I. Catalog Course Description

This course provides a framework of knowledge, values, skills and experiences for spiritually sensitive social work. Students develop insight and skills to respond competently and ethically, to diverse spiritual and religious perspectives in social work, with individuals, organizations and communities. Attention is given to collaboration with faith-based organizations and the religion and spirituality as dimension of policy and service delivery where “secular” and “spiritual” may come together to address human need in society. The course examines micro and macro aspects of social work.

II. Course Overview

Social work provides individuals, families, organizations, and communities with the resources and tools to achieve their highest potential. From an ecological perspective, social work incorporates a variety of approaches when serving people; utilizing interventions that incorporate biological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual aspects.

In this course, the term "spirituality" designates the human longing for connection to something greater than oneself and “meaning-making” through this connection. Spirituality is experienced through unique and common forms as expressed in societal myths, rituals, symbols and behaviors. Spirituality includes and also extends beyond institutional religious beliefs. "Religion" refers to organized, collective beliefs, behaviors and traditions.

Social workers are ethically responsible to be prepared to respond (competently) and effectively to spiritual and religious beliefs, behaviors and traditions which are common within much of human experience (micro and macro), while recognizing that beliefs, behaviors and traditions often form a framework which is used to interpret and make meaning of experience.

III. Place of Course in Program

This course is an elective which is recommended for professional growth and development.
IV. Program Level Learning Goals and the Council of Social Work Education’s Social Work Competencies

The MSW Program at Rutgers is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE’s accreditation standards can be reviewed at www.cswe.org.

In keeping with CSWE standards, the Rutgers School of Social Work has integrated the CSWE competencies within its curriculum. These competences serve as program level Learning Goals for the MSW Program and include the following. Upon completion of their MSW education students will be able to: demonstrate ethical and professional behavior; engage in diversity and difference in practice; advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice; engage in practice informed research and research informed practice; engage with individuals, families, groups organizations and communities; intervene with individual, families, groups organizations and communities; and evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

V. Course Learning Goals

Course goal: To enable students to acknowledge, respect and utilize their own and their clients’ spiritual values and religious beliefs in creating positive change, healing within individuals, families, organizations, and communities, and to promote diversity and inclusion.

Objectives (adhering to EPAS core competencies):
1. Integrate, appreciate, and interpret one’s own spirituality and religious tradition. (EPAS 2.1.1)
2. Identify and respect diverse religious and spiritual experiences and the implications for social work practice and social justice. (EPAS 2.1.4)
3. Understand the role of spiritual values and religious beliefs in the framework of contemporary clinical interventions.
5. Demonstrate skills of working sensitively and effectively with clients' spiritual values and religious beliefs in social work practice, e.g., with clients who face life-threatening illness, substance abuse, poverty, etc.
6. Apply selected spiritually sensitive clinical practice techniques in a manner consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics. (EPAS 2.1.2)
7. Experience religious diversity from multiple paradigms, such as race, ethnicity, gender, rural/urban, age, immigration status, and sexuality, with particular concern for oppressed groups.
8. Analyze critically the recent research on religion and spirituality in social work practice. (EPAS 2.1.6)

VI. School of Social Work Mission Statement and School Wide Learning Goals

The mission of the School of Social Work is to develop and disseminate knowledge through social work research, education, and training that promotes social and economic justice and strengths individual, family, and community well-being, in this diverse and increasingly global environment of New Jersey and beyond.

School Wide Learning Goals. Upon graduation all students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior;
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice; and
3. Engage, Assess, and Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

V. Required* and Recommended** Texts and Readings

Required textbook:
There is no required textbook to purchase for this course.

Recommended texts:

All required readings are available through the Rutgers University Library “Reading List” that is integrated into your Canvas course. To find your readings:

Click on the “Reading List” tab in the Canvas navigation bar to the left-hand side of the course. Please note: this list contains links to articles and other required readings separate from the textbook (if applicable). Please follow the syllabus and/or Canvas Readings and Resources page in each module for more specific required readings and resources for each week (including textbook/media).

For further instructions please click here for a video tutorial

VI. Course Requirements

Students are expected to be active learners and collaborators with the instructor in understanding theories and other course content discussed in class. Students are encouraged to contribute knowledge and observations to every classroom discussion. Students are encouraged to inform the instructor of any changes needed in the class structure or instructional style that might facilitate understanding.

Regular class attendance with active participation is expected. When students participate actively in class discussions, learning is enhanced. To be able to participate actively and with relevance to the course subject matter, it is important that reading assignments be completed prior to each class session. Specific reading for each class session will be assigned in class at the conclusion of the previous session. It is the student’s responsibility, whether present or absent, to keep abreast of assignments.

