I. Catalog Course Description

This course examines social policies and programs that affect immigrants and refugees; social work practices that encompass the diversity of immigration experiences, international refugee situations, and acculturation and family dynamics processes; transnational immigrants; inter- and intra-ethnic tensions; cultural competence in social work interventions; and specific issues of oppression and social justice that face refugees and immigrants.

This course introduces social work concepts regarding the specific needs and issues facing refugee and immigrant clients. Students will develop skills in providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Because this population is always changing, and becoming more diverse, we will focus on developing cultural competency knowledge, skills and values.

II. Course Overview

This course focuses on social work practice with immigrant and refugee populations in all their diversities of race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical and mental ability, age, and national origin. The course addresses immigrant and refugee experiences, social policy, and social justice in US social, economic, and political contexts. This course examines the consequences of immigration law history, United States foreign policy, and media influences for the life circumstances and adjustment processes of immigrants and refugees. Employing an international perspective, students study and discuss survivors of torture, victims of human trafficking, detainees, and asylum seekers with special attention to the current global and US immigration debate and incidents and issues facing refugee, immigrants and asylum seekers. The particular situations and needs of new immigrants are examined with a special focus on the greater New Jersey area. The course draws from multiple theoretical perspectives, including empowerment, ecological, psychodynamic, and life-course. It examines immigration theories in the context of current immigration experiences. The students will be thoroughly grounded in culturally sensitive, effective, and acceptable methods of service.
and intervention. The course’s underlying premise is the importance for social workers not only to analyze immigrant policies, but take leadership roles in creating and shaping appropriate social policies, intervention projects, and programs.

Students are expected to demonstrate understanding of immigrant and refugee issues in their complex social, economic, political, national, and international contexts. In their critical thinking about immigrant and refugee policy, program development, and social work practice issues, students are expected to utilize and present challenging, up-to-date empirical research and educational materials.

Through this course, the students will explore the ever-changing dimensions facing social workers who work with refugee and immigrant clients. The social work profession was founded on aiding the cultural adjustment of newcomers to the United States. According to the 2000 Census, New Jersey is the third most diverse state in the nation, and Hudson County is the second most diverse county, surpassed only by Queens, NY. Wherever one finds oneself working in the social work field upon graduation, one is sure to find refugee and immigrant clients. Topics include: becoming a refugee, the international experience before arrival in the US, the refugee experience, cultural adjustment, culture shock, post traumatic stress, and war and refugee trauma. Special groups will be discussed including: survivors of torture, victims of human trafficking, detainees, and asylum seekers. Special attention will be paid to family issues, inter-group conflicts, and intergenerational issues. Post 9-11 issues facing refugee, immigrants and asylum seekers will be discussed as well as the powerful role that social workers can play in the fight against anti-immigrant policies, sanctions and discriminatory practices.

III. **Place of Course in Program**

This course is an elective offered to both first and second year students. In the areas of direct practice, social policy, cultural diversity and oppression, and human behavior in the social environment, the course builds on both the core curriculum and foundation classes.

IV. **Course Objectives**

At the completion of this course, students are expected to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and skills related to national and international social, economic and political factors that affect the life circumstances and experiences of immigrants and refugees.

2. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and recommend specific changes in the delivery of social work practice interventions targeted to diverse immigrant groups.

3. Apply culturally and linguistically appropriate techniques to their practice with foreign-born clients.
4. Identify the commonalities and distinguishing characteristics of immigration experiences and their potential influences on immigrants’ and refugees’ experiences in the US.

5. Comprehend the importance of roles that family, community, and social service agencies may play in the immigration process.

6. Recognize the different cultural constructs of health and illness in different ethnic groups and their relevance to culturally competent social service interventions.

7. Understand and recognize the social justice issues that may impact on the detention of asylum applicants and on deportation based on race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical and mental ability, age, and/or national origin.

8. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and incorporate the social work values of challenging social injustice and oppression into work with marginalized, disenfranchised, and/or disadvantaged immigrant populations.

V. **Required Texts**


**Recommended Texts**


**Supplemental/Other Readings**


For additional assigned readings, see course schedule.

Additional handouts will be distributed in class.

**Video and guest speaker**

To be announced in class.

