

A Guide for Teaching About Spiritual Diversity in Social Work

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Approaches to Curriculum Innovation.....	6
Engage in Department/School Wide Planning.....	6
Infusion and Specialization Approaches	10
Educational Modules to Use Within Courses or in Workshops.....	11
A Specialized Course Dedicated to Practice with Spiritual Diversity	14
Guidelines for Experiential Exercises.....	15
More Teaching Tips About Course Structure and Approach	16
Overarching Considerations for Teaching about Spirituality in Social Work	18
References.....	22
Appendix I: Syllabus for MSW Course, In-Person Format.....	23
Appendix II: Suggestions for MSW Course, Converting to Blended or Online Formats.....	44
Appendix III: Mandala Appreciating Spiritual Diversity, Class Activity.....	46
Appendix IV: Module on Mindfulness Activities	50
Appendix V: Grading Rubrics	59
Appendix VI: Online Resources with Internet Links	63
Appendix VII: Access to Course Slides.....	67

Introduction

These recommendations are intended primarily for social work faculty, instructors, and teachers of professional workshops. They would also be useful for education in allied helping professions, such as counseling, clinical psychology, psychiatry, nursing, and other mental health and health related fields.¹ Although they focus on the US context for social work education, their implications for teaching about spiritual diversity and international perspective may be helpful for people in other countries.

The recommendations are based on my experience of more than 33 years teaching about spiritual diversity in social work within an MSW elective on spiritual diversity in social work, HBSE courses (at BSW and MSW levels), a PhD level theory course, professional continuing education workshops, human service organization consultations, and consultations for faculty in various universities in the USA and other countries. My approach is influenced by cultural anthropology and comparative religious studies (Canda, 1989; 2005). The educational principles for my teaching are based on the current CSWE educational standards, the NASW Code of Ethics, and the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work statement of ethical principles.²

My faculty appointments have always been in state affiliated universities (University of Iowa and University of Kansas), so my teaching approach does not advocate for particular theological or religious claims of truth. I promote development of students' understanding, knowledge, respect, humility, and skill regarding diverse religious and nonreligious forms of spirituality among clients and their communities. This prepares them for spiritually sensitive and culturally appropriate and humble practice.

¹ This monograph incorporates insights from materials I presented at "Integrative approaches to teaching about spiritual diversity in social work education" at the Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting, Denver, CO, October 23, 2019; and "Competencies for education of clinical mental health professionals for addressing religious and spiritual diversity" at the Meeting on the Role of the Faith-Based Community in Improving Services and Delivery of Care for People with Serious Mental Illness, the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives, Rockville, MD, July 5, 2019.

² These can be found by internet searching.

My recommendations are intended primarily for courses or modules that address spiritual diversity in social work, but they may also be relevant to those that present religion-specific approaches. My book on *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice 3E* (Canda, Furman, & Canda, 2020) includes extensive content and references that would be relevant to religion-specific approaches (especially in Part Two) within the context of an inclusive approach that can be congruent with and adaptable to diverse religious and philosophical perspectives.

There are many formats for education about spiritual diversity and social work that vary in depth. For example:

- Brief workshops for orientation to the importance of the topic, ethical standards, and basic competencies, such as implicit spiritual assessment
- More in-depth in-service trainings for introduction to spiritually sensitive practice, e.g. foundation of values, knowledge, and skills
- Modules inserted into mainstream graduate courses (e.g. direct practice methods, cultural diversity, human behavior theory)
- Full semester length course on topic
- Infusion of content on spirituality into entire undergraduate or graduate education curricula (preferably including specialized courses)
- Dual degree programs (e.g. MSW plus MDiv, MA in Religious Studies, or Clinical Pastoral Education)³
- Post-MSW certificate programs on spirituality in social work

Since I am writing for a wide audience of educators, my recommendations are at a broad level, although they focus on teaching within accredited social work education programs. Each teacher needs to tailor these recommendations for their particular context and students. This includes adapting teaching approaches to delivery format, such as all in-person class meetings, blended in-person and online, or all online. I include guidelines and examples for modules, for specialized courses, and I provide sample specialized course syllabi for an all in-person format and a blended format.

The following books are detailed examples of two approaches to education about spirituality: (1) conducting a specialized course on spiritual diversity in social work practice at the MSW level; and (2) infusing content within a broader human behavior theory course at the foundation level of BSW or MSW programs.

³ Canda, E. R. (2005); Daniel Lee & Robert O’Gorman (2005).

Canda, E. R., Furman, L. D., Canda, H. (2020). *Spiritual diversity in social work practice: The heart of helping, third edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- This book provides a comprehensive framework of values, knowledge, and skills for engaging spiritual diversity in social work practice. It is especially suitable for courses dedicated to the topic. Sections can be used for modules embedded within other courses.

Examples of slides to accompany teaching with the Canda et al. (2020) textbook are available in a separate document open access named “Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice: Slides for Teaching.” This can be found by searching the ResearchGate website.

Robbins, S. P., Chatterjee, P., Canda, E. R., & Leibowitz, G. S. (2019). *Contemporary human behavior theory: A critical perspective for social work, fourth edition*. New York: Pearson.

- This book is designed for courses on human behavior theory. It infuses content on spirituality into every chapter by discussing how each school of theory addresses the topic and how spirituality is relevant to a holistic approach to social work practice.

For more resources, see the extensive references and links provided in these two books and within this monograph, including Appendix VI.

A Note on Terms

In my usage, spirituality is a broader concept than religion. Spirituality includes religious and nonreligious expressions (see chapter three for details: Canda, Furman, & Canda, 2020). So when I use the term spirituality, it is inclusive of religious and nonreligious expressions. However, in discussion with clients, it is most important to use terms that reflect their language, vocabulary, beliefs, and comfort. The priority is on using inclusive and culturally responsive and humble definitions placing priority on the perspective of the client. In teaching, this also means beginning with a humble and flexible stance when introducing the concepts of spirituality and religion to students, while also making clear the usage of terms in the educational context.

This distinction between spirituality and religion can be helpful to prevent concerns among colleagues that teaching about this topic will result in proselytization or biased pro- or anti- religious assumptions. It clearly

acknowledges diverse religious and nonreligious forms of spirituality. In any case, I recommend using inclusive and culturally responsive/humble definitions and approaches. I commonly use the expression “religious and spiritual” since not all social work educators are familiar with or use a conceptual distinction between religion and spirituality. This makes clear to the reader/listener that I am addressing religion-specific issues and existential issues (such as meaning and purpose) that are not necessarily tied to religions. This is a brief way of referring to matters related to “religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives”.

- Spirituality is:
 - A process of human life and development
 - *focusing on the search for a sense of meaning, purpose, morality, and well-being;*
 - *in relationship* with oneself, other people, other beings, the universe, and ultimate reality however understood;
 - *orienting around centrally significant priorities; and engaging a sense of transcendence (experienced as deeply profound, sacred, or transpersonal).*
- Religion is:
 - A systematic and *organized* pattern of values, beliefs, symbols, behaviors, and experiences that involves
 - *spirituality*
 - a *community* of adherents
 - transmission of *traditions* over time, and
 - *Community support functions* (e.g. organizational structure, material assistance, emotional support, or political advocacy) that are directly or indirectly related to spirituality.
- Spirituality and religion can express in helpful and harmful ways.

Approaches to Curriculum Innovation

Engage in Department/School Wide Planning

Although spirituality (and religion) has become a much more widely accepted topic in social work education over the past 20 years, it is still not universally accepted. So faculty who wish to teach a new course (or even include content within established courses) sometimes need to provide extra justification and

rationale for the topic and the approach. Following are suggestions for how to do this advocacy for innovation.

Professional Educational Standards and Ethics

- Examine the current CSWE Educational Policy statement and the NASW Code of Ethics for relevant expectations (or similar documents relevant to other countries). See especially sections on nondiscrimination (based on religion, etc.) and cultural competence and appropriateness (as religion and spirituality are everywhere features of culture). The NASW website has statements about standards of professional practice in many fields (such as hospice, mental health); these can be examined for relevance to spirituality and religion. The Ethical Principles of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)/International Association of Schools of Social Work have similar provisions. The IFSW webpage on ethical principles has links to more than 20 other countries' codes of ethics, most of which make statements about relevance of spirituality or religion, such as related to nondiscrimination, respect for diversity, and holistic perspective. (See Canda, Furman, & Canda, 2020 for an analysis.) Related fields such as psychology, chaplaincy, and mental health recovery have statements that are also relevant.

