

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

COURSE/UNIQUE NUMBER: SW 381T/61845

SEMESTER: FALL 2011

MEETING TIME: W 2:30-5:30

MEETING PLACE: SSW 2.132

INSTRUCTOR: MONICA FAULKNER, PH.D., LMSW

OFFICE NUMBER: 3.212CB

OFFICE PHONE: (512) 471-7191

OFFICE HOURS: M 2:30-4; W 11:30-1 OR BY APPT

E-MAIL: MFAULKNER@MAIL.UTEXAS.EDU

## DYNAMICS OF ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

### I. Standardized 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. Standardized 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 (PB11 and 27);

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);

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);

Assess various evidence-based intervention approaches for working with organizations and communities (PB 11);

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);

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);

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: Weekly writing assignment, needs assessment

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

Objectives 5 and 6

Assignment: needs assessment

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

Objectives (not specified)

Assignment: Weekly writing assignment, needs assessment

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: needs assessment

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

Objective 6

Assignment: needs assessment

### III. Teaching Methods

This class is conducted using a variety of teaching methods such as lectures, videos, guest speakers, experiential activities and group discussions. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class period. Class instruction is designed to encourage student participation and input.

### IV. Required Readings

#### a. Textbook

Netting, F.E., Kettner, P.M., McMurtry, S.L., & Thomas, M.L. (2012). *Social Work Macro Practice* (5<sup>th</sup> edition). Pearson Education: Boston.

#### b. Additional readings

Additional readings from other books and journal articles may be assigned. Any additional readings will be available on UT Blackboard.

## V. Course Requirements

Weekly writing assignments (5 out of the 7)	25%
Needs assessment	
Group contract	5%
Three interviews	15%
One community activity	5%
Needs assessment- rough draft	5%
Needs assessment- final draft	20%
Presentation	15%
Class participation (Can drop two absences in case of emergency)	<u>10%</u>
	100%

### GRADUATE GRADING SCALE

100 - 94 = A

93 - 90 = A-

89 - 87 = B+

86 - 84 = B

83 - 80 = B-

79 - 77 = C+

76 - 74 = C

73 - 70 = C-

69 - 67 = D+

66 - 64 = D

63 - 60 = D-

59 and below = F

1. Weekly writing assignments. Students will complete weekly writing assignments to apply readings to macro practice cases and refine writing skills for social work practice. Seven weekly writing assignments are provided which correspond to the readings for that specific week. The assignment may require a student to write a memo, letter, email or press release depending on the weekly assignment. Students must complete five of the seven weekly writing assignments. Students may turn in more than five weekly writing assignments and have their highest five grades counted. Students may choose which weekly writing assignments to complete. Weekly writing assignments are due on the date listed in the course syllabus. No late weekly writing assignments will be accepted due to the flexible nature of this assignment.
2. Needs Assessment. The objective of the Community Needs Assessment Project is to learn about the needs and resources of a specific population in Austin and develop a change strategy that will benefit that target population. Students will work in small groups to conduct interviews and attend community events related to the group's population. This project will require: (1) a completed group contract; (2) three interviews conducted by each group member; (3) attendance at one community event; (4) a 18-20 page double spaced group paper (not including references); and (5) a 30 minute class presentation to present your change strategy. In extenuating circumstances including lack regard for group participation and group processes, the instructor may assign a student to complete all components of this assignment individually more a maximum grade of a C.

3. Class participation. Students will receive ten points for class attendance, class participation and professional conduct. Attendance will be taken every class period. A student may miss two classes without penalty. For each additional class missed, one point will be deducted from the class participation grade. In addition, students who inappropriately use cell phones, computers or any other technological device during class will have one point deducted from their participation grade each time the behavior occurs. If all participation points are deducted from a student's class participation grade and continued absences and/or class disruptions occur, additional points will be deducted from the student's final grade in the same manner in which they were deducted from the class participation grade.

## VI. Class Policies

1. *Class attendance.* Class attendance is required every class period for the entire class period. Attendance will be taken each class. It is the student's sole responsibility to sign the attendance sheet each class. Students are allowed two absences due to unforeseen circumstances. Any class material missed due to a class absence is the students' sole responsibility.
2. *Class participation.* Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions 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.* Assignments must be typed, be double spaced and have one inch margins unless otherwise specified in the assignment description. References/sources used in papers must be in APA format and be academic/scholarly sources. If questions about the credibility of a reference arise, consult with the instructor. The instructor is available to assist students in proof reading and formatting papers. The instructor is also available by email to answer questions about assignments. Students should submit questions or requests for clarifications at least 24 hours before an assignment is due. If an assignment is due in less than 24 hours, the instructor cannot guarantee a timely response.
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) to provide additional time to complete assignments. Students will be informed of any changes in assignments, due dates, and other class content. If an assignment is due on a date the student cannot attend class or during a time when a student is having difficulties printing a paper, papers may be emailed to the professor by the start of that day's class.
5. *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.
6. *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. Professional conduct also includes timely arrival to class, respectful behavior during class and appropriate use of technology. No cell phone use, ipod or other devices are permitted during class. Computers may only be used for taking notes or relevant in class activities. Any inappropriate use of computers for emailing or internet usage is not permitted. Professional conduct includes respectful and meaningful efforts to participate in group projects. Failure to display professional conduct may result in a deduction from attendance points.

7. *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/>).
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 or assignment is due. 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. *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>.
11. *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.
12. *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>.

13. *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. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered 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	8-24	Introduction to class	Syllabus	None
<b>Unit 1: Introduction to Macro Practice</b>				
2	8-31	Overview of macro practice *First group meeting	Ch. 1&2	Weekly writing assignment #1
3	9-7	Understanding macro problems	Ch. 3	Weekly writing assignment #2 Group contract
4	9-14	Understanding populations	Ch. 4	Weekly writing assignment #3
<b>Unit 2: Communities</b>				
5	9-21	Understanding communities	Ch.5	Weekly writing assignment #4
6	9-28	Assessing communities *Group time in class	Ch. 6	Weekly writing assignment #5
<b>Unit 3: Organizations</b>				
7	10-5	Understanding organizations Mid-semester evaluation	Ch.7	Weekly writing assignment #6
8	10-12	Assessing human services organizations *Group time in class	Ch.8	Weekly writing assignment #7
<b>Unit 4: Making change happen</b>				
9	10-19	Building support	Ch.9	Interview/Activity Log Worksheet
10	10-26	Selecting strategies *Group time in class	Ch. 10-11	Draft of needs assessment due
11	11-2	Selecting strategies, cont.		
12	11-9	Presentations		
13	11-16	Presentations		
14	11-23	Thanksgiving- No class		
15	11-30	Final class Course evaluation		Final draft of needs assessment due