



Summer 2025

Course & Session Number	SOWK 557.51	Virtual and in India	June 30-July 29
Course Name	Social Issues in India		
Day(s) & Time	Zoom as indicated in the schedule		
Instructor	Christine Walsh, PhD, RSW Office Hours as indicated in the itinerary		
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SYLLABUS STATEMENT

SOWK 557.51 fosters applied learning and inter-global practices within the contexts of Canada and India. Focusing on critical, intersectional and anti-colonial approaches to knowledge and praxis, learners will engage with key concepts of relationality/reciprocity, experiential learning and collaboration to foster a deeper understanding of social issues within a global context.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

SOWK 557.51 engages learners in an applied field study of India that begins with a critical examination of socio-economic and political climates of India as it relates to community practice with families and social change. Taken concurrently with SOWK 557.49 or UNIV 501.81, learners will participate in a pre-departure session via Zoom and travel to India for the field study as detailed in the itinerary. This course provides students with an introduction to theoretical and practical knowledge related to current social issues in India. This course includes a local and global perspective and social issues related to environment and international development. This course will help students understand the underlying factors that contribute to the social issues and elucidate strategies to address community social change. Students will acquire theoretical and applied knowledge through experiential, collaborative and reciprocal learning encounters that include local educators, community leaders, organizers, and other students. A key focus of this course is fostering reciprocal learning and knowledge exchange opportunities with social work students from India (Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala [CU] and Jamia Millia Islamia [JMI]), engaged as co-learners on this course. Centralizing anti-oppressive theory and practices, learners are encouraged to participate in critical self-reflection practice.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and reflect upon the impact of the history, knowledge and geo and socio-political contexts of the specific regions of India in which the course takes place.
2. Increase their understanding of social issues and social policies in India and the impact on communities.

3. Critically examine the social service delivery system in India and its impact on how services are delivered to urban, rural, disadvantaged and marginalized communities.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the links between micro, mezzo and macro social work practice and how they all work collaboratively to create change.
5. Develop reciprocal learning and exchange skills with social work students from partner institutions within India.

LEARNING RESOURCES

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND/OR READINGS

Readings are provided for the course. Please prepare yourself for class by completing the readings for the designated session.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND REQUIREMENTS

A D2L site is set up for this course which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials. A laptop, desktop or mobile device with Internet access, microphone and speaker is required for D2L and Zoom access.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES

SOWK 557.51 is taken concurrently with SOWK 557.49 or UNIV 501.81. The two courses apply a “macro” perspective that is deeply embedded in personal work and transformative learning. The content of this course is complementary to courses that focus on social policy, political anthropology, community development, international studies/relations, and social justice practice.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Please review the class Itinerary including class schedule and assignments for complete details

ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM CONDUCT AND RELATED INFORMATION

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Faculty of Social Work acknowledges the inequities experienced by racialized people, Indigenous people, and other marginalized populations. We aim to foster an environment that recognizes and celebrates diverse perspectives. Therefore, we are committed to eradicating all forms of injustices based on race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, religion, and disability.

GUIDELINES FOR ZOOM SESSIONS IN ONLINE CLASSES

Students are expected to participate actively in all Zoom sessions. If you are unable to attend a Zoom session, please contact your instructor to arrange an alternative activity for the missed session (e.g., to review a recorded session). Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that will allow you to be fully present and engaged in Zoom sessions. Students will be advised by their instructor when they are expected, if they are able, to turn on their webcam (for group work, presentations, etc.). All students are expected to behave in a professional manner during the session.

MEDIA RECORDING FOR ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

ZOOM RECORDINGS OF ONLINE CLASSES

The instructor may record online Zoom class sessions for the purposes of supporting student learning in this class – such as making the recording available for review of the session or for students who miss a session. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a Zoom session. These recordings will be used to support student learning only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

Assignment 1: Two Parts:

Part A: Situating self within the context of family and community **Worth 10%**

Course Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6

Due before departure (July 4, 2024), the two D2L posts and responses are worth 20% of final grade

The first written post requires situating yourself through your personal lens of considerations of how a current social issue in Canada impacts your life and has informed your current worldview.

Part B: Applicability of your social issue in India (10%)

Find a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in India and consider the social issue they are attempting to address in relation to the social issue you have chosen in Part A. What is the nature of the social issue and what strategy is the NGO utilizing to address the problem.

Each D2L post should be no more than 300 words. You will then select two other posts to respond to for each component. This will provide an opportunity for you to get to know your classmates and align interests for future group work together.

Selected Readings:

Geeks for Geeks. (09 Oct, 2023). List of current social issues in India [Latest],
<https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/social-issues-in-india/>

Khan, A., Khan, S., Khan, M. A., Zaman, K., Khan, H. U. R., Rosman, A. S. B., Indrianti, Y., & Hassan, A. A. (2023). Economic costs of gender inequality in health and the labor market: India's untapped potential. *Front Public Health*, 11, 1067940. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2023.1067940.