- NASW <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics>
- IFSW <https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-ethical-principles/>
- APA <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/>
- APC http://www.professionalchaplains.org/Files/professional_standards/professional_ethics/apc_code_of_ethics.pdf
- WRAP <https://mentalhealthrecovery.com/values-and-ethics/>

Sample Syllabi

- Examine the syllabi for social work courses at various universities, especially those similar to your own in terms of state or private auspice, region of country, country, ranking, or other distinguishing features. Identify how these faculty persons were able to make a successful case for the course. For example, see my syllabus for an MSW diversity selective on Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice (Appendices I and II and online at <https://spiritualdiversity.ku.edu/>). You can find more syllabi links on this website and on the websites of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work (<https://spiritualityandsocialwork.org/>) and the CSWE

Religion and Spirituality Clearinghouse (<https://www.cswe.org/Centers-Initiatives/Curriculum-Resources/Religion-and-Spirituality-Clearinghouse.aspx>). If you use contents of anyone else's syllabus or website, give citations and credit. You can also find syllabi by using an internet search engine with key terms “spirituality” or “religion” and “social work” and “syllabus”.

Articulate the Rationale

- Make a clear case to colleagues that is rooted in professional values for education and practice. Negotiate in a proactive but non-defensive manner. Build on student interest, practicum instructor requests, and research showing the importance of spirituality for social work and beneficial health and mental health outcomes.
- Use inclusive conceptualizations of spirituality and religion that are founded in the literature (e.g. Canda, Furman, and Canda, 2020).
- Avoid idiosyncratic definitions or use of nonprofessional, religiously biased, or 'pop' discourse about spirituality.
- Some educators and administrators are not comfortable using the term ‘spirituality’, even though they might recognize the importance of holistic and person-environment perspectives on social work or themes regarding meaning, purpose, existential concerns, philosophy, ethics and morals, worldview, and culturally appropriate practice (which all relate to spirituality as I use the term). In discussion with colleagues, use terms that relate to any of these shared interests and are familiar to them.
 - It is sometimes useful not to focus on the term ‘spirituality’ but rather to focus on these or other themes related to the concept (see the Introduction and also Canda et al, chapter 3, 2020 for more detail on definitions and terms).
 - For example, there are current trends in social work education to promote approaches including spirituality or related themes within them. These often go under the rubrics of
 - Holistic
 - Integrative
 - Integral
 - Body-Mind-Spirit
 - Healing Justice
 - Ecosocial work, deep ecology, ecofeminism

- Existential, humanistic, or meaning-focused
- There are also numerous holistic or integrative approaches that are grounded in specific cultures and worldviews. Some of the most common in social work currently are:
 - Africentric, Afrocentric, or African American centered
 - Indigenous/First Nations
 - Asian rooted holistic perspectives (e.g. karma yoga, Gandhian social work, integrative body-mind-spirit social work of Lee et al. [2018])
 - Religion-specific approaches, such as Buddhist social work and socially engaged Buddhism, Catholic Charities (Caritas), various other Christian social ministries, Islamic Social Services, Jewish Communal Service
- A related trend is to include certain spiritually oriented practices and their theoretical frameworks, such as related to mindfulness, trauma informed care, mental health recovery, restorative justice, faith-based services, and addressing moral and spiritual injury among military veterans

Infusion and Specialization Approaches

The most thorough approach to addressing spiritual diversity in the curriculum is to include both broad infusion and focused specialized courses. Infusion would require that the previously described efforts to advocate for the topic in department/school wide planning results in administrative and faculty agreement that spirituality is a high priority topic that should be included in all components of the curriculum. But even if a commitment is made to infuse such content pervasively, there is a risk of uneven implementation across courses and instructors. There is also a risk that infusion in educational practice is defused into superficiality.

Some suggestions for ways to establish infusion across a curriculum:

- Incorporate attention to spiritually sensitive practice and respecting spiritual diversity in the program's mission statement.
- Identify ways that this can be addressed in BSW, MSW, and PhD/DSW level degree programs.
- Consider ways to achieve synergy between the program's goals for teaching, research/scholarship, and service.
- State specific educational objectives on spiritual diversity in master syllabi learning objectives as relevant to all courses and field education.
- Examine how these are reflected in readings and assignments.
- Be sure that there are a sufficient number of faculty and other instructors on staff (or as adjuncts) who can teach specialized courses on the topic.
- Provide resources and educational guidelines to assist all instructors to address spiritual diversity in all components of the curriculum.
- Every course syllabus should mention policies pertaining to students' rights to accommodations based on religious diversity. For example, if exams or due dates conflict with times of special religious observance, accommodations should be made.

Specialized courses may be easier to achieve in planning than full scale infusion. They offer the advantage of going into greater depth and detail than brief mention or modules in various courses. However, there is a risk that spirituality could be relegated solely to a particular course, so that students rarely learn about it in other components of the curriculum. Sometimes this approach is limited to teaching by one or two highly committed instructors. If they leave a program or have other duties that take them away from teaching the course, then the topic of spirituality might disappear entirely.

I recommend combining infusion and specialized approaches in the curriculum. The following two sections describe ways to implement this. First, I discuss ways to identify relevant topics for modules that can be included within various existing courses and in workshops. Then, I present detailed guidelines for developing a specialized MSW level course on Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice.

Educational Modules to Use Within Courses or in Workshops

Modules can be small scale (e.g. one session or one portion of a session) if necessary to accommodate other content. One way develop a module is to examine issues that interface spiritual diversity and another more commonly addressed topic, such as diversity (e.g. gender identity and gender expression, culture, disability, age, sexual orientation, etc.), human development, or mental health assessment and use of DSM. See links to educational modules and numerous resources that can be used for developing modules at: <https://spiritualdiversity.ku.edu/> and content on many topics within the Canda et al. book. View Appendix IV for an example of a module on mindfulness.

The current CSWE EPAS allows for various ways to configure curricula. The following suggestions address traditional broad curricular content areas.

- In foundation **policy** courses, relevant topics might include: diverse religious influences on origin and development of social policy; faith-based services federal initiatives; current debate between different religious groups on policy issues, such as abortion or gay marriage; debate between secular and religious policy perspectives; religious roots of policy and programs in different countries; complex issues related to separation of church and state and rights to freedom of religion together with freedom from religion affecting social welfare; nonreligious spiritual approaches to policy, such as win/win solutions and restorative justice.
- In foundation **HBSE** courses, relevant topics might include: universal existential and spiritual aspects of human experience, such as the quest for meaning and loss of meaning during crisis; the impact of religious diversity on human behavior; alternative theoretical perspectives for understanding spirituality, such as ecofeminism, deep ecology, and transpersonal theory; potential helpful and harmful influences of religious traditions and social support systems; life course development including morality, faith, spiritual

intelligence, and spiritual transformation; loss and grief; death and dying; positive youth development; gerotranscendence. In general, content on transpersonal theory needs to be addressed (e.g. Jung, Grof, Maslow, Wilber, Washburn) concerning self-actualization and self-transcendence, development through the life span, spiritual crises, altered states of consciousness, and culture and religious-specific means of distinguishing visionary experiences from psychopathology (Canda et al., 2020; Robbins, et al., 2019).

- In **practice and practicum** courses, relevant topics might include: ethical guidelines for appropriate use of religiously derived helping techniques and support resources (e.g. Appendix IV); clarifying inter-professional boundary issues between social workers, clergy, and other religiously based helpers; dealing with possible conflicts between personal, professional, and agency based value commitments (e.g. debate over abortion/right to choose in Catholic agencies); how practitioners can utilize meditation, mindfulness, and ritual to enhance empathy, reduce stress, and increase life celebration for both selves and clients; how to conduct assessments of a client's spiritual perspective and its helpful or harmful consequences; how to differentially assess between psychopathology and spiritual transformation experiences; macro practice strategies that draw on nonviolent spiritual approaches (e.g. M. L. King and Gandhi) and empowerment (e.g. liberation theology).

- Regarding **practicum**, be sure there are field placement opportunities for students who wish to develop practice and administrative skills relevant to spirituality. For example, hospice, palliative care, hospitals with good partnerships between social work and pastoral counselors, mental health centers with spirituality related treatment programs (such as DBT, ACT, spiritually oriented cognitive behavior therapy, or consumer spiritual support groups), professional substance abuse treatment programs and 12 Step programs, immigrant and refugee serving agencies, and religiously sponsored agencies. Be sure that field instructors and liaisons are open to this topic and that the agencies neither prohibit or discriminate against spirituality or religion nor impose discriminatory spiritually/religiously based attitudes and policies or proselytization.

- In foundation **research** courses, relevant topics might include: issues in the study of human subjectivity and consciousness; the moral purposes and ethical dilemmas of conducting research; qualitative and ethnographic methods for studying spiritual communities; phenomenological and

transpersonal techniques for study of consciousness and self-reflection; human subjects protection concerns in studying religious groups; problems in operationalization and measurement of concepts such as faith, religiousness, and spirituality; strengths and weaknesses of current research on spirituality-related outcomes of clinical practices and religious/spiritual participation; insights from religious/spiritual traditions concerning epistemology and inquiry (such as related to holistic and monistic world views); culturally appropriate approaches to research in various cultural and international settings.

