

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

**Course/Unique Number:** SW 334 / U# 61650

**Semester:** Spring 2015

**Meeting Time/Place:** M/W 4:00-5:30/SSW 2.132

**Instructor:** Shannon Johnson, MSW, MPP, johnson.shannon@utexas.edu

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 9-11 am & by appt.

**Phone:** 734-945-8284

**SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES (BSW)**

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines the organizational context within which social services are delivered: how funding, mandate, and organizational arrangements influence service delivery, and factors to consider in efforts to modify existing organizational arrangements. The course 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 be 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. The course also includes an overview of the development of the community in America and the interaction between communities and service organizations. Attention is given to particular elements of organizational and community dynamics affecting diverse gender and ethnic groups.

**II. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course the student should be:

1. Familiar with the major concepts and dynamics of formal organizations and their influence on social work practice; **(PB11, 27)**
2. Familiar with the impact of the organizational mandate, funding sources, and other constituencies on problem definitions and goal formulation; **(PB27)**
3. Able to identify major concepts in organizational theories and to explain how such concepts relate to social work practiced at individual, family, organizational, and community levels, each as a focus of social work practice; **(PB11, 27)**
4. Familiar with the influence of community norms, priorities, and competitive community factions on the definition of problem/need and resource allocation for the delivery of social services; **(PB12, 27)**
5. Familiar with relevant cultures and how culture shapes individual lives and community processes. **(PB 12, 27)**
6. Able to understanding mezzo and macroeconomic events and how these events impact individual and community welfare **(PB27, 28)**
7. Familiar with the involvement of lay citizen groups as staff supplement and as a potential strategy for change; **(PB11, 27, 28)**

8. Familiar with information about special service populations and the participation of such populations in professional settings and community organizations; **(PB12, 27)**

9. Familiar with basic planning approaches, their advantages, and disadvantages and be able to utilize an empirical approach and associated tools to gather and analyze data to describe populations and communities and design service programs **(PB12, 28)**.

The School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1952. In order to maintain our accreditation status, we engage in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Several required courses in our curriculum are part of this ongoing assessment, including this course. Below is a list of the specific Educational Policies (EP) and Practice Behaviors (PB) that are assessed in this course. The complete EPAS can be optioned from your Student Handbook.

### **EP2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.**

**PB11** Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom

Objectives 1, 3, 7

Assignment: Advocacy statement, blogging assignment, in-class assignments, participation and contribution.

**PB12** Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation

Objectives 4, 5, 8, 9

Assignment: main course assignment, in-class assignments

**PB13** Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues

Objectives (not specified)

Assignment: main course assignment, blogging assignment, in-class assignments

### **EP2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice.**

**PB27** Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services

Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Assignment: main course assignment, blogging assignment, in-class assignment, participation/contribution

**PB28** Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services

Objectives 6, 7, 9

Assignment: main course assignment, advocacy statement

### III. TEACHING METHODS

The instructor will utilize a participatory pedagogical approach that will feature extensive use of in-class discussions and activities, as well as use of interactive technology outside of the classroom. The instructor will also combine interactive lecture with use audiovisual materials. Students are expected to complete all reading assignments and to contribute to their own learning by sharing experiences and perspectives and via active engagement in discussion, activities, and interactive technology assignments.

### IV. REQUIRED READINGS

*Community Practice: Theories and Skills for Social Workers* (3rd Ed.) by David A. Hardcastle with Patricia R. Powers and Stanley Wenocur (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

\* Supplemental readings will be posted on Canvas and announced in class and by email.

### V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Main course assignment	35%
2. Blogging assignment	35%
3. Preparation and contribution; in-class assignments	15%
4. Final exam	15%
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	100%

### VI. ASSIGNMENTS

Detailed descriptions of the main course assignment, the blogging assignment, and the advocacy letter assignment will be distributed and discussed in class. Due dates for each assignment are listed on the course schedule, provided below.

**Students may earn up to 3 points extra credit on their final grade. If you are motivated to earn extra credit, please take the initiative to arrange the opportunity with the professor.**

### VII. GRADING CRITERIA

Grades will be assigned as follows:

94.0-100 points	A (excellent)
90.0-93.999 points	A- (very good)

To receive an "A" in this course you must have excellent attendance, participation, and you must produce work that is of superior quality.

87.0-89.999 points	B+ (well above average)
84.0 - 86.999 points	B (above average)
80.0-83.999 points	B- (slightly above average)

Work earning grades of B+ and B generally exceeds assignment/performance expectations; demonstrates varying degrees of in-depth critical thinking and analysis that resulted in work additional to that laid out in the assignment directions (i.e., coherence and integration of ideas);

77.0-79.999 points	C+ (average)
74.0-76.999 points	C
70.0-73.999 points	C

Work earning grades of C+, C and C- may substantially to minimally meet requirements, have minor to more significant gaps, and lack evidence of in depth thinking and analysis. Social Work majors must make a grade of C- or above to avoid having to repeat the course.

67.9-69.999 points	D+ (below average)
64.0-66.999 points	D
60.0-63.999 points	D-

Grades in the D range reflect work that has important gaps in the assignment both in terms of not meeting the requirements and lacking critical thinking and analysis.

Below 60.0	F (failing)
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## VIII. INSTRUCTOR'S POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

**Class Attendance Policy:** Punctuality and timeliness are important for social work practitioners. Class attendance is required. It is your responsibility to sign the weekly attendance sheet. The instructor should be notified in advance via e-mail of any planned absence and as soon as possible in the case of an unforeseen, serious emergency. Students who are absent are responsible for making up missed in-class work and/or obtaining class material/content from a classmate. Attendance is an important part of the in-class assignments and participation grade. It is the student's responsibility to discuss extenuating circumstances related to absences with the Instructor.

