Social work and Human Rights

Teachers
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Introduction
Clients of social work usually have difficulties to be full-fledged members of the society because they may lack social skills, be in weak mental or physical health condition, dependency, insufficient income and other reasons. Hence there exists a risk that provision of social care services could violate their dignity, limit their freedom of choice, and increase their dependency on social benefits. The rather that nowadays social policy tends to organize social security in the way which is oriented more towards saving resources than enabling social work clients. The environment of social services organization could increase discrimination and stigma of services users. Therefore social workers have to be able to work protecting and securing client’s rights on micro-, mezzo- or macro level using deep theoretical knowledge and practical experience on human rights. Consideration and protection of human rights should be an inevitable core of daily work with client, mission of each social work agency and guide of state’s social policy. The aims of this Module are to enable student to act as social worker securing clients human rights in a broad social, legal, political and economical context.

Module Aims
On completion of the module the student will be able to:
- interpret social work and human rights in a broad social, legal, political and economical context;
- critically analyze and systematically assess social services organization and contribute to its development from the perspective of human rights and social work ethics;
- identify faulty social work practices, violating client’s human rights and generate measures and models how to protect client’s rights on micro-, mezzo- or macro level.

Competencies
In this module the following competencies will be addressed and assessed:

Competency 1. Diagnose
The EMSW is competent to identify and analyze problems of client groups which arise due to violation of their human rights.

Competency 2. Evaluate
The EMSW is able to employ human rights perspective evaluating social policy (on the macro level), functioning of a particular social work agency (on the micro level).

Competency 4. Innovate
The EMSW is able to track, creatively translate, develop and introduce national and international human rights trends, policies, practices and social concepts so that the quality of professional practices can be improved.

Competency 7. Professionalize
The EMSW is able to develop his professional human rights knowledge, skills, attitudes and is able to integrate his personal achievements successfully in the organization. The graduate can also improve his own competencies and use them for the benefit of colleagues and the organization. Being human rights-sensitive the graduate can systematically transfer his personal expertise and vision to colleagues and other experts in the professional field.
Competency 8. **Cooperate international**
The EMSW is able to cooperate solving human rights problems on micro and macro level inside and outside his own organization in an intercultural and international context.

Competency 9. **Intervene**
The EMSW is able to intervene in complex problem situations of client groups whose human rights are violated in relation to the social environment and in the context of social trends / developments in Europe.

**Professional role**

This module is useful for the student who is planning to act as Policy expert, Coordinator, Senior staff officer/Project Manager or Practitioner-researcher:

**Policy Expert**
The student can identify and evaluate relevant human rights policies from the European Union that have an impact on his/her own organization and on the possibilities, requirements and restrictions for the clients. The graduate can use previous experience as social worker in organizations in the past to evaluate how well the current employer is dealing with human rights issues relative to other organizations. The graduate can analyse the significance of European human rights issues, trends, procedures etc. for the organization, they can communicate the results of such an analysis in a manner that the organization can effectively use.

**Coordinator, Senior staff officer/Project Manager**
The graduate will have the analytic capacity to produce reports, memo or other documents concerning the implications of EU policies in the field of human rights for the organization. As senior staff officer the graduate will be responsible for mentoring and coaching in professional attitude of junior staff officers what concerns human rights. The graduate is able to signal developments in society and translate these into actions of the organisation.

**Practitioner-researcher**
Due to having studied various techniques, including online learning, and various research paradigms in an international university programme, the graduate will have sufficient scientific, academic, and professional competencies to carry our practice oriented research in the field of human rights. The graduate is able to present the report in front of a wide diversity of audiences including international ones.
Literature

Required


Optional


Organizational aspects of the module

A. Before the meeting week

A1 Students read:


The literature will be put on Moodle.

A2 Students write:

A short 2 pages essay and send them to lecturers. Goal of this essay is to disclose social work as a human rights profession. Themes will be given at the beginning of the 2nd preparatory week.

Feedback will be given during the meeting week.

A3 Students find 3 articles each in the mass media about human rights of socially vulnerable groups and translate them into English.

A4. Students find 3 manifestations of human rights violation or protection in fine arts, poetry, photography, cinema, fairy tale... If it is in their mother tongue, it should be translated. If it is a longer film, a 10 minutes clipping should be provided.

A5. Students analyze the privatization of social work from client’s human rights perspective.

B. The meeting week

Day I (6 acad. hours)
Getting to know each other. Discussion about personal experience in human rights violation/protection.


B2. Lecture: Human rights concept within theoretical discourses of social work.

Day II (6 acad. hours)


B4. Visit to Human rights agency in Lithuania.

Day III (6 acad. hours)
B5. Lecture and debates: Human rights: social worker’s and institutional perspective.

Day IV (6 acad. hours)
B6. Lecture and debate: Social work in a market environment: social work ethic and market values; the models of social services coordination; social work business.
The tasks for home work will be described and discussed.

Day V (6 acad. hours)
B7. Seminar: presentation and discussion of media cases.
B8. Seminar: presentation and discussion of fine – arts cases.
B9. Planning of the final paper.

C. After the meeting week

During the period of ten weeks:

Week 4-5
C1. After discussions during the meeting week students are supposed to write a letter to relevant newspaper reacting and critically assessing the article chosen by the student because of the unethical approach towards socially vulnerable group. At the end of week 5 the result is delivered to the lecturer, on week 6 the feedback is provided.

Week 6-8
C2. Group work. Evaluate social services quality assurance systems from client’s rights perspective. Cooperating in teams to research and compare social services quality assurance systems in 2-3 countries: concepts and approaches of public services quality, professional standard setting, service excellence etc. Groups cooperate via Moodle among themselves and with lecturers. At the end of week 8 the results in written form are delivered to the lecturer, on week 10 the feedback is provided.

