

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

Course: SW 334 61845  
Semester: Spring 2017  
Time: MW 4-5:30 pm  
Location: 2.132

Instructor: Alba Sereno, MSSW  
Office Location: Adjunct Office  
Office Phone: 214.799.3767  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Email: Via Canvas interface

**SW 334 Social Work Practice Organizations and Communities**

I. Course Description

In this course you will become familiar with the macro context of social work practice. It examines the reciprocal relationship between human behavior and social environments. The course emphasizes the interlocking and complex nature of culture and personal identity with content on populations-at-risk, while examining the factors that contribute to and constitute being at risk. It also introduces you to the obligation that social services have to meet the needs of groups served and are culturally relevant. This includes equipping you with skills to recognize diversity within and between groups that may influence assessment, planning, intervention, and research. You will 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 factors 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 will help you develop skills in 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 By the end of the course the student should be:

Upon completion of this course you will be able to:

1. Discuss communities and organizations as a context for professional practice to meet individual needs, build community capacity, and promote social and economic justice;

2. 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;
3. Assess the influence of community norms, priorities, and competitive community factions on the social structure of communities and the delivery of human services;
4. Assess various evidence-based intervention approaches for working with organizations and communities;
5. Discuss and describe the impact 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;
6. Discuss and describe alternative strategies for initiating change in organizations and communities, including planning models, coalition building, community development, direct action, and legislative advocacy;
7. Discuss and describe 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.

#### Teaching Methods

Course content is covered through reading, listening, thinking, and discussing social work practice in organizations and communities. Class sessions will be devoted to focused discussions that flow from assigned readings and supplemental materials presented in class. Students are expected to ask questions, share experiences, and actively participate in class discussions. In addition, the class will include small group experiential learning, videotapes to generate discussion, and guest speakers who work in agency and community-based settings.

The assigned readings for this course represent the minimum required reading for this course. There is a vast body of literature available on organizations and communities. An extensive bibliography will be provided on Canvas.

#### IV. Required and Recommended Text and Materials

Weil, M. (2013) *The Handbook of Community Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc. ISB 978-4129-8785-1

#### Additional Required Materials:

Access to the World Wide Web, Microsoft Word, Excel and Email Activation @mail.utexas.edu and access to Canvas. These resources are available through the Learning Resource Center. Each student is expected to secure an e-mail address and be prepared to use the Internet for class

assignments. The Internet is an important tool for accessing University library resources and securing other information relevant to this class and the profession. The Instructor will periodically assign readings available from the Internet or on Canvas. Students are responsible for all readings as assigned. Students will be asked on occasion to bring representative material from their work and other experiences to class.

#### V. Course Requirements

Student learning will be assessed through:

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Participation and attendance                          | 10 points        |
| Neighborhood analysis paper                           | 10 points        |
| Discussion questions for speakers (2 @ 5 points each) | 10 points        |
| Community engagement effort paper                     | 20 points        |
| Action planning proposal paper                        | 20 points        |
| Environmental Analysis Project and Presentation       | <u>30 points</u> |
|   | 100 points       |

See Canvas for assignment instructions. Please note that all written assignments will be graded for neatness, clarity, depth of discussion, spelling, critical thinking and punctuality.

### **VII. SPRING 2017 UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

#### **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  |

#### **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.

### **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. More information may be found at <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

### **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 <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>.

### **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/conduct/>).

## **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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **CAMPUS CARRY POLICY**

The University's policy on concealed fire arms may be found here:

<https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>. You also may find this information by accessing the Quick Links menu on the School's website.

## **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 <https://cio.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

## **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.

## **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. Faculty, instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Title IX Deputy for the SSW, Professor Tanya Voss. Students, faculty and staff may contact Professor Voss to report incidents or to obtain information. Further information, including

student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.

### **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://operations.utexas.edu/units/csas/bcal.php>.

### **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 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.

### **VII. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

| <b>Class/Date</b> | <b>Topic</b>   | <b>Readings and Assignments Due</b>                                  |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 1/18              | Introductions<br>Overview of course expectations<br>Ethics | Canvas:<br>ISFW Statement of Ethical Principles<br><br>Social Policy |

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|-----------|---|--|
|           |   | <p>A Primer on Intersectionality</p> <p>UNESCO Understanding the Community</p>   |
| 1/23-1/25 | Contexts for Community Change   | Weil: Part 1   |
| 1/30-2/1  | Major Approaches to Community Practice: Development, Organizing, Social Planning, and Social Change | Weil: Part 2   |
| 2/6       | Major Approaches to Community Practice: Development, Organizing, Social Planning, and Social Change | <p>Canvas:<br/>Blending Ameliorative And Transformative Approaches In Human Service Organizations: A Case Study</p> <p>Participatory Research Kit: Creating Surveys</p> <p>King County Equity Impact Review Tool</p> |
| 2/8       | Issues, Areas and Fields of Community Practice  | Weil: Part 3   |
| 2/13      |   | Neighborhood Analysis Work Day   |
| 2/15      | (Continued)<br>Issues, Areas and Fields of Community Practice                                       | Weil: Part 3   |
| 2/20      | Issues, Areas and Fields of Community Practice  | Canvas:<br>Social Inclusion for the United States  |



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|---------------------------|---|---|
|                           |   | <p>The Trouble With Issues:<br/>The Case For Intentional Framing</p> <p>Leading At The Intersections: An Introduction To The Intersectional Approach Model For Policy &amp; Social Change</p> |
| 2/22-2/27                 | Global Issues and Approaches  | <p>Weil: Part 4<br/>Canvas: The World Champ Of Poverty Fighters</p> <p><b>Neighborhood Analysis Due 2/27</b></p>  |
| 3/1                       |   | Environmental Analysis<br>Project Guest Speakers  |
| 3/6-3/8                   | Community -Based Organizations, Community Building, Service Coordination, Program Design and Resource Development | Weil: Part 5  |
| Spring Break<br>3/13-3/18 |   |   |
| 3/20                      | Community -Based Organizations, Community Building, Service Coordination, Program Design and Resource Development | <p>Canvas:<br/>Resolving The Dilemma Between Organizing And Services: Los Angeles ACORN's Welfare Advocacy</p> <p>Perspective Analysis:<br/>Mcknight's Careless</p>                           |

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|-----------|---|---|
|           |   | Society And The Strengths-Based Approach To Social Work<br><br>Community Toolbox: 7. Developing and Intervention (Outline & Examples) |
| 3/22      |   | Community Engagement Work Day   |
| 3/27-3/29 | Research, Evaluation, and the Use of the Technology in Community Practice | Weil: Part 6  |
| 4/3       |   | Project Work Day 1<br><b>Community Engagement Paper Due 4/3</b>   |
| 4/5       | Research, Evaluation, and the Use of the Technology in Community Practice | Canvas: Community Tool Box: 12. Evaluating the Initiative (Outline & Examples)<br><b>Guest Speaker Questions Due 4/5</b>              |
| 4/10      |   | Project Work Day 2<br><b>Action planning proposal Due 4/10</b>  |
| 4/12      |   | Guest Speaker Panel 1   |
| 4/17      |   | Project Work Day 3  |
| 4/19      |   | Guest Speaker Panel 2   |
| 4/24-4/26 | Reflections and Next Steps  | Due Date: 4/26<br>Environmental Analysis Project and Presentation   |

|     |  |                       |
|-----|--|-----------------------|
| 5/3 |  | Student Presentations |
| 5/1 |  | Student Presentations |