CURRICULUM FOR GENERAL PROGRAM
CORE KNOWLEDGE AREA MODULE 1
PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Introduction

Development and change permeate society in all its facets: history, culture, ecology, economy, politics, science and technology, social groupings, and a society’s place in the world, to name a few. As individuals and professionals who face contemporary societal challenges, we need to understand the context in which change takes place, the variety of forces that operate to bring about a myriad of changes in different spheres, the consequences of change at different levels, and our own role and how we might be effective as agents of positive social change.

The world we know and occupy is not the same as the world our recent forbearers occupied, and it will not be the same as the one our children or children’s children will inhabit. All that we know as our reality has been shaped by forces from the past and will in turn give rise to new forces that will mold the future. Some of these forces have been quite intentional: One thinks here of deliberative democracy and the civil rights and women’s movements as purposeful forces that have shaped societies. Other forces have come about as a consequence of natural developments: changes in a society’s demographics are somewhat predictable and not always under our control. Still other changes have come about as a direct result of human intervention, planned or otherwise: globalization, first the industrial and then the technological revolution, the distribution of wealth within a society, multiculturalism and ethnic and religious diversity, changes in the environment, communications between groups of people, and the development of new domains of knowledge.

Clearly change has brought both greater happiness and greater threats to happiness, improved conditions for many and the potential for diminished lifestyles for too many, new
challenges, and new opportunities. And these changes at the macro-level of the society impact
the micro-level of our daily lives and our professional environments, for good or ill.

Acknowledging change in these terms, we see that we are not only impacted by ongoing change
but can become responders to, participants in, and shapers of change.

Overall Objectives for This KAM

The purpose of this Knowledge Area Module (KAM) is to explore the forces of social
change—their causes and consequences—to examine ways in which these changes impact our
professional worlds and to find ways of responding to these changes to make a positive
difference for those for whom we work in our daily settings.

When you have completed this KAM, you will be able to:

1. Analyze and explain a chosen sphere or aspect of social and cultural change of
particular professional relevance to you, using concepts and information drawn from the existing
body of theory.

2. Critically examine current research to assess your profession and/or organization and
its problems and challenges from the perspective of this particular social change.

3. Propose and/or critically assess a response to this force of change within your
professional context.

Plan to accomplish objective #1 in the Breadth component of the KAM, objective #2 in
the Depth component, and objective #3 in the Application component. These objectives are
further explained with examples in the discussion of each component that follows.

Challenges and Opportunities in This KAM

Your first challenge in this KAM will be to identify a force or group of forces that change
society and that are particularly relevant to your professional field and your own professional
interests and then to pursue your examination through theory and research on its practical implications and applications. This KAM may well provide you with a larger context in which you may eventually place your dissertation research project. Since all dissertation studies undertaken at Walden are intended to have significance for social change, here in this KAM you may begin to build a foundation for satisfying that eventual outcome.

In the Breadth component, which is designed to give you the opportunity to study the theoretical explorations of the dynamics of social change, you will need to identify sources that go beyond mere description of the forces for change to examine the root causes, means, and consequences. The most helpful theories will be those that explain the force for change more generally, abstractly, and beyond the limits of your own localized context. To begin, ask yourself: What have theorists said about what this force for change is all about, where did it come from, and how is it shaping and impacting society and the human family? Then you will be able to write about how theorists have given different answers to these questions and make a determination about which answers make the most sense and why.

In the Depth component, you have the opportunity to bring your theoretical understanding to the examination of particular manifestations of social change in your own profession. Build out of your knowledge of the particular change issues you examined in the Breadth by critically examining how they influence your professional context and are addressed in different ways by researchers in your field. You will write about these developments in a way that shows you not only know what current researchers have discovered but you are able to identify where their research is helpful, perceptive, and well grounded or not. In addition, you can point out what gaps remain in our understanding of this phenomenon within the profession that still need to be addressed.
In the Application component, the opportunity presents itself to respond to the social change issue or issues you have been focusing on throughout this KAM. You may design a project of your own or assess the strengths and weaknesses of others’ projects in terms of what you have gathered from the study of the underlying theories and research already examined in this KAM. Bring your critical and creative eye to this component.

Breadth Component

SBSF 8110 Theories of Social Change (5 cr.)

Social change can be examined in terms of particular phenomena, such as poverty, diversity, technology, democracy, globalization, the green revolution, the civil rights movement, feminism, terrorism, and changes in knowledge including what is known about societal change itself, to list a few. In society, these forces are interconnected and sometimes mutually dependent and collectively influential, but you will need to find a specific theme on which to focus your attention.