Week 9-11
C3. Group work: a group of students choose one social work theory and analyze it from the human rights perspective. Groups cooperate via Moodle among themselves and with lecturers. At the end of week 11 the result is delivered to the lecturer, on week 12 the feedback is provided.

Week 3-12
C4. During the meeting week students will discuss and get the task for the final paper: preparation of the “Declaration of client’s rights of the xxxx service agency”. They are supposed to work on it during the whole module and at the end of week 12 the result is delivered to lecturer. At the end of week 13 the feedback is provided.

Students will read the required literature and self chosen relevant literature.

See appendix I: organization of the module “Social work and human rights”
Studyload
The study load of the module is 11 ECTS (308 study hours).
Estimated distribution of the hours:
- Lectures 15 hours
- Seminars/tutorials 15 hours
- Individual work 120 hours
- Groupwork 120 hours
- VLE activities 38 hours

Assessment

Accumulative assessment will consist of:

1. Written papers:
   a. Essay 20%
   b. Letter to a newspaper 5%
   c. Analysis applying theoretical perspective (5%)
   d. Evaluation of social services quality (5%)
   e. Final paper 30%

2. Involvement in debates during the meeting week 10%

3. Participation in discussions in VLE (25%)

   1. Written papers:
      a. Essay: Before coming to the meeting week students will write an essay summarizing literature provided. It should be submitted to teachers at the end of week 2. Essays will be assessed according to the following criteria: argumentation why social work is regarded as a human rights profession; identification of specific tasks of social work in the field of human rights distinguishing it from other professions; meeting special requirements of essay writing style.
      b. Letter: Each student will prepare a letter to a newspaper arguing with unethical approach towards respective social group or individual. The letter will be put on the Moodle and teachers will give their assessment. Criteria appraising the letter: proper selection of the article, exhaustive justification of student’s position based on human rights position.
      c. Each student will analyze human rights from the particular social work theoretical perspective. Analysis will be put on the Moodle and discussed and summarized by a group. Teachers will give their assessment based on quality of individual analysis and input in group-discussion.
      d. Evaluation of social services quality assurance systems from client’s rights perspective in 2-3 countries will be delivered. Students identify shortages in national quality assurance system from the perspective of human rights and give recommendations for its improvement. Analysis will be put on the Moodle and teachers will give their assessment. Assessment will be based on consistency of analyses, argumentation.
      e. Final paper: Students will summarize their newly gained theoretical knowledge, practical experience and professional values in the final paper “Declaration of client’s rights of the xxxx service agency”. Goal of this document is introduction and reinforcement of human rights component into agency’s daily practice, stronger engagement towards human rights based approach. This 5-7 pages document should
be designed as a useful tool for agency’s administration, staff and clients helpful both for solving daily misunderstandings as well as general ethical dilemmas. The final paper includes: short description of the agency, to which declaration will be applied, it’s mission, goals, services and clientele, main provisions of the declaration and expected changes occurring in the agency after adoption of the declaration. Proposed structure of the declaration is as follows:

- Purpose of the declaration.
- General principles, f.i.: respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy and independence of persons; non-discrimination; and general obligations, f.i.: to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination; to provide accessible information; to promote the training of staff.
- Practical detailed provisions, like protecting the integrity of the person; personal mobility; privacy and confidentiality; freedom of expression.
- Means to assure protection of client’s rights (clients’ council, complaints system, responsible persons, etc...).
- If needed – summary of declaration in easy to read language.

Declaration should be practically applicable and it is expected that students will present it to administration of his/her working place. Lecturers will directly contact organizations director and ask his/her opinion of the “Declaration”. The declaration should: reflect theoretical knowledge obtained during the course; be realistic and practically applicable; follow the abovementioned structure.

2. Participation at the debates on meeting week, day 3. It will be assessed according to the following criteria: actively involved by applying comprehensive argumentation, demonstrating theoretical background and critical thinking.

3. Participation in the VLE: students are supposed to participate in discussions on 2 papers. Firstly, a group of students will work jointly analyzing human rights from theoretical perspectives and outline main aspects concerning those theories. Teachers will give their assessment based on input in group-discussion. Secondly, a group of students will work jointly analyzing and comparing social services quality assurance systems from client’s rights perspective. Teachers will give their assessment based on input in group-discussion.

Possibility for a second chance, if the student doesn’t succeed
The student/group of students will have a chance to improve the following deliverables using the feedback of the teacher: Essay; Letter to a newspaper; Analysis applying theoretical perspective; Evaluation of social services quality; Final paper.
If student is not actively involved in discussions on virtual environment or during the meeting week respectively get 10% / 20% less.

Feedback during the working process
The student will have feedback of the teacher for each task and they will be invited to contact teachers while performing the tasks if any questions arise.

Teachers
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Egle Sumskiene, PhD, e-mail: egle.sumskiene@gmail.com
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<th>Subject/no of the week</th>
<th>Week 1 (before contact)</th>
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<th>Week 3 (contact)</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
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<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Reading literature</td>
<td>Lectures, discussion</td>
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<td><strong>1.1. HR concept and main categories</strong></td>
<td>Reading literature.</td>
<td>Essay.</td>
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<td>Lectures, discussion</td>
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<td><strong>2.3. Social worker’s and institutional perspective</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3.2. HR manifestation in fine arts, cinema, etc... (deliv.)</strong></td>
<td>Each student finds 3</td>
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**Final task**

- Introduction to the task
- Preparation of the task
- Delivery
- Assessment

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