

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number:	SW n381T	Instructor:	René Gaitan, LCSW-S
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Dynamics of Organizations and Communities

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course familiarizes students with the macro context of social work practice. It examines the reciprocal relationship between human behavior and social environments. It 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.

This course examines the impact of social structure and other societal factor on one's personal life chances in relation to equity, fairness, opportunity, and other issues of social and economic justice. Drawing on a systems-ecological perspective, this course helps students develop skills at using systems thinking approaches to understanding organizations and communities with special emphasis on their application to a variety of oppressed and disadvantaged populations and multiple levels of intervention. Special emphasis is given to the development of assessment skills and intervention methods that are relevant to empowerment, capacity building and social change within organizations and communities.

Understanding the role of age, race, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical and mental ability is an integral part of this course.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss communities and organizations as a context for professional practice to meet individual needs, build community capacity, and promote social and economic justice.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the value dilemmas and ethical issues confronting social work professionals and their implications for social work practice with organizations and communities.
3. Assess the influence of community norms, priorities, and competitive community factions on the social structure of communities and the delivery of human services.
4. Assess various evidence-based intervention approaches for working with organizations and communities.
5. Analyze the impacts of organizational and community dynamics on populations at risk and relate those impacts to the participation of such populations in organizational and community governance, human service provision, and policy formulation.

6. Evaluate alternative strategies for initiating change in organizations and communities, including planning models, coalition building, community development, direct action, and legislative advocacy.
7. Understand the relevance of age, race, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical and mental ability in social work practice that is grounded in social and economic justice.

EPAS Competencies

The Steve Hicks 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, the UT SHSSW engages in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).

Using a common evaluation instrument, this course measures the implementation of knowledge, skills, values, and/or cognitive and affective processes to assess the following competencies:

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Outcome 6.2: Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Outcome 7.1: Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies

Outcome 7.3: Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies

Outcome 7.4: Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Outcome 8.1: Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies

Outcome 8.3: Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes

Outcome 8.4: Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies

Outcome 8.5: Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Outcome 9.1: Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes

Outcome 9.3: Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes

Outcome 9.4: Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels

III. TEACHING METHODS

This course uses various teaching methods which includes lectures, class discussions, video presentations, and guest speakers. Furthermore, assignments are provided to help foster deep reflection and facilitate open and engaging class discussion. These assignments will include readings, brief case studies, reflective writing pieces, community analysis, and small group work and presentations. Parallel processing is noted as class and small group dynamics are built around the same positive community and organizational dynamics forming the foundational purpose of this course.

IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

The primary text for this course will be the [Community Tool Box](https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents) (<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents>) developed by the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. This work group is part of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Community Health and Development. The Community Tool Box is available for free online.

While the focus of much of the content is on community health, the tools and skills covered in the book are easily translatable to other kinds of community issues. All assigned readings and other course materials are available in the class Canvas page, which is organized into modules for each class session. Additional readings and materials may be assigned as we progress through the semester. These readings will also be available on-line in the course modules. If additional readings are assigned, the class will be notified the week before so that students will have adequate time to read it before class.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Reflection (70 Points) - Writing prompts requiring students to reflect/respond to case scenarios related to course EPAS core competencies. These reflections are expected to be written in journal format of no more than 1-page double spaced. The intent is to prepare the student for the common case assessment due at the end of the semester. 7 reflections at 10 points each will be assigned through the semester. Specific weekly prompts will be published on CANVAS one week before they are due.

Community Analysis (75 Points) - Students will be assigned to a task group of 4-5 members to analyze a community within Travis County (East Austin, Del Valle, Manor, Dove Springs, etc). Community will have a specific geographic boundary that encompasses at least one zip code. This assignment will require task groups to engage, assess, hypothetically intervene, and evaluate interventions proposed for/with selected communities. Tasks groups will collaboratively develop a handout summarizing analysis and provide an in class presentation. A detailed assignment and grading rubric will be posted on CANVAS by the end of the first week of class.

Common Assignment (75 Points) - Students will review and respond to a scenario involving a hypothetical neighborhood coalition meeting. 6 questions will be provided related to course EPAS core competencies. Assignment responses are expected to be written in APA format and will be no more than 3 double-spaced pages. A detailed assignment and grading rubric will be posted on CANVAS by the 5th week of class.

Participation (80 Points) - Lectures, readings, and assignments make up a portion of the learning experience. Experiential learning through class engagement and participation will make up a great portion of the learning experience. In order to achieve these learning objectives it is important that students attend class on-time, are engaged, and present free of distraction (email, texting, etc). Students are allowed one unexcused absence and will lose 5 points for each subsequent absence. Arriving to class after start time will result in a deduction of 2 points per incident. Extenuating

circumstances involving documented medical emergencies may be considered on a case-to-case basis.

