

**Practice with communities and organizations**  
**The University of Texas at Austin**  
**School of Social Work**

SW 334:	Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities	INSTRUCTOR:	JEMEL P. AGUILAR, PHD., M.S.W.
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines the organizational context within which social services are delivered: how funding, mandate, and organizational arrangements influence service delivery, and factors to consider in efforts to modify existing organizational arrangements. The course 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. The course also includes an overview of the development of the community in America and the interaction between communities and service organizations. Attention is given to particular elements of organizational and community dynamics affecting diverse gender and ethnic groups.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course the student should be:

1. Familiar with the major concepts and dynamics of formal organizations and their influence on social work practice; **(PB11, 27)**
2. Familiar with the impact of the organizational mandate, funding sources, and other constituencies on problem definitions and goal formulation; **(PB27)**
3. Able to identify major concepts in organizational theories and to explain how such concepts relate to social work practiced at individual, family, organizational, and community levels, each as a focus of social work practice; **(PB11, 27)**
4. Familiar with the influence of community norms, priorities, and competitive community factions on the definition of problem/need and resource allocation for the delivery of social services; **(PB12, 27)**
5. Familiar with relevant cultures and how culture shapes individual lives and community

processes. **(PB 12, 27)**

6. Able to understanding mezzo and macro economic events and how these events impact individual and community welfare **(PB27, 28)**
7. Familiar with the involvement of lay citizen groups as staff supplement and as a potential strategy for change; **(PB11, 27, 28)**
8. Familiar with information about special service populations and the participation of such populations in professional settings and community organizations; **(PB12, 27)**
9. Familiar with basic planning approaches, their advantages, and disadvantages and be able to utilize an empirical approach and associated tools to gather and analyze data to describe populations and communities and design service programs **(PB12, 28)**.

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, 7

Assignment: Problem analysis Paper

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

Objectives 4, 5, 8, 9

Assignment: Initial assessment paper

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

Objectives (not specified)

Assignment: Problem analysis and initial assessment paper

**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, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Assignment: Problem analysis and Intervention paper

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

Objectives 6, 7, 9

Assignment: Intervention paper

### Required Texts

Netting, F.E., Kettner, P.M., & McMurtry, S.L. (2008). *Social work macro practice*, 4th edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

### Course Requirements

Assignment	Due date	Points
Macro practice in my area	January 31	0
Problem analysis	February 14	100
Exam	March 7	100
Initial assessment	March 21	100
Intervention	April 18	100
Presentation	April 18-25	100
Final exam	May 2	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>600</b>

*Assignment descriptions will be provided in class and will be available on blackboard the date after they are discussed in class.*

### Schedule

Date	Readings	Topics	Assignments
Week of Jan 19 <sup>1</sup>		Introductions	
Week of Jan 24	Chapter 1	What is Macro practice?	
Week of Jan 31	Chapter 2, 3	History and problems	<i>Macro practice in my area</i>
Week of Feb 7	Chapter 4	Populations	
Week of Feb 14	Chapter 5	Communities	<b>Problem analysis due</b>
Week of Feb 21	Chapter 6	Community Assessment	
Week of Feb 28	Chapter 7	Organizations	
Week of March 7	Chapter 8	Organizational assessment	<b>Exam</b>
Week of March 14	<b>Spring break</b>		
Week of March 21	Chapter 9	Gathering Support	<b>Initial assessment due</b>
Week of March 28	Chapter 10	Strategies	
Week of April 4	Chapter 11	Interventions	
Week of April 11	<b>In-class project work with instructor</b>		
Week of April 18	<b>Presentations</b>		<b>Intervention due</b>
Week of April 25			
Week of May 2	<b>Final exam</b>		

### Class Expectations

Grade	Description	Points
EXCELLENT (A):	Significantly <u>exceeds</u> expectations (more than is required) & demonstrates in-depth critical thinking/analysis (e.g., coherent integration of ideas).	540 or above
GOOD (B):	Meets all the requirements & demonstrates in-depth critical thinking/analysis	539 – 480
AVERAGE (C):	Meets the requirements or has minor gaps but fails to demonstrate in-depth critical thinking /analysis.	479 - 420
BELOW AVERAGE (≤D):	Has important gaps in knowledge and has limited knowledge of the course of study	419 - 360
Failed (F)	Fails to demonstrate in-depth critical thinking/analysis and does not meet requirements for course of study	359 or below

- 1 All readings and assignments are due the Monday of the week they are assigned. Assignments are to be handed in the first fifteen minutes of class and are not accepted electronically **under any circumstances**. Assignments submitted after the due date and/or times are late and will receive one level grade reduction for each day they are late.