Mittal, M., Paden McCormick, A., Palit, M., Trabold, N., & Spencer, C. A. (2023). Meta-Analysis and Systematic review of community-based intimate partner violence interventions in India. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 20(7), 5277. doi: 10.3390/ijerph2007

Thapa, R., van Teijlingen, E., Regmi, P.R., & Heaslip, V. (2021). Caste exclusion and health discrimination in South Asia: A systematic review. *Asia Pacific J Public Health*, 33(8), 828-838. doi: 10.1177/10105395211014648.

Assignment 2: Giving Voice Expressive Art Project (50%)

Course Learning Outcomes: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Presentation/Content: Expressive Arts are often used as an effective means of knowledge dissemination as well as a tool for research and resistance. Using arts based materials (paint, paper etc.), drama (skits, short films), written or spoken word (short story, poetry, lyrics), visual art (photography, collage, media slide shows, digital storytelling) create a project that 'gives voice' to an issue salient to you with respect to a social issue in both India and Canada illustrating similarities in understanding the need social policies. Please bring some materials with you.

Due date: Group Presentation July 12 **Worth** 30%, Written Reflection July 13 **Worth** 10%

Submission: Presentation of the product will be presented in person and posted online to be shared with other students for discussion. The accompanying written explanation and reflection will be sent separately to the instructor and will not be shared with other students.

Option: Group or individual assignment (Groups will be evaluated as a group; individual marks will not be assessed; maximum 3 people per group).

Examples:

- Create a short film clip/slide show (5 minutes maximum) to illustrate topic area of interest/educational materials (e.g. PSA, Digital Storytelling Project)
- Write and illustrate a short story.
- Create a piece of artwork (any medium that can be shared in the online format – even if it's a photograph or video of a more physical piece of art such as sculpture or large painting)
- Present a short skit/drama therapy concept.
- Compose and perform a poem, song, spoken word etc.

Oral explanation/reflection defried and integration (rationale and process): **Each student** will provide a brief written personal explanation/reflection outlining their rationale for the project and a reflection on the process for themselves individually and within the group context and how this experience might be incorporated into current learning or future practice. Questions to consider: Why this particular topic? This medium? Changes you experienced or perceived about yourself or the group dynamic while working on the project; thoughts about how this experience might have impacted you personally/professionally in terms of development.

Selected Readings:

Davies, C., Pescud, M., Maury, S., & Sullivan, D. (2024). A new perspective to an old problem - Mobilizing research into policy and practice using an arts and health case study. *Front Public Health*, 17(12), 1392146. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2024.1392146.

de Witte, M., et al. (2021). From therapeutic factors to mechanisms of change in the Creative Arts Therapies: A scoping review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.678397>.

Levine, E. G., & Levine, S. K. (Eds.). (2011). *Art in action : Expressive arts therapy and social change*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. (available online through U of C library)

Tandon, R., & Hall, B. L. (2021). *The power of collaboration, creativity and art in knowledge mobilization: Reflections from international work*. pp 67-78 chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.unescochair-cbrsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Tandon_CCU_SSHRC_KMb.pdf

Assignment 3 Policy Brief (30%)

Due date: July 14, 2025

Description of Assignment:

A policy brief is a succinctly written document about a particular issue. It consolidates research, laws, debates and data about the context, causes, and impact of a situation or problem. A policy brief is designed to help decision makers by presenting policy options and recommendations. Readers are typically policy makers. Those who read policy briefs are invested in the issue but may not have in-depth knowledge of the topic. They are interested in getting the writer's insights and recommendations that are based on current evidence. Select a policy topic relevant to social work practice with children and families. Prepare a policy brief related to your selected topic that is geared toward a specific policy maker audience. The policy brief should include:

1. **Statement of the Issue/Problem:** Brief (2-3 sentence) statement describing the issue. What is the problem that this policy brief addresses?
2. **Background:** This includes a review of the topic including an overview of key issues or controversies, with reference to pertinent policy analysis and research literature;
3. **Information Pertinent to the Issue:** This may pertain to current laws needing to be changed, current debate about the issue, and/or data about the issue
4. **Responses and Policy options:** What has been done (or proposed) about the issue so far? Have other organizations addressed it? Are there pending legislative or regulatory proposals? (include support as needed)
5. **Recommendations:** List recommendations about what different actors should do (Can be formatted as a bullet list if appropriate).
6. **References:** Use endnotes throughout the brief rather than in-text citations.

This should be written in plain English, avoiding the use of jargon or highly technical, professionalized language.