VI. **Course Requirements**
Course format: The course is organized with strong emphasis on class discussions, lecture, video, and experiential group exercises. Students are expected to draw heavily from the assigned readings, their fieldwork practice experience, newspaper articles, and related courses in order to contribute to the discussions. The instructor will invite guest speakers for presentations on some topics in the class.

Class attendance: You are expected to attend all classes. Absenteeism will be viewed as lack of interest and the student will be encouraged to drop the course. If the course is not dropped, points may be deducted for non-attendance. If any student leaves a class early without the instructor’s special permission for that particular class, one point will be deducted from his or her grade. Points may also be deducted if any student is absent from class without explaining the situation to the instructor. If you must miss the class, e-mail me and let me know the reason.

Readings and class participation: In order to have informed class discussions, all students need to complete assigned readings on a timely, weekly basis. During all class lectures, the professor will assume that students have read the assigned material.

To facilitate learning and classroom interactions, you are expected to participate productively in class discussions on each day’s topic. Participatory learning experience in class is key to success in this course. Contributions should reflect an understanding of assigned readings, critical thinking, and application of the material to social work research and practice, and ability to integrate and build on the contribution of others.

VII. Grading

Students will be graded on two take-home written assignments, an oral presentation, and readings and participation in class discussions.

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<tr>
<th>Evaluation will be based on the following assignments:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Readings and class participation (20%)</td>
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<td>2. Your family immigration paper (25%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. In-class presentation on a current immigration policy/issue (15%)</td>
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<td>4. Final paper on immigrant family interview (40%)</td>
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Details on each of the assignments 2, 3, and 4 will be distributed in class.

Presentation style: Type the written assignments using 12-point font on 8 ½ x 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins. Double space the text and use only one side of the paper. Use
APA style, the style set out in *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.).

Submission of the course assignments by the due dates: Submit assignments on time, according to the schedule. If it is not possible to do so because of personal or family emergencies or illness, contact me before the due date to explain the situation and establish an alternative date. Any assignment submitted late without first obtaining my permission will incur a penalty of one point per day past the due date. Students with special needs, disabilities, or religious observances that conflict with the course time are encouraged to discuss those issues with me before the assignments are due. Appropriate accommodations will be made.

A grade of incomplete is given only in accordance with university policy.

VIII. Course Evaluation

Rutgers University issues a survey that evaluates both the course and the instructor. This survey is completed by students toward the end of the semester, and all answers are confidential and anonymous. The instructor may also choose to conduct a midpoint evaluation.

IX. Academic Integrity

All work submitted in a graduate course must be your own.

It is unethical and a violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy to present the ideas or words of another without clearly and fully identifying the source. Inadequate citations will be construed as an attempt to misrepresent the cited material as your own. Use the citation style preferred by the discipline.

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgement is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one’s own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: “to paraphrase Plato’s comment…” and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any question about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.
X. **Disability Accommodation**

Please Note: Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact the University Office of Disability Services at 732-932-2848 for a letter of accommodation. Students must have a letter of accommodation from the Office of Disability Services in order to receive accommodations. Any student who has already received a letter of accommodation, should contact the instructor privately to discuss implementation of his/her accommodations immediately. Failure to discuss implementation of accommodations with the instructor promptly may result in denial of your accommodations.
XI. Course Outline

Unit I The global context, the United States, and immigration—conceptual underpinnings

Week 1: Overview of immigration and refugee issues

- Overview of course and its relationship to practice and field internship
- Historical overview of immigration to North America
- Revisiting immigration experiences in contemporary America
- Interrelationships between micro and macro level issues in social work practice in immigration context
- Ethical, values and cultural competence intrinsic to social work practice
- Social and economic justice issues

Required Readings

Potocky-Tripodi, M. Chapter 1. Introduction
Chapter 4. Culturally competent social work practice

Week 2: History of immigration policy in America

- Immigration: Theories and policies
- United States immigration legislation
- United States immigration and Nationality Acts, Immigration reform and Control Acts
- Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and Welfare Reform Legislation of 1996
- Diversity, lottery, quotas

Required Readings

A U.S. Perspective (1-29).
Chapter 6. Refugees in the 1990s

Recommended Readings (available in social work reserve library online)

**Week 3 and 4: Different types of immigration status, social and economic implications and social work practice**

- Current debate on immigration policy: Alien, illegal or undocumented? Temporary vs. permanent visa? Amnesty?
- Different types of visas
- Refugees and asylum
- Rights and obligations
- Employment, naturalization, citizenship
- Human rights and social and economic justice issues
- Implications for social work practice and service delivery

