

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

<b>COURSE/UNIQUE NUMBER: SW 381T (#64235)</b>	<b>INSTRUCTOR: JENIFER DEATLEY, LMSW</b>
<b>SEMESTER: FALL 2013</b>	<b>OFFICE NUMBER: 3.104A</b>
<b>CLASS MEETING TIME: M 5:30-8:30</b>	<b>OFFICE PHONE: (512) 471-9826</b>
<b>CLASS MEETING PLACE: 2.112</b>	<b>OFFICE HOURS: M 4:00-5:00 - OR BY APPOINTMENT</b>
	<b>EMAIL: JDEATLEY@ENGENDERHEALTH.ORG</b>

**DYNAMICS OF ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES**

**I. Course Description**

This course familiarizes students with the macro context of social work practice. It examines the reciprocal relationship between human behavior and social environments. It 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.

This course examines the impact of social structure and other societal factor on one's personal life chances in relation to equity, fairness, opportunity, and other issues of social and economic justice. Drawing on a systems-ecological perspective, this course helps students develop skills at using systems thinking approaches to understanding organizations and communities with special emphasis on their application to a variety of oppressed and disadvantaged populations and multiple levels of intervention. Special emphasis is given to the development of assessment skills and intervention methods that are relevant to empowerment, capacity building and social change within organizations and communities. Understanding the role of age, race, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical and mental ability is an integral part of this course.

**II. Course Objectives**

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

- Discuss communities and organizations as a context for professional practice to meet individual needs, build community capacity, and promote social and economic justice;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the value dilemmas and ethical issues confronting social work professionals and their implications for social work practice with organizations and communities;
- Assess the influence of community norms, priorities, and competitive community factions on the social structure of communities and the delivery of human services;
- Assess various evidence-based intervention approaches for working with organizations and communities;

- Analyze the impacts of organizational and community dynamics on populations at risk and relate those impacts to the participation of such populations in organizational and community governance, human service provision, and policy formulation;
- Evaluate alternative strategies for initiating change in organizations and communities, including planning models, coalition building, community development, direct action, and legislative advocacy;
- Understand the relevance of age, race, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical and mental ability in social work practice that is grounded in social and economic justice.

### III. Teaching Methods

This class is conducted using a variety of teaching methods such as lectures, videos, guest speakers, writing exercises, and group discussions. Instruction is designed to encourage student participation and input. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class period, and come to class prepared to ask questions, share experiences, and actively participate.

### IV. Required Readings

#### a. Textbook

Hardcastle, D.A., Powers, P.A. & Wenocur, S. (2011). Community Practice: Theories and Skills for Social Workers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

#### b. Additional readings

Additional readings will be assigned throughout the course, and are available online in the course documents section of the class Blackboard page.

### V. Course Requirements

Course requirements consist of five writing assignments, and a task group project.

Assignment	% of Grade	Due Date
<b>Writing Assignments (5)</b>	25%	
<b>Task Group Project</b>	65%	
Final Product & Presentation		25%
Poster Presentation		20%
Group Documents		10%
Individual Grade		10%
<b>Class Participation</b>	<u>10%</u>	
	100%	

#### GRADUATE GRADING SCALE

94.0 and Above	A	74.0 to 76.999	C
90.0 to 93.999	A-	70.0 to 73.999	C-
87.0 to 89.999	B+	67.0 to 69.999	D+
84.0 to 86.999	B	64.0 to 66.999	D
80.0 to 83.999	B-	60.0 to 63.999	D-
677.0 to 79.999	C+	Below 60.0	F

Course requirements are described in detail below. Please ask for clarification at any time if you have any questions about the assignments.

## 1. Writing Assignments

There will be five writing assignments throughout the course, which will correspond to the assigned readings, guest speakers, and class activities and discussions. Writing assignments are designed to enhance student learning and to refine professional writing skills by tying readings to macro practice case studies. Writing assignments may require a student to write a memo, letter, press release or brief position paper. Writing assignments should be one to two pages single-spaced, and include a reference page with citations in APA (6<sup>th</sup> edition).

## 2. Task Group Project

The task group project involves small groups of 3 – 5 students working together to achieve an organizational or program goal or specific need of an agency. The objective of the task group project is to learn about the needs and goals of organizations, and develop skills for working in task groups. Task groups are working groups that are designed to achieve a specific goal or objective, and the ability to work cooperatively and effectively in task groups is a critical professional skill. Each task group will be paired with a community partner to work on an issue of concern to the partner, and will produce a deliverable as outlined in the scope of work presented by the organization. Task groups will be formed and paired with community partners on the first day of class.

