

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

<b>Course Number:</b> SW 383R	<b>Instructor:</b> Robin M. Smith, LCSW-S <a href="mailto:robinsmith@austin.utexas.edu">robinsmith@austin.utexas.edu</a>
<b>Course Unique Number:</b> 61860	<b>Phone:</b> 512-825-5308 (texting is fine for time-sensitive communication)
<b>Semester:</b> Fall 2023	<b>Office location:</b> SW 3.124A
<b>Class meeting time/place:</b> Thursdays 8:30 am to 12:30 pm in SSW 2.132	<b>Office Hours:</b> Thursdays 12:30 to 1:30 or by appointment

**Social Work Practice I**

**I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an introduction to social work practice methodology and professional use of self from a generalist perspective for social work practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities in conjunction with field education.

**II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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

1. Identify and begin to apply social work values and principles of ethical decision making as articulated by the NASW Code of Ethics;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of professional use of self and awareness of personal values in the development and maintenance of purposeful, problem-solving relationships with multiple levels of client systems, as well as cooperative and constructive relationships with agency staff, other professionals and community members;
3. Utilize professional communication skills, supervision and consultation in the effective and ethical provision of services to diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities;
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of organizational and community context on service delivery through the in-depth analysis of the assigned field agency;
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical roots and major developments of the social work profession and its commitment to promote social and economic justice for populations at risk;
6. Systematically apply an eco-systems framework to engage client systems in identifying target systems and goals, and in analyzing, implementing and evaluating interventions that enhance client system strengths, capacities, assets and resources in relation to their environment;
7. Recognize the influence of socioeconomic status, age, developmental level, gender, culture, race, ethnicity, physical status, sexual orientation and spiritual beliefs on assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation at all levels of practice;
8. Demonstrate familiarity with basic concepts and methodology related to work with small groups in agency, organization and community settings;
9. Identify the importance of empirically based knowledge to evaluate and improve practice, policy and social service delivery.

### III. TEACHING METHODS

A variety of teaching methods are used in this class with an emphasis on experiential learning (for example, role plays and small group discussions and activities) for the purpose of building skills and confidence. The foundational nature of the course requires a didactic approach as well, so I also use PowerPoint lectures and guest speakers. For success in this class, you must be willing to participate, take risks and go out of your comfort zone. Please feel free to meet with me after class or by appointment to continue a class discussion, talk about career opportunities or whatever is on your mind. I welcome your questions and informal feedback and the chance to get to know you better as an individual.

Using Canvas is essential to navigating the course material. Canvas is a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://canvas.utexas.edu> and is used for posting, submitting and evaluating assignments. Readings not found in the required text and all assignment guidelines and grading rubrics can be found in Canvas. You can access Canvas Help 24/7 by calling 855-308-2494. Please set notifications in Canvas so that you receive class announcements and updates as soon as they are posted. Thank you!

### IV. REQUIRED TEXT

A. Hepworth, D. H., Rooney, R.H., Rooney, G.D., & Strom-Gottfried, K. (2017). *Direct social work practice: Theory and skills* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cengage Learning, Boston, MA.

B. Articles, podcasts and/or short videos are assigned weekly to supplement readings from the text. These required, supplemental materials can be found under *Modules* on Canvas, organized by the week they are assigned.

### V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. Class Participation (20 points)

Because experiential learning is a significant part of skill and knowledge acquisition in this class, it's important you show up and stay engaged. Students who earn full credit for participation attend class consistently, complete the required prep and take some learning risks with their peers. I do not excuse absences; it is up to you to decide whether an absence is worth the impact on your learning. I do ask that you email me about any absence, tardy or early departure in the spirit of professional accountability and staying connected. Exceptions to this policy could include a prolonged illness or extended family emergency. Please contact me if this is your situation and we will discuss your needs and how to proceed. Participation points are given at the end of the semester. If you're concerned about your participation grade prior to that, please contact me.

#### Points will be assigned as follows:

**20 points** = No absences and/or overall excellent prep, participation & communication.

**18 points** = One absence and/or a couple of tardies or early departures with good prep, participation & communication.

**16 points** = Two absences and/or a few tardies or early departures with prep, participation & communication that needs improvement.

**14 points** = More than 2 absences and/or multiple tardies or early departures with prep, participation & communication that was inconsistent or poor. **If I observe that you are at this participation level, I will likely initiate a discussion with you about your engagement and could write up a formal Level Review to help you get your participation back on track. See Standards for Social Work Education, The Three Levels of Review section, for more details.**

#### B. Two Quizzes (each worth 10 points for 20 points total)

To reinforce key concepts from the readings, you will complete two quizzes outside of class, one at mid-semester and one at the end of the semester. Each quiz will be made up of short answer/essay-type questions and will cover the readings assigned up to the quiz due date. Quizzes with guidelines for completion will be posted in Canvas one week prior to the due date.