VI. GRADES

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

VII. CLASS POLICIES

Class Attendance & Participation - Classes will begin promptly at the start time indicated. A zoom waiting area will be available for students to log into pending initiation of class. Students are allowed one unexcused absence and late arrival. Subsequent absences will result in a deduction of 5 points per incident. Incidents of tardiness will result in a deduction of 2 points per incident. Extenuating circumstances involving documented medical emergencies may be considered on a case-to-case basis. Students are responsible for checking CANVAS and reaching out to peers for any information and class notes missed.

Assigned Readings – Readings listed in the syllabus are to be read before class for the days they are assigned to help facilitate conversation about the topic listed. Any additional readings or direction around specific page numbers will be communicated no later than one week before reading assignment is due.

Assignment Deadlines and Late Submissions - Assignments are due no later than 11:59 PM on the assigned due date. Assignments submitted past the deadline will result in a deduction of 5 points per day. Assignments that are 3 days past due will require a meeting with the Professor before being accepted.

Writing Style - Certain assignments will require students to follow APA 7th Edition guidelines regarding professional writing (cover page, running head, in-paper references, bibliography). Students are encouraged to access UT resources through the University Writing Center to review papers: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>.

Students can use Purdue University online resources to help guide APA formatting: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

CANVAS - All assignments, relevant instructions, grades and announcements will be posted through shared class CANVAS page. Students will be expected to maintain their UT provided emails in order to continue to receive timely communications regarding class or assignments.

Online Etiquette and Professionalism - All University Policies including but not limited to those regarding conduct, civility, and professional communication still remain in effect with regards to remote/online instruction courses. As a professional courtesy to fellow peers, students will be expected to focus in class and refrain from texting, browsing other sites, or answering emails while in class. All information shared in class is expected to be held in confidence.

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 be posted to Canvas. Students should check their email 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

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/>.

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.

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.

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Reading Selection Acronymns

- CTB – Community Tool Box
- SWDR – Social Work Desk reference
- SWP – Social Work Practice with Groups, Communities, and Organizations

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings
Week 1 - Intro to Course			
Mon June 8th	Class Introductions Class Overview Syllabus Group Dynamics		None
Wed June 10th	Course EPAS Assignment Overview Group Assignments		None
Week 2 - Understanding			
Mon	Understanding Communities	Reflection #1	CTB - Chp 2

June 15th	Logic Models/Theory of Change Asset Development MAPP		
Wed June 17th	Understanding Organizations For-Profit & Non-Profit Board Stewardship Task Groups Project Management		

Week 3 - Collaborating

Mon June 22nd	Leadership within Communities Formal & Informal Influence	Reflection #2	CTB – Chp 13-15
Wed June 24th	Leadership within Organizations Leadership vs Management Servant Leadership Leadership Effectiveness		SWDR - Chp 6

Week 4 - Engaging

Mon June 29th	Engaging Communities Communication Plans Crisis Communication	Reflection #3	CTB - Chp 6
Wed July 1st	Engaging Organizations Supervision/Staff Development Effective Meetings		

Week 5 - Assessing			
Mon July 6th	Assessing Communities Tools for Analysis Community Typologies	Reflection #4	CTB - Chp 3 SWP - Chp 3
Wed July 8th	Assessing Organizations Stakeholder Perspectives Leadership Assessment Performance Measures Agency Satisfaction		SWP - Chp 5
Week 6 - Intervening			
Mon July 13th	Interventions for Communities 8 Models of Community Intervention Civic/Cultural Engagement	Community Analysis –Handout Reflection #5	SWP - Chp 4
Wed July 15th	Interventions for Organizations Human Resources ARC Model Phases of Intervention	Community Analysis - Presentations	SWP - Chp 6
Week 7 - Evaluating			
Mon July 20th	Evaluating Community Practices and Effectiveness Logic Model (Review)	Reflection #6	CTB – Chp 36-39
Wed July 22nd	Evaluating Organizational Practices and Effectiveness Strategic Goals		

	Key Performance Indicators
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Week 8 - Finalizing		
Mon July 27th	Course Summary	Reflection #7
Wed June 29th	Hindsight and Foresight	Common Assignment

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Corcoran, K., & Roberts, A. (2015). *Social workers' desk reference / Kevin Corcoran, Editor-in-Chief ; Albert R. Roberts, Founding Editor-in-Chief.* (Third edition.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Community Tool Box. (2020, May 25). *Learn a Skill.* <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents>.

Retrieved on May 25, 2020.

Glisson, C., Dulmus, C., & Sowers, K. (2012). *Social work practice with groups, communities, and organizations evidence-based assessments and interventions / Charles A. Glisson, Catherine N. Dulmus, Karen M. Sowers.* Hoboken, N.J: Wiley.