

The University of Texas at Austin
School of Social Work
Generalist Social Work Practice: Skills, Knowledge, & Values
(Required Course – BSW Program)

Course Number: SW312	Instructor: Diane McDaniel Rhodes, PhD E-mail: diane.rhodes@utexas.edu
Unique Number: 61240	Phone: (512) 471-1831
Semester: Fall 2017	Office: SSW 3.122F
Meeting Time: M/W 9:30 to 11:00am	Office Hours: TBD
Meeting Place: SSW 1.214	

1. Standardized Course Description

This is the first course in the practice methods sequence, in which students are introduced to the fundamental values and ethics, skills, and knowledge relevant to generalist social work practice. Areas covered include the NASW Code of Ethics and Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice: the development of observation, communication, interviewing, and assessment skills utilizing the problem solving approach. Experiential learning is emphasized, including a **45-hour service-learning component** in which students have direct client contact.

2. Standardized Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Explain the major dimensions of generalist social work practice and the planned change/problem-solving process with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
2. Apply Social Work knowledge, values, and skills to their participation in the learning environment.
3. Demonstrate skills in observation, communication, interviewing, assessment and problem solving.
4. Demonstrate the ability to differentially use basic social work skills to reflect the needs of clients of diverse groups distinguished by race, ethnicity, class, gender, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical or mental abilities, and national origin.
5. Identify ethical issues and recognize when client, societal, and/or personal values conflict emphasizing understanding, affirmation and respect for human diversity and social justice in the practice of social work.

3. Teaching Methods

This class uses a seminar format. This course is designed to provide you with a meaningful learning environment through use of multiple methods of instruction (e.g. discussion, lecture, and group exercises); experiential learning (e.g. service-learning, role playing, & active learning) will be emphasized. You are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class period. You are expected to participate in class. Class attendance is required and essential for successful completion of this course. This course will use an electronic Canvas site. Canvas will be used for turning in assignments, grading, and communication between students, the instructor, and the TA.

To reach your class site on Canvas, please go to <http://courses.utexas.edu> or go to the Social Work web page and click on Canvas. To access the course website, you must have an Internet connection and computer access. You will need a UT EID and password. The Help Desk available through the UT home page (www.utexas.edu/its/help) can assist you with your computer and Canvas questions. You can also call them at 475-9400. Additionally, the Learning Resource Center at the SSW has computers and computer assistance.

Required Text: Birkenmaier, J., & Berg-Weger, M. (2017). *The Practice of Generalist Social Work, Fourth Edition*. Routledge.

4. Required Course Work

Service Learning

This class has a required service-learning component. You must complete 45 hours as a volunteer working in a local social service agency. You will find a list of agencies that host UT student volunteers every semester on Canvas. Using that list you will establish a volunteering relationship with an agency where you have contact with clients (no paperwork or organizing). If you are interested in working for a different agency you will have to ensure a social worker is on-site at the agency and get the approval of the instructor.

Responsibility	Due date(s)
<i>Service-learning Agency Selection Form</i> (Required for course credit) Indicate the agency selected for service learning work, location, supervisor, and scheduled service-learning hours.	9/27
<i>Service-learning Reflection Paper</i>	11/20
<i>Service-learning Hour Log Sheet</i> (Required for course credit) documenting all hours completed during the semester. <i>Thirty-two</i> service-learning hours must be completed to pass this course.	12/11
<i>Service Learning Evaluation Form</i> (Required for course credit). You will submit an evaluation of your performance in the service-learning placement by the agency service-learning supervisor.	12/11

Course work

Assignment	Points
Class attendance and participation	20
10 Weekly Reading Reflections You will use one of the 5 prompts listed on Canvas. This assignment is a text entry on Canvas – suggestion: write the assignment in your document software (e.g., MSWord, or Pages) first, edit it for spelling and punctuation. Then, cut and paste it into the text entry box on Canvas.	20
Mid-term Take Home Exam	15
Video Recording You will complete two video interview/assessment sessions with a classmate. Choose one of the sessions to critique.	10
Final Take Home Exam	15
Service Learning Form Submission (5pts each)	20
Total:	100 Points

Course Policies

1. Conduct and Civility: Social work students adhere to the Student Standards for Professional Conduct of the NASW Code of Ethics and assume responsibility for their conduct. Scholastic honesty and integrity are to be consistent social work values. The instructor will comply with University guidelines regarding scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism. Social work practitioners respect others; therefore, differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected. Students will help create and support a learning environment that does not interfere with the learning of fellow students. When students voice an opinion with which you do not agree, feel free to voice opinions in a civil manner that can enhance the flow of ideas and dialog.

