

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

<b>Course Number:</b>	SW 334	<b>Instructor:</b>	Carmen R. Valdez, Ph.D.
<b>Unique Number:</b>	60765	<b>Email:</b>	crvaldez@utexas.edu
<b>Semester:</b>	Spring 2023	<b>Office:</b>	3.106D SW
<b>Meeting Time/Place:</b>	Mondays and Wednesdays	<b>Office Phone:</b>	512-495-5388
	4:00 pm – 5:30 pm	<b>Office Hours:</b>	Wednesdays, 2:45-3:40pm
	SSW 2.132		Other times by appt

**Social Work Practice in Organizations and Communities**

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines contexts where social services are delivered, including programs, organizations, and communities and introduces you to effective and culturally grounded strategies within this area of practice. You will learn skills to impact social change at organizational and community levels based on a generalist practice intervention model. Specifically, this course will give you the opportunity to formulate a plan for social change at the organizational or community level using a planned process. Throughout the course, you will learn the appropriate use of collaboration, advocacy and empowerment in organizations and communities.

Prerequisites: For social work majors, admission to the practice sequence; for others, upper-division standing.

**II. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Identify elements of communities, including definitions of community, community structures, priorities, voice and leadership, and community organization.
2. Identify elements of organizations, including organizational structures, leadership, missions, strategic plans, funding sources, and other aspects of human services organizations at the state, local, and non-profit level.
3. Centering the perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and other scholars of color, analyze social work organizational and community practice based on various theoretical frameworks, including, but not limited to, feminist theory, ecological systems theory, critical race theory, and the strengths-based perspective, and consider how they inform anti-oppression and anti-racism by helping identify and address policies, behaviors, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions.
4. Evaluate the ways in which diversity and inequities (e.g., racialization, ethnic origin, class, gender, gender identity and expression, culture, sexual orientation,

- religion, age, physical and mental disabilities, caste, immigration/refugee status, national origin of communities and tribal sovereign status) impact and are impacted by service delivery by organizations and communities.
5. Apply the NASW Code of Ethics and other ethical principles to dilemmas that arise in social work practice in organizations and communities.
  6. Discuss how changes in social welfare policies as well as in the political and economic environment impact funding and budgets and in turn influence social service delivery at the community and organizational levels.
  7. Formulate a plan for social change at the organizational or community level using a planned process involving (a) engaging with relevant stakeholders, with a priority on community and client groups, (b) conducting an assessment of needs and strengths and gathering relevant demographic data, (c) recommending an intervention and planning a timeline for change, and (d) developing an evaluation plan.

## Course Outcomes, Instructional Strategies, and Expectations

Course outcomes: Subject matter/ content and concepts	Instructional strategies for meaningful learning	Skills: Learning objectives and expectations
<p><b>To gain a beginning knowledge to practice social work in organizations and communities.</b></p> <p><u>Major concepts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of community</li> <li>• Role of organizations in community development</li> <li>• Social justice imperative of organizations</li> <li>• Elements of community organizations</li> <li>• Context of community organizations</li> <li>• Community needs assessment</li> <li>• Community resources assessment</li> <li>• Types of organizational change</li> <li>• Removing barriers</li> </ul>	<p><b>In this course, we will read, watch videos, interact with communities, and integrate learnings into reports/ strategic plans/ presentations.</b></p> <p><u>Learning activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class attendance and participation</li> <li>• Online Discussion</li> <li>• Reports and other written products</li> <li>• Pair and small group discussions</li> <li>• Oral interviews</li> </ul> <p><u>Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UT Division of Diversity and Community Engagement</li> <li>• Dell Medical School Division of Community Engagement and Health Equity</li> <li>• Austin community</li> <li>• The Community Toolkit</li> </ul>	<p><b>To gain skills and tools needed to work in communities and build organizational capacity</b></p> <p><u>You will:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify elements of communities and organizations</li> <li>• Center underrepresented perspectives and analyze practice from those perspectives</li> <li>• Evaluate role of equity in service delivery and policy</li> <li>• Apply ethical considerations to community and organizational practice</li> <li>• Formulate plan for social change via engagement, assessment, and recommendations</li> </ul>

### III. TEACHING METHODS

Class is in-person with a format that is didactic and interactive. The content will be presented through a combination of lectures, demonstrations, experiential skill-building

exercises, and class discussions integrating the course readings and videos. The combination of these approaches will provide opportunity for theory and skill development in social work practice in organizations and communities. For a meaningful experience in this class, students are expected to actively participate, engage their critical thinking skills and attend class regularly. If students do not have a personal computer with personal Internet access, there are computers available for their use at the SW Learning Resource Center (LRC), the Flawn Academic Center, campus and public libraries.