Listed below are some suggestions for the kinds of issues you might want to pursue in the Breadth component of this KAM. They are intended to be suggestive only but will give you an idea of the kinds of topics your paper should address.

1. How has a particular social phenomenon (e.g., poverty, diversity, technology, democracy, globalization, ecology, equal rights movements) been explained in terms of its causes and consequences?

2. What are the major theories or explanatory schemes in the field? How do various theorists differ in their explanations? How useful are these theories in helping us understand this phenomenon?
3. What is the interconnection between two or more social change forces and why do they interconnect in this way? What is their combined impact?

4. Considering the broader sweep of human societies; how has societal change been defined in the literature?

5. What have been some of the differences among various explanatory theories, such as the social transmission theory (Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann, and John Dewey); interactionism, interventionism, and functionalism or conflict theories (Philip Jackson, Basil Bernstein, Pierre Bourdieu, and Jean-Claude Passeron); interpretive theories (Michael Young); transformation theories (Paulo Freire, Michael Apple, and Henry Giroux); and futuristic theories (Alvin and Heidi Toffler)?

6. What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of different theories in explaining contemporary societal developments?

Demonstration of Competence

Using the learning resources chosen, write a scholarly paper that demonstrates an understanding of the theories of societal and cultural change in general or as they relate to a particular social phenomenon or group of phenomena. The emphasis of the paper is not on summarizing the content of various theories but on a critical assessment of them including comparisons, contrasts, evaluations, and syntheses of different theories, assumptions, concepts, ideas, and elements encountered during the literature search and review. The expected length of the paper for the Breadth component is approximately 30 double-spaced pages, plus references. The paper is considered equivalent to 5-quarter credit hours of graduate work.
Learning Resources

A bibliography of possible references for this KAM can be found at the Walden Library site accessed through the faculty or student personal start page/campuscruiser. Once in the Walden Library site, click on Get KAM Research Help and look for the appropriate program or KAM. The Resources links will take you to general references that will provide an overview of the field or key thinkers. The Bibliography link will take you to a list of possible writings. The books and authors listed here are meant only to provide examples of the kind of literature you should be accessing. You can compile your own bibliographic references using this list as a starting point. If you have difficulty compiling a bibliography or choosing relevant readings, consult with your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden librarians.

Depth Component

SBSF 8120 Current Research in Social Change (5 cr.)

The purpose of the Depth component is to help you understand, analyze, and explain social change/societal development as it affects and is affected by your profession. Your task in this component is to select a particular social change/societal development that has salience in the current time period, is of interest to you, and intersects in intriguing and important ways with your professional context.

In the Depth you should consider the impact of the phenomena that you examined in the Breadth on some aspects of your profession. For instance, depending on the focus of the Breadth component, you may want to consider some aspect related to:

1. The multicultural classroom
2. Technology and today’s nursing practices.
3. Epidemics and pandemics as a manifestation of globalization.
4. Schools of tomorrow: responses to futuristic theories.

5. “Greening” the economy.

6. The criminal justice system and the minority offender.

7. Connections between changes in technology and the rise of obesity in children.

8. The “graying” of America and health care costs.


10. Violence at school or in the workplace as a manifestation of societal pressures.


12. Influence of societal development on management practices.

13. Media, the Internet, and the effect on consumers’ knowledge of health.

14. The impact of inequality in health care resources on vulnerable populations.

15. The economic effects of decreasing coverage for health insurance on consumers.

16. Increasing chronic diseases: implications for health and other social resources.

17. Purposes of schooling.

18. Change in family and community structures.

19. Limited resources, funding, and fiscal equity.

20. Equitable access to schooling (tracking, English-only, mainstreaming).


22. Public, private, charter, and/or alternative schools.

23. Social capital and school success.

24. The evolving role of nonprofits in the provision of social services.

25. The effects of government on citizen involvement.

Demonstration of Competence

Compile an annotated bibliography that includes a minimum of 15 recent refereed or peer-reviewed research journal articles (or older articles if they are a particularly good fit) related to the social change/societal development theme that you identified for this assignment, including literature that places this issue within the historical development or contemporary context of your profession. For each source included on your list, prepare a critical analysis. Arrange the bibliography in alphabetical order. Suggested length is 1 to 1½ pages per annotation.

Write a 25-30 page double-spaced typed scholarly paper describing, analyzing, and explaining the selected social change/societal development and relating it to developments in your profession. In this paper, be sure to include evidence of higher order thinking (comparison and contrast, analysis, and evaluation). The total Depth component assignment is equivalent to 5-quarter credit hours of graduate work.

