

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

**Course No.:** SW 312

**Unique No.:** 60315

**Class Time:** Mon/Wed 9:30-11:00

**Email/Tel:** [tesh.miki@gmail.com](mailto:tesh.miki@gmail.com)  
512-539-9701

**Instructor:** Miki Tesh, Ph.D., LCSW

**Semester:** Fall 2015

**Location:** SSW 1.214

**Office Hrs:** 11-12 Wed, and/or by appt.

**Generalist Social Work Practice: Skills, Knowledge, & Values  
(Required Course – BSW Program)**

**I. 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.

**II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course, students 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.

**III. TEACHING METHODS**

Although a variety of teaching methods will be employed (e.g., lecture, discussion, and group projects), experiential learning (e.g., service learning, conducting oral histories, and practice interviewing with video feedback) is emphasized in this course. This course will use an electronic Canvas site. Canvas will be used for communication between students, the instructor, and the TA. Some materials, grades, and attendance will also be posted online. 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](http://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.

#### IV. TEXTS THAT ARE REQUIRED, RECOMMENDED, & ON RESERVE:

*These books are recommended and on reserve:*

Cournoyer, B. (2011). The social work skills workbook (6th Ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Scales, T. Lane and Wolfer Terry A. (2006). Decision cases for generalist social work practice: Thinking like a social worker. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Walsh, Joseph (2009). Generalist social work practice: Intervention methods. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Supplemental course materials (worksheets, assignments, resources, articles, videos) will be posted on Canvas, given out, or emailed.

#### V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Due to the format and content of this course, both attendance and contribution are imperative. The other students in your class are dependent upon you for a quality learning experience.

1. Service Learning Forms \* Needed to pass course
2. Service Learning Journals 15%
3. Video Interview I 20%
4. Video Interview II 20%
5. Practice Skills Journaling 15%
6. Ethics Group Presentation 15%
7. Class Participation 15%

\* *Service learning component grade will be based on the hours completed, subject to verification by instructor. To receive full credit for service learning hours, all parts of the assignment must be completed and satisfactory. **Must complete 45 hours service learning hours to pass the class.***

#### UNDERGRADUATE GRADING SCALE

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

#### REQUIREMENTS

##### 1. Service Learning and Forms

Students must complete 45 hours throughout the semester and by the last day of class. This is a requirement for those who are planning to major in social work. The Release and Indemnification Agreement Form must be signed before service learning hours can start. This Service Learning requirement is designed to support students as they explore ethics, social justice, cultural diversity, policy, practice, and community issues related to social work.

Five forms: Provide a set of the forms to your supervisor at the beginning of the semester for their records. On the days that the forms are due, the forms need to be completely filled out and signed by the supervisor to receive full credit. Late forms will not be accepted.

Release and Indemnification Agreement Form  
 Service Learning Agency Selection (Form I)  
 Service Learning Log (Form II )  
 Service Learning Agency Evaluation of Student (Form III)  
 Service Learning Student Evaluation of Agency (Form IV)

## 2. Journal about Service Learning Experience

Three Blog entries will also be required from you regarding your experiences in the Service Learning agency. Consider how you might apply the topics in the course. You can discuss:

- Observations
- Your reaction to certain observations (e.g., emotional reactions; challenges to values and ethics; policy, practice, and implications; new information about a population; etc.)
- Include any information from outside resources or the text with your blogs

You will also be required to comment on another student's blogs in order to share the experiences as a classroom community.

*Note:* The purpose of this service learning experience is to gain either direct-client contact or direct-macro experience (e.g., community and organizations). The majority of your activities should be interacting with the community and individuals in order to gain valuable learning experiences for your college course experiences.

## 3. Videotaped Interview Presentation I

You will make two videos. The purpose of Video I is to practice the *fundamentals* of communication, interviewing, and assessment skills. Videotaped Interview I - Students will pair up, and keep the same partner for both Video I and Video II. Interviews should last 30 minutes. Students will upload their video to YouTube and present 3 minutes of it to a small group of about 6 students. The viewing students will use a strengths based assessment to critique each other. Strengths based assessment is used for a couple of reason: 1) To practice using this skill with others because this is the approach social workers use, and 2) to reduce anxiety so that students can try out new skills and take more risks in experimenting with different styles. Students will meet in their small groups, one group at a time, during class time hours, and rotating in shifts.

*Note:* You must have your video prepared and ready to go for your group in advance. Test your video ahead of time and make sure it is open and unsearchable, but searchable by link. You must also stay for your whole group to get full credit for this assignment.

## 4. Videotaped Interview Presentation II

The same procedure will be followed as the first video. You keep the same partner and group of 6 students. Video II will demonstrate your competency in new skills learned in class since the first video. Make a comparison of the first and second interviews, again focusing on strengths and areas of improvement. Continue to use fundamentals for communication, interviewing, and assessment skills, and add new skills for practice. Although you will be practicing new concepts, remember, fundamental communication skills will account for 90-95% of your interaction in the video. *Note:* You must have your video prepared and ready to go for your group in advance. Test your video ahead of time and make sure it is open and unsearchable, but searchable by link. You must also stay for your whole group to get full credit for this assignment.