Students are expected to attend all classes and to participate in an interactive framework between collegiate students and the professor. 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 attend the class and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade. Students will be allowed one (1) absence. Role will be taken each class period. In cases where a student misses more than one class, the professor will lower that student's final grade by one grade level for each class missed beyond one absence. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences. Any student missing more than 4 classes (excused or unexcused) is in jeopardy of failing this course.

### ***University Electronic Mail Notification Policy***

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

In this course e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements. Note: if you are an employee of the University, your e-mail address in Blackboard is your employee address.

### ***Persons with Disabilities***

Students with disabilities who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259- voice or 471-4641 – TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course *at the beginning of the semester* and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed.

See website below for more information:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php>

### **NOTE TO THE STUDENTS ABOUT FEEDBACK**

Feedback is an important part of any kind of learning. Without feedback on how well you understand the material, it is more difficult for you to make significant progress. During this course I will be asking to give me feedback on your learning in some informal and formal ways, such as assignments, orally as well as on exams. I also ask that you let me

know when something we discuss is not clear. This kind of information communication will enable me to provide additional information when needed or to explain a concept in different terms.

In addition to feedback on your learning, I will be asking for feedback from you about how my teaching strategies are helping or hindering your learning. This kind of feedback is very important to me as I continually strive to be the best teacher I can be. Some of this feedback will be gathered from online anonymous surveys. I encourage you to respond to these surveys so that together we can create an effective teaching and learning environment.

### ***Religious Holidays***

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors *at least fourteen days prior* to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.

### ***Requirements for all Written Assignments***

All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and formatted in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Thus, papers should be written on 8 1/2 x 11 in white paper, in black ink, 12-pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and 1 inch margins. A complete description for formatting your papers is available on beginning on page 283 of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.)

The instructor will evaluate your writing on the basis of content, format, and writing style (organization, clarity, grammar, punctuation, etc.). If the student includes in-text citations for a reference list and more than 5 of these citations/references are incorrect, then paper will be automatically reduced by 15 points.

All students are expected to conform to the rules of scholastic honesty as outlined in the General Bulletin of the University of Texas at Austin. Scholastic misconduct will result in *automatic failure* of the course.

### ***Statement on achievement***

Student achievement in meeting course objectives will be evaluated on the following written, oral, and in-class experiential assignments, regular and punctual class attendance, and informed class participation based upon class readings/assignments. Student feedback

is welcome. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback during office hours, by phone, by e-mail, and by appointment if they desire. If students are concerned about their class performance, the professor is more than willing to work with students to help them improve their course grades prior to the end of the semester. Part of professional accountability includes treating others with respect and courtesy. Within this class, this means you will be expected to listen to the opinions and concerns of others with openness, to offer suggestions and ideas in a positive and respectful manner, and to be willing to promote group cohesiveness in order to create a safe learning environment. The instructor reserves the prerogative to change class assignments as needed to meet the course objectives. The changes will be shared with the students in class or by email.

### **Classroom policies and expectations**

1. 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.
2. Grades are assigned based on the following criteria: The grade of “A” is given for outstanding work that engages course materials with original thought and creativity or a mastery of technical skills. The grade of “B” is given for doing all of the work well. The grade of “C” is given for meeting all course requirements. To obtain a high grade, students must find the time to complete assignments in a way that **integrates and extends** readings, lectures, classroom discussions, and your own critical perspective on the topic.
3. Students are expected to share perspectives and opinions as part of skill development for social work practitioners. Students are expected to behave respectfully toward others who may (and most likely will) view similar situations from a different vantage point. These differences in perspectives do not make one right and the other wrong. Students are expected to critically examine all perspectives and before determining which best fits the situations discussed in class.
4. Phone calls, pagers, and other **communication devices are restricted** from being on or placed in ‘silent’ mode while in class. ‘Ear buds’ are also not allowed. The use of computer is not allowed in class unless you have a professional letter explaining your need. This letter needs to be presented to the professor within the first 2 weeks of the course. Cell phones need to be turned off during class time. 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.

5. Assignments are to be handed in within the **first fifteen minutes of class** and on the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted.
6. The professor is available to students during office hours. Emails and telephone calls will only be returned at that time as well.
7. Disrespect toward others or the professor is not tolerated and will be handled directly and in the context in which it occurs. Disrespectful behavior includes overt acts, such as talking over others or making derogatory comments based on another person's race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religious preference, and/or ability/disability. Moreover, covert acts of disrespect, such as sneers and other derogatory facial expressions, excluding class members from classroom tasks, etc. are also unacceptable.
8. Students are permitted one excused absence. A student is considered absent if they arrive more than 10 minutes late to class, leave early, or are unable to come to class. Any other absences will result in a reduction by one letter grade.
9. Students have the opportunity to evaluate the professor and are expected to critique the course in time for the professor to make changes that will benefit them. If students think the professor has failed to live up to the principles or philosophies listed, they are expected to communicate their concerns directly to the professor and in a constructive manner.