

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

Course Number:	SW 334	Instructor:	John Feather, PhD
Unique Number:	60115	Email:	jfeather@utexas.edu
Semester:	Spring 2024	Office:	By appointment
Meeting Time/Place:	Mon & Wed 4:00pm – 5:30 pm Room SSW 2.132	Office Phone:	202-725-6731
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SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

I. STANDARDIZED 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.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course you 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.

EPAS Competencies

The Steve Hicks School of Social Work (SHSSW) 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

6.2 - Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

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

7.1 - Collect and organize data and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies.

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

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

8.1 - critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies.

8.3 - Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice.

8.4 - Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies.

8.5 - Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed upon goals.

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

9.1 - Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes.

9.3 - Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes.

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 you with a meaningful learning environment through use of multiple methods of instruction (e.g., discussion, lecture, and group exercises). Experiential learning will be emphasized. You are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class period and are expected to participate in all class activities as an active participant. Class attendance and participation are required and essential for successful completion of this course. The UT Canvas system will be used for communication between students and the instructor, and announcements will be provided with more specific information on class activities each week. Assignments will also be posted through the Canvas system.

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

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, usually by Canvas Announcements. 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.

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Community Tool Box [<https://ctb.ku.edu/en>]. This free online resource has become the major repository of reading materials, web-based learning tools, and skills development curricula for those working in human services. This is not a traditional textbook, but a compendium of resources that you will return to throughout your career. We will only skim the surface of what is here, but you need to become familiar with it. Assigned readings are listed as 'CTB' in the syllabus.

Additional reading and video links will be assigned and available to you on the web and are listed in Section X below. **Students are expected to have read all required readings *before* the class for which they are assigned and be able to engage in class discussions effectively.**

All of these resources are free; you are not required to purchase anything for this course.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment and Grade Points

Your grade in this class will be based on four components: class participation; a series of written exercises; a group project analyzing the needs of a particular Austin community; and an individual reflection on your group project.

Class participation. It is important for you to develop the skills to work with other colleagues across not only the small group project but also with the larger group of students in the class. This expectation is described in detail in the syllabus and will be **10% of your grade.**

Exercises. The four written exercises allow you to show your ability to absorb the reading material and apply it to a specific situation. Each of these will be described in detail and provided in Canvas. Clarity of thought, good writing skills, and evidence of the application of the reading material to the issue will be the basis for your grade. Each exercise should be no more than three single spaced pages in length and the due dates are given in the syllabus. **Each exercise is 10% of your final grade or 40% overall.**

- ***Exercise 1 [due January 26]:*** How do you define the ‘community’ or ‘communities’ that you belong to?
- ***Exercise 2 [due February 14]:*** Using social work theories on social work issues
- ***Exercise 3 [due March 6]:*** Understanding the organizational context of social work
- ***Exercise 4 [due April 12]:*** Reflections on ‘community’

Small group project. Each of you will be randomly assigned to a specific community in the Austin area:

- Montopolis
- Pecan Springs-Springdale
- Elgin
- Georgian Acres
- Windsor Park

You will work together with 2-3 of your classmates throughout the semester to complete a group assignment for the course, all of which is described in detail in another document posted to Canvas. There will be specific times during the class hours for you to meet as a small group, on February 8 and 10, March 27, and April 5 and 12. The assignment has several components which collectively **total 35% of your final grade.** These include:

- ***Work Plan [due February 16]:*** developing a scope of work, division of labor between teammates, deadlines for creation of content, and creation of a final product. **5% of final grade**

- **Class Presentation [due April 17 or 19]:** PowerPoint presentation to community leaders of your neighborhood. **15% of final grade**
- **Executive Summary Report [due April 26]:** a written report to the city planning agency on your findings and rationale for your proposed solution to social work issues. **15% of final grade**

Since this is a group assignment, **all members of the group will receive the same grade.**

Individual Reflection on the Small Group Project. All social work students throughout the country engage in a similar project to assess the needs of a specific community. You are all then asked to reflect individually on various aspects of the project and how well you feel it meant the learning objectives. **15% of final grade.**

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

Grading of all written assignments will consider the quality of the writing as well as the content. If you are reporting on your research findings, you should use the American Psychological Association (APA) citation method commonly used in social work. Written material should be carefully proofread, and errors (punctuation, typographical, spelling) corrected. Good writing requires an iterative process that must be followed if quality is to improve. Students are strongly encouraged to read their paper several times and, if possible, have someone else proofread it.

VII. CLASS POLICIES

- Students are expected to attend class sessions and to participate in an interactive framework between collegiate students and professor. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Failure to regularly attend the class and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be part of assigning the final grade. The instructor requires advance notice that classes will be missed. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences.

- Except in the case of emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed-upon due dates. If the due date is a problem, then the student should contact the professor and negotiate another due date well in advance.
- Student feedback is welcome. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback by phone, by e-mail, and by appointment if they desire.

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Policies

Grading Scale

[No A+]		87.0 to 89.999	B+	77.0 to 79.999	C+	67.0 to 69.999	D+
94.0 and Above	A	84.0 to 86.999	B	74.0 to 76.999	C	64.0 to 66.999	D
90.0 to 93.999	A-	80.0 to 83.999	B-	70.0 to 73.999	C-	60.0 to 63.999	D-
						Below 60.0	F

Attendance and Academic Behavior. At the University of Texas at Austin, regular attendance at all class meetings is expected. Instructors are responsible for implementing an attendance policy and must notify students of any special attendance requirements. See more information at <https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/attendance/>. Furthermore, students are expected to abide by the Standards for Social Work Education (available at <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/student-resources/bsw/policies-and-procedures/>). The student shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, and keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements.