## 5. Practice Skills Journaling

Pick 3 from the different skills learned in the course, while primarily focusing on the fundamentals for communication in social work practice. These three journals will allow you to try out these core fundamental skills first and foremost. It should end up being enjoyable as you learn about yourself and your abilities. Focus on your areas of progress and areas of where you

want to keep improving. **Guidelines:** Interview someone using the skills you use in class. This other person could be another social work peer, a person at your service learning placement, or a friend. Always use the fundamentals of communication, interviewing, and assessment skills, plus at least a little bit of the new skills you are trying out. Try to find people different from yourself whenever possible. When you can, try to vary the people you interview, for example, try to interview a child, an elderly person, a disabled person, a teen-ager, a veteran, someone with an illness, etc. Write in your Journal about experience. Focus your journal write-ups more on your skills, and less about the person's actual story. The story is important, however this exercise is about how you did, your personal educational growth, how you did well, and how you might could improve, and questions you might have, and where you might get those questions answered. The goal is for you to assess your skills, areas of improvements, and strengths. Be sure to ask for feedback too at the end of the practice skills meeting. You can give people a form to rate your skills (use the Interview Feedback Form in course handouts), or ask for verbal feedback by asking them what helped. One last note: Try to step outside your comfort zone when using these skills. You can only learn from any experience and the more "risk" you take going for it, the better. Don't be hard on yourself. This is where you get to explore ideas and skills. It's more about self-analysis, self-assessment, growth, and challenging yourself, and not about being perfect all the time. It is ok to make mistakes because mistakes are part of the learning process. Go for it and have fun while you are doing it. **Remember to primarily focus on the fundamentals:** *Establishing Rapport, Being Non-Judgmental, Building Confidence, Listening more than Talking, Being Authentic, Being Collaborative, Understanding Discrimination in Systems, Understanding Person in Environment, Using a Strengths Perspective, Have Empathy, Be Accepting, Ask Open Ended Questions, Being Attentive, Being Optimistic about Human Potential, etc.*

### **6. Ethics Group Presentation**

Small groups will be formed, and each group will receive a list of ethical scenarios that involve one or more ethical dilemmas. Groups will choose a case to analyze, and present in class. Class time will be provided for the groups to discuss the case with the class. The group will need to meet outside of class in order to present the case well, and provide lots of reasoning, back up research, and pdf the class ahead of time a copy of the case study. Presentations should include: a reading of the case, outlining of the relevant legal duties and social work ethical principles, a listing of relevant stake holders (persons with an interest in the case), a discussion of possible courses of action and implications of each, and a discussion of the course of action chosen by the group. The purpose of these presentations is to engage the class rather than just simply to talk about your own process and answers. Consider how you would consider good critical thinking skills and ethical issues, while engaging the class. All groups must meet with the me, the professor, to discuss their outline in advance.

### **7. Class Participation**

Participation includes attendance, arrival on time, adherence to all activities in class and outside of class (on Canvas), preparation before class, and responding to emails to other students and to the professor in a timely fashion. All participation must be courteous and timely. Participation, attendance and tardiness are graded. All are worth a considerable amount of the grade for this course. Professionalism and maturity are an important feature of the social work profession, therefore students will be assessed on these qualities. Also graded are curtesy towards each other in the classroom, towards the professor, and preparation before all classes. It is the student's responsibility to be on time and sign the attendance sheet at the beginning of each class. Missing

more than three classes without a valid excuse or medical documentation will receive a letter grade lower than their final grade. More than five absences will result in an increased grade reduction as determined by the instructor. It is the student's responsibility for ensuring that she or he has signed the daily attendance sheet for the class. There is a limit of four days of medically documented excused absences; beyond the four medically excused absences, the student must make special arrangements with the instructor to complete the course. Similarly, the instructor reserves the right to raise a student's grade at the end of the semester based on class participation. Students who arrive to class more than 15 minutes late or leave class more than 15 minutes early will receive  $\frac{1}{2}$  attendance credit for that class. Also, using electronics in class is viewed as being absent. *Special Note:* Please do not sign your friends name on daily attendance sheets when they are not present. This is viewed as cheating, and could have serious ramifications. *Grades:* All students must achieve an overall course grade of C or better to avoid repeating the course. To receive an "A" in this course you must have excellent attendance, participation, and you must produce work that is of superior quality. Grading of all written assignments will take into account the quality and content of the writing. The American Psychological Association (APA) – 6th edition format should be used when relevant. Written material should be carefully proofread and errors (punctuation, typographical, spelling, etc.) corrected prior to submission in order to avoid losing points in the assignment grade, particularly the research paper. This may be a useful link: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>.

