

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Social Work Practice in Organizations and Communities

Course/Unique Number: SW 334/ 64085

Semester: Fall 2013

Meeting Time/Place: M/W 4.00-5.30/SSW 2.122

Office Hours: after class until 6.00pm and by Appointment

Instructor: Diane McDaniel Rhodes, Assistant Instructor

Diane.Rhodes@UTexas.edu Office: 3.112

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 are 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 macro economic 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).

III. Required Texts and Materials

Kirst-Ashman, K. K. & Hull, G. H. Jr. (2012). *Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities. 5th Edition*. Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishers. The Instructor will assign additional reading and video to supplement the text. Supplemental articles, handouts and links are posted to the class WIKI.

IV. TEACHING METHODS

This course incorporates a variety of teaching methods including lectures, readings, in class and online discussions, guest speakers, audiovisual materials, group activities, and student presentations to ensure a rich learning experience. The content of the course has the potential to be emotionally charged because of possible controversial issues; therefore, the students and professor will establish guidelines for a respectful and challenging learning environment collectively. **Students are expected to contribute through actively participating in collaborative class activities and discussions.**

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The following assignments and activities will be completed during the semester. Your grade will be based on a total of 100 points accrued by the end of the semester. Detailed directions for each assignment are posted on the class wiki including the grading criteria.

Attendance, Punctuality, and Contributions to Class (10 pts)

You are expected to attend class regularly and participate in an interactive framework between students and professor. Failure to attend class regularly and failure to demonstrate comprehension of the readings through class discussion either in the classroom or online will have an impact on the final grade.

Blog (25pts)

This course involves a significant amount of required reading and classroom interaction. Each student will create a blog and make weekly entries that reference the readings, classroom discussions, and responses to relevant issues related to macro-level practice, public policy, government or international intervention.

The professor may elect to provide specific questions related to the readings or class discussions for students to respond to in their blog posts. Blog posts are expected to include photographs, video, and poetry, etc. as well as written reflections and responses to the readings.

You are also required to comment on at least two blogs of fellow students each week.

2 Op-Ed Essays (10pts each)

Two Op-Ed pieces written about an issue related to macro-level social work practice, public policy, government or international intervention. Writing Op-Ed pieces are also a way to advocate and participate in our democracy.

Group Project (25pts)

Develop an organizational project on behalf of an agency/organization. In collaboration with staff, identify a need, develop an agency profile – including funding sources. The group will produce an organizational tool (such as; a survey, a policy, training, helping with social media, PR, manual, website development, update data, video promotions):

Comprehensive Examination (20 pts)

A comprehensive take home exam will be distributed near the end of the semester and students will have approximately one week to complete the exam. Responses will be graded on thoroughness, including student's ability to integrate readings from the texts, collateral readings, community experiences and class discussions.

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.

2. 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. 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.

4. Class Attendance Policy: Punctuality and timeliness are important for social work practitioners. Class attendance is expected. It is your responsibility to sign the weekly 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 via email prior to 8.00pm 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.

7. Use of WIKI: The instructor uses a wiki page – a 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 also be posted to the WIKI page. Students should check their email and WIKI 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 in Class

The professor expects students to act like 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.

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://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).

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 14 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're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

Dates	Topics	Class Preparation	Work due
Week 1: W: Aug 28	Review of Syllabus WIKI Orientation Social Work and Organizations		
F:			Wiki – sign in Blog Set-up Email blog address
Week 2: M: Sep - 2	Labor day holiday		
W: Sep - 4	Understanding Organizations	Kirst-Ashman (K-A) Ch 1 - 3	
F:			Blog Posts 1
Week 3: M: Sep 9	Decision Making in organizations and groups	K-A Ch 4 - 5	
W: Sep 11	Stakeholder participation in organizations		
F:			Blog Posts 2
Week 4: M: Sep 16	Policies and procedures	K-A Ch 6	
W: Sep 18	Staff – rights, needs, supervision, licensing		
F:			Blog Posts 3
Week 5: M: Sep 23	Program design and development	K-A Ch 7	Groups formed
W: Sep 25	Programs – implementations, evaluation, reporting		
F:			Blog Posts 4
Week 6: M: Sep 30	Communities and community engagement	K-A Ch 8	
W: Oct 2			
F:			Blog Posts 5
Week 7: M: Oct 7	Community Organizing	K-A Ch 9 - 10	Submit group project proposal
W: Oct 9	Social problems and local and national politics		

F:			Blog Posts 6
Week 8: M: Oct 14	Social Change	K-A Ch 11	Op-Ed
W: Oct 16	Social problems in the media and popular culture		
F:			Blog Posts 7
Week 9:	Ethics	K-A Ch 12	
W: 21	Ethical conflicts		
F: 23			Blog Posts 8
Week 10: M: Oct 29	Courts and the legal system	K-A Ch 13	
W: Oct 31	Prison		
F:			Blog Posts 8
Week 11: M: Nov 4	Development and fundraising	K-A Ch 14	
W: Nov 6	Selling social problems		
F:			Blog Posts 9
Week 12: M: Nov 11	Strategic planning	Reading Folder (on the Wiki)	
W: Nov 13	Boards of Directors		
F:			Blog Posts 10
Week 13: M: Nov 18	Social entrepreneurship	Reading Folder	
W: Nov 20	Micro lending		
F:			Blog Posts 11
Week 14: M: Nov 25	Visions and strategies	Reading Folder	Op-Ed
W: Nov 27	Thanksgiving holiday – no class		
F:	Final posted to wiki		Blog Posts 12 Group Project Due
Week 15: M: Dec 2	Group Presentations		
W: Dec 4	Group Presentations		
F:			Blog Posts 13
F: Dec 13			Final Due

IX. 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