- For the latter, see the CSWE resource: “Teaching in the Research Curriculum: Culturally Competent International Social Work Research” by Mahasweta M. Banerjee and Edward R. Canda, which can be found on the CSWE website by searching for curriculum resources.

- In **diversity** focused courses, be sure to include issues of religious and spiritual diversity as well as intersections between spiritual diversity and other forms of diversity (e.g. religious denominational positions on LGBTQI issues, helpful or harmful ways that religious congregations address congregants with medical or mental health disabilities, or issues of discrimination and oppression toward members of spiritual groups). See the many sections on spiritually sensitive practice related to diversity issues in Canda et al. (2020).

Many other courses and modules lend themselves toward the topic of spirituality. See the index in Canda et al. for content on various fields of practice. For example, courses and modules on the following may be especially suitable:

- *health* (e.g. research on complementary medicine, the effects of religious participation, teamwork with chaplaincy and palliative care, and spirituality and religion as sources of resilience)
- *mental health* (e.g. role of spirituality as support in recovery; consumer perspectives on spirituality; culturally appropriate and spiritually sensitive use of DSM, spiritual strengths assessment)
- *aging* (e.g. significance of spirituality in life review and preparation for end of life; Eden Alternative and deep ecological approaches to residential settings for elders; gerotranscendence; hospice and palliative care)
- *substance abuse treatment* (e.g. pros and cons of 12 Step programs; alternative paradigms for treatment based on feminist or Indigenous views; crises of meaning involved in development and recovery from

- substance abuse; understanding religiously and legally appropriate use of peyote in the Native American Church)
- *grief, loss, death, and dying* (e.g. stages of grief; crises as opportunities for spiritual transformation; near death experiences; various religious views on death and after-death; existential questions about suffering; spirituality as source of resilience)
- *youth development and child welfare* (e.g. contemporary youths' ways of understanding and engaging spirituality via affirming or questioning parental views, peer relationships, internet use; spiritual development of children and youth; religiously based adoption and foster care programs; parental or religious authorities' misuse of religious teachings and power to abuse or neglect children)

A Specialized Course Dedicated to Practice with Spiritual Diversity

This is most commonly feasible at the advanced MSW level, because students can build on knowledge, skills, and maturity developed through on foundation level knowledge and field learning experience. Also, MSW programs often have room for electives on this topic, if the program does not make this a required course. The above topics can be packaged into such a course.

A standard format should be established for master course syllabi so that course syllabi/outlines for particular sections can be compared with objectives, rationale, and other content indicators required for every section of a course.

The most feasible approach is to develop a specialized course that provides a **comprehensive framework** for knowledge, values, and skills for spiritually sensitive and culturally appropriate and humble practice. It should not be simply a collection of unintegrated ideas and skills or the pet interests of the instructor. It could be an elective or a required course. Based on my experience, electives are more likely to be approved within curricula. However, programs that make spirituality a priority may require a spiritual diversity course.

See sample course syllabi as mentioned above and in Appendices I and II as examples to help design the course. Canda et al. (2020) is designed to serve as a thorough textbook for such a course. Its contents and extensive bibliography give numerous other resources (print and online), including other textbooks, that can be used to go into more detail on various types of spiritually oriented practice in a

range of fields. Any textbook should be scrutinized for its consistency with professional values, state of the art theory and research, clear applications to practice and policy, and relevance to particular course objectives.

When using the Canda et al (2020) textbook, I recommend introducing practice applications, such as mindfulness and self-care activities, alongside materials in the chapters beginning with the first or second session. This way, students (who are usually eager and impatient for 'how to do it' information) can weave between the cognitive and experiential learning guided by the book and practice applications. Although I go through the chapters sequentially, I bring in the application material little by little throughout the semester and then focus on that more intensively in the last half of the semester. The third edition of the book has extensive information on practice in various settings, interdisciplinary insights on theory and practice, social policy principles, and international perspectives and contexts. There are 40 scenarios that vividly illustrate applications of concepts and skills.

Another educationally transformative way to explore spiritual diversity in social work is through **Study Abroad** courses. These can be designed to give an international comparative understanding of spiritual diversity in social work. Because they include intensive immersion in another country's cultural and spiritual context, students are challenged on a deeper level. This also means that instructors are challenged to deepen mentoring for students. Activities and readings should be tailored to the national context of the course. See the following presentation on a study abroad course in South Korea as an example:

- Kansas Asia Scholars Program 2002-06: Spiritual Diversity and Social Work in Korea
 - <http://spiritualdiversity.ku.edu/resources/practice/korean-social-welfare>

Guidelines for Experiential Exercises

Experiential exercises are important for students to develop awareness, values, relationship and communication styles, and skills and techniques for practice. These could include relaxation and meditation techniques, mindful walking, attention to breath, visits to human service organizations that address spirituality in practice, visits to religious events or sites, journaling, group drumming, introspective exercises, small group discussions, role plays, etc.. However, experiential activities can be challenging and provocative. So they should be well

planned and facilitated. Here are some guidelines for use of experiential exercises. See also the guidelines in my syllabus (Appendices I and II).

- Establish values for professional respectful communication and rapport.
- Be inclusive, respectful, and humble in attitude and behavior.
- Identify the spiritual backgrounds and sensitivities of students, according to their comfort levels and sense of privacy, especially as these might determine the types of exercises that would be appropriate.
- Obtain explicit oral consensus in the group regarding support for experiential learning.
- Allow for degrees of participation by comfort level in specific exercise by explaining each ahead of time, asking for questions, allowing for private expressions of discomfort or concern, and indicating when students have an option for simply observing versus full engagement.
 - Explore guidelines for trauma-informed experiential practices, such as meditation, mindfulness, and yoga
- De-link classroom exercises from sectarian religious origins, if any. Do not require direct participation in any religion specific activity.
 - Attend to issues of ethically and culturally appropriate use of spiritually related activities that might be derived from or inspired by religious and spiritual traditions, such as mindfulness (Canda et al., 2020)
 - For example, see Appendix IV for slides related to appropriate engagement of mindfulness activities
- Observation and educational field visits of a variety religiously sponsored agencies and sites can be appropriate within the context of clear course objectives. Do not limit to only one religion.

More Teaching Tips About Course Structure and Approach

- Begin the course or first module on spirituality in a course with clear explicit connection to professional purposes, values, and ethics. Explain the meaning and significance of spirituality and spiritual diversity.

- Establish guidelines for class discussion that promote respect for diversity, openness to different points of view, willingness to agree to disagree, and to work through disagreements in a respectful way. These should be in the syllabus and/or presented orally, depending on educational setting.
- In lectures, build on your areas of special knowledge, expertise, enthusiasm, and familiarity.
- Bring invited presenters to address topics with which you are not thoroughly familiar and which help link class materials to regional practice issues.
- In lectures and guest presentations, introduce students to several religious and non-religious spiritual perspectives including some that are especially relevant to local populations and some that show significant contrast between perspectives.
- Do not cover so many materials that the course becomes superficial. Choose certain topics to go into significant depths and details.
- Give in-class exercises and homework assignments that help students to connect classroom learning to their practicum and professional practice. There are many in Canda et al. (2020).
- In lectures, supplement verbal presentation with use of stories, images, artwork, experiential exercises, small group discussions, and use of internet videos, and other formats.
- In each class session, make sure there is a mixture of these approaches.
- In a course focused on spirituality, choose at least two or three spiritually related practice skills that are nonreligious (including assessment and helping activities) to teach students in depth and to give them an opportunity to practice in the class. Explain how these can be related to religion-specific practices when clients desire.
- Emphasize that spiritually sensitive practice is based on the quality of the helping relationship (e.g. ‘common factors’) and that skills and techniques should follow from that relationship.

