

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

<b>Course Number:</b>	SW381T	<b>Instructor's name:</b>	Cal Streeter
<b>Unique Number:</b>	94860	<b>Office Number:</b>	3.130G
<b>Semester:</b>	Summer 2011	<b>Office Phone:</b>	512.471.0543
<b>Meeting Time/Place:</b>	M-W, 5:30-8:00 pm, Room. 2.112	<b>Email:</b>	cstreeter@mail.utexas.edu
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**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 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 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:

1. 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**);
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 (**PB 27**);

3. 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)**;
4. Assess various evidence-based intervention approaches for working with organizations and communities **(PB 11)**;
5. 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)**;
6. 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)**;
7. 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: Class exercises and activities, exams and class project

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

Objectives 5 and 6

Assignment: Class exercises and activities, exams and class project

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

Objectives (not specified)

Assignment: Class exercises and activities, exams and class project

**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: Class exercises and activities, exams and class project

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

Objective 6

Assignment: Class exercises and activities, exams and class project

### III. 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 may include small group experiential learning, videotapes to generate discussion, and guest speakers who work in agency and community-based settings.

### IV. Required and Recommended Texts, and Materials

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

Assigned readings that are not from the text are available on-line in the course documents section of the class Blackboard page. Additional readings may be assigned as we go through the semester. These readings will, in most cases, also be available on-line. If additional readings are assigned, I will notify the class the week before so that students will have adequate time to read it before class.

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 is provided at the end of the syllabus. You might peruse the bibliography to see if there are titles that you find interesting and would like to investigate.

### V. Course Requirements

Course requirements consist of a small group assignment and two exams. A description of the assignment is provided below. I try to return all exams and assignments within 1 week. I do not take class time to go over exams in detail, so if students have questions about their grade, they should see me individually.

Course requirements, due dates, and their contribution to the final grade are summarized below.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>% of Course</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
<b>Exam one</b>		<b>25%</b>	27 June
<b>Exam two</b>		<b>25%</b>	20 July
<b>Class project</b>			
Written report	35%		
Presentation	15%		
<b>Total project grade</b>		<b>50%</b>	<b>25 July</b>

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

Each of the course requirements is described in detail below. However, sometimes students still have questions about the assignments. If this is the case, please feel free to ask for clarification at any time during the course. Students may ask for clarification on an individual basis or they can ask questions at the beginning of each class session.

**Exams.** There will be two exams. The first exam will be on 27 June and will include material covered in the first half of the class. The second exam will be on 20 July. This exam will focus on material from the second half of the course. Each exam is worth 25% of your final grade. The exams will draw heavily from the readings and class discussions. Format for exams may include multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions. Only in the case of illness or other unforeseen emergencies will make-up exams be given. The format of make-up exams is at the discretion of the instructor.

**Neighborhood Analysis and Strategy Planning.** Reading about and discussing communities and organizations is one way for students to become familiar with the complexity and range of variation found in communities and organizations. However, becoming involved in an actual project can enhance the learning experience and helps students translate the abstract concepts and theories about communities and organizations into meaningful and practical applications for the design and maintenance of effective community-based initiatives.

As social workers, much of your professional work will involve working with task groups (boards, task forces, committees, etc.). In this project, students will work in teams of 4-6 students to conduct an analysis of a defined neighborhood in Austin. First, each group will conduct a neighborhood analysis using conceptual frameworks presented in class. Next, the group will conduct an analysis of the critical problems facing the residents of the neighborhood. Finally, the group will select one of the problems and develop a strategy for mobilizing residents to action. Since things move very quickly during the summer session, some class time will be given to the teams to help facilitate the project (see course schedule).

This project is worth 50% of your course grade. It will involve two parts: a 15-20 page double spaced written report (35%) and an in-class presentation (15%).

This a group project and I hold the entire group responsible for the successful completion of the project. That means that the group should address issues regarding quality standards for the project, timely task completion, workload, etc. If and when problems arise in the group, the group should work as a unit to try to develop appropriate solutions. Of course, as professor, I will be available to consult with the groups as needed.

As a group project, all members of the group will get the same grade unless I feel some differential grading is appropriate (see note below). At the end of the semester, each member of the group will evaluate their own performance and the performance of all other members of the group using a standard evaluation form provided by the professor. This evaluation, along with my observations through the semester, will be the basis for determining if differential grading will occur.

**Written report.** Each group will produce a written report that includes a title page, acknowledgments (if appropriate), an executive summary, and a bibliography. The final report should be well organized, concisely written, neatly presented, and follow the APA style. In other words, the final report should look like a professional document. The written report will contain 3 parts.

