

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number:	SW381T	Instructor's name:	Cossy Hough, LCSW
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Semester:	Fall 2016	Phone:	512-471-8226 or 512-659-2086
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DYNAMICS OF ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

I. Course Description

This course familiarizes students with the macro context of social work practice. It examines the reciprocal relationship between human behavior and social environments. It emphasizes the interlocking and complex nature of culture and personal identity with content on populations-at-risk, examining the factors that contribute to and constitute being at risk. It introduces the student to the obligation that social services meet the needs of groups served and are culturally relevant. This includes equipping students with skills to recognize diversity within and between groups that may influence assessment, planning, intervention, and research. Students learn how to define, design, and implement strategies for effective practice with persons from diverse backgrounds.

This course examines the impact of social structure and other societal factors on one's personal life chances in relation to equity, fairness, opportunity, and other issues of social and economic justice. Drawing on a systems-ecological perspective, this course helps students develop skills at using systems thinking approaches to understanding organizations and communities with special emphasis on their application to a variety of oppressed and disadvantaged populations and multiple levels of intervention. Special emphasis is given to the development of assessment skills and intervention methods that are relevant to empowerment, capacity building and social change within organizations and communities. Understanding the role of age, race, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical and mental ability is an integral part of this course.

II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course the students will be able to:

1. Discuss communities and organizations as a context for professional practice to meet individual needs, build community capacity, and promote social and economic justice;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the value dilemmas and ethical issues confronting social work professionals and their implications for social work practice with organizations and communities;

3. Assess the influence of community norms, priorities, and competitive community factions on the social structure of communities and the delivery of human services;
4. Assess various evidence-based intervention approaches for working with organizations and communities;
5. Analyze the impacts of organizational and community dynamics on populations at risk and relate those impacts to the participation of such populations in organizational and community governance, human service provision, and policy formulation;
6. Evaluate alternative strategies for initiating change in organizations and communities, including planning models, coalition building, community development, direct action, and legislative advocacy;
7. Understand the relevance of age, race, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical and mental ability in social work practice that is grounded in social and economic justice.

III. Teaching Methods

The class is fully-online and uses a form of blended learning where students learn content online through analyzing readings and articles, watching videos and completing exercises, such as blog posts. Class time is then used to elaborate on the topics and discuss issues via online video conferencing on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00pm. The class is shorter than an in-person class, to make time for the online learning that happens (Canvas case exercises, videos, etc.) between online video classes. An addendum to this syllabus provides guidelines and policies for participation in this online course.

Course content is covered through reading, listening, thinking, and discussing social work practice in organizations and communities. Class sessions will be devoted to focused discussions that flow from assigned readings and supplemental materials presented in class. Students are expected to ask questions, share experiences, and actively participate in class discussions. In addition, the class will include small group experiential learning, videos to generate discussion, and guest speakers who work in agency and community-based settings.

IV. Required and Recommended Texts, and Materials

The primary text for this course will be the [Community Tool Box](#) developed by the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. This work group is part of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Community Health and Development. The Community Tool Box is available for free online.

All assigned readings and other course materials are available in the class Canvas page, which is organized into modules for each class session. Additional readings and materials may be assigned as the semester progresses. These readings will also be available on-line in the course modules.

V. Course Requirements

Course requirements will consist of attendance and participation in class, discussion board postings, a book review assignment, and work on a project for a community partner with a group of peers.

All written assignment submissions must occur by the beginning of class for the due date. Assignment grades will be lowered by .5 points for each day they are late. Students are allowed to submit one assignment one day late during the semester without losing points. Students must communicate with the instructor regarding late assignments prior to the date the assignment is due.

Regular class attendance through Adobe Connect is expected and students should come to class prepared to actively participate in the class discussions. Course requirements and their contribution to the final grade are summarized below. Grades for this course will be assigned using the following scale:

94 and above = A
90.0 to 93.999 = A-
87.0 to 89.999 = B+
84.0 to 86.999 = B
80.0 to 83.999 = B-
77.0 to 79.999 = C+
74.0 to 76.999 = C
70.0 to 73.999 = C-
67.0 to 69.999 = D+
64.0 to 66.999 = D
60.0 to 63.999 = D-
Below 60 = F

Attendance and Participation (10 Points). Students are expected to attend class, to complete assigned readings and online Canvas postings prior to class and participate in in-class discussions. Failure to regularly attend class and contribute constructively to class discussions will be considered in determining the final grade. Failure to complete required readings will also be considered in determining the final grade.