#### C. Agency Analysis (20 points)

To better familiarize you with your field agency, and to strengthen your critical thinking about social work at the organizational level, you will put together an analysis of your field agency's structure and ability to meet diverse clients'

needs. Guidelines with grading rubric and due date can be found in Canvas.

**D. Video Role Play Project (20 points)**

This assignment will help you improve your interviewing and assessment skills, as well as improve your self-awareness and ability to give and receive feedback. Guidelines with grading rubric and due dates can be found in Canvas. This project has two parts:

- 1) **Video & Feedback Participation:** You will pair up with another student in the class and prepare and record a 20-minute role-play or real-play. The role play or real play must demonstrate an *assessment* interview. You will then show a 5-minute clip of your video to a small group from our class, and exchange feedback with members of your group. Sign up for video times will be done through Prof. Smith closer to the date of the feedback groups (see course schedule, below).
- 2) **Write-up:** You will also complete a single-spaced one-page report on your “client”, plus a short reflection paper on your assessment interview and what you learned.

**E. Client Assessment with Case Analysis (20 points)**

To continue to strengthen your ability to gather, analyze and synthesize client data, you will choose a client from your caseload in field and complete a biopsychosocial-spiritual assessment on that client. To improve your ability to connect private troubles with public issues and utilize professional use of self, you will also complete an analysis of the case. Guidelines with grading rubric and due date can be found in Canvas.

This table summarizes how you will demonstrate your learning and how each assignment is weighted:

Assignments	Points possible	% of Grade
<b>A. Class Participation</b>	20	<b>20</b>
<b>B. Quizzes</b>	20	<b>20</b>
<b>C. Agency Analysis</b>	20	<b>20</b>
<b>D. Video Role Play Project</b>	20	<b>20</b>
<b>E. Client Assessment with Case Analysis</b>	20	<b>20</b>
<b>Total:</b>	100	<b>100</b>

The following graduate grading scale will be used to determine your final letter grade for the course. **The student who earns a high “A” for this course is one who consistently submits excellent quality work over the entire semester.**

**VI. GRADING**

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	
<b>70.0 to 73.999</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>(Class failed/no credit)</b>
67.0 to 69.999	D+	
64.0 to 66.999	D	
60.0 to 63.999	D-	
Below 60.0	F	

If I observe that your work is consistently at a C level, I will likely initiate a discussion with you about your assignments and could write up a formal Level Review to help you get your learning back on track. See Standards for Social Work Education, The Three Levels of Review section, for more details.

Students who were admitted to the MSSW program on a conditional basis are not able to take an incomplete for this course if the conditions for admission are still in place.

## VII. CLASS POLICIES

Social work students must adhere to the Student Standards for Professional Conduct of the UT School of Social Work and the NASW Code of Ethics and assume responsibility for their own conduct.

Find the MSSW Handbook at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/current/forms/>

Find the MSSW Graduate Guide to Field at <http://www.utexas.edu/ssw/field/forms/>

**A. Professional Conduct in Class:** 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. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

**B. Student Privacy & Confidentiality:** Class discussions or role plays can on occasion bring up strong emotions or raise issues of a personal nature. For student privacy, it is recommended that students not discuss matters of a highly sensitive nature in class. If you need to talk, come see me after class. Your privacy and confidentiality will be protected unless the matter must be reviewed by the School of Social Work or must be reported by law (please refer to the MSSW Handbook and Title IX requirements). I will connect you with resources in the community if your personal needs exceed what can be provided by me or by UT services.

**C. Client Privacy & Confidentiality:** If class work prompts you to reflect on past or current client contact, and sharing information about that contact is necessary for the learning process, it is your professional obligation to protect the client's privacy and confidentiality as much as possible by sharing judiciously and anonymously (this applies to information shared about staff at your field agency as well).

**D. Classroom Civility:** A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work 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.

*Personal Pronouns: Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.*

**E. 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 instructor. The instructor 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 can contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>. Professor Smith can also make a confidential referral directly to the CARE Counselor in our school which may expedite your getting an appointment. Please talk to me privately if you think you might need a mental health referral and would like my help.

## F. Grading Policies

All assignments – including late assignments – must be submitted to Canvas for assessment and feedback. Except where noted, assignments are due Fridays by 11:59 pm. Assignments turned in after the official due date and time are considered late. Students will lose 5% of the assignment point value per calendar day that an assignment remains un-submitted. On subsequent days, papers must be submitted in Canvas by 11:59 pm to avoid an additional 5% penalty. If you think you cannot turn in an assignment on time, please contact me prior to the due date to discuss your situation and I will consider adjusting the due date for you depending on your circumstances. **NOTE: You have a one-day late “pass” per semester to be used for any one Practice assignment. This means you can take an extra day to finish one Practice assignment without penalty. Please indicate in the comment box that you are using your late “pass” when you submit your assignment in Canvas, or points will be deducted.**

If you have any questions about a grade or the feedback you receive on an assignment, please make an appointment to meet with me. I enjoy talking with students about assignments and may give some credit back on the assignment based on our conversation. If a student has demonstrated strong class participation and professionalism throughout the semester, I round up any fractional point totals at the end of the semester. For instance, a 93.2 (A-) would become a 94 (A).

