

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

COURSE/UNIQUE NUMBER: SW 381T (#63245)	INSTRUCTOR: JENIFER DEATLEY, LMSW
SEMESTER: FALL 2014	OFFICE NUMBER: 3.104A
CLASS MEETING TIME: M 5:30-8:30	OFFICE PHONE: (512) 471-9826
CLASS MEETING PLACE: 2.112	OFFICE HOURS: M 8:15-9:15 - OR BY APPOINTMENT
	EMAIL: JDEATLEY@UTEXAS.EDU

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 factor 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:

- Discuss communities and organizations as a context for professional practice to meet individual needs, build community capacity, and promote social and economic justice;
- 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;
- Assess the influence of community norms, priorities, and competitive community factions on the social structure of communities and the delivery of human services;
- Assess various evidence-based intervention approaches for working with organizations and communities;
- 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;

- Evaluate alternative strategies for initiating change in organizations and communities, including planning models, coalition building, community development, direct action, and legislative advocacy;
- 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

This class is conducted using a variety of teaching methods such as lectures, videos, guest speakers, writing exercises, and group discussions. Instruction is designed to encourage student participation and input. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class period, and come to class prepared to ask questions, share experiences, and actively participate.

IV. Required Readings

a. Textbook

Hardcastle, D.A., Powers, P.A. & Wenocur, S. (2011). Community Practice: Theories and Skills for Social Workers, 3rd Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

b. Additional readings

Additional readings may be assigned throughout the course, and will be made available online in the Files section of the class Canvas page.

V. Course Requirements

Course requirements consist of two writing assignments, one take home writing exam, and a final task group project.

Assignment	% of Grade	Due Date
Writing Assignments (2)	10%	
Take home paper	15%	
Task Group Project	60%	
Final Deliverable		30%
Class Presentation		20%
Group Documents		5%
Evaluation Grade		5%
Class Participation	15%	
	<u>100%</u>	

GRADUATE GRADING SCALE

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

Please note that you will not earn credit for MSSW courses if your final grade falls below a 'C'. You must earn a 'C' or above for credit to be given for the course.

Course requirements are described in detail below. Please ask for clarification at any time if you have questions about the assignments. Assignments are also posted to the class Canvas page.

1. **Writing Assignments**

There will be two writing assignments throughout the course, which will correspond to the course content. Writing assignments are designed to enhance student learning and to refine professional writing skills by tying course content to macro practice case studies. One assignment will be to write a press release, and one assignment will be to write a persuasive letter. Writing assignments should be one page single-spaced, and include a reference page with citations in APA (6th edition).

2. **Take Home Paper**

Take Home Paper instructions will be distributed mid-semester, and will due to the instructor on **November 3rd**. Students will choose one of two videos shown in class and write a reflection, including reactions, thoughts, and perspectives of the video and propose one policy or structural change. Papers will be four pages, double spaced.

3. **Task Group Project**

The task group project involves small groups of 3 – 5 students working together to achieve an organizational or program goal or specific need of an agency. The objective of the task group project is to learn about the needs and goals of organizations, and develop skills for working in task groups. Task groups are working groups that are designed to achieve a specific goal or objective, and the ability to work cooperatively and effectively in task groups is a critical professional skill. Each task group will be paired with a community partner to work on an issue of concern to the partner, and will produce a deliverable as outlined in the scope of work presented by the organization. Task groups will be formed and paired with community partners on the first day of class. Groups will work together to provide a final deliverable, a presentation to the organization to deliver the product, project documents, group member evaluations, and a final class presentation.

4. **Class participation**

Attendance and participation are important for effective learning; therefore, the class participation grade will be earned each week of class. It is important to arrive on time and be prepared by having read the assigned material for the week. As graduate students, it is expected that you are able to participate on a deeper level in class discussions, and it is expected that you are meaningfully and actively engaged. You will not receive class participation points for any days absent, or for days in which you do not actively participate.

VI. Class Policies

1. *Class attendance.* Class attendance is required every class for the entire class, and will be taken each week. As in a professional work setting, if there is an unforeseen emergency, contact me **in advance** to let me know you will not be present that day. Any class material missed due to a class absence is the students' sole responsibility. The professor reserves the right to deduct points from the student's final course grade due to absences.
2. *Class participation.* Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and be well prepared to participate in discussions, with guest speakers, and experiential learning assignments. Failure to demonstrate through discussions that one has completed the readings will be considered in assigning the class participation grade.

3. *Assignment due dates.* Students will be penalized 5 points for each calendar day that an assignment is late. UT does not allow Incompletes (grade of X) for additional time to complete assignments. Students will be informed of any changes in assignments and due dates in advance. If a student is absent on an assignment due date, that assignment may be emailed to the professor before the start of that day's class with a clear explanation.
4. *General assignment requirements.* The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition) is the style manual adopted by the School of Social Work. All papers and writing assignments must conform to APA style, and must be typed, double spaced, and have one inch margins unless otherwise specified in the assignment description. References and sources must be academic/scholarly sources, and documented in APA format. A summary handout is provided in class, in the Learning Resource Center, and at APAStyle.org.
5. *Professional conduct in class.* 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. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.
6. *Classroom civility.* 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 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.
7. *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 instructor. The instructor 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 can contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/.
8. *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/>).
9. *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.
10. *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). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

11. *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, an examination, a work assignment, or a 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.
12. *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 among 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>.
13. *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 to keep the university informed about changes to their 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>.
14. *Policy on social media and professional communications.* 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 UT Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and broader community.
15. *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.

16. *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:
- a. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building.
 - b. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
 - c. In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
 - d. Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.
17. *Use of class materials.* The materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, exams, quizzes, and homework assignments are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized copying of the class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor 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 includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with other current or future students.

VIII. Course Schedule

Class	Date	Topic/In class	Assigned Readings	Assignments Due
1	9-08	- Introductions and course overview - Introduction to Community Practice - Form project groups	Syllabus	None
2	9-15	- Problem-solving Process - Group Exercise: Case Study - Task Groups - Skills Inventory & Group Contract	Hardcastle, Powers, and Wenocur: Ch. 1 & 9	Set up meeting with org liaison
3	9-22	- Group Exercise: What's the Problem - Social & community problems - Group Exercise: Framing the problem - Video: Santa Ana's Health Crusade	Ch. 2 & 3	Group Contract due Email to Professor detailing liaison meeting
4	9-29	- Understanding Communities - Community Theory - Community Assessment - Video: Poor Kids	Ch. 4	Work Plan due
5	10-06	- Guest Lecturer: Jeni Brazeal, Community Needs Assessment - Community Organizing Models - Project Group Work	Ch. 5 & 6	Writing assignment #1 due
6	10-13	- Guest Lecturer: Max Elliott - Understanding Organizations - Group Exercise: Create an Agency	Ch. 8	
7	10-20	- Assessment & Evaluation - How to write a press release - Project Group Work		
8	10-27	- Funding & Grant Writing - Video: Me Facing Life: The Cyntoia Brown Story - <i>Student teaching assignments</i>		Writing assignment #2 due
9	11-03	- Social Action and Advocacy - Guest Lecturer: Brittany Yelverton - Video: The Democratic Promise, Saul Alinsky	Ch. 12	
10	11-10	- Use of Self in Community Practice *student taught - Project Group Work	Kirst-Ashman and Hull Ch. 7	Take Home Paper due
11	11-17	- Resume's and Interviews		*Bring your resume to class
12	11-24	Project Group Work Day		Presentations
13	12-01	Class Presentations Course Evaluation		Presentations Final Project Packets due