Students will be allowed one absence without losing points. If a student will not be in class, the instructor should be notified in advance. In cases where a student misses more than one class, the instructor reserves the right to lower the student's final grade by up to 2 points point for each class missed.

Discussion Board Answers and Reading Reviews (20 Points). On designated weeks in the course schedule, students are expected to complete a discussion board answer in Canvas. Discussion Board questions will cover the readings and asynchronous course assignments

between classes. Answers to discussion board questions should be approximately 1-2 paragraphs. Students must also read and leave comments for two other students posted answers. Each week's discussion board answer and comments are worth 2 points for a total of 20 points. Discussion board responses will be due prior to the beginning of class.

Book Review Paper (15 Points). In order to demonstrate further integration of class topics and readings, students will write a 6-8 page book review of one of the following books:

Tough, Paul (2008), *Whatever it takes: Geoffrey Canada's quest to change Harlem and America*

Vergheze, Abraham (1994), *My own country: a doctor's story of a town and its people in the age of AIDS*

Stevenson, Bryan (2014), *Just Mercy*

The review should consist of the following elements: a summary of the issues discussed in the book; a discussion of the role of organizations and service delivery; the relevance of community in assessing the social problems described and in the development of approaches to these problems. The review must include references to concepts discussed in class and in course readings in the discussion of organizational and community issues addressed in the book, and should also provide evidence of critical thinking by the student. Research citations must be included to substantiate all assertions of fact. Research citations may, but are not required, to include readings outside of course readings. APA format should be used for this paper. Due Date: Selection for Book Review: **September 13, 2016 at 6:30pm**
Book Review: **November 1, 2016 at 6:30pm**

Group Community Partner Project (55 Points).

This project requires students to work in a task group consisting of 4-5 students. Each task group will be paired with a community partner to work on an issue of concern to the community partner. Students will conduct research to assess this critical social problem and identify innovative approaches that might help address the problem. This might include reviewing the existing literature to see how other communities have approached similar issues in an innovative manner, or developing a plan for how existing innovations in the community may be successfully replicated in other communities.

A separate assignment sheet will be provided.

VI. Class Policies

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HONOR CODE. The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust,

fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM. The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS. Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION. Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way.

Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>).

USE OF COURSE MATERIALS. The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

DOCUMENTED DISABILITY STATEMENT. Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471- 6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS. By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

TITLE IX REPORTING. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Faculty, instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination,

sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Title IX Deputy for the SSW, Professor Tanya Voss. Students, faculty and staff may contact Professor Voss to report incidents or to obtain information. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.

CAMPUS CARRY POLICY. The University's policy on concealed fire arms may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>. You also may find this information by accessing the Quick Links menu on the School's website.

CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY. Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS. Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

SAFETY. As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

BEHAVIOR CONCERNS ADVICE LINE (BCAL). If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY. Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement

is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

VII. Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Due	Readings
8/30	Introduction and Overview of Class and Structure Review Project Description Form and Meet with Task Groups Overview of Community Tool Box	Video Introductions Group Project Preferences (due prior to class)	
9/6	Defining Community Social Work Practice in Communities	Meet with Project Liaison this week Task Group Forming Exercise	Community Tool Box (CTB): Chapter 1 Canvas: Streeter, Community Overview
9/13	Understanding the Community	Discussion Board 1 Task Group Work Plan, Agendas and Minutes Starting This Week Book Review Selection	CTB: Chapter 3, Sections 1, 2, 4, 5, 16, 19 & 21 Canvas: The Geography of Opportunity
9/20	Assessing Community Needs <i>Project Work Day</i>	Discussion Board 2	CTB: Chapter 3, Sections 3, 6, 7, 10, 11 - 15 & 22 Canvas: Allen, <i>Telephone Focus Groups</i>
9/27	Assessing Community Resources	Discussion Board 3	CTB: Chapters 3, Sections 8, 18 & 20 and Chapter 21, Section 8