Overarching Considerations for Teaching about Spirituality in Social Work

- Education should inculcate a stance of **humility and continual growth** for social workers as persons and professionals.
- Development of spiritual sensitivity and cultural appropriateness is a **lifelong process** and commitment, not limited to specific outcomes or competencies that can be operationalized and measured. This applies to both students and teachers.
- Social workers need to learn how to **integrate personal and professional** aspects of their lives, including one's spiritual perspective, in a way that is authentic to oneself, congruent with professional ethics, and centered on the goals and beliefs of clients in application to practice.
- Professional boundaries should not alienate clients. Rather, they should promote **empathetic connection and therapeutic alliance**, without enmeshment and over-identification that can lead to clinician burnout or inappropriate imposition of the social worker's biases.
- Education for spiritually sensitive practice requires extensive student **self-reflection on value and ethical issues**, especially regarding intersection of personal and professional values. This can be supported by journaling, discussion, experiential learning activities, clinical supervision, and experiential training (e.g. mindfulness skills).
- **Compassion** is a crucial quality for spiritually sensitive practice and should be addressed in education. This is more than just compliance with ethical obligations. Compassion (Canda et al., 2020) involves:
 - Sincere caring
 - Clear awareness in each moment of the helping encounter
 - Nonjudgmental empathy
 - Non-enmeshment (i.e. relating with professional boundary but not detachment)
 - Skillful responses to clients
 - Self-care of professionals
 - Empathy, rapport, response-ability with clientsRelevance of 'common factors' of therapeutic relationships

- The **educator must be engaged** in a long-term process of personal and professional growth as a basis for being an effective teacher and model.
 - For example, in preparation for teaching, the educator could go through the Canda et al. (2020) text in detail, including doing many of the exercises at the end of chapters.
 - Hopefully, the educator’s growth is a life-long (or at least career long) commitment.
- Supporting **knowledge development** of students includes helping them to become familiar with:
 - **Theories** (e.g. humanistic, existential, transpersonal, spiritually oriented cognitive/behavioral)
 - **Empirical research** (e.g. quantitative, qualitative), esp. about role of religion/spirituality (r/s) in supporting strengths-based practice, recovery, resilience, well-being, and social and environmental justice
 - **Helping practices** that are
 - Evidence based, spiritually sensitive, and culturally congruent
 - Supported by both ‘book learning’ and experiential engagement with people in community, including clients, advocates, consumer run organizations, and informal community support systems
 - Supported not only by western scientific evidence based practices, but also by well-established wisdom of spiritual and cultural traditions
 - **Basic beliefs, values, and practices of diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives**, including similarities and differences
 - With special interest in implications for various fields of practice and populations, including some **contrast of worldviews**, e.g.,
 - theistic (e.g. Christian, Jewish, Islamic)
 - polytheistic (e.g. Hinduism)
 - nontheistic (e.g. Vedantic Hinduism, Buddhism)
 - nonreligious (e.g. existential, transpersonal, deep ecological)
 - Indigenous worldviews
 - “nones” (not religiously affiliated), including atheists and ‘spiritual but not religious’

- spiritual perspectives and denominations that are specific to the communities in the service locales of students and practitioners
 - Consider international and global issues and perspectives (see chapter 13 in Canda et al.)
- Learning of **skills** should include:
 - Identifying religious/spiritual **qualities/types** among service users and their communities
 - Identifying **key community leaders and consumer advocates** relevant to religion/spirituality
 - **Evaluating the human service organization** for spiritual sensitivity and cultural appropriateness and engaging in innovations based on results
 - Engaging in helping **relationships based on the ‘common factors’** (e.g. empathy, trust, rapport, provision of hope, obtaining and responding to clear evaluative feedback)
 - **Engaging in types of spiritual assessment as relevant to clients and setting, e.g.**
 - Spiritual interest screen
 - Brief explicit assessments (e.g. FICA, MIMBRA)
 - Implicit assessments (i.e. not requiring use of terms religion/spirituality/faith but exploring and discovering clients’ terms, meanings, and relevance to mental health recovery)
 - Detailed explicit assessments, e.g. spiritual development timeline
 - Understanding distinction from and interaction between spiritual crises or breakthroughs and mental illnesses
 - For free access to a spiritual strengths assessment tool: Spiritual Strengths Assessment brochure: https://spiritualdiversity.ku.edu/sites/spiritualdiversity.ku.edu/files/docs/Mental_Health/spiritual%20strengths%20assessment%20for%20mental%20health%20recovery%20brochure.pdf
 - Assessment of the spiritual sensitivity and cultural appropriateness of the human service organizational culture
 - Assessment of the spiritual sensitivity and cultural appropriateness macro social policies

- **Engaging in spiritually attuned helping practices that are not religiously framed, e.g.**
 - MBSR, DBT and ACT (with mindfulness components)
 - Various other mindfulness, meditation, and stress-relieving practices
 - Forgiveness
 - Restorative Justice
 - Client-based rituals
- **Ethically appropriate incorporation of specific religious/cultural spiritual frameworks as relevant to client and as consistent with social worker's expertise and cultural authorization**
 - E.g. Catholic client seeks counseling from Catholic clinician within a Catholic social services agency or parish ministry
- **Referring to and collaborating with** specific religious communities and formal/informal spiritual mentors, teachers, and support systems, as relevant to clients
- Supporting client in **self-determined use of r/s based support practices** and support systems (e.g. prayer, meditation, worship, religious community services, complementary and alternative healing)
- **Facilitating creative integration** of conventional social service/health/mental health systems approaches and complementary/alternative/holistic/integrative approaches (e.g. body-mind-spirit integrative; bio-psycho-social-spiritual-ecological; religiously and culturally specific healing/helping systems; trauma informed yoga; therapeutic mindfulness)

The Appendices offer detailed examples of course syllabi, learning activities, supportive resources, and slides for educational presentations.

References

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Appendix I: Syllabus for MSW Course, In-Person Format

Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice

**The University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare
Individual Course Syllabus**

SW 870: Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice

[Specify semester, year; instructor's contact information; office hours and location; locations of course meeting place; time.]

I. COURSE RATIONALE

[Adapt this rationale to particular values and curriculum design for your program.]

A. Relationship to the School of Social Welfare's Mission. The social work profession has a strong commitment to developing human service approaches that support human diversity and alleviate or eliminate social oppression and injustice. Many practice settings serve diverse clients, involving issues pertaining to gender, ethnicity, culture, race, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual beliefs, ability, social class, and age. In keeping with the mission and themes of the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, this course promotes an approach to social work practice that challenges dominant norms and worldviews that work to marginalize persons who present with these diverse attributes.

B. Relationship to other courses in the curriculum. This course is organized around understanding diversity and the application of that understanding to people of diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives and traditions, with special consideration of those who have been marginalized and oppressed. Students who complete this course will be able to apply a framework of knowledge, values, and practice methodologies needed to provide service to diverse populations and particularly to issues of spiritual diversity. Accordingly this course is a clinical diversity practice selective that builds on the generalist approach of the foundation curriculum by giving a more specialized understanding of spiritual diversity in social work practice and its relevance to policy, research, and theory.

C. Preparation for advanced practice. Social work seeks to assist people to achieve their full potential within their environmental contexts. In order to do so it adopts an holistic person-in-environment perspective to guide practice. Since the historical foundation of the profession, many social workers have recognized that a holistic perspective requires taking into account the biological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual aspects of human needs, strengths, and experience. Our

profession's commitment to honor diversity also requires social workers to address the diversity of religious and nonreligious forms of spirituality among clients and their communities and how these intersect with other aspects of human diversity. However, the spiritual aspects of social work practice have been commonly marginalized or ignored in social work education until recently. Minority spiritual perspectives have been especially neglected given the Eurocentric assumptions common in social work. However, current trends in social work education and practice, NASW competency standards for many fields of practice, and the NASW Code of Ethics, support the inclusion of content on religious and spiritual diversity.

D. What this course covers. In this course, the term "spirituality" designates the human striving for a sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment, through relationships between individuals, communities, the surrounding universe, and the ontological ground of our existence (whether conceived in theistic, animistic, nontheistic, atheistic or other terms). As such, spirituality is expressed through diverse forms in our clients' lives. Often, spirituality is expressed in religious forms (i.e. through institutionalized patterns of belief and behavior oriented toward spiritual concerns). However, spirituality may also be expressed without adherence to a religion. Clients' spiritual perspectives are related inextricably with their understandings of suffering and injustice and their attempts to accomplish personal and collective goals. Therefore, social work practitioners need to be prepared to respond to the spiritual aspects of client needs, strengths and experiences.

This course provides a framework of knowledge, values, skills and experiences for culturally competent, ethical, and spiritually-sensitive social work practice. A critically reflective approach to content is employed. The roles of religion and spirituality in supporting or impeding individual strengths and social justice are considered.

II. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

By the conclusion of this course graduate students will demonstrate an ability to:

- A.** Describe and reflect critically on the implications of human diversity for social work theory, research, policy, and practice.
- B.** Evaluate themselves, their practice and their agency settings with regard to cultural competence in work with diverse populations.

- C.** Describe, analyze, and respond to specific needs and strengths of diverse groups.
- D.** Apply professional social work values and ethics to practice in a way that respects diversity and promotes empowerment and justice.
- E.** Identify and critically reflect on diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives and their implications for social work practice.
- F.** Understand and analyze the history of the relationship between religion and social work as well as the current state-of-the-art for culturally competent, ethical and spiritually-sensitive social work practice.
- G.** Understand and formulate qualities of a spiritually-sensitive helping relationship and evaluate their own practice and its outcomes accordingly.
- H.** Understand and critically evaluate guidelines for bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment of human development and well-being, including use of standard diagnostic systems such as the DSM-5 as well as strengths based assessment tools.
- I.** Identify strategies for effective cooperation with religious and nonreligious spiritual support systems of clients regarding both direct and indirect practice.
- J.** Identify and critically evaluate practical, theoretical, ethical and research-based guidelines for utilizing religiously derived social work practice activities, such as religious symbolism, prayer, meditation, ritual, and referral to and collaboration with religiously affiliated social service agencies and community organizations.
- K.** Understand the supportive and oppressive aspects of religious and spiritual perspectives concerning issues of human diversity, such as gender, ethnicity and culture, age, sexual orientation, ability, and social class.
- L.** Apply a framework of knowledge, theory, values, and skills for spiritually-sensitive social work practice.

III. SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

[Specify guiding principles and values for your specific social work program, if any.]

IV. THE LIBERAL ARTS PERSPECTIVE

Building upon the liberal arts perspective, students in this course are expected to: (1) think and write clearly and effectively about their practice activities and the specific ways in which client outcomes can be improved; (2) understand ways in which knowledge is gained and applied through review of research findings and analysis of various practice theories relevant to clinical social work practice; (3) use knowledge of the social, biological, and behavioral sciences in completing broad based bio-psycho-social assessments of clients' situations; (4) use knowledge of history in understanding the impact of oppression and discrimination on diverse people's individual and collective functioning; (5) understand the effects of variations between workers' and clients' values and cultural backgrounds on the clinical helping process.

This course links a broad range of liberal arts and social science concerns with the field of social work. Historical, cultural, philosophical, and religious information and concepts are derived from disciplines of comparative religious studies, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and philosophy. Since this course examines diverse forms of spiritual and religious experience, social work practice becomes connected with fundamental humanistic and existential issues. The course assumes that students have a liberal arts educational background and have completed foundation level social work courses, as preparation for understanding and applying the course content.

V. PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES AND VALUES

Although American social work originated with a strong influence from religious movements for charity and social service, the past several decades have involved controversy over the connections between religion, spirituality, and social work. Since the mid 1980s, there has been increasing professional support for non-discriminatory and respectful ways of providing spiritually-sensitive social work. Students are familiarized with the history of these connections and controversies as

well as the present state-of-the-art in the development of culturally competent and spiritually-sensitive social work.

In keeping with professional ethics and value commitments, the course adopts holistic and inclusive approaches to subject material. The holistic approach encourages understanding and responsiveness to the whole person, including the spiritual aspect, in the context of cultural and religious support systems. The concept of person-in-environment is expanded to include examination of how people deal with the spiritual tasks of establishing a sense of meaning and purpose in relations with the human community, the planetary ecology, and the ontological ground of existence, however conceived. The inclusive approach emphasizes the professional values of client self-determination, empowerment, and appreciation for diversity. All spiritual perspectives are to be understood and respected without judgmentalism or pressure from proselytization. Ethical dilemmas and guidelines for ethical decision-making, are considered, especially in relation to the uses of religiously derived helping resources, strategies, techniques, and support systems.

VI. PREPARATION FOR PRACTICE WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS

In keeping with the mission and themes of the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, this course promotes an approach to social work practice that challenges dominant norms and world views that work to marginalize persons who present with issues pertaining to gender, ethnicity, culture, race, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual beliefs, ability, social class, and age. This course is organized around understanding diversity and application of that understanding to people of diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives and traditions, with special consideration of those that have been marginalized and oppressed. Students who complete this course will be able to apply a framework of knowledge, values, and practice methodologies needed to provide service to diverse populations.

A comparative approach to teaching about religious and spiritual diversity is employed, to provide understanding of diverse perspectives and to foster self-awareness of students about their own spiritual commitments and congruence with professional values. In addition, religious and spiritual systems may support or inhibit, liberate or oppress clients. The potential for liberation or oppression of people, especially in relation to diversity of social class, ethnicity or culture, sexual orientation, age, ability, and gender is explored.

The course provides a general framework for culturally competent and spiritually sensitive practice; however, each student must clarify how to refine and apply this framework in his or her own practice. Therefore, class discussion, assignments, and practice exercises help the student to formulate an individualized practice framework, inspired by state-of-the-art professional developments linked to personal interests and value commitments.

VII. TOPICS

- The influence of ethnocentrism and various forms of racism, discrimination, and oppression on social work theory, research, policy and practice.
- Various models of empowerment and liberation for understanding and working with spiritually diverse clients as an example of diverse client populations.
- A foundation of theoretical perspectives for spiritually sensitive and culturally competent treatment models, such as transpersonal theories and spiritual development models.
- Guidelines for ethical decision-making with regard to addressing spirituality in practice consistent with social work professional values and the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Guidelines for assessment of strengths and challenges of client systems related to spirituality, including appropriate use of the DSM V regarding distinguishing between psychopathology and spiritual crises.
- Guidelines for application of spiritually-oriented skills and techniques, including use of religiously derived helping activities and support systems and nonreligious interventions such as stress-reduction meditation.
- Guidelines for establishment of a spiritually-sensitive helping relationship, including interpersonal communication skills, organizational policies and procedures, and community collaboration.
- Use of holistic approaches to practice that go beyond verbal interaction, such as creative arts, therapeutic dreamwork, meditation, and ritual.
- Understanding of local community religious traditions and support systems which are commonly used by diverse local client populations.
- Cross-cultural and international comparison of religious traditions and their impact on the understanding and provision of human service.

VIII. REQUIRED READINGS

Book:

Canda, E. R., Furman, L. D., & Canda, H. (2020). *Spiritual diversity in social work practice: The heart of helping*, 3rd edition. NY: Oxford University Press.

Recommended for Further Information

See the KU Spiritual Diversity Initiative for numerous educational materials and internet links: <http://spiritualdiversity.ku.edu/>

IX. ASSIGNMENTS

Note: See the schedule at the end of the syllabus for timing of class sessions and assignments. Attendance and participation can also affect the grade for the course; see the attendance policy.

>>>**ASSIGNMENT A. Self-Reflection Journal** 60% of grade (total of all entries)

This assignment is based on the exercises listed at the end of each chapter in the Canda, Furman, & Canda textbook. It allows for flexibility and variety of learning styles. The exercises stimulate self-reflection and provide guidance for application of text material to social work practice and personal growth. You will need to choose and complete an exercise and write about each one, as described in the following instructions. The length of each reflection essay should be about 1 1/2 pages (not more than 2), typed and single spaced. This assignment is adapted from guidelines for journaling at the end of chapter one. However, be sure to follow the guidelines in this syllabus, since they vary from the explanation in the book.

You will submit these entries at 3 times for grading.

- The first submission (a single reflection essay) is due on the third class meeting and will be graded pass/fail (i.e. pass is equivalent to at least a grade of B-). In the event of failure, the student will be able to re-write the entry until it meets expectations for pass. Feedback from this submission will help you understand fully the expectations for this assignment. Remaining entries are due in two sets as indicated on the course schedule.

- The second submission is a set of 3 entries and will be letter graded (1/2 of assignment grade which is 30% of course grade). It will be due on the ninth class meeting.
- The third submission is the final set of three entries and will be letter graded (1/2 of assignment grade which is 30% of course grade). It will be due on the fifteenth class meeting.

Note: You should read the chapters and the explanations of exercises early enough, especially for submissions 2 and 3, so you can make a decision about which exercise fits your learning goals best, being sure you have enough time to complete the exercise and the written entry. Exercises and entries usually cannot be completed in one day and sometimes could take up to a week.

Chapters and exercises are shown below for each of three entry submissions.

For Submission 1 (choose one from chapter 1 or 2; submit only one entry)

Entry 1:

1: **On Principles.** Choose 1.1 or 1.2

Note that exercise 1.3 is not an option because it is similar to the instructions for this journal entry assignment. This includes some helpful suggestions.

However, follow the instructions for this assignment as described in the syllabus.

OR

2: **On Compassion.** Choose any one exercise from 2.1 to 2.5

.....

For Submission 2 (submit entries 2, 3, and 4 all together; put all in one Word file in consecutive order)

Entry 2: (choose one from chapter 3 or 4)

3: **On Meaning and Definitions.** Choose 3.1 or 3.2 or 3.4 (note: 3.3 is not an option because this online resource should be used throughout the course; website updated to <http://spiritualdiversity.ku.edu>)

OR

4: **On Diversity and Justice.** Choose any one exercise from 4.1 to 4.4 (note: 4.5 is not an option because we will discuss in class.)

.....

Entry 3: (choose one from chapter 5 or 6)

5: **On Religious Perspectives.** Do 5.1 based any any religious perspective you choose. If you do not have time to complete each activity within step 4, at least discuss with a colleague or supervisor how you or your setting might address implications for practice. (note: 5.2 is not an option because we will discuss in class.)

OR

6: **On Nonsectarian Perspectives and Cooperation.** Choose any exercise from 6.1 to 6.3

.....

Entry 4:

7: **On Helping Relationship and Organizational Context.** Choose 7.1, 7.2, or 7.3

- For 7.1, choose one exercise from A to F
- For 7.2, choose one exercise from A to C
- For 7.3, use the Quick Version

.....

For Submission 3 (submit entries 5, 6, and 7 all together; put all in one Word file in consecutive order)

Entry 5: (choose one from chapter 8 or 9)

8: **On Spiritual Development.** Choose any exercise from 8.1 to 8.4.