**The attendance policy for this course stipulates that students are allowed a maximum of three unexcused absences. A student's fourth absence will result in an automatic deduction of 2 points from the student's final course grade. A student's fifth absence will result in an automatic deduction of an additional 2 points from the student's final course grade. Missing more than five classes will automatically result in a failing grade (F).**

**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. Cell phones and MP3 devices must be put away during class and computers turned off (except when used for classroom purpose with instructor authorization).

**Readings and Preparatory Assignments:** Students are expected to be active participants in the classroom community. Students are also expected to complete readings and preparatory assignments prior to class. Failure to demonstrate comprehension of 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. The 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. Quizzes will be factored into the student's contribution and in-class assignment grade.

**Professional Communication and Interactions:** Refrain from private conversations during class or other disruptive behavior. Class participation is required. Speak up and contribute to class. Disrespectful behavior is against the University Honor Code and will not be tolerated.

**Assignments and Grades:** Written assignments must be turned in via Canvas by 4:15 pm on the date they are due, barring serious, unforeseen medical illness or family emergencies. Student presentations can only be given on the assigned dates. All assignments submitted after the time they are due are considered late. Films shown in class are not available for individual viewing (with the exception of limited films available at the SSW LRC). Assignments should be turned in with correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Late assignments will receive a 5% reduction in grade per day late, including weekends.

**Writing Style and proper credit:** The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Sixth Edition (APA) is the style manual to be used by all students. To avoid plagiarism, you must correctly cite your sources when using words or ideas that are not your own. The APA manual contains specific rules to make references, quotes, and edit your papers.

**Use of Canvas:** This course will use the electronic Canvas, a web-based course management/collective workspace. Canvas will be used for communication between students and the instructor. Through this site the instructor will distribute course materials, post grades, updates of the course, and news related to the course. Most of assignments will be submitted through Canvas. You will be responsible for checking the Canvas course site regularly for class work and announcements. 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. 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. Students can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk by calling 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please plan accordingly.

**Individual assessment versus Group assessment:** As the professor, I do reserve the right to award differentially weighted grades on the group project. This will normally occur when a member of the group fails to actively participate in the group, consistently misses deadline for assigned tasks, or produces work that is below the quality standards expected for the project. In other words, if a student's individual performance is consistently below par so that it jeopardizes the grades of the other members of the group, I will down grade that student.

**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 also be posted to Canvas. Students should check their email and Canvas 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.

## IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings and Assignments</u>
1/21	Syllabus, introduction to course	Syllabus
1/26	Introduction to Community Practice	Preface Chapter 1 (p. 1-11)
1/28	Ethics and Community Practice	Chapter 1 (p. 11-30)
2/2	Nature of Community Problems; Problem Solving Strategies <i>Main course assignment reviewed in class;</i> <i>Groups assigned</i>	Chapter 2, p. 39-46 Chapter 3
2/4	Assessment	Chapter 5 & 6, Pages TBA
2/9	Assessment continued	

2/11	<b>Peer discussions, teams 1 and 2</b> <i>Groups 1 and 2 are to facilitate peer discussions relevant to ethics in community practice and/or the use of assessment in community work with their target populations.</i>	Assigned blogs
2/16	Using your agency	Chapter 8
2/18	Using your agency continued...	
2/23	Program development	Reading on Canvas
2/25	<b>Peer discussions, teams 3 and 4</b> <i>Groups 3 and 4 are to facilitate peer discussions relevant to ethics in community practice and/or the use of assessment in community work with their target populations.</i>	Assigned blogs
3/2	Course assignment meetings <i>Each team is to work on the course assignment during class and must attend a 20 minute meeting with the professor on 3/2 or 3/4. Slots will be assigned in class.</i>	
3/4	Course assignment meetings <i>Each team is to work on the course assignment during class and must attend a 20 minute meeting with the professor on 3/2 or 3/4.. Slots will be assigned in class.</i>	
3/9	Using marketing	Chapter 11
3/11	Marketing continued	
<b>3/16</b> <b>3/18</b>	<b>HAVE A WONDERFUL SPRING BREAK!</b>	
3/23	Using work groups	Chapter 9
3/25	Using networking	Chapter 10
3/30	Using networking, continued...	
4/1	Using the organizing spectrum	Chapter 13
4/6	Using organizing continued...	

4/8	<b>Peer discussions, teams 5 and 6</b> <i>Groups 5 and 6 are to facilitate peer discussions relevant to ethics in community practice and/or the use of assessment in community work with their target populations.</i>	Assigned blogs
4/13	Using the advocacy spectrum	
4/15	Advocacy, continued...	Chapter 12
4/20	Using Self in Community Practice	Chapter 7
4/22	Semester review; preparation for final examination	Chapters 1-3, 5-13
4/27	Group presentations <i>Teams 1 and 2 will spend 35 minutes Each presenting their final projects for the class.</i>	
4/29	Group presentations <i>Teams 3 and 4 will spend 35 minutes Each presenting their final projects for the class.</i>	<b>Final exam posted</b>
5/4	Group presentations <i>Teams 5 and 6 will spend 35 minutes Each presenting their final projects for the class.</i>	
5/6	Wrapping up; course evaluations	<b>Final exam due</b>

## **X. 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 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.

**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.

**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/](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 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.

**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/>.

**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.

**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>.

**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 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>.

**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 of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered 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.