Course number:	SW 393T20	**Faculty:**	Suzanne Potts, LMSW, MPH
Unique number:	59840	**Office number:**	3.106F
Semester:	Fall 2020	**Office phone:**	(619) 994-1871
Meeting time:	THU 11:30PM-2:30PM	**Email:**	spotts@utexas.edu
Meeting place:	Zoom	**Office Hours:**	By Appointment

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL WORK

I.   COURSE DESCRIPTION

Human services are under increasing pressure to document the services they provide in light of the diminished resources. As a result of these demands, agencies compile data consisting of the number of services provided, the outcomes, and the demographics of clients receiving those services. Human service practitioners and managers are frequently using technological products (i.e., word processing applications, email, text messaging, case management applications) to not only document services provided to clients, but also to facilitate communication, report outcomes to funding agencies, and monitor trends in service delivery. Because human service managers are not working in a technological environment, they must become familiar with the technologies that agencies are typically using to document services, the ways to use technology to improve the overall quality of services provided to clients, and the barriers and opportunities afforded by the increased integration of technology into human services.

This course emphasizes the use of information technology in human service delivery and management (1) to improve overall quality of services provided by agency staff as well as (2) to leverage the implicit knowledge of workers so that agency's foster ongoing innovations in service provision. To that end, students in this course will be exposed to traditional management practices, intra-agency communication strategies using various technologies, factors facilitating and impeding information flow in organizations, and the technological opportunities and limitations facing human services as these organizations integrate technology into their daily operations.

II.   COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course student will be able to:

1.   understand the role of information and technology in both the management and delivery of human services;

2.   understand how organizational, interpersonal, ethical, and cultural factors facilitate and impede the flow and exchange of knowledge (i.e., formal/informal structure, hierarchy, organizational roles, the democratic ideal, and similar factors) within organizations;

3.   identify traditional methods of disseminating and exchanging knowledge in organizations and their strengths and weaknesses (i.e., policy manuals, memo systems, staff meetings, training, MIS, organizational development, and other methods);

4.   apply automated methods of information collection, dissemination and analysis (i.e., database management, report generation, spread sheet analysis, electronic mail systems, and other methods);

5.   assess organizations to determine the ways in which they make use of technology to facilitate communication between staff members and compile client information regarding services and outcomes achieved;

6.   apply general-purpose computer software to such human service information problems as client information and tracking systems, information and referral problems, budget preparation and analysis, and related problems; and,

7.   analyze the differential impact of technology on diverse client and user groups.

III.   TEACHING METHODS

This course is an intensive class-based learning that introduces them to the concepts, processes, and practice of human service information technology. At the end of this course students will be fluent in the terms used for information systems and communication, and will have a theoretical framework to assess information system needs within an organization. Students will develop a logic model for a hypothetical program or project, as well as identify marketing and communication needs to key stakeholders. The instructor will assign students into work teams for the Agency Information System Assessment. These teams will be asked to conduct an assessment of the information systems and communication of an agency and/or the program. The assessment seeks to identify the current technology, information systems and communication process in the agency/program, the agency's technological or communication efforts towards improving the quality of services, and the mechanisms for exchanging knowledge among staff or programs within the agency/program. Student teams will meet with the instructor to discuss the process and outcome of the assessment for the assigned program and then host a presentation on their findings.

IV.   REQUIRED TEXTS:

All readings are included and linked in the course syllabus. Additional readings may be handed out in class or linked in syllabus.

V.   ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING

The assignments for this class include an in-class assessment based on the readings, presentation of projects, an information system and communication assessment, and an agency presentation. Each section includes the weighted percentage for that grade.

In class participation (15%)
This course will include discussion on in class activities, readings, topics and group work. Your participation in classroom discussion is expected and encouraged. This will be graded by in class activities, attendance to the class and observation by the instructor. Students are expected to read all assigned readings and participate in an active dialogue, using in class discussion. Students may have divergent thinking on topics however discussions are expected to be professional and courteous.

Donor Persona Development (15%)
Students will be expected to create user profiles for their non-profit that identifies different types of end user profiles. These are used to understand who you are serving, who your donors are and who potential partners are the strategies used to reach and engage them.

Infographic (15%)
Students will be expected to develop a topic, outline, content, and references for an Infographic or marketing project from an organization of choice. Students will work individually to develop these tools. Project specifics will be handed out in class.

Social Media Plan (15%)
Students will plan a social media campaign related to an organization and/or program of their choice. They will clearly articulate their plan as well as the rationale and intended outcomes of the plan. Project specifics will be handed out in class.

Agency Information System Assessment and Presentation (40%)
Work teams will identify an area agency to assess their agency information system or technology needs. Towards the end of the assessment, each student group is required to submit a presentation (PowerPoint or other presentation tool) assessing a particular project or program with clear recommendations for the agency. Student's will demonstrate that they integrated the readings, analyzed the group process used to coordinate the project, reflected on the student meetings including what was discussed (in terms of tasks), tasks that were completed, and challenges in completing the project. The presentation will be given in class and is expected to include well-developed, carefully thought-out reflections of the team's perspective or ideas and is targeted to the board of the agency that you are assessing. The guidelines for this assessment will be drawn from the readings, and the needs of the organization. Each assessment must include a detailed description of the methodology used to gather information about the agency's technology (i.e., interviews with staff or clients; document reviews), the methods to analyze the data, the conclusions, and recommendations for agency. The team will present the results of their information system assessment to the class. This presentation will be an informal showcasing of process the group engaged in to determine the information system, communication or technological needs of the organization as well as the results of the assessment. Typically, student groups' schedule the presentation and it lasts approximately 30 minutes with 10 minutes for questions and answers. Students' must submit copies of the presentation evaluation to the professor with a brief description of their perspectives of the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation.