OR

9: **On Spiritual Assessment.** Choose any one exercise from 9.1, 9.2, 9.4 or 9.5. (note: 9.3 is not an option because there is a similar exercise in the previous chapter.)

- If you choose 9.1, select only one of the clinical assessment activities to practice on yourself and with a colleague (A though G). Consult your practicum instructor or work supervisor for guidance as needed.
- If you choose 9.2, select only one of the clinical assessment activities to practice with a client (A though G). Be sure to consult your practicum instructor or work supervisor for guidance prior to using with a client and after the assessment is conducted.

.....

Entry 6:

10: **On Ethical Guidelines.** Choose any exercise from 10.1-10.5.

.....

Entry 7: (choose one from chapter 11, 12, or 13)

11: **On Growth Promoting Practices.** Choose any exercise from 11.1 to 11.4.

- If you apply any of these practices with clients, only do so with professional clinical supervision or sufficient prior practice experience.
 - For 11.1, select one of the basic meditation practices listed in the exercise instructions
 - For 11.2, select one of the quick meditation exercises

OR

12: **On Transformational Process and Practices.** Choose any exercise from 12.1 to 12.6.

- If you apply any of these practices with clients, only do so with professional clinical supervision or sufficient prior practice experience.

OR

13: **On Worldwide View.** Choose any exercise from 13.1 to 13.3.

- If you apply any of these practices with clients, only do so with professional clinical supervision or sufficient prior practice experience.

.....

[Specify how to submit these, e.g. paper copies in class or online.]

NOTE: If the exercise requires that you produce an essay, drawing, assessment summary, or some other product, attach that to your reflection journal entry unless it is too private. This attachment is not included in the page limit for the journal entry. If you do not attach the product, explain briefly why you decided not to attach it in section one. If there is no physical product required, then the journal entry is sufficient. Notice that journal entries involve (1) **DOING** the exercise, (2) **REFLECTING** on the process and results of the exercise, and (3) **WRITING** the self-reflection journal entry about what you learned from doing the exercise. Be detailed and reflect deeply, but write concisely.

1. *Student's Name and Number of the exercise.*⁴

For example: Jane Goodwell, exercise 2.5

2. *Main insight from doing the exercise.* (about 1/2 page)

This is not merely writing about what you read or stating your personal opinion about something. First, describe how you did the exercise. You may refer to an attached product, if any. State briefly one main insight resulting from doing the exercise. For example:

“I carefully read each ethical principle for spiritually sensitive social work. I compared the authors’ wording with the original wording in the NASW Code of Ethics. I reflected on the extent to which I agreed or disagreed with each principle, why, and how this relates to my practice.

The thing that struck me the most was the way the authors extended the principle of “importance of human relationships” to the importance of relationships with the natural environment and understanding the way clients’ might experience a relationship with supernatural or divine aspects of reality. Although I agree with this, I realize I have to stretch my understanding of relationships in the helping process much further than I have been doing.”

3. *Self-reflection.* (about 1 page)

In this main section, write about your reactions to the exercise and implications for your personal and professional growth in more detail. Your reflections should go beyond mere unreflective opinions or detached intellectual statements. Engage yourself as a whole person, including feelings, sensations, thoughts, intuition, and action in the exercises and journal essays. It is especially useful if you can link your action commitments to activities in practicum or professional employment. Include all three of the following levels of reflection:

- Reaction and Reflection: explanation of your reaction to the exercise and what predisposed you to this reaction, considering your personal and professional background, strengths, and limitations as revealed by the exercise;

⁴ See the template in Appendix V.

- Implications for Growth: identification of one or two specific implications for further personal or professional growth, including how to build on your strengths and expand beyond your limitations;
- Commitment to Action: commitment to **at least one action with a plan** that will promote this growth, stated in **specific behavioral terms** with a **timeline** for completion. For example, "In order to increase my knowledge of Islam as practiced by Somali refugees in the Kansas City area, I will visit a Kansas City area mosque where Muslims attend (specify the name and location of the mosque) and speak with a representative there, no later than March 1, 2011.

All entries must be typewritten, single spaced, 12 Point Times New Roman with one inch margins.

Grading Criteria for Each Journal Entry⁵

1) **Overall Quality**, including organization, format, and writing quality [10% of grade]

2) **Main Insight** [30%, about 1/2 page, single spaced], including each element:

- Explanation of how completed exercise, referring to product if any
- Clear identification of main insight from completing exercise

3) **Self-Reflection** [60%, about 1 page, single spaced], including each element:

Reaction and Reflection

- Reaction to exercise
- Reflection on predisposition to reaction and other self-awareness or awareness of professional issues
- Identifying student's strength(s)
- Identifying student's limitation(s)

Implications for Student's Growth

- Implication for growth building on at least one strength
- Implication for growth expanding beyond at least one limitation
- Clear statement of commitment/goal for growth that addresses at least one strength and/or limitation

⁵ See the rubric in Appendix V.

Commitment to Action

- Statement of specific plan of action in behavioral terms with timeline

>>> **ASSIGNMENT B. In-Class Team Presentation** *30% of grade*

Each student will do an in-class presentation as a member of a team. The purpose of the presentation is to engage students as professional collaborators in the learning/teaching process. This will help students to develop expertise and presentation skill related to addressing spiritual diversity within a field of practice, including (1) as relevant, knowledge about theory, contents of a spiritual perspective, basic concepts for a spiritually sensitive approach to practice, and issues specific to a field of practice; (2) relevant professional values, ethical standards, and standards for professional practice in the chosen field; (3) explanation of how to engage in spiritually sensitive assessment and practice at a micro, meso, or macro level. Choose a topic that engages your enthusiasm, but it should not repeat a previous presentation by the instructor or students. The instructor will advise students to design and schedule the presentations.

Examples of possible topics:

(1) Collaboration with 12 Step groups in treatment of alcoholism and substance abuse; (2) Spiritually sensitive practice in the context of a religiously sponsored refugee resettlement program; (3) Collaboration between chaplains and social workers in health care settings; (4) Use of creative arts to explore spiritual development of young adults; (5) Dealing with controversies of religious belief and practice within child welfare settings (such as may arise in medical care of foster children; or placement of children in an adoptive or foster home; or addressing abuse and neglect); (6) Hospice philosophy and practice in relation to the social worker's role in addressing spirituality for those who are dying; (7) Spiritually sensitive and culturally appropriate practice with particular populations, based on a particular characteristic of diversity, such as gender, ethnicity, culture, race, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual beliefs, disability, social class, age, and intersectionality. The presentation should take into account relevant supportive and oppressive aspects of religious and spiritual perspectives or religious/spiritually based clinical practices concerning issues of human diversity and how to promote clients' well-being in the context of strengths, empowerment, and justice.

Each presentation must include 1) a brief explanation of the topic; the reason you chose it; its relevance to social work; 2) main content (e.g. oral presentation with Power Point and a list of websites and APA style references); 3) use of some type of creative mode of presentation such as personal narrative, internet videos or other

resources, music or art; 4) a brief structured class activity, such as organized discussion, experiential exercise, or educational game; and 5) time for discussion with the class. The presentation should take approximately 60 minutes, plus instructor's response, up to a total of about 70 minutes.

All members of the group receive the same grade, so cooperation and coordination are important qualities in preparation. Use a combination of in-person meetings, Skype or other online conferencing, social networking, and other online or phone-based interactions to facilitate planning.

- A hard copy of this outline or Power Point must be given to the instructor at the time of presentation. In addition, the Power Point file must be added to the course Blackboard site at least one day prior to the presentation so all students can access it. The instructor will provide a document folder for that. The file name should include a brief descriptor term and date of presentation, such as 'hospice 3 6 2018'.

Grading Criteria⁶

- (1) Presentation is done according to schedule, within the time limit, in a professional manner [10% of grade]
- (2) Explanation of topic, rationale, and relevance are clear [10%]
- (3) Main content presentation is clear, thorough, and consistent with professional standards and ethics [50%]
- (4) Accompanying supportive materials (including outline or Power Point) and creative activity were effective [10%]
- (5) The structured class activity was well designed and implemented [10%]
- (6) Conduct of class discussion was effective [10%]

>>>ASSIGNMENT C. Collective Design of Mandala/Quilt Honoring Spiritual Diversity *10% of grade*

This assignment will be explained in class. It involves each student drawing and coloring on a piece of paper to represent their ideals and images symbolizing connection between their personal spiritual perspective and professional ethics as reflected in spiritually sensitive and culturally appropriate practice. Each student will also provide a brief explanation (up to 25 words) of the meaning of their design. The instructor will provide instructions and materials and then organize all the pieces into a composition as a paper mandala/quilt. At the end of the course,

⁶⁶ See rubric in Appendix V.

each student will receive a copy of the completed mandala/quilt as a memento of the course.⁷

This will be graded as pass/fail (pass = full credit, at least B- quality; fail = no credit). In the event of 'no credit', the student will have an opportunity to re-do and submit their piece for credit, based on feedback from the instructor.

