

The University of Texas at Austin  
School of Social Work

<b>Course Number:</b>	<b>SWF395K</b>	<b>Instructor's Name:</b>	Dr. Tommy Darwin
<b>Unique number:</b>	94810	<b>Phone:</b>	512-468-7246
<b>Semester:</b>	Summer 2012	<b>E-Mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:tdarwin@austin.utexas.edu">tdarwin@austin.utexas.edu</a>
<b>Meeting Time/Place and Room:</b>	M-TH 1:30-3:30 SW 2.119	<b>Office Hours:</b>	By Appointment Only

## **LEADERSHIP, COMMUNICATION, and CHANGE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Communication discloses and constitutes our world and our relationships. It is the “stuff” out of which most of what matters to us emerges, and the process by which we generate meaningful change.

This course covers four key areas: 1) dialogue to foster open, authentic communication in organizations and communities, and among individuals; 2) modes and frameworks for communication to inspire and create alignment to a shared vision; 3) Modes of inquiry for discovering mutual interests and managing differences productively; 4) A systems perspective to promote real understanding of complex human situations. The course will be interactive and experiential, and will focus on actually producing communication strategies for a real situation students wish to engage.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Examine theories and models of communication that enable and sustain social change.
2. Increase one’s ability to engage in and sustain dialogue that fosters authentic, generative communication through inquiry and listening.
3. Build one’s toolkit of communication models, frameworks, and strategies for creating and sustaining alignment while respecting difference.
4. Develop understanding of group process and dynamic as part of catalyzing social change.
5. Build interpersonal skills to “read” situations and engage others in a way that is respectful and generative.

### **TEXTS**

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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

## ASSIGNMENTS

Participation/Exercises 20%: Because this is a course in communication and change, the classroom will itself become a “living laboratory” for exploring and engaging community change issues. Throughout the course of the semester, students will participate in a range of exercises designed to build their communication capabilities and their ability to navigate complex social situations effectively.

Mapping 20%: Students will map the systemic factors that constitute the communication situation they want to engage emerges. They will also construct at least two different scenarios for how the challenge could develop and change over time.

Theory of Change 20%: Written in conjunction with the Communication Engagement Project, this short paper will explain why given the situation they have mapped and analyzed, their communication strategy has a chance of working. It should incorporate course readings as well as discoveries they have made in the course of investigating the situation.

Communication Engagement Project 40%: For this capstone assignment, students will use the theories, models, and practices they have learned during the course to create a communication strategy to engage particular exigence that matters to them, an issue they currently work with or would like to work with in the future. The “deliverables” for the project will include any actual materials they will need for the engagement (e.g., powerpoints, videos, fliers, manifestos, training material, conversational scripts, web-copy, FB page, etc) as well as a plan for how they will deploy them.

## CLASS POLICIES

1. Students are expected to attend class. Students who are absent after the break will be considered absent for the entire class, unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor.
2. Except under extremely unusual circumstances, assignments must be completed on the due date and turned in at the beginning of class on the due date.
3. If students are concerned about their class performance, the instructor is more than willing to work with students to help them improve either their understanding of group theory, use of self in understanding group process, or becoming more comfortable in group interaction. The instructor can meet with students privately either before or after class, or by appointment.
4. Student feedback is welcome. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback either in class, during office hours, and by appointment if they desire.
5. Small groups are expected to resolve challenges within their group context. The instructor is willing to serve as a consultant if groups have worked diligently to resolve their difference but have been unsuccessful.

## **GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **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.

As part of professional courtesy in class, cell phones, laptops (unless otherwise indicated due to a learning disability), text-messaging, etc. will not allowed during class hours, other than at the designated break time.

### **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.

