



UNIVERSIDADE LUSÍADA
LISBOA

Course Unit Program
Seminar: Introduction to Social Problems

Academic Year 2026/2027

1. Organic Unit

Higher Institute of Social Work

2. Course

SOCIAL WORK

3. Cycle

1st

4. Course Unit

Seminar: Introduction to Social Problems (L4505)

5. Scientific Area

6. Curricular Year

1st

7. Type of Curricular Unit / Semester

1st Semester



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8. Class type and workload (work time)

Theoretical classes:

Practical classes:

Theoretical-Practical Classes 30,00

Tutorial Guidance: 20,00

9. ECTS Credits

6,00

10. Scientific Area Coordinator

11. Regent

Prof. Doutora CRISTINA MARIA RAMOS COELHO

12. Assistants

13. Teaching Language

Portuguese

14. General Objectives

- Critically map and contextualise the main contemporary social issues.
- Deconstruct the ethical-political matrix that underpins the identification and conceptualisation of social issues.
- Understand the functions of integrated diagnostics and interpret social indicator systems to contextualise and substantiate the design of multidimensional responses.

15. Specific Objectives

- Identify the structural dynamics and triggering factors of the main contemporary social issues.
- Mobilise key Social Work theoretical frameworks for the conceptualisation and analysis of social problems.
- Critically analyse case studies and diverse scenarios of social vulnerability.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of social diagnostics and intervention strategies against the complexity of the identified problems.
- Design proactive intervention proposals aimed at safeguarding social rights

16. Skills to be acquired



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- Learning to source relevant information for each problem under analysis;
- Ability to critically analyze complex data and situations to identify underlying problems;
- Understanding the diversity and heterogeneity of social issues and the potential areas of intervention for Social Work;
- Knowing and utilizing diagnostic tools;
- Understanding the importance of public policies as both part of the problem and the solution.

17. Teaching Methodology

Theoretical lectures.

Student-led presentations.

Active learning through practical exercises, reflexivity, and debate.

18. Course Unit Program

1 - Introduction to social problems

1.1 - Concept and definitions of Social Problem.

1.1.1. - From common sense to social issue.

1.2 - Theoretical perspectives on social problems.

1.3 - The use of critical thinking in the analysis and critical reflection of social problems.

2 - Introduction to social diagnosis: concepts, strategies, and methodologies.

2.1 - Social needs and social problems.

2.2 - Research in the daily work of the social worker.

2.1 - Objectives and participatory strategies.

3. Diversity and heterogeneity in contemporary social issues.

3.1. The concept and application of intersectionality.

4 - The reconceptualisation of social issues: (mis)alignments between human rights and public policies.

19. Assessment Methods

Written test.

Group work and oral presentation.

Class participation.

Other components.

20. Didactic Resources

Computer;

Projector;

Powerpoint presentations;

Documentation and bibliography recommended by the teacher.

21. Sustainability Objectives



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SGD 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere

SGD 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

SGD 10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries

22. Keywords

Social Problems

Social Intervention

Social Diagnosis

Critical thinking



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23. Main Bibliography

Author(s): Hermano Carmo (Ed.)
Title: Problemas sociais contemporâneos
Edition: 1ª Edição Year: 2001
Local: Lisboa
Publisher: Universidade Aberta
ISBN Code:

Author(s): Dimitris Michailakis & Werner Schirmer,
Title: Social work and social problems: A contribution from systems theory and
Edition: (23), 4, 431-442. Year: 2014
Local: <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:liu:diva-107377>
Publisher: International Journal of Social Welfare,
ISBN Code:

Author(s): Maria José Aguilar Idáñez e Ezequiel Ander-Egg
Title: Diagnóstico social: conceitos e metodologias
Edition: 3ª Edição Year: 2007
Local: Porto
Publisher: REAPN
ISBN Code:

24. Complementary Bibliography

Author(s): Joaquim Fialho (Coord.)
Title: Manual de Intervenção Social
Edition: 1ª Edição Year: 2021
Local: Lisboa
Publisher: Sílabo
ISBN Code:

Author(s): Allen Rubin e Earl R. Babbie
Title: Research Methods for Social Work
Edition: 7ª Edição Year: 2011
Local: Belmont, CA
Publisher: Brooks-Cole - CENGAGE Learning
ISBN Code:



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Ficha técnica MIP / MIP Datasheet	
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Autor / Author	Prof. Doutora CRISTINA MARIA RAMOS COELHO
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Colaborador(es) / Colaborator(s)	-
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