

# SW395K LEADERSHIP, COMMUNICATION, AND CHANGE

## Summer 2011

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Course Number: SW395K  
Unique Number: 94975  
Course Time: M, T, W, Th 1:30-3:30 PM  
Class Location: 2.118  
Instructor: Dnika J. Travis, MSW, PhD  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12-1:30pm or by appointment  
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### Course Description

Everyday individuals take action as leaders to champion for social change and innovation in their communities and organizations as well as personal lives. Communication is a vital part of that process. Using a strengths-based approach, this course examines theories, models, and strategies for effective communication that ultimately promote personal, organizational and social change (as examples, appreciative inquiry and scenario planning).

To promote social change, this course will cover topics in four areas: (1) dialogue to foster open, authentic communication in organizations and communities, (2) non-verbal and verbal forms of communication that inspire and align others to a shared vision, (3) communication models to manage uncertainty, expectations and conflict; (4) feedback mechanisms to sustain personal, organizational, and social change efforts. International case examples will be used to broaden the learning and application of course content. The course format will be interactive and experiential. Readings, assignments, and activities are interdisciplinary and grounded in social work knowledge and practices.

### Course Objectives

- 1) Examine theories and models to build leadership and communication skills for individuals to champion social change —regardless of one’s formal position of power.
- 2) Enhance one’s ability to engage in dialogue that fosters open, authentic communication through inquiry, listening, as well as providing and receiving feedback.
- 3) To build one’s toolkit of models and strategies that inspires and aligns others to a shared vision while simultaneously managing uncertainty, expectations, and conflict.
- 4) Develop skill in group facilitation and planning as part of leading social change.
- 5) Build interpersonal skills to navigate personal, organizational and social change processes through communication and dialogue.

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## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Bojer, M.M., Roehl, H., Knuth, M. & Magner, C. (2008). *Mapping Dialogue: Essential Tools for Social Change*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publications.

Whitney, D., Trosten-Bloom, Cooperrider, D. (2010). *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change*, 2nd Edition.

***Additional required readings will be available on Blackboard.***

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## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS

### **Class Participation (150 points)**

Class participation points are allocated based on (a) students overall level of participation and (b) students' facilitation of an in-class discussion using a specific communication tool. Further guidelines will be distributed in class.

### **Content Quizzes (50 points each)**

Individuals are expected to complete all weekly readings by Monday of the week they are assigned. On Mondays, a quiz, which covers the content from the assigned readings, will be distributed at the start of class. Make-up quizzes will not be provided.

### **Skills Application Project (600 points)**

The skills application project is a self-designed learning opportunity to develop skills in a particular area of leadership, communication, and change. Individuals will have flexibility in crafting their project and will receive feedback and consulting from the instructor and peers to inform the project and maximize student learning. There are 3 parts to this project:

**Part I:** Individuals are required to submit a brief planning document that outlines your area of focus for the skills application project. The components of the planning document include: (1) your learning goals; (2) your plans to have a "live" conversation to promote change; (3) discussion of your plans for the final paper, (4) timeline for completing each component. The planning document will help guide your work through the semester and offer an opportunity for feedback. Due: June 9<sup>th</sup> (No page limit). (100 points)

**Part II:** Each individual will select and use a communication tool to help you facilitate or engage in a "live" conversation (or dialogue). The purpose of the conversation is to open the door for positive change. Individuals may select an area from your work or personal life and will be some granted in class preparation time. Students are required to submit a 2-3 page paper documenting the experience after completing the conversation. This paper will be due on the last day of class (July 7<sup>th</sup>). (150 points)

**Part II:** Individuals are required to complete a comprehensive final paper integrating class discussion, theory, and readings. This paper is an in-depth examination of how people

(regardless of formal position of power) can navigate personal, organizational or social change through communication and dialogue. Students have flexibility to design their final paper to meet one's personal learning goals. Accordingly, students can select one of four formats for the paper: (350 points)

- *Case study*- The case study format asks the student to review a historical or present issue related to *social or organizational change*, communication, and leadership. The student will conduct an in-depth analysis of the tools, interventions, and theories through the lens of the "case". The student will analyze the strengths and areas of improvement and provide recommendations for practice. Students will select their own case study.
- *Project in your organization* – Individuals may decide to conduct a project or design an intervention within their organization. The development of this project needs to be informed by the theories, approaches, and communication strategies discussed in class.
- *Research paper or Book analysis*- For the research paper option, individuals may conduct an in-depth analysis of a theory or communication strategy that is important to you. Individuals will be required to research specific topics and discuss the application of approaches or theories researched.
- *Toolkit* – Individuals may develop a toolkit or training guide that seeks to build leadership, communication skills for promoting organizational or social change. The toolkit may integrate several approaches and/or apply to a specific population, setting, or situation.