*Neighborhood Analysis.* The neighborhood analysis will apply conceptual frameworks presented in class to help us understand the neighborhood. It is called an analysis because it is focused on understanding as much as we can about the neighborhood; its demographics, history, culture, income distribution, housing characteristics, beliefs and attitudes, politics, etc. The analysis is not a needs assessment, although some identification of needs/problems will likely emerge from the analysis. Nor is it a resource assessment, although you will certainly be identifying the unique resources of the neighborhood.

*Problem Analysis.* Most community organizing is focused on issues. Issues generally emerge as communities struggle with social problems. A social problem is a broad area of concern such as health care, pollution, lack of affordable housing, etc. An issue is about a solution or partial solution to a problem. More specifically, issues tend to emerge when there is not agreement about the appropriate solutions to a social problem. If there is unanimous agreement, there is no issue. Based on your neighborhood analysis, provide a general overview of the most critical social problems facing the neighborhood (at least 3). Next, select one of those problems and conduct an analysis of that problem. What is the history of the problem in the neighborhood? What data indicates that there is a problem? Is the source of the problem located in the neighborhood or outside? Are there subparts to this problem and how are they related to one another? Who is impacted by the problem? Next, identify and describe the possible solutions to the problem (at least 2). What are the pros and cons to each option? Who is likely to support each option? Who will likely oppose each option? Is there any space for common ground? If so, what is that space? What resources will be needed for each option to be successful? What unique resources/assets exist in the neighborhood that would support each option? After comparing the pros and cons of each option, select the option you think is most likely to be successful in your neighborhood.

*Develop a Strategy.* Use the Strategy Chart presented in class to develop a plan of action. The strategy chart allows you to define the short-term, intermediate and long-term goals of your plan of action, the resources need to be successful, constituents and supports, targets, and tactics.

***Presentation.*** Each group will present their project to the class on July 25. The presentation can include PowerPoint, graphs, charts, overhead projection, pictures, slides, videos, posters, web pages, role plays, etc. The goal of the presentation is for your group to gain support for its plan of action. Your group will define the situation (audience and purpose) and then tailor the presentation to that situation. For example, you may be trying to recruit new members to your organization. You might be asking the audience to support some cause or action that you are planning (letter writing campaign, support for a candidate, participate in a boycott, etc.). You might be presenting a request for funding to an allocation board or asking for donation from a group of concerned citizens. You might be presenting a set of recommendation for changing a policy to the Board of Directors, City Council, and Commissioner's Court. Or perhaps you are giving testimony before a legislative committee regarding your issue of concern. Each group will have 15-20 minutes to make their presentation so it will need to be focused and well organized.

**NOTE:** As the professor, I do reserve the right to award differentially weighted grades on the group project. This will normally occur when a member of the group fails to actively participate in the group, consistently misses deadline for assigned tasks, or produces work that is below

the quality standards expected for the project. In other words, if a student's individual performance is consistently below par so that it jeopardizes the grades of the other members of the group, I will down grade that student.

## **VI. Class Policies**

**Class Attendance and Participation.** Attendance and participation are important for effective learning. This means that students should not only attend class but should be prepared to actively participate in class discussions. At the same time, there may be occasions when students will not be able to attend class because of illness or other unforeseen problems. In such cases, it would be appropriate for the student to notify the professor before class that they will not be in class. In the case of excessive absences, the professor reserves the right to deduct points from a student's final course grade.

**Publication style manual.** The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 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](http://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: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/>. Students are asked to notify the professor of any accommodations they may need prior to the end of the second week of class.

**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.

**VII. Course Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Text / Readings</b>
June 6	Introduction and course overview <b>Form project groups</b>	
June 8	Community Practice: An Introduction <b>Skills Inventory and work plan</b>	Text: Chapter 1 Hightower: Rebellion is What Built America Loeb: We Don’t Have To Be Saints
June 13	Understanding the Social Environment	Text: Chapters 2 and 3
June 15	Community and Community Practice <b>Project work day</b>	Text: Chapters 4 and 5 Streeter: Community Overview
June 20	Community Analysis Community Maps Mapping Community Resources	Text: Chapters 6 Kretzman & McKnight: Asset-based Community Development
June 22	Mapping Community Resources (cont.) Professional use of self in community practice <b>Project work day</b>	Text: Chapter 7
June 27	<b>Exam one</b>	
June 29	Understanding the agency and work groups <b>Project work day</b>	Text: Chapters 8 and 9
July 4	<b>NO CLASS</b>	

July 6	The community as a social network <b>Project work day</b>	Text: Chapter 10 Streeter: Safe School/Healthy Students Initiative
July 11	Community intervention: Models and approaches	Text: Chapter 12 Rothman: Multi-methods of intervention at the macro level
July 13	Organizing for community change	Text: Chapter 13 and 14
July 18	Social marketing <b>Project work day</b>	Text: Chapter 11
July 20	<b>Exam two</b>	
July 25	<b>Presentation of class projects</b> <b>Final project is due</b>	

### VIII. Bibliography

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