

**The University of Texas at Austin
School of Social Work**

**Advanced Integrative Capstone
in Social Work Knowledge and Practice**

Course Number:	385T	Instructor:	Noël Busch-Armendariz, PhD, LMSW, MPA
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Meeting Time/Place:	Online	Office Hours:	By email, phone, & Skype

I. Course Description

Competent social work practice involves broad knowledge of person-in-environment and a full integration of social work knowledge, skills, theory, evidence, and values and ethics and the ability to clearly articulate a rationale for decision-making. This course gives students the opportunity to analyze and apply with greater depth, breadth, and specificity their knowledge, skills, and theories to values and ethics, diversity, populations at risk, social and economic justice, human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy, social work practice, research and field education. Therefore, the course builds upon all previous courses in the curriculum and their field internships utilizing a multi-level case study method and prepares students for professional practice. Case studies will require students to intervene at all systems levels. The course will be taken concurrently with students' final field placement (in the spring semester) to enhance reciprocal learning in class and in field.

II. Course Objectives

At the completion of this course students will be able to:

1.	formulate and identify relevant social work knowledge and theory	CL/CAL APB3
2.	demonstrate an ability to integrate their knowledge, skills, and values and ethics	CL/CAL APB1
3.	critically analyze human behavior and social problems at all systems levels	CL/CAL APB3
4.	critically analyze and apply to their practice research findings in the empirical literature and assess applicability of related media sources (such as professional bulletins, documentaries, and/or other internet sources)	CL/CAL APB6, 10d
5.	defend practice decisions based on ethical principles and relevant data and information	CL/CAL APB9, 10d
6.	organize and present (orally and in writing) a multi-level case analysis based on a systematic and conceptually-driven process	CL/CAL APB10c
7.	collaborate effectively with others who may have opposing viewpoints, interpretation of information, or agendas	CL/CAL APB1
8.	further develop self awareness of personal strengths and challenges as a social work practitioner	CL/CAL APB1
9.	apply their understanding of, and commitment to, the promotion of social and economic justice, and the recognition and impact of oppression, discrimination and privilege on individuals, families, groups, practitioners, organizations, and communities	CL/CAL APB1

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.

			Objectives	Assignments
Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.	CL/APB1 Evaluate professional roles and boundaries	CAL/APB1 Evaluate professional roles and boundaries	2, 7, 8, 9	c case presentations from field, social work inventory
EP 2.1.3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.	CL/APB3 Utilize multiple perspectives to analyze client's strengths and problems	CAL/APB3 Utilize effective models of macro professional practice to effectively serve client systems	1, 3	Individual integrative learning, case presentations from field
EP 2.1.6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.	CL/APB6 Apply empirically supported evidence to practice	CAL/APB6 Use empirical evidence to create strategies for system change	4	Individual integrative learning, case presentations from field
EP 2.1.9. Respond to contexts that shape practice.	CL/APB9 Adapt micro and mezzo practice by monitoring and responding to changing contexts	CAL/APB9 Engage in continuous environmental scanning and forecasting and adapt macro practice based on the acquired knowledge	5	Individual integrative learning, case presentations from field, social work inventory
EP 2.1.10c. Intervention	CL/APB10c Critically apply interventions to design, implement and evaluate effective practice	CAL/APB10c Critically apply systematic interventions that prevent problems, expand opportunities, and enhance quality of life	6	Individual integrative learning
EP 2.1.10d. Evaluation	CL/APB10d Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate treatment and adherence to best practices	CAL/APB10d Develop and recommend program and/or policy changes based on evaluation	4, 5	Individual integrative learning

Brief Description of Course Requirements

See Guidelines for Assignments & Written Work for additional details.

Individual Integrative Learning

The major activity this semester will involve an individualize, integrative learning assignment.

(CL/APB1, CAL/APB1; CL/APB3, CAL/APB3; CL/APB6, CAL/APB6; CL/APB9, CAL/APB9; CL/APB10c, CAL/APB10c ; CL/APB10d, CAL/APB10d)

Case presentations from field

Individuals will present a case relevant to his/her current or past field placement. The presentation of case information should be ten minutes and a group discussion will be schedule for approximately another 15 minutes. Students may want to give a brief handout with the important case elements, but it is not required. Individuals will be assigned dates for presentation based on his/her group assignment. All class members should be prepared to give immediate and spontaneous useful feedback including asking for questions, talking about options, identifying underlying issues, and making an assessment.

