

**The University of Texas at Austin**  
**School of Social Work**  
**Social Work Practice in Organizations and Communities**  
**(Required Course – BSW Program)**

<b>Course Number:</b> SW334	<b>Instructor:</b> Diane McDaniel Rhodes, PhD <b>E-mail:</b> diane.rhodes@utexas.edu
<b>Unique Number:</b> 60765	<b>Phone:</b> (512) 471-1831
<b>Semester:</b> Spring 2016	<b>Office:</b> SSW 3.122F
<b>Meeting Time:</b> M/W 4:00 to 5:30pm	<b>Office Hours:</b> TBD
<b>Meeting Place:</b> SSW 2.132	<b>TA:</b> <b>Email:</b> <b>Office Hours:</b> TBD

## **I. Course Description**

Social Work seeks to bring order, to 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, as well as how funding, mandate, and organizational arrangements influence service delivery, and community and individual wellbeing.

The course emphasizes the interlocking and complex nature of structural systems, 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 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 with 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.
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. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.** Marie Weil, Editor. Sage Publishers. 2013. The Instructor will assign additional reading and video to supplement the text. Supplemental articles, handouts and links are posted to the class WIKI.

### **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 for each assignment are posted on the class wiki including the grading criteria.

#### **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 (2 pts. X 10 essays = 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.)

Your reflection must:

- Have a cover page with your name, the class name,
- Be at least 500 words long, double spaced, 1 inch margins, with page numbers (you can certainly 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 paper that describes your observations and interactions between participants and systems. The paper must be typed and double-spaced.

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; a Web-based course management /collective workspace. 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, campus and public libraries.

**8. 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 AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM.** The professor expects students to act as 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. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

**UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS.** Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at [512-471-3515](tel:512-471-3515) or online at [www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/](http://www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/).

**POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION.** Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

**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://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>).

**USE OF COURSE MATERIALS.** The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

**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). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/how-to-register-with-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, examination, work assignment, or 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.

**TITLE IX REPORTING.** In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Students who report incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct to faculty, instructors, and/or staff who supervise students, will be provided a list of University resources. If the incident is impacting the

academic environment, a report will be provided to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.

**CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY.** Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

**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 for keeping the university informed about a change of 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 between 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](tel: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 in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering 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

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments Due
1	W 1/20	Introductions Course Overview Review of Syllabus and Assignments	
2	M 1/25	Engaged Social Work and the Context of Community Practice	Weil Ch. 1 & 2
	W 1/27	Social Justice and Community Practice	Weil Ch. 3 & 4
3	M 2/1	Theories of Community	Weil Ch. 5 & 6
	W 2/3	Community Development / Community Organizing	Weil Ch. 7 & 10
4	M 2/8	Community Planning	Weil Ch. 12 & 14
	W 2/10	Group work on community assessment projects	
5	M 2/15	Policy and practice	Weil Ch. 18
	W 2/17	Group work on community assessment projects	
6	M 2/22	Social and Economic development in a changing world	Weil Ch. 23
	W 2/24	Group work on community assessment projects	
7	M 2/29	Restorative Justice	Weil Ch. 27
	W 3/2	Group work on community assessment projects	
8	M 3/7	Global Poverty	Weil Ch. 29
	W 3/9	Group work on community assessment projects	
9	3/14 - 18	SPRING BREAK	
10	M 3/21	International practice	Weil Ch. 30
	W 3/23	Group work on community assessment projects	
11	M 3/28	Community-based organizations	Weil Ch. 32
	W 3/30	Group work on community assessment projects	
12	M 4/4	Fundraising & sustaining organizations	Weil Ch. 37
	W 4/6	Group work on community assessment projects	
13	M 4/11	Program evaluation	Weil Ch. 38
	W 4/13	Group work on community assessment projects	
14	M 4/18	Community Practice in the Digital Age	Weil Ch. 39
	W 4/20	Group work on the community assessment project	
15	M 4/25	Human Rights and Social Work	Libal & Harding
	W 4/27	Group work on community assessment projects	
16	M 5/2	Community Project Presentations	<i>Community Project Presentations</i>
	W 5/4	Community Project Presentations	

## IX. Course Grading

94.0 - 100 = A	84.0 - 86.999 = B	74.0 - 76.999 = C	64.0 - 66.999 = D
90.0 - 93.999 = A-	80.0 - 83.999 = B-	70.0 - 73.999 = C-	60.0 - 63.999 = D-
87.0 - 89.999 = B+	77.0 - 79.999 = C+	67.0 - 69.999 = D+	Below 60 = F