

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Social Work Practice in Organizations and Communities

Course/Unique Number: SW 334/ 64021	Semester: Fall 2015
Meeting Time: M/W 4.00-5.30	Location: SSW 2.118
Professor: Diane McDaniel Rhodes, PhD	Diane.Rhodes@utexas.edu SSW 3.116D 512.471.1831 Office Hours: Mondays 2.30 – 3.30 Wednesdays 2.30 – 3.30 Thursdays 2 – 3 & By appointment
TA:	 Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30 – 4 Thursdays 3 – 5

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Social Work seeks to bring order, connect private troubles to public causes, and help disenfranchised people create better lives for themselves. In this class you will learn about practicing social work in organizations and in communities. This course examines the community and organizational context within which social services are delivered: community engagement. Additionally, you will learn how funding, mandates, and organizational arrangements influence service delivery and community and individual wellbeing.

This course emphasizes the interlocking and complex nature of structural systems, culture, and personal identity with content on populations-at-risk, and learning to identify and analyze the factors that contribute to and constitute being at risk. The course introduces the student to the obligation that social services meet the needs of communities served. This includes equipping students with skills to recognize diversity within and between groups that may influence assessment, planning, intervention, policy 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 community dynamics within global contexts and international practice.

II. 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. **(PB 12, 27)**
7. Able to understanding mezzo and macro economic events and how these events impact individual and community welfare **(PB27, 28)**
8. Familiar with the involvement of lay citizen groups as staff supplement and as a potential strategy for change; **(PB11, 27, 28)**
9. Familiar with information about special service populations and the participation of such populations in professional settings and community organizations;**(PB12, 27)**
10. 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).**

III. REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

The Handbook of Community Practice. 2nd Edition. Marie Weil, Editor. Sage Publishers. 2013.

The Instructor will assign additional reading and video to supplement the text. Supplemental articles, handouts and links will be posted on Canvas.

IV. TEACHING METHODS

This course incorporates a variety of teaching methods including lectures, readings, in-class and online discussions, guest speakers, audiovisual materials, group activities, and student presentations to ensure a rich learning experience.

******Students are expected to contribute through significant active participation in collaborative class activities and discussions.***

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The following assignments and activities will be completed during the semester. Your grade will be based on a total of **100 points** accrued by the end of the semester.

Detailed directions and grading criteria for each assignment are posted on Canvas.

Class attendance & participation (30 pts.)

This is a practice level class – you must attend class – if you are absent you will lose grade points. This class will meet 26 times, not including the first day of class. Each class is worth 1 point. The other 4 points will be based on your participation during class time by speaking up, paying attention, etc.

Reading Reflection Essays (10x 2pts.) (20 pts.)

The purpose of the essay is for you to immerse yourself in and be fully prepared to discuss and apply the material as we are learning it.

Summarize the main points in the chapter and critically reflect on what the chapters teach you about social work practice in organizations and communities. Include at least one real world example from:

- Organizations you've volunteered or worked for in the past (or at present)
- The current news cycle
- Popular culture (a movie, book, blog, etc.)

Reflections must:

- Have a cover page with your name, the class name, and date
- Be at least 500 words long, typed, double spaced, 1-inch margins, with page numbers (you may go longer if you need to)
- Be handed in as a hard copy at the beginning of class on the due dates

Observation reflection (10 pts.)

Conduct an observational study of a social service system or structure in action (e.g., observe the waiting-room at a TANF office, or in a social service agency), court proceedings (e.g., observe a juvenile court case, or a protective order docket), or the criminal processing of offenders (e.g., do a "ride-along" with the city police). Write a 750-word, typed, double-spaced paper with 1-inch margins and page numbers that describes your observations and interactions between participants and systems. Use the following questions to guide your writing.

1. What did you observe? Describe in detail the setting, people (and their roles), and circumstances you observed.
2. Discuss any problems that you encountered with the process and strategies employed.
3. What did you accomplish, both individually and as part of the large group of students at the capitol?
4. Observation and listening can be very useful in the development of assessment skills and planning. Based on your observations, formulate two separate ways a social worker might have (or did) impact the setting, people, or circumstances.

Mini- Hypothetical Grant Proposal (10pts)

For this assignment, you will compose a grant proposal for a hypothetical social service project or program. You can be creative in suggesting your project topic, though the idea should be your own and it should relate to an existing social service program that you have worked/volunteered in.

Group project (30 pts.)

You will be assigned a group to work with on a community based group project the will include identifying a community, conducting a needs assessment, identifying a community need/issue/problem, developing a strategy for addressing said problem within the resources, limitations and real life character of the community.

Your primary time for this project will be in class on Wednesdays, so be sure to bring your technology to class on Wednesdays to facilitate working. You will also need to go into the community you choose to do some of this work – so we'll need to think through transportation etc.

Your group will present your project at the end of the semester.