(CL/APB1, CAL/APB1; CL/APB3, CAL/APB3; CL/APB6, CAL/APB6; CL/APB9, CAL/APB9; CL/APB10c, CAL/APB10c)

Social work inventory

This assignment requires reflection on and integration of your graduate education as a basis for professional social work practice. The final product will have two parts: 1) an integrative summary of your current theoretical perspective and 2) an articulation of how you understand and apply the social work concept, "use of self." Together, these two components provide a broad framework for summarizing your learning. The process of completing this assignment will help you prepare for professional practice and future development.

(CL/APB1, CAL/APB1; CL/APB9, CAL/APB9; CL/APB10c, CAL/APB10c)

III. Teaching Methods

The primary teaching approach in this course will be integrative learning. Course materials will be presented primarily through individual learning objectives, assignments, and discussions with faculty member. Reading, research, and handouts will be incorporated. The goal is to stimulate critical thinking, defensible decision-making, intellectual creativity, and sharing of knowledge and skills with and through the class. Students will be responsible for material presented through all these activities. Assigned readings are for the week in which they are listed. Given that this is section is given online, students will need to take significant initiative toward their learning and task completion.

IV. Course Requirements

Course requirements consist of the three primary graded assignment categories below. The following points are assigned to each assignment. See Section of Description of Assignments for specific details.

Individual Integrative Learning Assignment	40
Inventory of Social Work Practice	25
Case Presentations from Field	25
Participation & Thoughtfulness (this includes Friday email check ins)	10
Total Points	100 points

V. Grading Scale

100 - 94 = A	76 - 74 = C
93 - 90 = A-	73 - 70 = C-
89 - 87 = B+	69 - 67 = D+
86 - 84 = B	66 - 64 = D
83 - 80 = B-	63 - 60 = D-
79 - 77 = C+	59 and below = F

VI. Additional Class Policies

1. Students are expected to submit materials as the course calendar outlines.
2. Late assignments will receive a ten (10%) penalty per day (weekend days are included in the reduction). The instructor may use her/his discretion and may result in a reduced participation grade.
3. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA 7th Edition) is the style manual to be used for all assignments. Incorrect APA style will result a deduction of points on assignments.
4. Appropriate referencing is required. Failure to use quotation marks for direct quotes or citation for indirect quotations and/or others ideas may result in a "0" for the paper and/or an "F" for the course.
5. All papers are to be word-processed or typewritten, double-spaced, 10 – 12 point font, and "normal" margins.
6. University policies governing scholastic dishonesty, as presented in the General Information Bulletin and the brochure prepared by Student for Academic Integrity apply in this course. Scholastic dishonesty may result in a report to the Graduate Program Director, the Dean of the School of Social Work, and/or the Dean of the Graduate School. Students may receive an "F" for the course and other sanctions in accordance with University policies.
7. Any modifications, amendments, or changes to the syllabus and or assignments are the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be announced in class. It is the responsibility of the student to inquire about any changes that might have been made in his/her absence.
8. Issue of Safety--As part of professional social work education, student 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 also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.
9. Students who have difficulty with the course materials, assignments, or class activities should schedule an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible so that, where appropriate, additional assistance can be provided.

VII. Students with Special Learning Needs and Disabilities

Please let your instructor know if you have learning and/or another disabilities and whether you require special accommodations. The goal of this course is that it be a productive learning experience for everybody.

The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

VIII. Guidelines for Assignments & Written Work

A. Individual Integrative Learning Paper

This assignment gives students the opportunity to develop an individualized learning assignment that analyzes and applies with greater depth, breadth, and specificity their knowledge of social and economic justice, human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy, social work practice, and research in the context of their current internships. To achieve this overall learning objective, students will need to complete several tasks.

To complete successfully complete assignment, student must complete a template (it is fine to utilize, expand, and amend your completed survey) and provide regular updates to the instructor on her/his progress toward learning goals through Friday email check ins. The instructor will review your submitted outline and may approve it or ask for revisions.