Class attendance is not optional. Students are expected to come to all classes, prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Students will take responsibility for clarifying difficult material encountered in the text, readings and in the lectures. Students are expected to notify the instructor prior to any absence. The professor reserves the right to reduce the final grade for any student with 3 or more absences. In order for a student to be considered present for class, the student must be present for all of the class. Students who leave during the break will be marked
as absent for that class. Students will not be penalized for missing class for appropriate reasons. The same criteria for judging the appropriateness of a class absence that an employer uses are the same criteria I will use. Here are some examples of appropriate reasons for missing class: illness and religious observances. If you are absent from a class because of a medical reason, you must bring a note from your doctor in order to have an excused absence. Here are some examples of inappropriate reasons for missing class: birthday parties and problems finding parking.

All written work must be typed. The letter grade for a hand-written assignment will be reduced by one letter. All written assignments must follow APA 7th Edition format. The professor reserves the right to reduce the letter grade for any assignment that does not conform to APA 7th Edition format.

Late assignments will not be accepted unless the student has planned with the professor prior to the assignments’ due date. The professor reserves the right to reduce the letter grade for any late assignment. If a student is observing a religious holiday that delays the submission of an assignment, the student must inform the professor as early as possible and not, for example, a week before the assignment is due.

Student behavior in this course must comply with the university’s code of conduct. The entire code of conduct can be attained from Student Judicial Affairs Office or online at http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu. Students should be aware that violations of academic integrity, for example plagiarism of any kind, would result in expulsion from the program.

VII. Diversity and Inclusion Statement

RU SSW seeks to create an inclusive learning environment where diversity, individual differences and identities (including but not limited to race, gender-identity and expression, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) are respected and recognized as a source of strength. Students and faculty are expected to respect differences and contribute to learning environment that allows for a diversity of thought and worldviews. Please feel free to speak with me if you experience any concerns in this area.

VIII. Reaching Out and Student Success and Well-Being

Graduate School is challenging no matter what and this has been a particularly challenging time period for all of us. My goal is to support your success in the classroom despite these challenges. If you are struggling academically or if you have other concerns, please reach out to me and communicate your concerns. I am here to help you with course content and I can refer you to other academic support and/or resources to support your well-being as necessary. Please remember that the Office of Student Affairs and your advisor are also here to help facilitate your success in our program as well. A variety of resources can be found on including supports around behavioral health/counseling, sexual violence and misconduct diversity and inclusion and bias reporting by campus at https://socialwork.rutgers.edu/current-students/office-student-affairs.

IX. Grading & Assignments

• **20%** Spiritual Assessment homework. Using a model given by the instructor, students will conduct a spiritual assessment of one of their classmates and write a 2-3-page paper based on the information obtained along with answering some questions provided by the instructor.

• **10%** Attendance and Class Participation.

• **30%** Interview with a religious/spiritual leader/teacher (4 pages, not including title page, abstract, references). Students must interview a leader/teacher (e.g., pastor, imam, rabbi, monk, shaman, guru, etc.) of a tradition which is outside of your own spiritual tradition. In the paper, describe the rituals, symbols, community, and spiritual expressions found in this tradition and how they are different/similar to your own.

• **40%** Final Paper (6-8 pages, not including title page, abstract, references) on ethically addressing a social work problem that involves spirituality and religion.

**Grading Standards**

It is critical that students keep up with the readings and lectures. Keeping up means understanding the materials presented in both the readings and lectures. When concepts, lecture material or readings are unclear, ask for clarification as soon as possible. Clarify the requirements of any assignments prior to handing in that assignment. Students should feel free to ask for clarification during class, after class and during office hours.

Designation of letter grades for the course are as follows:

- **A** 92-100
- **B+** 87-91
- **B** 82-86
- **C+** 77-81
- **C** 70-76
- **F** 0-69

*Scores to be rounded up at .5*

**X. Academic Resources**

**Library Research Assistance**

**Julia Maxwell** is the social work the social work librarian on the New Brunswick Campus julia.maxwell@rutgers.edu; **Natalie Borisovets** is at Newark, Dana Library natalieb@rutgers.edu; **Katie Anderson** is at Camden, Robeson Library katie.anderson@rutgers.edu. They are all available to meet with students.

**Writing Assistance**

Success in graduate school and within the larger profession of social work depends on strong writing skills. Several resources are available to help students strengthen their professional and academic writing skills. Writing assistance is available to all MSW students as described below.

All MSW SSW students (NB, Camden, Newark, IW, online and blended) are eligible to access writing assistance at the New Brunswick Learning Center. Online tutoring may also be available.
Additional Online Resources

APA Style

All students are expected to adhere to the citation style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th edition (2020). It can be purchased at APA Manual 7th Edition. The Purdue OWL website is also a good resource https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

XI. Course Evaluation

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

XII. Academic Integrity

As per Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, “Students are responsible for understanding the principles of academic integrity and abiding by them in all aspects of their work at the University. Students are also encouraged to help educate fellow students about academic integrity and to bring all alleged violations of academic integrity they encounter to the attention of the appropriate authorities.” All SSW students are expected to review and familiarize themselves with the RU Academic Integrity Policy in its’ entirety.