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## GRADING 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

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## DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

Note: All readings are to be completed on the Monday of the week the readings are assigned.

Date	Assigned Reading	Deliverables
<b>First Class Day June 2</b>	Introduction to course. In-class opening activities.	
<b>Week One June 6-9</b>	Edmondson, A.C. & Smith, D. M. (2006). Too hot to handle: how to manage relationship conflict. <i>California Review Management</i> , 49(1):6-31. Kotter, J. P. (1995, March/April). Leading Change: Why transformational efforts fail. <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , 59-67. Latting J. K. & Ramsey, V. J. (2009). Building Effective Relationships. (Chapter 4). <i>Reframing Change</i> . (pp. 69-97). Patterson et al. (2002). Mastering crucial conversations: The power of dialogue. (Chapter 2). <i>Crucial Conversations</i> by (pp: 17-26) Weeks, H. (2001). Taking the stress out of stressful conversations. <i>Harvard Business Review</i> . 112-119.	Weekly Quiz (June 6)  Planning Guide Due (June 10, 8am, electronic submission)
<b>Week Two June 13-16</b>	Figuroa, M. E., Kincaid, D. L., Rani, M., & Lewis, G. (2002). <i>Communication for social change: An integrated model for measuring the process and its outcomes</i> . Retrieved from <a href="http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/socialchange.pdf">http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/socialchange.pdf</a>  Mapping Dialogue: Essential Tools for Social Change – pp.9-36 and 47-54	Weekly Quiz (June 13)
<b>Week Three June 20-23</b>	Mapping Dialogue: Essential Tools for Social Change – pp. 55-145	Weekly Quiz (June 20)
<b>Week Four June 27-30</b>	Mapping Dialogue: Essential Tools for Social Change, pp. 37-46  The Power of Appreciative Inquiry, Chapters 1-6	Weekly Quiz (June 27)
<b>Week Five July 5-7</b>	The Power of Appreciative Inquiry, Chapters 7-12	Weekly Quiz (July 5)  Live Conversation Brief Paper Due (July 7)  Final Paper Due (M, July 11am, 8am, electronic submission)

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## **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 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.

## **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.

## **USE OF BLACKBOARD IN CLASS**

In this class the professor uses Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give students online quizzes and surveys. Students can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk by calling 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please plan accordingly.

## **FEEDBACK STATEMENT**

During this course the professor will ask students to provide feedback on their learning in informal as well as formal ways, including through anonymous surveys about how the professor's teaching strategies are helping or hindering student learning. It is very important for the professor to know the students' reactions to what is taking place in class, so students are encouraged to respond to these surveys, ensuring that together the professor and students can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.

## CLASSROOM PRACTICES

As students enter the UT School of Social Work, they are simultaneously entering into a profession that puts forth a set of ethical responsibilities and values that all social workers must follow. As such, students are held to the NASW ethical mandates and Standards for Social Work Education as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Students are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions and activities. A student is considered absent if they arrive more than 10 minutes late to class, leave early, or are unable to come to class. More than two absences can result in a reduction by one letter grade or failure. Students are responsible for any and all material missed due to absences.

Students missing two or more class sessions may receive a 10% reduction in their overall course grade. Students missing three (3) or more class sessions may receive an "F" for the course. The instructor may use her/his discretion. Students should not register for this class if he/she has a conflict with the schedule, however emergencies are understandable. As soon as you know that you will not be attending class because of an emergency, please let your instructor know by email.

Students are encouraged to contribute to ask questions during class time and contribute to class discussion. If further assistance or guidance is needed, students are encouraged to visit the professor during office hours or make an appointment. Students also can feel free to contact the professor via email with questions, comments, or feedback. Emails and telephone calls will be returned in a timely manner based on the instructor's availability.

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is the style manual to be used by all students in this course. Therefore, appropriate referencing is required on all written assignments. If you are unfamiliar with this resource, a copy of the manual is available in the LRC (SWB 1.218).