Timeliness for all assignments

- [Specify late assignment policy.]

Suggestion for Return of Written Assignments at End of Semester

- [Specify submission method(s).]

X. GRADING

[Specify grading scale.]

B. Incomplete grades. [Specify policy and procedures.]

C. Attendance policy. [Specify policy and procedures, including accommodations related to disability, illness, pregnancy, religious observance, personal or community emergencies, or other special circumstances. If there are ways to make up for missed attendance, explain procedures and grading implications.]

[Specify expectations for conduct, such as the following:]

The topic of this course is inherently controversial. Students are expected to communicate between themselves and the instructor in a manner that encourages open dialogue, appreciates diversity, and tolerates disagreement. In a public educational institution, religious proselytization by the instructor or students is prohibited. We may well challenge each other to pursue understanding of truth, but we may not coerce or denigrate each other on the basis of our own versions of the truth.

This course combines educational methods of lecture, discussion and experiential exercises. The instructor will seek consent from all students for participation in experiential exercises. Students must make clear to each other and the instructor

⁷ See explanation of this assignment in appendix III.

their comfort or discomfort with proposed exercises, so that modifications can be made and a consensus of agreement can be achieved. Failure to do so will adversely affect the class experience for everyone. This will be considered unprofessional behavior.

Any self-disclosure that could result from the papers or class discussion will be voluntary on the part of the student. At no time should the confidentiality of clients be violated.

Pagers and cell phones with sound alarms are not permitted to be used in class. [Adapt to your actual policies.] Students are not to leave class to answer pagers or cell phones, except in the case of an emergency. If there is a critical situation that might require answering a phone or pager during class, the student should notify the instructor at the beginning of class and set the phone/pager to vibrate. Students are not permitted to text or engage in other activities not relevant to the class.

Computers and other electronic devices will be allowed at instructor's discretion. [Adapt to your actual policies.] Utilizing these in the classroom for notetaking is permissible but other activity not directly related to the class will not be permitted (i.e. email, internet, games, etc.). In these cases students will be asked to turn off their device and if inappropriate use continues to be a problem, it will have a negative impact on the credit for attendance, thus affecting the course grade.

D. Academic misconduct and plagiarism.

[Specify university and departmental regulations and consequences of violation.]

XI. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- a. Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent them from satisfactorily completing course requirements should contact [specify regulations and procedures].
- b. Please notify the instructor in advance if your religious observances conflict with class or due dates for class assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements, including alternative assignments to cover missed classroom content if necessary. [Adapt to department and university policies.]

XII. RECORDING AND SHARING RECORDINGS OF LECTURES

[Specify university and department policies.]

XIII. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY CONSIDERATIONS [Adapt as needed.]

The NASW Code of Ethics requires that social workers protect client confidentiality and privacy. Various state and federal regulations, including the HIPAA Privacy Rule, may also protect the confidentiality of client information in settings where social work students are engaged in practicum placements. In order to safeguard these client rights:

- Always disguise the name and other personal identifying information when you speak or write about a client.
- If writing in great detail about a client, ask permission from that client.
- Share nothing discussed in class about specific clients, agencies, or other students outside of this classroom.
- Any information shared with the instructor will be confidential, within the limits defined by the NASW Code of Ethics and relevant legal guidelines.
- Information regarding your performance or behavior as a student is protected by the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act. However, student information can be shared between KU faculty, staff, administration, or field instructors when there is a compelling educational or safety reason to do so.

XIV. INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY

See contact information on the first page.

XV. UNIVERSITY'S POLICY ON...

[Specify any other relevant university policy(ies) and related procedures, such as for inclement weather.]

XVII. SCHEDULE OF CLASS TOPICS AND DUE DATES FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Class Session and Date Topic and Due Dates for Reading and Assignments

(Some changes may be made in order to accommodate presentations. Students will be notified in advance. Readings must be completed prior to the class meeting.)

1: 1/22 Introduction to Course, Key Issues, and Values for Spiritually Sensitive and Culturally Appropriate Practice

2: 1/29 Values for Spiritually Sensitive and Culturally Appropriate Social Work, continued

Read ch. 1.

3: 2/5 Compassion, Justice, and the Call to Service

Read ch. 2.

Submission 1 due by ...; only one entry related to chapters 1-2.

If you wish, you can also give me a draft of one other journal essay before the next set is due, so I can give feedback for improvement.

4: 2/12 The Meaning of Spirituality for Practice and Research

Read ch. 3.

5: 2/19 Spiritual Diversity Issues Relating to Oppression, Empowerment, and Social Justice

Read ch. 4.

6: 2/26 Diverse Religious Perspectives on Social Work

Read ch. 5 on Buddhism, Christianity, and Confucianism

7: 3/5

Diverse Religious Perspectives on Social Work

Read ch. 5 on Hinduism, Indigenous Perspectives, Islam, and Judaism.

SPRING BREAK

8: 3/19

Diverse Nonsectarian Spiritual Perspectives on Social Work

Read ch. 6.

9: 3/26

Evaluating the Practice Context for Spiritual Sensitivity and Cultural Appropriateness

Read ch. 7.

Submission 2 due by ...; three entries related to chapters 3-7.

10: 4/2

Understanding and Assessing Spiritual Development; DSM Diagnosis

Plus Student Team Presentation(s)

Read ch. 8.

11: 4/9

Strengths Oriented Assessment and Ethical Decision Making in Spiritually Sensitive Practice

Plus Student Team Presentation(s)

Read ch. 9.

12: 4/16

Spiritually Sensitive Practice Skills and Techniques
Plus Student Team Presentation(s)

Read chs. 10 & 11.

13: 4/23
Continued

Spiritually Sensitive Practice Skills and Techniques

Plus Student Team Presentation(s)
Begin Mandala/Quilt assignment in class.

Read chs. 12 & 13.

14: 4/30
Continued

Spiritually Sensitive Practice Skills and Techniques

Plus Student Team Presentation(s)

Focus on completing assignments.
Mandala/Quilt to be completed.

15: 5/7

A Worldwide View & Conclusion

Focus on completing assignments.
Submission 3 due by ...; three entries related to chapters 8-13.

Appendix II: Suggestions for MSW Course, Converting to Blended or Online Formats

Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice

Blended refers to a course format in which about half of the sessions are in-person and the remainder are online. I offered the course in this format several times by adapting the traditional in-person format syllabus (Appendix I). I kept this blended design close to the in-person format because I and my students were familiar with this traditional approach. I kept the design simple in terms of use of internet and media, and nonsynchronous interaction, in order to accommodate students' range of technology availability and savviness, internet accessibility, and complex schedules for school, practicum, employment, and home responsibilities. However, instructors and students who are more tech savvy and familiar with online modes of instruction than me can be more creative and interactive. This I expect is increasing rapidly with new cohorts of students and faculty and with requirements for online education recently imposed by the covid-19 pandemic. I retired just before the pandemic affected the university.

In the blended format, whenever possible, I recommend making the most of the combination of in-person and online sessions. Cover material that needs more explanation in the in-person sessions. Also, use the in-person sessions for interactive exercises, case discussions, and student presentations. Make the course schedule easy to read, with easy to follow instructions for what is required for each in-person or online session. Set the online sessions apart by bolding or some other special formatting in the schedule. I suggest using an at-home exam (example to follow) for blended at online formats.

I have not taught this course in a fully online format. I have not considered the fully online format to be optimal, because the topic calls for significant in-person interaction and development of rapport, empathy, teamwork, and conflict resolution skills. However, online formats may be the only options available for distance learning and for accommodation to the current pandemic. In online formats, I recommend that the course design include opportunities for synchronous online group interaction and/or occasional intensive in-person meetings. The instructor will need to be especially attentive and responsive to the possibility that students could experience distress or might desire mentoring related to personal

and professional growth challenges or interpersonal conflict in the course. When possible, a primarily online format could be supplemented by a concentrated short-term in-person interaction.

My approach to teaching and the Canda et al. (2020) textbook include many experiential and community engaged activities. In the time of pandemic, these would need to be adapted to online and virtual activities. For example, visits to a variety of religious sites and interviews with members of various religions and spiritually-oriented social service settings can be arranged through virtual tours and through online interviewing and conferencing.


Use of a Multiple-Choice Exam

I recommend developing an at-home exam for the blended format in order to provide additional structure and incentive for students to keep up with reading, since reinforcement by in-person meetings is reduced. However, I suggest that the exam not require memorization, so it can be done at the student's pace and in a comfortable environment. Adjust the percent of total course grade to the use of an exam. Suggested wording for a syllabus:


This is an at-home exam that tests students' knowledge of diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives and issues of culturally appropriate practice. It does not require memorization. But it does require sufficient familiarity with the readings and other learning resources so that answers to questions can be found readily. This more closely resembles the situation of professional practice than would a time-restricted exam based on memorization. Demonstrating knowledge relevant to practice is a component of competency as required by the NASW Code of Ethics. The due date for posting the exam is listed on the schedule. However, students will be given at least three weeks to complete the exam, including two online sessions.