## VI. CLASSROOM POLICIES

**1. Participation, Attendance, and Tardiness:** Participation includes attendance, arrival on time, adherence to all activities in class and outside of class (on Canvas), preparation before class, and responding to emails to other students and to the professor in a timely fashion. All participation must be courteous and timely. Participation, attendance and tardiness are graded. All are worth a considerable amount of the grade for this course. Professionalism and maturity are an important feature of the social work profession, therefore students will be assessed on these qualities. Also graded are curtesy towards each other in the classroom, towards the professor, and preparation before all classes. It is the student's responsibility to be on time and sign the attendance sheet at the beginning of each class. Missing more than three classes without a valid excuse or medical documentation will receive a letter grade lower than their final grade. More than five absences will result in an increased grade reduction as determined by the instructor. It is the student's responsibility for ensuring that she or he has signed the daily attendance sheet for the class. There is a limit of four days of medically documented excused absences; beyond the four medically excused absences, the student must make special arrangements with the instructor to complete the course. Similarly, the instructor reserves the right to raise a student's grade at the end of the semester based on class participation. Students who arrive to class more than 15 minutes late or leave class more than 15 minutes early will receive  $\frac{1}{2}$  attendance credit for that class. Also, using electronics in class is viewed as being absent. *Special Note:* Please do not sign your friends name on daily attendance sheets when they are not present. This is viewed as cheating, and could have serious ramifications.

**2. Late Assignments:** Except in the case of extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, late assignments will not be accepted. Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date at the beginning of class. Assignments not turned in class on the day it is due will be considered late. If accepted, late assignments will

be assessed point penalties at the rate of three (3) points each day late. If the due date is a problem, then the student should see the professor and negotiate another due date well in advance.

**3. Student Achievement:** Student Achievement in meeting course objectives will be evaluated on the following written, oral, and in-class experiential assignments, regular and punctual class attendance, and informed class participation based upon class readings/assignments.

**4. Student Questions and Feedback:** Student feedback is welcome either informally or formally about class room learning and content, the teaching strategies, peer relationships, scheduling, or other items. Students are encouraged to provide feedback during office hours, by phone, e-mail, text, and/or during office hours.

**5. Assignment Changes:** The instructor reserves the prerogative to change class assignments as needed to meet the course objectives and needs of the class. The changes will be discussed with the students in class or by email before implementation.

**6. Cell phone and Laptop Use:** Cell phones and laptops are not permitted in class unless instructor permission is given. Failure to comply with this expectation may result in a grade reduction in class participation grade.

**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 [www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/](http://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. Students who report incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct to faculty, instructors, and/or staff who supervise students, will be provided a list of University resources. If the incident is impacting the academic environment, a report will be provided to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may be found at <https://www.utexas.edu/student-affairs/policies/title-ix>.

**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 1st 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.



## SYLLABUS

Day	Date	Topic – Readings will be provided in advance	Due
Wed	8/26	Introduction to Course	
Mon	8/31	Strengths Perspective in SW Practice	
Wed	9/2	Ecological/Person-in-Environment Theory	Release & Indemnification Agreement Form
Mon	9/7	<i>Happy Labor Day Holiday</i>	<i>Happy Labor Day Holiday</i>
Wed	9/9	Reflective Listening, Rapport Building, Person Centered	
Fri	9/11	<i>1st annual Service Learning Fair 11-2 p.m. 2.212 &amp; 2.214</i>	
Mon	9/14	Reflective Listening, Rapport Building, Person Centered	
Wed	9/16	The Lasting Impact of LBJ's Legacy on Social Issues	Meet at Utopia then come to class afterwards
Mon	9/21	Why Reflective Listening is important from a social justice standpoint	Service Learning Form I
Wed	9/23	Reframing	
Mon	9/28	Video I presentation Week	Groups 1, 2, 3 Present
Wed	9/30	Video I presentation Week	Groups 4, 5, 6 Present
Mon	10/5	Play Therapy and How to work with children	
Wed	10/7		
Mon	10/12	Mindful Self-Compassion (focus on Cournoyer communication skills)	
Wed	10/14		<i>Service Learning Journal 1</i>
Mon	10/19	Solution Focused (focus on Cournoyer)	
Wed	10/21		Practice Skills Journal 1
Mon	10/26	Motivational Interviewing (focus on Cournoyer communication skills)	
Wed	10/28		<i>Service Learning Journal 2</i>
Mon	11/2	Cognitive Behavioral (focus on Cournoyer communication skills)	
Wed	11/4		Practice Skills Journal 2
Mon	11/9	Video II Presentation Week	Groups 1, 2, 3 Present
Wed	11/11	Video II Presentation Week	Groups 4, 5, 6 Present
Mon	11/16	Ethics	Practice Skills Journal 3

Wed	11/18	Ethics Groups Presentations	
Mon	11/23	Ethics Groups Presentations	<i>Service Learning Journal 3</i>
Wed	11/26	<i>Happy Thanksgiving Holiday!</i>	<i>Happy Thanksgiving Holiday!</i>
Mon	11/30	Ethics Groups Presentations	
Wed	12/2	Conclusion	Service Learning Forms II, III, IV