

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Number:	SW 381T	Instructor:	Monique Vasquez, MSSW, MPH
Unique Number:	61470	Email:	
Semester:	Fall 2022	Office:	3.104A
Meeting Time/Place:	Thursday	Office Phone:	512-766-9435
	2:30pm – 5:30pm	Office Hours:	Thursdays at 10am (via Zoom) or by appointment
	SSW 2.116		

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 intersectionality of racialization, ethnic origin, class, gender identity and expression, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical and mental abilities, caste, immigration/refugee status, national origin of communities and tribal sovereign status is an integral part of this course. The complex tensions between dismantling systems of oppression while working within those systems as agents of change will also be discussed.

II. STANDARIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. Explore communities and organizations as a context for social work practice to meet individual needs, build community capacity, and promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

2. Demonstrate knowledge, skills, critical examination, and self-reflection in engaging with 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 values and norms, priorities, and competing interests on the social structure of communities and the delivery of human services.
4. Analyze the reciprocal impacts of organizational and community dynamics on client populations and relate those impacts to the participation of clients in organizational and community governance, human service provision, and policy formulation.
5. Gain understanding of the existence of community agency and learning to center on the community's knowledge and determination of its own capacity-building and power.
6. Evaluate strategies for initiating change in organizations and communities, such as planning models, coalition building, community development, direct action, and advocacy at the mezzo and macro levels.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of how bias, power, and privilege as well as personal values and personal experiences may influence assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels.
8. Compare various evidence-based interventions and emerging approaches for working with organizations and communities.
9. Make use of knowledge and skills in strengths-based approaches to build capacity with client systems, exploring and building on existing individual and community assets.
10. Increase knowledge of internal workings of public and private organizations across the lifecycle.
11. Examine systemic and institutional racism in organizations and institutions in communities, including racial and ethnic representation in the different branches of agencies, analyzing structural elements such as boards, bylaws, and hiring practices of organizations that reinforce white supremacy culture.

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 is designed to provide students with a meaningful learning environment through use of multiple methods of instruction which includes class discussion, lecture, reflection, textual analysis and group work. Course content is covered through reading, listening, thinking, and discussing social work practice in organizations and communities.

Each class session will focus on a set of materials found in a module in Canvas. Readings have been selected to provide both technical skills and to highlight lived experiences of individuals as they encounter the mezzo and macro level. Students are expected to complete readings and any other assigned content prior to class each week. Class sessions will be devoted to focused discussion that flow from assigned readings and supplemental materials prepared for the class. Class attendance and active participation is essential for successful completion of this course, as is engagement with the readings and course material. Students are expected to ask questions, share experiences, and actively participate in class discussions. Reflection assignments are designed to foster deeper reflection on the news, current events, the media and to engage in the larger community. A key component to this course is a small group experiential learning through a common assignment. These methods intentionally draw on diverse pedagogical approaches to be inclusive of a variety of learning styles.

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.

There will also be assigned readings from *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (Blumenfeld, Castañeda, Hackman, Peters, & Zúñiga). These readings, along with other 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

Text for book analysis

Students will be asked to select and read one of the following texts for analysis:

- A) Coates, T. N. (2015). *Between the world and me*. Text publishing.
- B) Desmond, M. (2016). *Evicted: Poverty and profit in an American city*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.
- C) Farmer, P. (2001). *Infections and inequalities: The modern plagues*. Univ of California Press.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reflection (50 Points) – Social workers must be aware of the ways in which clients are impacted by policy, have serious implications for the clients we serve and the communities where we live and work. Throughout the semester each student will write a total of 5 reflections.

- **Media Reflections:** 4 of your reflections must be based on a story they read in a news publication or heard on a news program. It might also be based on a TED talk or similar medium. These stories can be local, statewide, national or global in scope.
- **Community Meeting Reflection:** Students should attend a community meeting where a platform is being laid out, stakeholders are having a discussion, or a meeting where policy decisions are being made at the local level (ie - City Council Meeting or County Commissioners Court). Students may choose to turn the Community Meeting Reflection in at any of the 5 reflection due dates. Additional information about the Community Meeting Reflection will be distributed on the first day of class.

Reflections should be 1-2 pages in length in APA format. Students should think about the following questions as they prepare their reflection. What was your initial reaction to the story? Which communities does this story impact most? Who stands to benefit or be harmed by what has happened or what is being proposed? How does this tie into what you are learning in class? Did you find the evidence being presented in the story credible? Did this story change your mind or provide you with new insights on this issue? Make sure to connection your reflection to your role as a social worker, social work competencies or the code of ethics.

Each reflection is worth 10 points, and will be assigned throughout the semester (see course schedule for specific dates).

Book Analysis (100 Points): Students are to read one of the following books (*Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond, or *Infections and Inequalities* by Paul Farmer) and prepare a 4- to 5-page paper, exclusive of the cover page and the reference page. The paper should be double-spaced and use Times Roman 12-point font. Analysis instructions will be distributed on the first day of class.