VI.   GRADING SCALE

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+
60.0 to 66.999	D
60.0 to 63.999	D-
Below 60.0	F

VII.   CLASS POLICIES
<u>Assignment Submissions</u>
Except in the case of extreme emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. Late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of ten (10) percent of the value of the assignment for each day late. If a student has a significant and unavoidable conflict with an assignment's due date, then they should contact the instructor well in advance to discuss an alternate submission date.
<u>Student Feedback and Performance Questions</u>
Student feedback is welcome. Students are encouraged to provide feedback during office hours, by phone, by e-mail, and otherwise by appointment. If students have questions on a specific assignment or general course topic, the professor is willing to work with them outside of class or office hours**.**

VIII.   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.

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://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/.

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 race, 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. This atmosphere includes working intentionally to recognize and dismantle racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism in the classroom. 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 or online at https://cmhc.utexas.edu/.

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 (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g. blogs) 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/.

SHARING OF COURSE MATERIALS IS PROHIBITED No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

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.

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. **CLASS RECORDINGS.** Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

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.

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 on the basis of sex https://titleix.utexas.edu/. Faculty, field instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, or any other forms of sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at https://titleix.utexas.edu/.

CAMPUS CARRY POLICY. The University's policy on concealed firearms may be found here: https://campuscarry.utexas.edu. You also may find this information by accessing the Quick Links menu on the School's website.
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 have concerns about their behavioral health, or if they are concerned about the behavioral health of someone else, students may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns. 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 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 you are given instructions by the Austin Fire
Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

COVID CAVEATS. To help keep everyone at UT and in our community safe, it is critical that
students report COVID-19 symptoms and testing, regardless of test results, to University Health
Services, and faculty and staff report to the HealthPoint Occupational Health Program (OHP) as
soon as possible. Please see this link to understand what needs to be reported. In addition, to
help understand what to do if a fellow student in the class (or the instructor or TA) tests positive
for COVID, see this University Health Services link.

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Class #	Date	Class content/Activity	Readings for the Week	Assignments
1	Aug 27	Course Overview	**Syllabus review** https://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/technology-articles/why-social-workers-need-data-science/	Pre-survey (emailed before class)
2	Sept 3	Information Seeking/Agency Assessment Overview	**Reading: NASW Technology Standards** **https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=lcTcdsHUcng%3d&portalid=0** **Data Privacy for Non Profits Article:** https://www.squirepattonboggs.com/~/media/files/insights/events/2018/03/data-privacy-for-non-profits/data-privacy-for-nonprofitspptx.pdf	Agency Information Systems project reviewed **(DUE DEC 3)** Working groups determined In class activity: What are Information Systems
3	Sept 10	Social Work and Social Media	**Guest Speaker:** Brooke McMillan, Social Llama Consulting **Reading:** Social Media Best Practices https://mediacause.org/social-media-best-practices-for-nonprofits/	Macro Social Media assignment handed out **(DUE OCT 8)**
4	Sept 17	Making Data Work for You	**Guest Speaker:** Elizabeth Pena, Central Texas Food Bank, Agency Program Director	

			Reading: Late Adapters? How Social Workers Acquire Knowledge and Skills about Technology Tools **(Goldkind, Wolf & Jones 2016)-Uploaded to Canvas**	
5	Sept 24	Social Work and StoryTelling	**Guest Speakers:** Jennifer Long and Mat Hames **Preparation:** https://storycorps.org	Review StoryCorps and find one story that you wish to discuss with the class.
6	Oct 1	The Safety Net/Mapping Data	**Guest Speaker:** Erine Grey, Aunt Bertha **Hillier, "Why Social Work Needs Mapping" (uploaded to Canvas)**	
7	Oct 8	Evaluating and Sharing Data	**Reading: Infographics** https://www.dipjar.com/blog/infographics-for-nonprofits-how-to-create-one-and-why-its-effective	Homework- Infographic/ Marketing tool **(DUE NOV 5)**
8	Oct 15	Social Service and Innovation	**Guest Speaker: TBD Listen to this Ted Talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pallotta_the_way_we_think_about_charity_is_dead_wrong**	
9	Oct 22	Austin Data and Needs	**Guest Speaker:** Amy Price, United Way of Greater Austin (UWGA) **Reading:** 2017 UWGA Community Needs and Trends Report **(will be uploaded to Canvas)**	
10	Oct 29	Donor Personas	**Guest Speaker:** AnneMarie Schindler **Reading:** https://bloomerang.co/blog/what-winnie-the-pooh-can-teach-us-about-nonprofit-donor-personas/	Donor Persona Assignment **(DUE DEC 3)**
11	Nov 5	Small Group Work	In class group time to work or meet with Professor	
12	Nov 12	Project Presentations	No readings	
13	Nov 19	Project Presentations	No readings	Post-survey
14	Nov 26	NO CLASS	Thanksgiving Week	
15	Dec 3	Last Class	Last class/Survey results discussion	Agency Information System assessments and evaluations due

X. BIBILIOGRAPHY

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