

ONLINE COURSE SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH AS A PRACTICE OF TRANSPARANCY

The Theory Practice Nexus: Social Workers as Intellectuals

Friday January 24, 2025

9.30 – 12.30 CET

09.30 09.45 Welcome by Prof. dr. Rudi Roose - chair TiSSA

09.45 10.30 Prof. dr. Rudi Roose

Re-intellectualising social work: the importance of useless theories

Although social work is defined as both a practice and an academic discipline, a de-intellectualisation of social work is apparent. The neo-liberalisation of social work reduces social work education to training, while a narrow evidence-based approach reduces research to the development of methods and practice to the implementation of neutral knowledge. In this lecture, I argue for a re-intellectualisation of social work. Revisiting the statement by Lewin that nothing is so practical as a good theory, I will argue that nothing is as necessary, as so-called useless theories.



Rudi Roose studied social pedagogy and criminology. He is head of the Department of Social Work & Social Pedagogy at Ghent University, Belgium. His research interest focuses on the development of critical pedagogies for social work. He is chair of TiSSA and co-editor in Chief of the European Journal of Social Work.

10.30 11.00 Break

11.00 11.45 Prof. dr. Paul Michael Garret

Social workers as intellectuals?

In this contribution the focus is on the topic of 'intellectuals' with discussion examining some of Gramsci's ideas. How meaningful is the Italian's perspective in terms of comprehending social work and research with the field? What are the limitations placed on dissenting intellectuals during a period when neoliberalism remains hegemonic and stifling? How might newer technologies and the use of AI constrain thought and critical reflection? How, more generally, are critical intellectuals corralled during a period of wider political turbulence when certain critiques are rendered 'unsayable'? These are a few of themes that will be engaged with in Garrett's paper on social work and intellectuals.



Paul Michael Garret is an educator and writer who has been described by the International Journal of Social Welfare, as 'probably the most important critical social work theorist in the English-speaking world'. His most recent single-authored book is *Dissenting Social Work: Critical Theory, Resistance and Pandemic* (2021) and *Social Work and Common Sense* (2024). He also co-authored, with the anti-racist activist Washington Marovatsanga, *Social Work with the Black African Diaspora* (2022). Paul is a member of the Royal Irish Academy. Still a registered social worker, he has worked as a Lecturer at the University of Galway since 2004.

11.45 12.30 Questions and debate

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