VI. COURSE POLICIES

1. Conduct and Civility: Social work students adhere to the Student Standards for Professional Conduct of the NASW Code of Ethics and assume responsibility for their conduct. Scholastic honesty and integrity are to be consistent social work values. The instructor will comply with University guidelines regarding scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism. Social work practitioners respect others; therefore, differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected. Students will help create and support a learning environment that does not interfere with the learning of fellow students.

2. Readings and Preparatory Assignments: Students are expected to be active participants in the classroom community. Students are also expected to complete readings and preparatory assignments prior to class. Failure to demonstrate comprehension of the readings will be considered when assigning the final grade. Students are responsible for the material in the assigned readings whether or not the material is covered in class. Professor reserves the right to conduct quizzes should there be a pattern of students not demonstrating that they have completed the readings and are not prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion.

3. Professional Communication and Interactions: Refrain from private conversations during class or other disruptive behavior. Class participation is required. Speak up and contribute to class. Disrespectful behavior is against the University Honor Code and will not be tolerated.

4. Class Attendance Policy: Punctuality and timeliness are important for social work practitioners. Class attendance is required. It is your responsibility to sign the weekly attendance sheet. The instructor should be notified in advance of any planned absence and as soon as possible in the case of an unforeseen, serious emergency.

5. Assignments and Grades: Assignments should be turned in via email prior to 8.00pm on the date they are due, barring serious, unforeseen medical illness or family emergencies. Late assignments will be considered when assigning the final grade.

6. Writing Style: The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association Sixth Edition (APA) is the style manual to be used by all students.

7. Use of Canvas: The instructor uses Canvas, the web-based learning management system of The University of Texas at Austin. If you do not have a personal computer with personal Internet access, there are computers available for your use at the SW Learning Resource Center (LRC), the Flawn Academic Center, and campus and public libraries.

7. Course Modification: To ensure achievement for course objectives, the professor reserves the right to make modifications to any part of this syllabus related to schedule and assignment due dates. Should any modifications be made, students will be notified in class and modifications will also be posted to the WIKI page. Students should check their email and WIKI frequently. Note that some of the links to

documents and videos on the Internet may change. Documents, new links or alternate options will be provided.

VII. 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.

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 14 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 the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office gives you instructions to do so.

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading	Work Due
Week 1			
Wed 8/26	Introductions Course Overview Review of Syllabus and Assignments		
Week 2			
Mon 8/31	Engaged Social Work Context of Community Practice	Weil Ch. 1 & 2	Reading Reflection Paper
Wed 9/2	Social Justice and Community Practice	Weil Ch. 3 & 4	
Week 3			
Mon 9/7	Labor Day / No class		
Wed 9/9	Theories of Community	Weil Ch. 5 & 6	Reading Reflection Paper
Week 4			
Mon 9/14	Community Development / Community Organizing	Weil Ch. 7 & 10	Reading Reflection Paper
Wed 9/16	Group work on the community assessment project		
Week 5			
Mon 9/21	Community Planning	Weil Ch. 12 & 14	Reading Reflection Paper
Wed 9/23	Group work on the community assessment		

	project		
Week 6			
Mon 9/28	Policy and practice	Weil Ch. 18	Reading Reflection Paper
Wed 9/30	Group work on the community assessment project		
Week 7			
Mon 10/5	Social and Economic development in a changing world	Weil Ch. 23	Reading Reflection Paper
Wed 10/7	Group work on the community assessment project		
Week 8			
Mon 10/12	Restorative Justice	Weil Ch. 27	Reading Reflection Paper
Wed 10/14	Group work on the community assessment project		
Week 9			
Mon 10/19	Global issues in community practice	Weil Ch. 28	Reading Reflection Paper Observation Paper
Wed 10/21	Group work on the community assessment project		
Week 10			
Mon 10/26	Global Poverty	Weil Ch. 29	Reading Reflection Paper
Wed 10/28	Group work on the community assessment project		
Week 11			
Mon 11/2	International practice	Weil Ch. 30	Reading Reflection Paper
Wed 11/4	Group work on the community assessment project		
Week 12			
Mon 11/9	Community-based organizations	Weil Ch. 32	Reading Reflection Paper Mini Grant Proposal
Wed 11/11	Group work on the community assessment project		
Week 13			
Mon 11/16	Fundraising & sustaining organizations	Weil Ch. 37	Reading Reflection Paper
Wed 11/18	Group work on the community assessment project		
Week 14			
Mon 11/23	Program evaluation	Weil Ch. 38	Reading Reflection Paper
Wed 11/25	Thanksgiving Holiday. No class.		
Week 15			
Mon 11/30	Community Project Presentations		
Wed 12/2	Community Project Presentations		

IX. Course Grading:

94.0 and Above	A
90.0 to 93.999	A-
87.0 to 89.999	B+
84.0 to 86.999	B
80.0 to 83.999	B-
77.0 to 79.999	C+
74.0 to 76.999	C
70.0 to 73.999	C-
67.0 to 69.999	D+
64.0 to 66.999	D
60.0 to 63.999	D-
Below 60.0	F