### Project Components:

- **Partner Product / Deliverable:** Each group will produce a specific product for the community partner as defined by the partner. The format and content of the product will be dependent on the partner's needs and parameters; therefore, each group's product will be unique. Examples of products may include a written report, a training guide or other materials, survey instruments, or a PowerPoint presentation. All products should be well organized, neatly presented, and a professional document that achieves the goals and needs of the partner.
- **Partner Presentation:** Each group will present their final product and recommendations during a presentation for the community partner. The time, location, and format of the presentation will be determined with the partner. In some cases, the partner may want a presentation for a group of executives, program staff, board members, or solely to the liaison. This will be determined by the needs of the partner.
- **Poster Presentation:** Groups are required to prepare and deliver a poster to present during the final week of class. A poster presentation is intended to graphically present your research and outcomes and visually tell your story. In presenting your research with a poster, you should aim to use the poster as a means for generating active discussion of the research. Poster templates may be found on Blackboard and examples will be shown in class. Posters need to be ordered approximately two weeks in advance. Instructions for ordering posters will be provided in class.
- **Documents:** Each group is required to produce documents that support their work and represent a record of activities. These documents must include 1) a work plan, 2) meeting agendas and minutes, and 3) other supporting documentation. Any work done individually or in sub-groups should be documented as appropriate. A shared group page will be available on Blackboard for posting all project documents so that all group members have access to the documents.

The **work plan** will help your group organize the project and serves as a planning document to keep your group on task, on deadline, and organized. Work plan templates may be found on Blackboard. Work plans are due on the 4<sup>th</sup> class day. **Agendas** outline the purpose and direction for meetings, and the **meeting minutes** indicate who attended each meeting, how tasks were determined and assigned, timelines, and any action steps.

- **Individual Evaluation:** I will be collecting information from three different sources to determine the individual portion of the project grade. 1) I will observe task groups during class project work days to observe participation. 2) Each group member is required to prepare a brief written statement outlining their own contributions to the project and overall group. 3) Each group member is required to complete an evaluation of themselves and of each of the other members of the group. Evaluation documents will be available on the class Blackboard page.

### 3. **Class participation**

Attendance and participation are important for effective learning; therefore, the class participation grade will be earned each week of class. It is important to arrive on time and be prepared by having read the assigned material for the week. As graduate students, it is expected that you are able to participate on a deeper level in class discussions, and it is expected that you are meaningfully and actively engaged.

## VI. **Class Policies**

1. **Class attendance.** Class attendance is required every class for the entire class, and will be taken each week. As in a professional work setting, if there is an unforeseen emergency, contact me in advance to let me know you will not be present in class. Any class material missed due to a class absence is the students' sole responsibility. The professor reserves the right to deduct points from the student's final course grade due to absences.
2. **Class participation.** Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and be well prepared to participate in discussions, with guest speakers, and experiential learning assignments. Failure to demonstrate through discussions that one has completed the readings will be considered in assigning the class participation grade.
3. **General assignment requirements.** The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) is the style manual adopted by the School of Social Work. All papers and writing assignments must conform to APA style, and must be typed, double spaced, and have one inch margins unless otherwise specified in the assignment description. References and sources must be academic/scholarly sources, and documented in APA format. A summary handout is provided in class, in the Learning Resource Center, and at APAStyle.org.
4. **Assignment due dates.** Students will be penalized 5 points for each calendar day that an assignment is late. UT does not allow Incompletes (grade of X) for additional time to complete assignments. Students will be informed of any changes in assignments and due dates in advance. If a student is absent on an assignment due date, that assignment may be emailed to the professor before the start of that day's class with a clear explanation.

5. *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.
6. *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/>).
7. *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.
8. *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/>.
9. *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.
10. *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>.
11. *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>.

12. *Policy on social media and professional communications.* 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.
13. *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.
14. *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:
  - a. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building.
  - b. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
  - c. In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
  - d. 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

Class	Date	Topic/In class	Assigned Readings	Assignments Due
1	9-09	- Introduction and course overview - Review project descriptions and form project groups	Syllabus	None
2	9-16	- Introduction to Community Practice - Task Groups - Skills Inventory & Work Plan <b>Community liaison meetings</b>	Hardcastle, Powers, and Wenocur: Ch. 1 & 9	
3	9-23	- Community Practice Theory - Social & community problems <b>Project Work Day</b>	Ch. 2 & 3	Writing assignment #1
4	9-30	- Understanding Communities & Neighborhoods	Ch. 4	Work Plan
5	10-07	- Community Assessment	Ch. 5 & 6	Writing assignment #2
6	10-14	- Understanding Organizations  <b>Project Work Day</b> <b>Mid-semester evaluation</b>	Ch. 7 & 8	
7	10-21	- Organization Assessment  <b>Project Work Day</b>	Ch. 10	Writing assignment #3
8	10-28	- Social Networks	Ch. 11	
9	11-04	- Social Marketing - Social Action and Advocacy  <b>Project Work Day</b>	Ch. 12	Writing assignment #4
10	11-11	- Organizing for Community Change	Ch. 13 & 14	
11	11-18	- Use of Self in Community Practice		Writing assignment #5
12	11-25	<b>Project Work Day</b>		
13	12-02	Poster Presentations Course Evaluation		Poster Presentation Final Task Project due, including final work plan, meeting agendas and minutes, and evaluations with written statement of contributions