The final product for this assignment will be a paper that includes all your products. This doesn't solely have to be a paper (it could include photos, art, or whatever you have develop for yourself). Each output/product should be documented and explained in some way. You should submit to me a paper with the following outline:

- I. Introduction
Include your project overview, contextual information that might be helpful, table of contents)
- II. Learning Objective Products
These can be distinct from each other and not necessarily a written paper, but should in some ways be explained
- III. Conclusion and Implications
What did you learn, how do you integrate the aspects of social work curriculum [would be good to name these specifically—see course description], what would you like to continue to learn, what are the implications for your practice as a social worker, and etc.

B. Guidelines for Social Work Inventory (25 points)

This paper focuses on:

- ❖ Social work knowledge, theories, skills, and approaches that inform the student's practice (cite professional literature)
- ❖ Use of self in the student's social work practice (cite professional literature)
- ❖ Student's experience (and/or lack thereof) with diversity and social justice
- ❖ Student's self-assessed strengths and limitations
- ❖ Student's plan for professional self-care and continuing development

The paper is intended to aid students' transition from graduate school to advanced social work practice. This assignment requires reflection on and integration of your graduate education as a basis for professional social work practice. The final product will have two parts: 1) an integrative summary of your current theoretical perspective and 2) an articulation of how you understand and apply the social work concept, "professional use of self." Together, these two components provide a broad framework for summarizing your learning. The process of completing this assignment will help you prepare for professional practice and future development.

Part I: Theoretical Framework or Practice Models. Discuss the theoretical frameworks or practice models that you have learned over the course of the MSSW program that will guide your social work practice. This should be a framework that is specific to your practice that you have internalized and constructed as a result of learning, critically thinking about, and applying knowledge in your MSSW program, or that you plan to apply. Do not limit yourself to a theory or model rather *integrate various theories* from the social work knowledge base into your unique framework. Cite sources for the various theories you incorporate.

This is not a literature review, rather it *your narrative* (thinking, discord, integration) of important theories and

your assessment of how these have worked for you as a social worker. Give case examples. For example, suppose one of the theories that you have incorporated into your framework for practice is “cognitive behavioral theory” or “sustainable development model.” Given the tenants or framework, how did it go? In what ways was it or wasn’t it applicable? When you identify this theory or model as being a part of your practice framework, you should cite the sources that have contributed to the development or application of this perspective.

Further Learning. When you think of the knowledge and skills you’ve learned here, what future learning do you intend to pursue? What knowledge and skills do you need to develop further to achieve competence in professional practice? How will you do this?

Part II: Professional Use of Self: Define what is meant by "the professional use of self," and describe in depth how the insights you have gained in graduate school about this concept will be incorporated into your practice model. In your answer, (a) present examples of how your skills and experiences have been utilized productively in your work. (b) Provide examples your challenges and personal growth areas that can potentially hinder your effectiveness in doing your work. Discuss how you will address these challenges. (c) Discuss what issues pertaining to social justice and diversity have been challenges for you, and what you have learned about working with people different from yourself. (d) Discuss which work situations (with colleagues, clients, community, etc.) you anticipate may be sources of stress for you in professional practice, and describe how you will address these stressors.

The inventory should be double-spaced and word-processed, with a reference list for literature cited in the paper. It should be APA style. Heading and subheadings should be used to denote the above components of the inventory. A minimum of eight pages is expected for this paper.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the inventory:

- ❖ Demonstrated ability to integrate social work theories and models, knowledge, skills, and values into a holistic perspective for social work practice
- ❖ Thoroughness in addressing all components of this assignment
- ❖ Specificity of discussion and analysis
- ❖ Depth of discussion and analysis
- ❖ Professional writing skills

C. Guidelines for Case Presentations from Field (25 points—15 for the case presentation and 10 for responses to peers)

This assignment will help students think through a current challenging field placement experience. For this assignment, students will present a case from his/her internship. For example, if you are having difficulty with an ethical issue, you should use this assignment to gain feedback from peers. These cases can be micro (with individual clients or family, group), mezzo (board of directors, programs or services available, etc.), or macro (with organizations, policies, etc.). Cases can focus on personnel dynamics, financial constraints, unmet needs, etc. This is a challenge that *you* are experiencing or that you identify as a social work intern.