**Required readings**
Potocky-Tripodi, M.

- Chapter 2. Immigration and refugee policies
- Chapter 3. Service delivery systems


United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR website on "Population of concern to UNHCR": *Instructor suggested search terms*) refugees, asylum-seekers, returned refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) protected/assisted by UNHCR, returned IDPs, stateless persons, and others of concern to UNHCR, in more than 150 countries)  
[www.unhcr.org/statistics/populationdatabase](http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/populationdatabase)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights—country-specific reports and statistics  

**Supplemental readings (available in social work reserve library online)**

- Chapter 2. Ethnic conflict and international norms.
Unit II  Social work practice with immigrants and refugees, and work in resettlement agencies

Discussion on immigrant and refugee populations coming from several countries will include:
1. Children—foreign- and US-born
2. Elderly/aging
3. Persons with disabilities
4. HIV/AIDS and immigrants and their needs and the policies and restrictions confronting them

Week 5 and 6: Immigrant communities: Transnational contexts, acculturation and intergenerational issues

- When “home” is in two countries—social work with transnational immigrants
- Family transitions—gender roles in family and community context
- Ethnic, US, and community identities
- Responsiveness of social work programs to transnational immigrants

Required readings
Potocky-Tripodi, M.
Chapter 7. Family dynamics
Chapter 3. Service delivery systems

Week 7: School performance and related issues

- Intergenerational family contexts—parenting issues
- Bi- and multilingual families
- Foreign-born parents and children studying in US schools
- Interfacing with public schools

Case study: Head Start

Required readings
Potocky-Tripodi, M.
Chapter 8. Language, education and economic well-being

Supplemental readings (available in social work reserve library online)

**Reflection paper on your family’s immigration is due in class:**  
March 4, 2008

**Week 8: Health and mental health, access to health care services**

- Immigration experiences and influence on health and mental health
- Cultural beliefs of health and illness
- Health and mental health issues—identification of and provision of culturally sensitive social work practice

**Required readings**  
Potocky-Tripodi, M.  
Chapter 5. Health  
Chapter 6: Mental health  
Chapter 8. Language, education and economic well-being

**Supplemental readings (available in social work reserve library online)**  


**Week 9: Elderly immigrants and immigrants with disabilities**

- Life stage of development and aging in different cultural contexts  
- Development of disability culture  
- Traditional societal and family relationships and response  
- Participatory approach to identify, assess and engage in treatment  
- Application of diversity models—empowerment, case management and the independent living model

**Required readings (available in social work reserve library online)**  
Chapter 12: “Models of Professional Practice”.

**Supplemental readings**  
2005 White House Conference on Aging: International Observers,
Elderly/aging—policy and programs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Handouts will be distributed in class).

Week 10: Victims of Human Trafficking

- Human trafficking in the US—different modalities
- Human trafficking as a process—is it an organized crime?
- Class discussion on the required readings

Required readings
Selected chapters to be notified in class.

Supplemental readings


Week 11: Survivors of torture

- Trauma—coping strategies, resources, facilitating factors, impeding factors
- Clinical and contextual practice issues—strengths and challenges
- Roles of culture and spirituality
- Role of state, and local government agencies and resettlement NGOs

Documentary: Living with torture

Required readings
Potocky-Tripodi, M.
Chapter 6. Mental health

Supplemental readings
To be distributed in class.

Week 12: Cross-cultural conflict and resolution

- Case study: Congo
- Displacement and forced migration: programs and strategies
  a) Trauma counseling
b) Support
c) Social, recreational and children’s educational
d) Family reunion
e) Integration
f) Human rights

- Documentary: “Farmingville”

Required readings
Potocky-Tripodi, M.
Chapter 9. Interethnic relations

Supplemental readings

Chapter 2. The integrated-perspectives approach to international social work.
Chapter 12. The field of displacement and forced migration: Programs and strategies

Unit III Future directions in social work practice, research and policy

Week 13 Students’ presentations

Final Paper is Due in Class: April 15, 2008

Week 14: Students' presentations continued

Week 15: Social workers’ roles

- Course review and feedback

Required readings
Potocky-Tripodi, M.
Chapter 10. Summary and conclusions

*Bhattacharya, G: December 3, 2007*