights of the child: Children can wait no longer for their rights. *Social Work, 56(4),* 367-370.

Link, R. (2007). Children's rights as a template for social work practice. In E. Reichert (Ed.), *Challenges in human rights* (pp. 215-238.) New York: Columbia University Press.

Morgaine, K. (2011). 'How would that help our work?' The intersection of domestic violence and human rights in the United States. *Violence Against Women*, 17(1), 6-27.

Reichert, E. (2012) Women and the human rights framework. In L.M. Healy & R.J. Link (Eds.) *Handbook of international social work: Human rights, development and the global profession* (pp. 447-451). New York: Oxford University Press.

Siegel, M. D. (2012). Surviving Castle Rock: The human rights of domestic violence. *Cardozo Journal of Law and Gender*, 18, 727-751.

Unit 5 – January 9
Topics:
- Responding to current crises
- Self-care in human rights and social work
- Group presentations

READ IN ADVANCE:

Blanchetiere, P. (2006). Resilience of humanitarian workers. Retrieved from http://www.dochas.ie/Shared/Files/4/resilience-of-aid-workers.pdf

Eisenman, D. P., Bergner, S., & Cohen, I. (2000). An ideal victim: Idealizing trauma victims causes traumatic stress in human rights workers. *Human Rights Review*, 1(4), 106.

Recommended reading:

Beaton, R. D., & Murphy, S. A. (1995). Working with people in crisis: Research implications. In C. R. Figley (Ed.). *Compassion fatigue: Coping with secondary traumatic stress disorder in those who treat the traumatized* (pp. 51-81). NY: Brunner/Mazel.

Berthold, S. M. (2014). Vicarious trauma and resilience (2nd ed.). Peer-reviewed CME course published by NetCE Continuing Education Online. Retrieved from http://www.netce.com/courseoverview.php?courseid=1060

Berthold, S. M., & Akinsulure-Smith, A. M. (2014). Survivors and victims of terrorism. In A. Gitterman (Ed.), Handbook of social work practice with vulnerable and resilient populations (3rd ed.) (pp. 509-534). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Bride, B. E. (2007). Prevalence of secondary traumatic stress among social workers. *Social Work*, 52(1), 63-70.

McCann, L., & Pearlman, L. A. (1990). Vicarious traumatization: A framework for understanding the psychological effects of working with victims. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 3*(1), 131-149.

Yassen, J. (1995). Preventing secondary traumatic stress disorder. In C. R. Figley (Ed.). Compassion fatigue: Coping with secondary traumatic stress disorder in those who treat the traumatized (pp. 178-208). NY: Brunner/Mazel.

USEFUL WEBSITES

International Federation of Social Workers: www.ifsw.org

International Association of Schools of Social Work: www.iassw-aiets.org

September 2014

National Economic and Social Rights Initiative: www.nesri.org

UN High Commission on Human Rights: www.ohchr.org

USEFUL SOCIAL WORK AND HUMAN RIGHTS JOURNALS ON HUMAN RIGHTS TOPICS

Human Rights Quarterly

Human Rights Review

International Journal of Social Welfare

International Social Work

Journal of Health and Human Rights

Journal of Human Rights

Journal of Human Rights

Social Development Issues