## 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.

**ACCESSIBLE/COMPLIANT 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 touch base with your instructor to discuss your Accommodation Letter as early as possible in the semester so your approved accommodations can be implemented.

**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 DISCLOSURE.** Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Education Code, Section 51.252 (formerly known as Senate Bill 212) requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, to report to the [Title IX Office](#) any information regarding incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive information about incidents of this type (including, but not limited to, written forms, applications, one-on-one conversations, class assignments, class discussions, or third-party reports) must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX-related incident, please remember that I will be required to report this information.

Faculty, staff, graduate assistants, teaching assistants, and graduate research assistants are [mandatory reporters](#) under federal Title IX regulations and are required to report [a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct](#), including the types of misconduct covered under Texas Education Code, Section 51.252. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex – including pregnancy and parental status – in educational programs and activities. The Title IX Office has developed supportive ways and compiled campus resources to support all impacted by a Title IX matter.

If you would like to speak with a case manager, who can provide support, resources, or academic accommodations, in the Title IX Office, please email: [supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu). Case managers can also provide support, resources, and accommodations for pregnant, nursing, and parenting students.

For more information about reporting options and resources, please visit: <https://titleix.utexas.edu>, contact the Title IX Office via email at: [titleix@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:titleix@austin.utexas.edu), or call 512-471-0419.

**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.



## IX. Course Schedule

All prep material, assignment guidelines, grading rubrics and other essential information for this course are in Canvas; please check Canvas regularly. Changes to this schedule made at Prof. Smith's discretion and as circumstances require. Changes will be announced with as much advance notice as possible. It is the student's responsibility to note changes when announced.

WK	DATE	TOPIC	Prep material to be completed by class time	All P1 & F1 assignments are due to Canvas on Fridays by 11:59 pm except where noted
<b>Module 1 - Prepare</b>				
1	8/24	Overview of Practice I, Making Social Work History activity	See Canvas for prep material	None
<b>Module 2 - Context</b>				
2	8/31	Values of the Profession, SW Roles, Legacy of Racism	See Canvas for prep material	Journal 1 due
3	9/7	Ethical decision-making, dual relationships, risk management	See Canvas for prep material	Journal 2 due
4	9/14	Mezzo/macro practice, principled negotiation, impact of environment	See Canvas for prep material	Journal 3 due
<b>Module 3 - Engage</b>				
5	9/21	Empathic responding, use of self, "tuning in"	See Canvas for prep material	Journal 4 due
6	9/28	Effective communication, broaching the subjects of race, ethnicity & culture, microaggressions	See Canvas for prep material	SHORT Journal 5 due Agency Analysis due *Learning Contracts should be in Canvas*
<b>Module 4 - Assess</b>				
7	10/5	Assessment process & product, strengths-based documentation	See Canvas for prep material	Journal 6 due Process Recording 1 due
8	10/12	Assessing multiple dimensions, special assessments	See Canvas for prep material	CREATIVE Journal 7 due Quiz 1 due *Your midterm evaluation should be underway*
9	10/19	Application Day! Role plays, etc.	See Canvas for prep material	Journal 8 due
10	10/26	<b>Video project feedback groups:</b> Group 1 8:30 – 10:30 Group 2 11:00 – 1:00 Group 3 1:30 – 3:30	See Canvas for prep material	SHORT Journal 9 due Video due by group time
<b>Module 5 – Intervene</b>				
11	11/2	Contracting, developing goals, evidence-based practice	See Canvas for prep material	Journal 10 due Video project paper due Mon. 11/6
12	11/9	Planning and implementing change-oriented strategies	See Canvas for prep material	CREATIVE Journal 11 due
<b>Module 6 Evaluate</b>				
13	11/16	Over/under-involvement with clients, working across cultures, termination	See Canvas for prep material	SHORT Journal 12 due Process Recording 2 due Quiz 2 due *Start your final evaluation*
14	11/23	<b>FALL BREAK</b>	<b>FALL BREAK</b>	<b>FALL BREAK</b>
15	11/30	Last Class! Summary of the semester, tying up loose ends, celebration	See Canvas for prep material	Client Assessment w/ Case Analysis due Monday 12/4 *All remaining field requirements are due by Friday 12/8*



## X. Bibliography

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