Students will post their case analysis on Blackboard (BB) to an assigned small group and each group member will respond (at least one time to every colleague’s case presentation). The discussion will take place in discussion board on BB. The instructor will assign students to small groups on BB. Students should prepare a written summary of the case to distribute at the time of the presentation.

Guidelines for presentation of case (use this outline):

1. A brief description of the organization/program mission
2. A brief description of your job tasks as social work intern

3. A brief description of the case situation that is challenging to you
4. Name the key issues/problems
5. Describe your role in this situation and/or professional use of self
6. Your critical thinking of the problem or issue and its possible resolution
7. Develop at least two prompt questions that you would like addressed by your colleagues

Although Blackboard is a secure site, students should use pseudonyms throughout the case description (including the agency name).

D. Participation & Thoughtfulness

Your contribution to this success of this course is essential. Hence, you are expected to actively contribute to your learning and the learning of your colleagues. The instructor may ask students to assess themselves, peers, or group members to inform the evaluation in this area.

- Preparation and Timeliness—working on learning objectives through the semester and submitting assignments as outlined
- Thoughtfulness and Depth—the degree of thinking, creativity, commitment to the individual learning objectives

Required Friday Email Check In. Students will also be required to email the instructor on Fridays by close of business (COB) with a short check in. This check in serves two functions—it gives students the opportunity to set weekly course goals and also stay connected with the instructor. Since this is the final required course of the MSSW program, it is very important that students continuously work toward its completion. Over the past six years of teaching this course I have found that distance learning students, even those that are highly organized and motivated, have better outcomes in this course when time and task lists are implemented.

The check in should consist of 2 – 5 bullets that summarize the work you completed for the capstone course during the previous week and 2 – 5 bullets of your goals for the next week.

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Assignments
Jan 18	Friday Email Check In – Check in is only acknowledgement that you arrived at your internship and are settling in
Jan 25	Friday Email Check In
Feb 1	Friday Email Check In
Feb 8	Individualize Integrative Learning Outline Due
Feb 15	Friday Email Check In
Feb 22	Friday Email Check In
Mar 1	Friday Email Check In
March 8	Friday Email Check In
March 15	Spring Break
March 22	Friday Email Check In All field cases presentations posted
March 29	Friday Email Check In Respond to your colleague’s field cases
April 5	Friday Email Check In Follow up on field cases, if needed
April 12	Friday Email Check In Follow up on field cases, if needed
April 19	Friday Email Check In
April 26	Friday Email Check In
May 3	Course Evaluations Social Work Inventory Papers Due

All assignments are due by close of business (COB) for your time zone

**Individualize Integrative Learning Plan
(Submit to Instructor)**

Name _____

CLINICAL or CAL

Your Agency/Organization _____

City/State/Country _____

Learning Objectives	Methods of Learning or Tasks	Related theories and Evaluation	Output/Product/Deliverable
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Learning Objectives: Name three to five things that you would like to learn about your field internship, city, country, community, practice setting in the spring? (E.g. its history, the origin of the movement, the economic or governmental structure, etc.). Be specific and somewhat narrow.

Methods of Learning: What strategies do you think would be most effective for that learning you summarized in #1? (E.g. interviews with people, reading historical novels or popular press, field trips, etc.)

Example

Learning Objectives	Methods of Learning or Tasks	Social Work Curricula Integration (related theories, research/evaluation, policy, field)	Output/Product/Deliverable
Learn firsthand account about domestic victims of sex trafficking (DMST) in the U.S.	Read: Rachel Lloyd's book Girls Like Us Find Two Creditable Websites	Social change theory Empowerment Victimization Trauma Theories	2 – 5 pages summarizing work
Understand the extent of the problem of DMST in US	Research three academic sources on data	Survey data Prevalence studies	2 – 5 pages summarizing work
Understanding the policy impacting DMST	Attend local conference Read relevant US and one state policy	Policy analysis related to	2 – 5 pages summarizing work
Integrate internship experience	Critical thinking and integration of all above	Field	2 – 5 pages summarizing work