

WELF 7031 THEORIES AND KNOWLEDGES FOR SOCIAL WORK

Credit Points 10

Legacy Code 102743

Coordinator Rimple Mehta ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Rimple Mehta/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Rimple%20Mehta/))

Description This subject explores different strands of social theory and their relevance for contemporary social work practice, both in the context of Western Sydney, and also globally. The heritage of the European Enlightenment will be critically examined as providing the basic paradigm for the construction of 'social theory' and also of social work knowledge and practice. The contribution of the humanities, as providing space for creativity and inspiration as well as insight, will also be considered. The limitations as well as the positives of Western epistemologies will be explored, and alternatives such as Southern Theory, Indigenous knowledges, critical theory, and 'new paradigm' thinking will be evaluated.

School Social Sciences

Discipline Social Work

Student Contribution Band HECS Band 4 10cp

Check your fees via the Fees (https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/) page.

Level Postgraduate Coursework Level 7 subject

Restrictions

Students must be enrolled in program 1792 Master of Social Work (Qualifying)

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this subject, students should be able to:

1. Critically evaluate the range of theories used by social workers, their strengths and their limitations.
2. Demonstrate an understanding through a critique of the Enlightenment heritage of social work, and its epistemological assumptions.
3. Examine and evaluate the relevance of alternative epistemologies for social work, especially in relation to indigenisation and decolonisation.
4. Identify ways in which the humanities and the creative arts can be incorporated into social work knowledge.
5. Demonstrate how these alternative epistemologies can be contextualised for practice in culturally diverse communities.

Subject Content

1. Theory for practice: theories that social workers use
2. The relationship between knowledge, theory and practice
3. Paradigms of social theory: positivist, interpretive, critical and postmodern
4. The Western Enlightenment tradition: strengths and limitations
5. Social work's Enlightenment heritage
6. Alternative epistemologies

7. Indigenisation and decolonisation of social work knowledge
8. The humanities and social work: history, philosophy, literature
9. Creativity, the arts and social work
10. Contextualising social work knowledge in culturally diverse communities

Assessment

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Type	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task	Mandatory
Essay	1,500 Words	40	N	Individual	N
Presentatio	15 mins	30	N	Group	N
Essay	750 words	30	N	Individual	N

Prescribed Texts

- Gray, M., and Webb, S.A. (2013). *Social Work Theories and Methods*, London: Sage.
- Harms, L & Connolly M. (2023) *Social Work: From Theory to Practice*, 4th Edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Ife, J., Mehta, R., & Tusasiirwe, S. (2024) *Re-imagining Social Work: Towards Creative Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Morley, C., Ablett, P., Noble, C., and Cowden, S. (eds) (2019). *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Pedagogies for Social Work*, Routledge.
- Munford, R. (2019). *New Theories for Social Work Practice*, Jessica Kingsley.
- Thorpe, C. (2017). *Social Theory for Social Work: Ideas and applications*, London: Taylor and Francis.

Teaching Periods

Autumn (2025)

Parramatta City - Macquarie St

On-site

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View timetable (https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=WELF7031_25-AUT_PC_1#subjects)