Maximum length: 2 pages single spaced (not including references or additional resource

Criteria for assessment:

- Clarity of statement of the issue/problem and explanation of the background
- Thoughtful, logical, well-articulated analysis of the issue including laws, debates, and data
- Policy alternatives are identified; recommendations are clearly stated and appropriate to audience.
- Use and quality of references

Suggested Readings:

Naidoo, R., et al. (2022). The development of a policy brief on physical activity and health in Africa for children and adolescents with disabilities: COVID-19 and beyond. *African Journal of Disability*, 11(1), e1–e4, <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v11i0.1100>.

IDRC-CRDI (2024). How to write a policy brief. https://www.idrc-crدي.ca/en/funding/resources-idrc-grantees/how-write-policy-brief?gad_source=1

Taenzler, D., Ruettinger, L., Ziegenhagen, L., & Murthy, G., (October 2011). Climate change and conflict water, crisis and climate change in India: A policy brief. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://adelphi.de/system/files/mediathek/bilder/2011_water_crisis_and_climate_change_in_india_a_policy_brief.pdf

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

- Students are expected to actively and meaningfully engaged in all activities and discussions.
- Make-up options are available and must be determined in consultation with the instructor.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

- Please submit all assignments electronically through their respective Dropbox in D2L. Assignments may be submitted in Word or PDF format. Assignments should have a file name as follows: “Full name and assignment number” (e.g., Jane Smith Assignment 2). Assignments are due by 11:59pm on their due date. Please note that it is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

- Students should get in touch with the instructor if they require an extension. Late assignments will be accepted only in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the instructor” or “assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with a grade reduction.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING

- All assignments will be assessed partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented and referenced in APA 7th edition format. If you need writing support, please connect with the Student Success Centre, at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

- It is expected that all work submitted in assignments is the student’s own work, written expressly by the student for this particular course. Students are reminded that academic misconduct, including plagiarism, has serious consequences, as set out in the University Calendar: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

GRADING

A student's final grade for the course is the sum of the separate assignments. Students must receive the lowest percentage value of a letter grade range to receive that letter grade. Numerical grades will be rounded up. It is not necessary to pass each assignment separately to pass the course.

The University of Calgary **Undergraduate Grading System** and Faculty of Social Work Percentage Conversion will be used. This grading system overrides the grading system in D2L.

Grade	Grade Point	Description	Percentage Range
A+	4.0	Outstanding performance	95-100
A	4.0	Excellent performance	85-94
A-	3.7	Approaching excellent performance	80-84
B+	3.3	Exceeding good performance	77-79
B	3.0	Good performance	73-76
B-	2.7	Approaching good performance	70-72
C+	2.3	Exceeding satisfactory performance	67-69
C	2.00	Satisfactory performance	63-66
C-	1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	60-62
D+	1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	57-59
D	1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.	50-56
F	0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	Below 50
CG		Credit Granted. Not included in the GPA calculation. See section F.1.3 for additional detail.	
CR		Completed Requirements. Carries no weight in calculating the grade point average. This will be noted in the calendar description as "Not Included in GPA" where applicable.	

COURSE EVALUATION

Feedback will be sought at the end of the course through the standard University and Faculty of Social Work course evaluation forms. Students are welcome to discuss the process and content of the course at any time with the instructor.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED READINGS

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY POLICIES AND SUPPORTS

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

As members of the University community, students and staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Students and staff are also expected to demonstrate professional behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. Consistent with the aims of the Social Work Program and the University of Calgary, all students and staff are expected to respect, appreciate, and encourage expression of diverse world views and perspectives; to offer their fellow community members unconditional respect and constructive feedback; and to contribute to building learning communities that promote individual and collective professional and personal growth. While critical thought and debate is valued in response to concepts and opinions shared in class, feedback must always be focused on the ideas or opinions shared and not on the person who has stated them.

Students and staff are expected to model behaviour in class that is consistent with our professional values and ethics, as outlined in the Canadian Association for Social Workers, Code of Ethics (2005) and the Alberta College of Social Work Standards of Practice (2019). Both can be found online at:

<https://acsw.ab.ca/site/practice-resources?nav=sidebar>

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures. Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS). SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/access/prospective-students/academic-accommodations>

RESEARCH ETHICS

"If a student is interested in undertaking an assignment that will involve collecting information from members of the public, they should speak with the course instructor and consult the CFREB Ethics Website (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/researchers/ethics-compliance/cfreb>) before beginning the assignment.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Course materials created by professor(s) (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the professor(s). These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is

prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Acceptable-Use-of-Material-Protected-by-Copyright-Policy.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the policy available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Sexual-Violence-Policy.pdf>

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Please visit the Registrar's website at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for additional important information on the following:

- **Wellness and Mental Health Resources**
- **Student Success**
- **Student Ombuds Office**
- **Student Union (SU) Information**
- **Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information**