As per Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, “The principles of academic integrity require that a student: make sure that all work submitted in a course, academic research, or other activity is the student’s own and created without the aid of impermissible technologies, materials, or collaborations; properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, images, or words of others; properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work; obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with the student’s interpretation or conclusions; treat all other students ethically, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This principle requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress; uphold the ethical standards and professional code of conduct in the field for which the student is preparing.”

Students should review all types of Academic Integrity Violations per the RU Academic Integrity Policy. Below are some of the more common violations, as articulated in Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy:

“Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words, ideas, images, or results, no matter the form or media, without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, a student must identify every direct quotation using quotation marks or appropriate indentation and cite both direct quotation and paraphrasing properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some
common examples of plagiarism are: Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution; Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one’s own words another person’s written words or ideas as if they were one’s own, regardless of the nature of the assignment; Incorporating into one’s work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources, regardless of format, without proper attribution.”

“Cheating: Cheating is the use or possession of inappropriate or prohibited materials, information, sources, or aids in any academic exercise. Cheating also includes submitting papers, research results or reports, analyses, and other textual or visual material and media as one’s own work when others prepared them. Some common examples are: Prohibited collaboration: receiving research, programming, data collection, or analytical assistance from others or working with another student on an assignment where such help is not permitted; Copying another student’s work or answers on a quiz or examination; Using or having access to books, notes, calculators, cell phones, technology, or other prohibited devices or materials during a quiz or examination; Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from the instructors involved; Preprogramming a calculator or other device to contain answers, formulas, or other unauthorized information for use during a quiz or examination.; Acquiring a copy of an examination from an unauthorized source before the examination; Having a substitute take an examination in one’s place; Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement; Submitting as one’s own work a term paper or other assignment prepared, in whole or in part, by someone else.”

Any faculty member or academic administrator who becomes aware of a possible academic integrity violation must initiate a formal complaint with the Office of Student Conduct and the SSW’s Academic Integrity Facilitator (Dr. Patricia Findley, pfindley@ssw.rutgers.edu). The AIF deciding the case (the “adjudicator”) shall notify the accused student of the allegation in writing or by electronic communication within fifteen working days of the time the faculty member becomes aware of the alleged violation.

Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TF or incomplete grade shall be assigned until the case is resolved. For more information, see Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy.

To promote a strong culture of academic integrity, Rutgers has adopted the following honor pledge to be written and signed on examinations and major course assignments submitted for grading: On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination/assignment.

XIII. Disability Accommodation

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are
officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: 
https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports 
your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’ disability services office will 
provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors 
and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this 
process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS website.

XIV. **Other Resources**

Our school is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and 
our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual 
misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and 
stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students’ academic success and 
we encourage students who have experienced some form of sexual misconduct to talk to 
someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need.

Confidential support and academic advocacy are available through the Rutgers Office on 
are free and confidential and available 24 hours/day, 7 days a week.

XV. **Course Outline**

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<th>UNIT 1: Defining Spirituality and Religion</th>
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**Week 1:** Course Overview: What is spirituality, religion, and secularism?

**Core Readings**

Crisp, B. R. (2020). Charting the development of spirituality in social work in the second decade 
961-978.

Wong, Y. L. R., & Vinsky, J. (2009). Speaking from the margins: A critical reflection on the 
‘spiritual-but-not-religious’ discourse in social work. *British Journal of Social 
Work, 39*(7), 1343-1359.

**Week 2:** Distinguishing religious/spiritual experiences, values, and beliefs and their 
ocurrence in practice

**Core Readings**


**UNIT 2: Theories of Spiritual Development**

**Week 3: Assessing spiritual development**

***Spiritual assessment homework distributed***

**Core Readings**


Puchalski, C. & Romer, A. (2000). Taking a spiritual history allows clinicians to understand patients more fully. *Journal of Palliative Medicine, 3*(1), 129-137.


**UNIT 3: Appreciating Religious Differences and Clinical Sensitivity**

**Week 4: Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism**

**Core Readings**


**Week 5: Indigenous perspectives, syncretism, and animism**

**Core Readings**


**Week 6: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam**

**Core Readings**


***Spiritual assessment due***

| UNIT 4: Spirituality, Healthcare, and Lifespan Issues |

**Week 7: Spirituality and religion in healthcare settings**

**Core Readings**


Sections I to VII (pp. 1-17)
Section VIII. “Shaman and physician partner for improving health for Hmong refugees” (pp. 20)

Recommended Reading

**Week 8: Grief, loss, and healing**

Core Readings


**Week 9: Gender and sexuality**

Core Readings

**Week 10: Spirituality and religion throughout the lifespan**

Core Readings

UNIT 5: Recovery and Mental Health

Week 11: Spirituality and recovery

***Interview with a religious/spiritual leader/teacher due***

Core Readings
Chapter 2 “There is a Solution”
Chapter 5 “How It Works”


Week 12: Psychodynamic theory and existentialism

Core Readings


Week 13: Cognitive and behavioral theory

Core Readings


UNIT 6: Community Organizing, Development, and Faith-Based Organizations

Week 14: Community organizing and community development

Core Readings


Week 15: Spirituality and the workplace

***Final paper due***

Core Readings