**Use of Canvas:** The instructor uses Canvas, the University's learning management system. To reach our class site on Canvas, students should go to <http://courses.utexas.edu> or go to the Social Work web page and click on Canvas. To access the course website, students must have an Internet connection and computer access. They will need a UT EID and password. The Help Desk available through the UT home page ([www.utexas.edu/its/help](http://www.utexas.edu/its/help)) can assist students with their computer and Canvas questions. Students can also call the Help Desk at (512) 475-9400. Additionally, the Learning Resource Center at the SSW has computers and computer assistance.

**Course Modification:** To ensure achievement for course objectives, the instructor 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 online videos may change. Documents, new links or alternate options will be provided.

#### IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

Community Tool Box – The University of Kansas: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en>  
Additional reading and video links will be assigned and available to students electronically via Canvas. Students are not required to purchase anything for this course.

#### V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class Attendance and Participation (17 points)  
In order for you to get the most out of this class, you are required to come to class. Attendance will be managed via roll call at the beginning of class. If arrival is post roll call, it is your responsibility to ensure that your attendance is noted. More than two unexcused absences will result in a loss of 10 points. In addition, 7 points will be awarded to active participation with the content, within small groups, and the larger class.
2. Discussions (15 points)  
Discussion questions will be posted throughout the semester on Canvas and responses will be graded for reflection and knowledge.
3. Community Needs Assessment and Intervention Planning (68 points)  
This assignment requires students to work in small groups of 4-5 students. There are multiple components to this assignment. Groups will work with a community organization and base all components on that organization and the community it

serves. On Canvas, students will find in the Assignment Tab a series of documents that detail this assignment:

- Overview of Needs Assessment Group Project
- Rubric for Needs Assessment Group Project
- Community Needs Assessment Project Due Dates & Guidelines

Overview	Point/% value
#1: Attendance and participation	17
#2: Discussions	15
#3: Community Needs Assessment	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Grading of all written assignments will take into account the quality of the writing (grammar and sentence structure) as well as the content. *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association –Seventh Edition* format should be used. Assignments should be carefully proofread and errors corrected (e.g., punctuation, typos, spelling) or points will be lost. Graded papers will not be available until one (1) week after papers are due.

## VII. CLASS POLICIES

1. Attendance and absences: Students are expected to attend class sessions promptly and regularly, and participate in an interactive and collegial manner with the instructor and Teaching Assistant, both in the classroom and in CANVAS discussions.

Students will be allowed 1 absence. Informing the instructor of upcoming absences is expected, but does not constitute an ‘excused absence.’ All absences will count towards the one that is allowed across the semester. Students are expected to catch up on the material missed while absent (including lecture, readings, and video, if applicable), with their classmates. If a student has travel planned or other plans that might interfere with class attendance, they should arrange their schedule in a manner that takes into account traffic patterns, flight cancelations, work hours, family needs, etc.

In cases where a student missed more than the allowed absence, the instructor reserves the right to lower that student’s final grade. In extenuating circumstances of absence, students are to notify the instructor as soon as possible and provide documentation of reason for absence (eg: doctor’s note; bill from a towing company; or similar; see note about COVID-19 below). Students are responsible for any in-class homework that may be missed due to absences.

2. Use of electronics in class: Please turn off cell phone ringers and refrain from text messaging and other non-class activities during the class period. Laptop computers are also not allowed unless discussed with instructor first for the purposes of taking notes or required for specific learning needs. Checking email and working on outside class assignments is easy to detect, is not acceptable, and will be reflected in student’s final

grade. If student is expecting an emergency call that must be answered, please notify professor in advance and step out of the classroom to answer the call.

3. Participation and engagement: The instructor is often aware of students who are not paying attention or are involved in something other than what is happening in class. The instructor will discuss this with that student during a break or outside of class.

Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Reading assignments will not be reviewed in totality in class but might be discussed. Failure to demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade. The instructor is unable to determine student's understanding of the assigned material or learning objectives if they do not participate in class discussions and group work.

The instructor and students have the ethical responsibility to their colleagues to see that the class environment is maintained as a respectful and confidential setting.

Eating in class is discouraged when it is disruptive to the instructor, fellow students, and guests.

4. Assignments: Assignments are due IN CLASS on the date noted, unless other arrangements have been made with the professor. Assignments turned in after class starts will be considered late. Late assignments will lose one point per day of grade (including 2 points for the weekend). Assignments turned in on the due date, but later in the day following class, will be graded minus one point. In dire emergencies, such as acute hospitalization, the instructor will require both written notice and any notes/rough draft materials the student has completed prior to the due date to determine point deduction. Final grades assigned in the course are not negotiable.