2. Readings and Preparatory Assignments: Students are expected to be active and participate in the learning process, and in an interactive framework between collegiate students and professor. Students are also expected to complete readings and preparatory assignments prior to class. Failure to demonstrate through discussions in class, online, and through assignments that one has comprehended the readings will be considered when assigning the final grade. Students are responsible for the material in the assigned readings whether or not the material is covered in class. Professor reserves the right to conduct quizzes should there be a pattern of students not demonstrating that they have completed the readings and are not prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion.

3. Professional Communication and Interactions: Refrain from private conversations during

class or other disruptive behavior. Disrespect toward the professor, students, or others is unacceptable and will be handled directly and in the context it occurs. Disrespectful behavior includes overt acts, such as talking over others or making derogatory remarks based on another person's age, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religious preference, and ability. Moreover, covert acts of disrespect such as sneers, and other facial expressions, excluding class members from classroom tasks, etc. are also unacceptable. **Electronic Devices:** All communication devices should be turned off or placed on silent mode and put away during class. Unless laptops are required for specific class sessions, students may not use laptops during class without prior permission from the professor. Grade is negatively impacted by student's failure to comply with this policy.

4. Class Attendance Policy: Punctuality and timeliness are important for social work practitioners. Class attendance is expected. Attendance is defined as students' attentive physical presence in class for the entire class. Establishing a pattern of late arrivals and early departures will negatively affect your grade. It is your responsibility to sign the class attendance sheet. The instructor should be notified in advance of any planned absence and as soon as possible in the case of an unforeseen, serious emergency.

5. Assignments and Grades: Assignments should be turned in online on the date they are due, barring serious, unforeseen medical illness or family emergencies. Late assignments will be considered when assigning the final grade.

6. Writing Style: The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Sixth Edition (APA) is the style manual to be used by all students. The manual is available at the library or for purchase at the UT Co-op.

7. Use of Canvas: The professor uses Canvas Web-based course management/collective workspace. An orientation will be given the first day of class. If you do not have a personal computer with personal Internet access, there are computers available for your use at the SW Learning Resource Center (LRC), the Flawn Academic Center, campus and public libraries.

8. Course Modification: To ensure achievement for course objectives, the professor reserves the right to make modifications to any part of this syllabus related to schedule and assignment due dates. Should any modifications be made, students will be notified in class and modifications will be posted to Canvas. Students should check their email frequently. Note that some of the links to documents and videos on the Internet may change. Documents, new links or alternate options will be provided.

VIII. UNIVERSITY 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](tel:512-471-3515) or online at www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/.

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://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

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](tel: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.

Course Grading:

94.0 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 60.0	F

5. Detailed Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments Due
1	W 8/30	Introductions, syllabus, service learning requirement	
2	W 9/6	The role of social work	
3	M 9/11	Social work practice	Read: Ch. 1 <i>Reflection Paper 1</i>
	W 9/13	Empowerment practice	
4	M 9/18	Values, multicultural competency	Read: Ch. 2 <i>Reflection Paper 2</i>
	W 9/20	Ethics	
5	M 9/25	Learning about yourself	MBTI and bring results to class
	W 9/27	Self-care practice	<i>Agency selection form due</i>
6	M 10/2	Process: Client Engagement	Read: Ch. 3 <i>Reflection Paper 3</i>
	W 10/4	Strength based perspectives	
7	M 10/9	Process: Assessment	Read: Ch. 4 p. 103 - 138 <i>Reflection Paper 4</i>
	W 10/11	Practice: Assessment Midterm take home exam	
8	M 10/16	Process: Intervention	Read: Ch. 5 p. 173 – 208 <i>Reflection Paper 5</i>
	W 10/18	Practice: Intervention	
10	M 10/23	Process: Terminations and Evaluation	Read: Ch. 5 p. 209 – 231 <i>Reflection Paper 6</i>
	W 10/25	Practice: Terminations	
11	M 10/30	Boundaries & Professionalism	
	W 11/1	Boundaries: exercises	
12	M 11/6	Issues working with Families	Read: Ch. 6 p. 235 – 260 <i>Reflection Paper 7</i>
	W 11/8	Genograms: exercises	
13	M 11/13	Issues working with Groups	Read: Ch. 8 p. 367 – 390 <i>Reflection Paper 8</i>
	W 11/15	Guest speaker	
14	M 11/20	Case examples	<i>Service learning reflection paper</i>
	W 11/22	Thanksgiving holiday	
15	M 11/27	Issues working with Communities	Read: Ch. 10 p. 412 – 421 <i>Videotape critique Due</i> <i>Reflection Paper 9</i>
	W 11/29	Guest speaker	
16	M 12/4	Issues working with Organizations	Read: Ch. 12 p. 494 – 506 <i>Reflection Paper 10</i>
	W 12/6	Guest speaker	
	M 12/11	Final Take home exam	<i>Service Learning Hour Log Sheet</i> <i>Service Learning Evaluation Form</i>