			Canvas: Asset Mapping Handbook
10/4	Community Change and Encouraging Involvement	Discussion Board 4	CTB: Chapters 5 and 7 Canvas: Rothman, <i>Multi Modes of Intervention at the Macro Level</i>
10/11	Organizational Functioning <i>Project Work Day</i>	Discussion Board 5	Canvas: Kirst-Ashman and Hull, <i>Understanding Organizations</i> and Morgaine Capous-Desyllas, <i>Anti-Oppressive Practice within Organizations</i>
10/18	Strategic Planning and Organizational Structure	Discussion Board 6	CTB: Chapters 8 and 9 Canvas: Bryson, <i>The Future of Public and Nonprofit Strategic Planning in the United States</i>
10/25	Becoming a Community Leader <i>Project Work Day</i>	Discussion Board 7	CTB: Chapters 13 and 14
11/1	Analyzing Community Problems and Designing Interventions Cultural Competence and Humility	Discussion Board 8 Book Review Paper	CTB: Chapters 17 - 19 and 27
11/8	Removing Barriers, Creating Opportunities and Improving Services <i>Project Work Day</i>	Discussion Board 9	CTB: Chapter 23, Chapter 24, Sections 1, 3 & 4, Chapter 25, Sections 1 & 10, Chapter 26, Sections 2 - 4 & 12
11/15	Organizing for Effective Advocacy Evaluation <i>Project Work Day</i>	Discussion Board 10	CTB: Chapters 30, 33 and 36

11/22	Group Presentations	Group Presentations	
11/29	Group Presentations	Group Presentations Final Project Deliverables Individual and Group Evaluation Forms Community Partner Presentation	

Course Syllabus Addendum Online Guidelines and Policies

Course Technology Requirements. Students will need to have access to the following to participate in this online course:

- Computer with dependable access to reliable, high speed internet connection and webcam
- Headphones and a well lit private room for participation in the synchronous portion of the class each week
- Access to Adobe Connect Pro
- Access to the Internet, MS Word or Pages, PowerPoint and Excel
- Accounts in Canvas, Google Docs and Google Hangouts

Virtual Classroom Expectations.

Out of Class Time Assignments (Asynchronous). It is required that students complete the asynchronous portion of each class module on the due date indicated in the course schedule and in Canvas. The specific requirements for the Asynchronous portion of each class will be posted in Canvas at least two weeks prior to the due date. If it becomes evident a student is not completing the asynchronous portion of class, the student's grade in the class will be impacted.

Required class readings are included in the expectations of class preparation and that time is not considered part of asynchronous class activities.

Students should take notes of any questions, comments, thoughts and feelings while engaging in the asynchronous units/modules/activities and be prepared to share during the synchronous class meeting times.

Synchronous Class Meeting Times (The Virtual Classroom). Although class participants are not in a physical classroom, the virtual environment needs to be treated with respect as a learning environment. External distractions should be kept to a minimum. Students should do their best to find a quiet, well-lit space prior to logging into the synchronous class session.

Classroom Decorum and Establishing an Environment for Safe Communication:

- Classroom attire-students should wear something they would wear to an in-person class.
- Children-should not be on the student's lap or in the vicinity of the camera's view in respect to other students.
- Pets-appearances should be kept to a minimum.
- Distractions-both television and music should not be on during class time. Students should not be in a public space such a coffee shop during class time.

Students and their computers should be in a place where students can hear and be heard without distractions. Cell phones should be off or in silent mode and not used during class time unless there is an urgent issue that you have informed the instructor about before class.

- Set up for class-Students' computer cameras should give a full view of the student's face in order to engage with others in the virtual classroom.
- Class participation- Students should monitor contributions to class as they would in a physical classroom. Students should be aware of when they can contribute more and when they need to pull back with the level of contribution to give others space.
- Language-Students should use academic discourse through speech, chat room or email.
 - When posting written communication, avoid typing in all caps or bold as this can be viewed as yelling in some online communities.
 - Use emoticons and other symbols to indicate tone when appropriate. This helps to decipher tone and intent.
 - Students should take time to critically think about messages posted and how to formulate responses. Thoughts don't need to be perfectly formulated but should be respectful.
 - Chat room entries should be relevant to the topic being discussed in the synchronous portion of class.