

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number: SW334	Instructor: Diane McDaniel Rhodes, PhD
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Semester: Fall 2017	Phone: (512) 471-1831
Meeting Time: M/W 2.30-4.00pm Meeting Place: SSW 2.118	Office Room: SSW 3.122F Office Hours: M/W 12.00 – 2.00pm and by appointment

Social Work Practice in Organizations and Communities

I. Standardized Course Description

In this course you will become familiar with the macro context of social work practice. It examines the reciprocal relationship between human behavior and social environments. The course emphasizes the interlocking and complex nature of culture and personal identity with content on populations-at-risk, while examining the factors that contribute to and constitute being at risk. It also introduces you to the obligation that social services have to meet the needs of groups served and are culturally relevant. This includes equipping you with skills to recognize diversity within and between groups that may influence assessment, planning, intervention, and research. You will 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 will help you develop skills in 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. Standardized Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course you 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. Discuss and describe the impact 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. Discuss and describe alternative strategies for initiating change in organizations and communities, including planning models, coalition building, community development, direct action, and legislative advocacy; 7. Discuss and describe 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 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. Class attendance and participation is required and essential for successful completion of this course. This course will use an electronic Canvas site. Canvas will be used for communication between students, the instructor, and the TA.

IV. Required and recommended texts and materials

Textbook:

Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull, J. G. H. (2017). *Empowerment Series: Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities* (7 edition). San Francisco, CA: Cengage Learning.

Additional readings and material will be available on Canvas

V. Course requirements

The most detailed description and instruction for course assignments will be on Canvas. Below is a brief guide to the course work.

ASSIGNMENT#1: Attendance 15 pts (.5 per day)

You are required to come to class. Attendance will be managed through a sign in sheet – it is your responsibility to ensure that you have signed in to each class you attend. Absences may be excused by the professor (typically for illness, loss, or other unforeseen crises) – you must request excused absences by email.

ASSIGNMENT #2: Group Task Participation and Reflection 35 pts

Students will be assigned to work in groups this semester. Your group will have about 6 people and many of the in-class tasks will happen in those groups. Three of those tasks will be graded and will include that the group present their work to the class.

Today's news vs Social work 10pts

Create social welfare in your country 10 pts

System Change scenarios 10 pts

As a result, you will also be required to reflect on the work of your peers in writing each week. A combination of those feedback forms and my observation 5pts

ASSIGNMENT #3: Community/neighborhood Ethnographic Analysis 50 points

Students will work alone and in task groups of 4-5 members each to complete this assignment (see breakout of individual and group activities on Canvas). Group membership and assignment of neighborhood or community to each group will be determined by the course instructor. A group may propose a neighborhood or community other than the one to which it has been assigned, but the instructor must approve the proposed substitution before the group begins work on the assignment.

Each group will study a place-based neighborhood or community located in the Greater Austin area. Each neighborhood or community will have specific geographic boundaries that encompass at least one zip code. Group members will employ ethnographic interviewing in culturally sensitive ways to gather information required for this assignment, including engaging one or more "cultural guides" to help gain access to the neighborhood or community and its residents as well as to guide group members in their efforts to learn about the area.

Individual group members will receive an individual grade (20 points) for the parts of the assignment for which they have responsibility. The group will receive an overall grade (30 points) based on the 20-minute in-class multi-media presentation the group makes at the end of the semester and the portfolio of work products produced as part of the assignment.

VI. 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. A pattern is considered three or more late arrivals and early departures during the semester. Late arrivals and early departures are defined as student arriving 10 minutes after class starting or prior to class ending. Missing more than two classes may result in loss of a letter 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 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.

VII. 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** 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

VIII. Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Due
1	W 8/30	Introductions and syllabus	
2	W 9/6	Practice with Orgs & Comm	
3	M 9/11	Practice with Orgs & Comm	Kirst-Ashman & Hull Ch 1 & 2
	W 9/13	Stress & Time Management	
4	M 9/18	Using micro skills	Kirst-Ashman & Hull Ch 3
	W 9/20	Group work	
5	M 9/25	Understanding Organizations	Kirst-Ashman & Hull Ch 5
	W 9/27	Group work	
6	M 10/2	Decision Making for Org change	Kirst-Ashman & Hull Ch 6
	W 10/4	Group work	
7	M 10/9	Implementing Change: Agency policy, projects, and programs	Kirst-Ashman & Hull Ch 7
	W 10/11	Group work	
8	M 10/16	Understanding Neighborhoods and Communities	Kirst-Ashman & Hull Ch 8 & 9
	W 10/18	Practice in Communities	
10	M 10/23	Evaluating Macro Practice	Kirst-Ashman & Hull Ch 10
	W 10/25	Group work	
11	M 10/30	Advocacy and Social Action	Kirst-Ashman & Hull Ch 11
	W 11/1	Group work	Community Ethnographic Analysis Paper due
12	M 11/6	Ethics	Kirst-Ashman & Hull Ch 12
	W 11/8	Group work	
13	M 11/13	Using supervision	Kirst-Ashman & Hull Ch 13
	W 11/15	Group work	
14	M 11/20	Managing Agency Resources	Kirst-Ashman & Hull Ch 14
	W 11/22	Thanksgiving	
15	M 11/27	Group Work	
	W 11/29	Group Work	
16	M 12/4	Group Presentations	Group presentation portfolios due
	W 12/6	Group Presentations	
	M 12/11		