There will be 40 multiple choice type questions (four or five possible answers each). Questions will come from readings, lectures, and guest presentations. The questions focus on prominent historical dates and episodes in the formation of religious traditions; important figures, beliefs, values, practices, and symbols in various spiritual perspectives; and major guidelines for practice in regard to the diverse spiritual perspectives and issues covered in the course. In order to prepare for the exam, it is helpful to review all readings and course materials and take notes on them. Students may use readings and notes while taking the exam. This must be your own work, done without consulting anyone else.


Appendix III: Mandala Appreciating Spiritual Diversity, Class Activity

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Appendix IV: Module on Mindfulness Activities


A Module on Spiritually and Culturally Appropriate Use of Therapeutic Mindfulness


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Appendix V: Grading Rubrics

[Note: Often students like to have clarity and specificity about how grading will be done for assignments. The rubrics included here provide that. The details are closely matched to the requirements for assignments described in syllabi. However, some people find use of rubrics to be too rigid. Yet I've found that most students prefer to use rubrics so that there is no ambiguity about expectations.]

Grading Sheet for Each Journal Entry

Note: Suggested lengths are for single spaced format. Total length should be about 1 ½ pages (no more than 2), not including attachments if any.

Student's name:

Exercise Number:

Overall organization, format, writing quality (max 10 points) =

Main Insight (about 1/2 page, max 30 points) =

- Explanation of how completed exercise, referring to product if any
- Clear identification of main insight from experiencing the exercise

Self-Reflection (about 1 page, max 60 points)

Careful, holistic self-reflection, including

Reaction and reflection (max 20 points) =

- Reaction to exercise
- Reflection on predisposition to reaction and other self-awareness or awareness of professional issues
- Identifying strength(s)
- Identifying limitation(s)

Implications for personal and/or professional growth (max 20 points) =

- Building on at least one strength
- Expanding beyond at least one limitation

Commitment to growth (max 20 points) =

- Clear statement of commitment and goal for growth that addresses at least one strength and/or limitation
- Statement of specific plan of action in behavioral terms with timeline

TOTAL POINTS =

Additional Comments

Journal Entry Template

[Note: This template can be used by students to structure their journal entries, making it clear where they write about each required component. It is congruent with the grading rubric and the explanation of the assignment in the syllabus.]

1. *Student's Name and Number of the exercise.*

2. *Main insight from doing the exercise*

Description of How Exercise was Completed

Main Insight from Experiencing the Exercise

3. *Self-reflection.*

Reaction and Reflection

Implications for Growth

Commitment to Growth and Action

Grading Sheet for Student Team Presentation

Students' Names:

Date of Presentation:

Topic:

The grading criteria are explained in the syllabus.

(1) professional timing and manner (max 10 pts) _____
(approximately 60 minutes for presentation)

(2) topics, rationale, relevance are clear (max 10 pts) _____

(3) main presentation is clear, thorough, ethical (max 50 pts) _____

(4) supportive materials and/or media are effective (max 10 pts) _____

(5) structured class activity well designed and implemented
(max 10 pts) _____

(6) class discussion is effective (max 10 pts) _____

TOTAL POINTS (MAX 100)* _____

*Since this is a team presentation, grade is for every member.

Other comments:

Appendix VI: Online Resources with Internet Links

Websites with Educational Resources

[Spiritual Diversity and Social Work Initiative](#)

[CSWE Clearinghouse on Religion and Spirituality in Social Work](#)

[Society for Spirituality and Social Work](#)

Open Access Video Presentations

[Edward Canda video on Strengths, Spirituality, and Transilience](#)

[Edward Canda video1 on Introduction to Spiritual Diversity in Social Work](#)

[Edward Canda video2 on Introduction to Spiritual Diversity in Social Work](#)

[Edward Canda video on Spiritual Strengths Assessment \(English and Czech\)](#)

Open Access Publications Authored or Co-Authored by Ed Canda

Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice: Slides for Teaching
See Appendix VII. [numerous Power Point slides]

East/West Philosophical Synthesis in Transpersonal Theory [article]
<https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/29772>

The Way of Humanity: Confucian Wisdom for an Opening World (Teachings of the Korean Philosopher, Haengchon) [book]
<https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/30363>

My Sojourn with the Strengths Perspective: Growth and Transformation through Crisis, Illness, and Disability [chapter]
https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/30272/24_Rooted%20in%20Strengths_revisedMay2020.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y

Ethical Considerations About Spirituality in Social Work: Insights From a National Qualitative Survey [article]
<https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/10368>

Heed Your Calling and Follow It Far: Suggestions for Authors Who Write About Spirituality or Other Innovations for Social Work [article]

<https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/10369>

The Meaning and Engagement of Spirituality for Positive Youth Development in Social Work [article]

<https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/10972>

Comparing Rawlsian Justice and the Capabilities Approach to Justice from a Spiritually Sensitive Social Work Perspective [article]

<https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/8805>

An International Analysis of the Role of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work Practice [article]

<https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/10367>

Teaching Resource on Spirituality and Mental Health Recovery: Insights From the Art and Words of Consumers of Mental Health Services [monograph]

<https://www.cswe.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=18026c3e-fac2-4835-b0a7-b2ec64e6cbee>

Spiritual Diversity and Social Work in Korea (Study Abroad Course Insights) [Power Point presentation]

<http://spiritualdiversity.ku.edu/sites/spiritualdiversity.ku.edu/files/docs/Practice/KAS%202002-06%20compressed.pdf>

Vol. 9 No. 1 (2010): Special Issue on Spirituality and Positive Youth Development in Currents: New Scholarship on the Human Services [journal]

<https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/currents/issue/view/1312>

Spiritually Sensitive Social Work: Key Concepts and Ideals [article]

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.565.5827&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

A World Wide View on Spirituality and Social Work: Reflections from the USA Experience and Suggestions for Internationalization [article]

https://www.ucalgary.ca/currents/files/currents/v1n1_canda1.pdf

[The future of spirituality in social work: The farther reaches of human nurture](#)

[article]

Spiritual Strengths Assessment in Mental Health Practice [article]

https://oushi.upol.cz/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2014_spiritual_strengths_assessment.pdf

Spirituality, Religion, and Aging Research in Social Work: State of the Art and Future Possibilities [article]

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233167635_Spirituality_Religion_and_Aging_Research_in_Social_Work_State_of_the_Art_and_Future_Possibilities#read

Spiritual Assessment in Mental Health Recovery [article]

https://oushi.upol.cz/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2014_spiritual_assessment.pdf

Spiritually Sensitive Social Work with Victims of Natural Disasters and Terrorism [article]

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4985726/>

Wisdom from the Confucian Classics for Spiritually Sensitive Social Welfare [article]

https://ucalgary.ca/currents/files/currents/v1n1_canda2.pdf

Spiritual Connection in Social Work: Boundary Violations and Transcendence [keynote speech transcript]

http://spiritualdiversity.ku.edu/sites/spiritualitydiversity.drupal.ku.edu/files/docs/P_hilosophy/EdCandaKeynoteinCanada2006editedwebsite.pdf

Reflections on Collective Trauma, Faith, and Service delivery to Victims of Terrorism and Natural disaster: Insights from Six National Studies [article]

<https://www.nacsw.org/RC/49996633.pdf#page=78>

World Religious Views of Health and Healing [monograph]

<http://spiritualdiversity.ku.edu/sites/spiritualitydiversity.drupal.ku.edu/files/docs/Health/World%20Religious%20Views%20of%20Health%20and%20Healing.pdf>

Special issue of the journal, Reflections: Narratives on Professional Helping on Spiritual Diversity in Social Work [journal]

<https://reflections narratives of professional helping.org/index.php/Reflections/issue/view/71>

Special Issue of the journal, Reflections: Narratives on Professional Helping on Spirituality in Social Work [journal]

<https://reflections narratives of professional helping.org/index.php/Reflections/issue/view/32>

The Billiken: Bringer of Good Luck and Cultural Competence [article]

<https://reflections narratives of professional helping.org/index.php/Reflections/article/view/499>

Comprehensive Set of Presentation Slides for Teaching About Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice (by Edward Canda, provided for Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic)

https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2014/SPP002/um/Spiritual_Diversity_in_Social_Work_Practice_comprehensive.pdf

Spiritually Sensitive Social Work:An Overview of American and International Trends
[plenary address transcript]

<https://spiritualitydiversity.drupal.ku.edu/sites/spiritualitydiversity.drupal.ku.edu/files/docs/Practice/Spirituality%20and%20SW%20Hong%20Kong%20plenary%20paper.pdf>

Appendix VII: Access to Course Slides

Examples of slides to accompany teaching with the Canda et al. (2020) textbook are available open access at the ResearchGate website. The document is named “Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice: Slides for Teaching”.