Common Assignment (125 Points) – Students in groups will have one of two project options to select for their common assignment:

A. Using a community case, groups will simulate engaging with and assessing a community, identifying concerns and propose an intervention with an evaluation. (See Assignment Rubric)

or

B. Teams will conduct either an organizational or community needs assessment. Choose a project or intervention to participate in, and execute an intervention.

The end product will be a group presentation to the class in addition to an individually written assignment. A detailed assignment and grading rubric will be posted on CANVAS.

Participation (25 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 and your presence is important for everyone’s success in this course. 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). Participation will be based on engagement in class. Students are allowed two unexcused absences and will lose 5 points for each subsequent absence. Please be proactive in situations where you will be absent, if you experience an emergency, or anticipate a prolonged absence for any reason. Extenuating circumstances involving documented medical emergencies may be considered on a case-to-case basis.

50 Points	Reflections (5 Reflections x 10 Points Each)
100 Points	Book Analysis
125 Points	Common Assignment
25 Points	Participation
300 Points	Course Total

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. Students are responsible for checking CANVAS and reaching out to peers for any information and class notes missed. Students are allowed two unexcused absences and will lose 5 points for each subsequent absence. Extenuating circumstances involving documented medical emergencies may be considered on a case-to-case basis.

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.

Student’s ability to demonstrate their understanding of the readings through discussions in class and through assignments 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

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 on all assignments except for reflections (which will have a deduction of 2 points per day late). 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 – This course is in-person, however if we have portions of classes online, 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.

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION. The University’s policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: <https://protect.utexas.edu/>

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 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. Students who violate University rules on academic 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 academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

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.

UNIVERSITY ELECTRONIC MAIL STUDENT NOTIFICATION. Electronic mail (email), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send email communications to all students, and the University will expect that email communications will be received and read in a timely manner. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <https://it.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable period after the absence. A reasonable accommodation does not include substantial modification to academic standards, or adjustments of requirements essential to any program of instruction. Students and instructors who have questions or concerns about academic accommodations for religious observance or religious beliefs may contact the [Office for Inclusion and Equity](#). The University does not maintain a list of religious holy days.

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 campus carry may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>.

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 and COVID-19 ADVICE LINE (BCCAL). 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 and COVID-19 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 <https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line>. The Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line has been expanded to support The University of Texas at Austin community during the COVID-19 pandemic. By calling 512-232-5050 - Option 2 for COVID-19, students, faculty and staff can be assisted in English and Spanish with COVID-19 support.

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.

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

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Reading Selection Acronyms

- CTB – Community Tool Box
- DSJ – (Posted to Canvas)

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings
Week 1 8/25	Course Introduction and Overview Syllabus & Introductions	None	No Assigned Readings
Week 2 9/1	Community Development & Social Determinants of Health Meet with Group		CTB: Chapter 1& 2 DSJ: Structure as the Subject of Justice; The possessive investment in whiteness
Week 3 9/8	Assessing Community Needs	Reflection #1 Book Selection for Analysis	CTB: Chapters 3, Sections 1, 2, 4, 5, 16, 19, & 21, 22 Community Advancement Network Dashboard
Week 4 9/15	Assessing Community Resources and Strengths		CTB: Chapters 3, Sections 3,6-8, 10, 14,15, 20

Week 5 9/22	Understanding Organizations		CTB: Chapter 8, Chapter 9 Sections 1-3, Chapter 46
Week 6 9/29	Strategic Planning and Organizational Structure	Reflection #2	CTB: Chapter 9 Sections 4-6 & 8 The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House, <i>Lourde</i>
Week 7 10/6	Engaging Interest and Participation in Strategies for Community Change	Reflection #3	CTB: Chapter 5,6, 7 DSJ: -Calling all Restroom Revolutionaries -Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster
Week 8 10/13	Analyzing Community Problems and Designing Community Intervention		Don't "Just Call the Social Worker", Training in Structural Competency, <i>Downey, Neff and Dube</i> DSJ: Allies to Young People, What Allies of Elders Can do
Week 9 10/20	Removing Barriers, Creating Opportunities and Improving Services	Reflection #4	CTB: Chapters 23, Chapter 24 Sections 1, 3 & 4, Chapter 25, Sections 1 & 10, Chapter 26, Sections 2, 3, 4 & 12
Week 10 10/27	Understanding Structural Impacts on Community & Becoming a Community Leader Book Discussion	Book Analysis Due	

Week 11 11/3	Organizing For Effective Advocacy		CTB: Chapters 30, 33, & 35 Ch 5 The Social Arsonist, The Mexican Problem, <i>Thompson</i> Recommended: Ch 8 I've got the Light of Freedom, Slow and Respectful Work, <i>Payne</i>
Week 12 11/10	Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives	Reflection #5	CTB 36, 37 and 38
Week 13 11/17	Common Assignment Work Week Dedicated Class time Group Prep		No Assigned Reading
11/24	Fall break / Thanksgiving Holiday NO CLASS		
Week 14 12/01	Group Presentations	Common Assignment Due (Group Presentations and Individual)	No Assigned Reading

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W. J., Castañeda, R., Hackman, H. W., Peters, M. L., & Zúñiga, X. (Eds.). (2013). *Readings for diversity and social justice, Third Edition*. Routledge.

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