In addition to the timing of assignments, integrity and quality of the work submitted will be graded. In terms of integrity, students must give credit to outside sources for any materials used in their assignments. Social work uses APA formatting to do this. Students who are unfamiliar with APA should notify the instructor. Note: social work majors need a final grade of a 'C'- or above to progress to following courses in the major.

In terms of quality, students' work must be clear. Using format and composition, they should ensure their work is understandable to readers. They must demonstrate evidence of their original thoughts and include the following elements of critical thinking:

- o Reflection
- o Analysis
- o Acquisition of information
- o Creativity
- o Structuring arguments
- o Decision making
- o Commitment
- o Debate

## 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.

**DISABILITY ACCOMODATION STATEMENT.** If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability and Access (D&A). You may refer to D&A's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/> . If you are already registered with D&A, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and how they apply in my class.

**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

Week	Date	Topics and Readings
1	Jan. 9	Overview of Class and Community Building
	Jan. 11	Orientation to Materials and Assignments
2	Jan. 16	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – NO CLASS
	Jan. 18	What is a community? <i>Read:</i> CTB Chapter 1 Section 3 <b>Discussion Question Posted After Class (Responses due</b>

		<b>before the next class)</b>
3	Jan. 23	Understanding and describing the community <i>Read:</i> CTB Chapter 3 Section 2
	Jan. 25	Understanding and describing the community <i>Watch Ahead of Time:</i> <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/mia_birdsong_the_story_we_tell_about_poverty_isn_t_true">https://www.ted.com/talks/mia_birdsong_the_story_we_tell_about_poverty_isn_t_true</a>
4	Jan. 30	Assessing Community Needs <i>Read:</i> CTB Chapter 3 Section 1, 14 <b>Discussion Question Posted After Class (Responses due before the next class)</b>
	Feb. 1	Assessing Community Needs <b>Workplan due at end of class</b>
5	Feb. 6	Assessing Community Resources <i>Read:</i> CTB Chapter 3 Section 21
	Feb. 8	Assessing Community Resources <i>Watch in Class:</i> <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/dave_meslin_the_antidote_to_apathy">https://www.ted.com/talks/dave_meslin_the_antidote_to_apathy</a> <b>Discussion Question Posted After Class (Responses due before the next class)</b>
6	Feb. 13	Strategies for Community Change CTB Chapter 5 Section 1
	Feb. 15	Strategies for Community Change <i>Watch Ahead of Time:</i> <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/majora_carter_greening_the_ghetto">https://www.ted.com/talks/majora_carter_greening_the_ghetto</a>
7	Feb. 20	Understanding Organizations <i>Read:</i> TBD
	Feb. 22	Understanding Organizations
8	Feb. 27	Strategic Planning <i>Read:</i> CTB Chapter 8 Section 1
	Mar. 1	Strategic Planning
9	Mar. 6	Analyzing Community Problems <i>Read:</i> CTB Chapter 17 Section 3

	Mar. 8	Analyzing Community Problems
10	Mar. 13	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
	Mar. 15	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
11	Mar. 20	Choosing Interventions, Removing Barriers, Creating Opportunities and Improving Services <i>Read: CTB Chapter 23 Section 1; CTB Chapter 17 Section 6</i>
	Mar. 22	Choosing Interventions, Removing Barriers, Creating Opportunities and Improving Services <b>Discussion Question Posted After Class (Responses due before the next class)</b>
12	Mar. 27	Building Relationship with People from Different Cultures <i>Read: CTB Chapter 27 Section 2</i>
	Mar. 29	Building Relationship with People from Different Cultures <b>Intervention Proposal due by 11:59pm</b>
13	Apr. 3	Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives <i>Read: CTB Chapter 39 Section 1</i>
	Apr. 5	Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives
14	Apr. 10	Becoming a Community Leader <i>Read: CTB Chapter 13 Section 3</i> <b>Report Section Drafts due by 11:59pm</b>
	Apr. 12	Becoming a Community Leader <i>Watch Ahead of Class:</i> <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action">https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action</a> <b>Discussion Question Posted After Class (Responses due before the next class)</b>
15	Apr. 17	<b>Class Presentations</b>
	Apr. 19	<b>Class Presentations</b>
16	Apr. 24	Wrap-Up and Celebration <b>Final Report due by 11:59pm</b>

## X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Birdsong, M. (n.d.). The story we tell about poverty isn't true. Retrieved January 8, 2023, from [https://www.ted.com/talks/mia\\_birdsong\\_the\\_story\\_we\\_tell\\_about\\_poverty\\_isn\\_t\\_true](https://www.ted.com/talks/mia_birdsong_the_story_we_tell_about_poverty_isn_t_true)

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