

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

Dynamics of Organizations & Communities

Course Number: 381 T

Unique Number: 61855

Semester: Fall 2011

Meeting: Monday, 5:30pm – 8:30pm

Location: 2.112

Office Hours: Monday, 4:15pm - 5:15pm

Instructor's Name: Morgan J Curtis, LMSW

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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.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

2. Discuss communities and organizations as a context for professional practice to meet individual needs, build community capacity, and promote social and economic justice **(PB11 and 27)**;
3. 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 **(PB 27)**;
4. Assess the influence of community norms, priorities, and competitive community factions on the social structure of communities and the delivery of human services **(PB 11)**;
5. Assess various evidence-based intervention approaches for working with organizations and communities **(PB 11)**;
6. 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 **(PB 12 and 27)**;
7. Evaluate alternative strategies for initiating change in organizations and communities, including planning models, coalition building, community development, direct action, and legislative advocacy **(PB 11, 12, 27 and 28)**;

8. 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 (**PB 11**).

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, 4, 6, 7

Assignment: community assessment project

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

Objectives 5 and 6

Assignment: community assessment project, assigned readings, classroom discussion

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

Objectives (not specified)

Assignment: community assessment project, written exams

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, 5, 6

Assignment: group project

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

Objective 6

Assignment: community assessment project

CONTACTING ME:

I will attempt to respond to emails in a timely manner (within 24 hours). If you need something more urgently, please call or text me at the cell phone number provided above. *Contacting me via email or text will probably be the easiest and most reliable means of reaching me.* I encourage students to approach me with any questions, concerns, or feedback about the class and to do so in a timely manner. I am available to students during my office hours and also by appointment.

REQUIRED READINGS:

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

Assigned readings that aren't from the primary text will be available in the Course Documents section of the class Blackboard page. These readings include excerpts from other texts, articles from professional journals, and other relevant materials related to macro social work practice. If additional readings are assigned, the class will be given ample notice of said readings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Two Reading Application/Reflection Papers** – Students are expected to apply readings from class to real world scenarios outside of the group project. Application papers can focus on the relevance of certain readings to organizations and/or communities encountered through a student's field placement, place of employment or volunteer work. Application papers should be approximately 2 pages double-spaced and should focus on applying one primary concept from course reading. Specific attention should be given to critically thinking about applying theories and models from class to the real world (e.g., discuss any shortcomings you identify in the theory when applying it to practice). These can be written and turned in at any point in the semester but students are encouraged not to put them all off until the end of the semester when other, larger assignments are due. Papers will be graded based on demonstration of critical thinking and application of reading concepts to practice, as well as format, organization, style, grammar, and proper use of APA formatting.
2. **Exams** – There will be two take-home exams during the semester. Exam questions will draw from readings and from class discussions or exercises. Exams may include short answers, essay questions, and/or case analyses. Each exam is worth 15 points. Only in the case of unforeseen emergencies or illness will make-up exams be given. The format of the make-up exam is at the discretion of the instructor. Although these are take-home exams, they are meant to be an assessment of each individual's learning. Therefore, the expectation is that these are completed individually and not in groups.
3. **Community Assessment Project** – The community assessment project involves groups of 4 to 5 students examining either a community or an organization within the context of a specific social justice issue. Specifically, work groups are to:
 - (a) conduct a community assessment focusing on gathering information on the current assets, resources, barriers, and emerging community needs;
 - (b) map out community resources and assets;
 - (c) attend at least one community or organizational meeting or event to help inform your analysis;

- (d) propose at least three plausible intervention strategy based on three theoretical perspectives;
- (e) write a report of findings.

Each group is to work collaboratively on all project elements and deliverables for the duration of the semester. At the beginning of the semester groups are to engage in work-planning to help build skills in team development and project planning. There are four deliverables for the Community Assessment Project:

- i. Project Proposal & Workplan
- ii. Group presentation
- iii. Mid-term assessment of work group activities and progress
- iv. Written report

Additional information about each deliverable is available in the Community Assessment Project guide that will be distributed the first week of class.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to award differentially weighted grades on the group project. This will occur if a group member fails to actively participate in the group, misses deadlines consistently or otherwise significantly hinders the progress or quality of work of the group.

SCHEDULE OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Schedule of Project Requirements		
Assignment	Points	Due Date
Community Assessment Project	Project proposal & work group contract (w/skills inventory)	10 <i>September 26</i>
	Midterm assessment	10 <i>October 10</i>
	Group presentation	20 <i>November 14 or 21</i>
	Written report	20 <i>by December 5</i>
Exam #1	15	<i>October 3</i>
Exam #2	15	<i>November 7</i>
Application Papers	5 each	<i>by December 5</i>

Grades for this course will be assigned using the following 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. Class Policies

Class Attendance and Participation. Active, engaged and informed participation in classroom discussion and exercises is a critical component of student learning. Showing up prepared to participate in class demonstrates respect for the material and emerging professionalism. This means that students should not only attend class on time but should be prepared to actively participate in class discussions. At the same time, there may be an occasion when a student will not be able to attend class because of illness or other unforeseen problems. In such cases, it is required that the student notify the instructor **before** class that they will not be in class. In the case of more than one absence, I reserve the right to deduct points from a student's final course grade.

Publication style manual. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) is the style manual adopted by the School of Social Work. All papers prepared for this class should conform to the APA style. A summary handout of this manual is available in Student Services. The complete manual is available in the Learning Resource Center. You can also find on-line assistance with electronic reference guidelines at: APAStyle.org.