Learning Resources

Because the Depth section is so individualized, it is difficult to offer reading recommendations. Both books and articles can be used, although current research is more likely to be found in journal articles. You are encouraged to review a wide range of sources for this assignment but focus particularly on dissertations and journal articles in selecting the sources that will ultimately comprise your bibliographic list.

Consult your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden library staff for further assistance in identifying sources in your literature search.
Application Component

SBSF 8130 Professional Practice and Social Change (4 cr.)

In the Application component of the KAM, your focus should now turn to your own professional context. Here you may examine and critique a particular role of the profession in engaging in or responding to the specific social change/societal development phenomenon you have been examining throughout this KAM or propose and justify a response to that change phenomenon.

In order for the Application component to be the most productive learning experience possible, it is useful for this component to draw on the themes and findings from the Breadth and Depth components of this KAM. You are encouraged to review the resources presented in previous components of this KAM as well as the annotated bibliography compiled as part of the Depth component. In addition to these you are urged to reflect on your own professional practice and firsthand experiences with social change/societal development in your context.

Remember to secure Institutional Review Board approval to conduct research using human subjects.

Some suggestions of Application projects you might consider:

1. Prepare a report that reflects your understanding of how your professional setting, or another of interest to you, has engaged in a social change response. The report could include personal interviews with key leaders/informants, documents, observations, and surveys. The case study report could address the following: (a) a description of the social change response; (b) a profile of the selected institution that engaged in the response; (c) a description of the role(s) the institution played in attempting to address the social context; (d) a summary of the roles the leaders or key members played in engaging the institution in addressing the social
change/societal development; (e) an interpretative discussion of the data, including conclusions, implications, and recommendations; or (f) a commentary on the insights you gained in the theories and research studied in the earlier components of the KAM and the case study.

2. Describe and evaluate a program that is intentionally dedicated to addressing a social change issue that is operated by a selected institution or organization. Your evaluation could address the following: (a) a description of the program, including details such as its goals, target audience, stakeholders, and delivery and implementation strategies; (b) a detailed description of the evaluation goals, target population/sample, design (qualitative, quantitative, mixed), data collection methods, and data analysis procedures; or (c) a summary of the major results of the evaluation, including conclusions, implications and recommendations, especially as you assess them in the light of the theories and research studied in the earlier components of this KAM.

3. Develop a project of your own that addresses a specific social change phenomenon. Building on the understandings from the earlier components of this KAM, you might want to include: (a) a needs assessment that explains the social change issue you are addressing and why this is important to your stakeholders; (b) a thorough description of the program, its goals, delivery, and implementation strategies; (c) a detailed description of how you will evaluate the degree of success in implementing the program, including the evaluation goals, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures; or (d) if the project is implemented, a summary of major results of the evaluation, including conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

4. Use a major work you have previously completed (e.g., a master’s thesis, curriculum design, published article, or professional project) to demonstrate your ability to apply the theories, concepts, methods, and research findings that are the focus of this KAM. Provide a brief rationale for the project and comment on how the situation might have changed since the
project was first undertaken. In the light of the theoretical and research findings from earlier parts of the KAM, critically analyze what you might do differently if you were to plan and implement something like this again.

5. Write a grant proposal for a new social agency or project designed to address the issue you studied in the earlier components. Include the needs assessment, justification, proposal, business plan, staffing needs, and objectives and vision for the first 5 years and explain how the proposal draws on findings from the earlier components of this KAM.

6. Analyze a current bill or policy reflecting social change. Using the findings from the earlier components of the KAM, critically examine the legislation in terms of its effectiveness in responding to or creating change in your profession.

7. Develop a manual to guide managers/administrators in your organization in dealing with current forces of social change in your organization. Explain how this manual reflects your findings in the earlier components of this KAM.

Demonstration of Competence

The Application component of the KAM gives you the opportunity to put the theories and research pertaining to social change/societal development into practice. Think in terms of developing a project that addresses change in your setting. Your final demonstration should include both the project and reflective commentary on it, where you show how it is informed by the theories and research studied in the earlier components of this KAM. The Application is considered equivalent to 4-quarter credit hours of graduate work in a traditional program.

Learning Resources

The resources you will use in this component are very specific to your particular project. If a theory or research paper is the foundation of the project, be sure to reference it. If you have
difficulty compiling a bibliography or choosing relevant readings, consult with your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden librarians.