Scholastic Dishonesty. The University of Texas at Austin is proud of its students' commitment to academic integrity and their pledge to abide by its policy on scholastic dishonesty. The tradition of academic integrity is maintained by the cooperation of students and faculty members. Official University policies regarding academic integrity may be accessed from the [Student Judicial Services](#) web site. This site provides detailed information about the university's policies regarding academic integrity and standards of conduct. Students are encouraged to review this page and to become familiar with these policies.

If a student has any questions concerning the application of the rules prohibiting scholastic dishonesty in regard to a particular assignment, it is the responsibility of that student to seek clarification from the instructor of the course. Violations of the University's policy on scholastic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the course and may result in reporting to the Dean of the School of Social Work and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Conditional admission. Students who were admitted into the MSSW program on a conditional basis are not able to take an incomplete for this course if the conditions for admission are still in place.

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 also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.

Accommodations for students with disabilities. The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodation for any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive). For information about academic accommodations, students should contact the Office of the Dean of Students, Services

for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing).
Information is also available online at: also available online at: also available online at:

Professional Conduct in Class. I expect students to act like professionals in class. This means 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, I do require that you engage one another with respect and professionalism.

Course Schedule and Readings

Class	Topic	Readings
August 29	Introductions & Overview of Course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to course, review of syllabus, overview of assignments ▪ Class introductions ▪ Assignment of groups for class project 	Hardcastle Text: Chapter 1 <i>Blackboard:</i> Page & Donelan (2003)
September 5	LABOR DAY – no class	
September 12	Overview of Macro Social Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to Community Practice ▪ Systems Theory 	Hardcastle Text: Chapter 2 & 3 <i>Blackboard:</i> Maton (2000); Mulroy (2004); Wolff (2010) Ch 6
September 19	Understanding Community	Hardcastle Text: Chapter 4 <i>Blackboard:</i> Homan (2011). First half of chapter 5; Kirst-Ashman et al. Ch. 8; Maton (2008)
September 26	Assessing Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Asset Mapping ▪ Community Readiness ▪ Participatory Action Research 	Hardcastle Text: Chapters 5 & 6 <i>Blackboard:</i> Bonner Curriculum: Community Asset Mapping: A Critical Strategy for Service; Edwards et al. (2000); Homan Ch. 5 (second half)
October 3	Use of Self in Community Practice Group meeting time Exam #1 Due	Hardcastle Text: Chapter 7 <i>Blackboard:</i> Ungar et al. (2004)
October 10	Dynamics of Human Service Organizations Guest Speaker: Tim Love	Hardcastle Text: Chapter 8 <i>Blackboard:</i> Kirst-Ashman et al. Ch 4; Matton (2008); Schmid (2006); Schmid (2011)

October 17	Dynamics of Human Service Organizations, cont'd Networking, Coalition Building & Task Groups	Hardcastle Text: Chapters 9 & 10 <i>Blackboard:</i> Chen et al. (2010); Donaldson, (2007); Holley (2004); Lewandowski (2003)
October 24	Organizational Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizational interaction with community Group Meeting Time	<i>Blackboard:</i> Bramson & Buss (2002); Homan: Ch. 14; Finegold (2002); Kirst-Ashman et al. Ch. 5; Tapp (2006)
October 31	Community Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocacy ▪ Organizing ▪ Public Policy 	Hardcastel Text Ch 12, 13 <i>Blackboard:</i> Silliman et al. (2004) Ch. 11 & 12
November 7	Community Change, cont'd <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marketing ▪ Casework ▪ Program Planning Guest speaker: Torie Camp Ethics in Macro Practice Exam # 2 Due	Text Ch 11 & 14 <i>Blackboard:</i> Hardina, D. (2004); Kirst Ashman et al. (2011) Ch 12; Messinger (2004); Rothschild & Milofsky (2006)
November 14	Group presentations	
November 21	Group presentations	
November 28	Review & Wrap-up Course evaluation	
December 5	Community Engagement Project written assignment due by <u>5:00pm</u>	Last day to turn in reflection/application papers. (by 5pm)

References

- Bonner Foundation (n.d.). Community asset mapping: A critical strategy for service bonnernetwork.pbworks.com/f/BonCurCommAssetMap.pdf
- Bramson & Buss (2002). Methods for whole system change in public organizations and communities: An overview of the issues. *Public Organization Review: A Global Journal*, 2, 211-221.
- Chen, B. & Graddy, E.A. (2010). The effectiveness of nonprofit lead-organization networks for social service delivery. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 20(4), 405-422,
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- Edwards, R.W., Jumper-Thurman, P., Plested, B.A., Oetting, E.R., & Swanson, L. (2000). Community readiness: Research to practice. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 28(3), 291-306.
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- Hardina, D. (2004). Guidelines for ethical practice in community organizations. *Social Work*, 49 (4), 595-604.
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- Mulroy, E.A. (2004). Theoretical perspectives on the social environment to guide management and community practice. *Administration in Social Work*, 28(1), 77-96.

- Page, D., & Donelan, J. (2003). Team-building tools for students. *Journal of Education for Business*, 78(3), 122-128.
- Schmid, H. (2006). Leadership styles and leadership change in human and community service organizations. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 17(2), 179-194.
- Schmid, H. (2011). Organization-environment relationships. *Social Work*, 28(1), 97-113.
- Tapp, A. (July/August 2006). Reclaiming our social justice organizations. *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*, 25(4), 4-8.
- Ungar, M., Manuel, S., Mealey, S., Thomas, G., & Campbell, C. (2004). A study of community guides: Lessons for professionals practicing with and in communities. *Social Work*, 49(4), 550-561.
- Wolff, T. (2010). *The power of collaborative solutions: Six principles and effective tools for building healthy communities*. CITY: Jossey-Bass.