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 Center for Access and Restorative Engagement at <https://community.utexas.edu/care/>. The University does not maintain a list of religious holy days.

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.

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.

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>.

Steve Hicks School of Social Work Policies

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.

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.

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 and Mental Health 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.

Resources, Prevention of Discrimination, and Safety

Disability Accommodation 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: <https://community.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.

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.

Covid-19 Related Information. The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: <https://protect.utexas.edu/>

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/>.

Title IX Accommodations for Those Pregnant, Nursing and Parenting. Pregnant, nursing and parenting students, faculty, and staff are eligible for accommodations through the Title IX Office that support equal access to education and work and prevent discrimination. Students may reach out to the Title IX Office for help with accommodations to make up missed classes, complete missed coursework, keep them safe in the classroom, apply for leaves of absence, receive priority registration and other related support. Faculty and staff, including undergraduate students who work on campus and graduate student employees, may reach out for assistance with job or schedule restructuring and obtaining modified or additional work equipment. Visit the [Title IX pregnancy and parenting resource page](#) for more information or contact the [Title IX Support and Resources team](#) connect with a Case Manager.

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.

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

January 17

Topics: Class Overview and Introductions

Review of Syllabus and Community Toolbox

Understanding Micro, Mezzo, and Macro Levels of Analysis

Reading: CTB Chapter 1, Section 3 and Chapter 1 Section 6

January 19

Topics: What Do We Mean by 'Community'? Team Assignments

Reading: CTB Chapter 3, Section 2

Watch:

https://www.ted.com/talks/wale_elegbede_it_takes_a_community_to_eradicate_hate

https://www.ted.com/talks/chitra_ayyar_how_to_build_community_when_you_feel_isolated

January 24

Topics: Community and Identity

Reading: CTB Chapter 7 Section 2

NASW Code of Ethics: <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

Watch:

https://www.ted.com/talks/america_ferrera_my_identity_is_a_superpower_not_an_obstacle

January 26

Topics: Understanding and Describing Community

Reading: Chapter 37 Section 7

Exercise 1 due: How do you define the 'community' or 'communities' you identify with?

January 31

Topics: Macro Theories of Practice in Communities: Person-in-Environment Theory; Critical Race Theory

Reading:

Person-in-Environment Theory, Ecological Theory, Systems Theory, Strengths Perspective:

<https://www.centerffs.org/sites/default/files/Kolivoski%20et%20al%20-%20Critical%20Racism%20Theory%20%281%29.pdf>

February 2

Topics: Macro Theories of practice in communities: Feminism; Critical Race Theory

Reading:

Feminist Social Work; <https://www.thesocialworkgraduate.com/post/feminist-social-work>

Critical Race Theory: <https://www.centerffs.org/sites/default/files/Kolivoski%20et%20al%20-%20Critical%20Racism%20Theory%20%281%29.pdf>

February 7 – NO CLASS

Meet with your team

February 9 – NO CLASS

Meet with your team

February 14

Topics: Assessing Community Needs

Readings: CTB Chapter 3 Section 1 and Chapter 3 Section 14

<https://cacost.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Full-2020-CNA.pdf>, pp. 11-21

Exercise 2 due: Using Social Work Theories to Analyze Social Work Issues

February 16

Topics: Assessing Community Needs

Understanding Community Context: Housing Discrimination in Austin

Readings:

<https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/1499065/austin-restricted-draft-final.pdf> (pp. 1-42)

<https://www.statesman.com/story/news/local/2011/04/18/census-data-depict-sweeping-change/6692718007/>

Team Project 1 due: Describing Your Team's Work Plan

February 21

Topics: Assessing Community Resources

Readings: CTB Chapter 3 Section 21

Watch:

https://www.ted.com/talks/mia_birdsong_the_story_we_tell_about_poverty_isn_t_true

February 23

Topics: Strategies for Community Change

Readings: CTB Chapter 5 Section 1

February 28

Topics: Understanding social service organizations

Readings:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-service>

March 1

Topics: Understanding social service organizations: Who funds social services?

Readings:

<https://www.causeiq.com/organizations/meals-on-wheels-central-texas,237202594/>

March 6

Topics: Community Needs Assessment

Readings: CTB Chapter 17 Section 3

<https://oxfordre.com/socialwork/socialwork/abstract/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.001.0001/acrefore-9780199975839-e-73>

Watch: https://www.ted.com/talks/majora_carter_greening_the_ghetto

Exercise 3 due: Understanding the organizational context of social work

March 8

Topics: Community Needs Assessment

Readings: Chapter 3 Section 5

Watch: https://www.ted.com/talks/dave_meslin_the_antidote_to_apathy

March 13 – NO CLASS (Spring Break)

March 15 – NO CLASS (Spring Break)

March 20

Topics: Choosing Interventions and removing barriers

Readings: CTB Chapter 23 Section 1

<https://www.socialworkdegreecenter.com/study/community-based-interventions/#:~:text=To%20plan%20for%20an%20intervention,way%20of%20addressing%20their%20needs>

March 22

Topics: Creating opportunities and improving services

Readings: CTB Chapter 17 Section 6

March 27 – NO CLASS

Meet with your team

March 29

Topics: Building relationships with people of different culture

Readings: CTB Chapter 27 Section 2

<https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=PonPTDEBrn4%3D&portalid=0#:~:text=Cultural%20competence%20refers%20to%20social,communication%20and%20expressions%20of%20respect.>

Watch:

https://www.ted.com/talks/eve_pearlman_how_to_lead_a_conversation_between_people_who_disagree

April 3

Topics: Evaluating Community Programs and initiatives

Readings: CTB Chapter 39 Section 1

April 5 – NO CLASS

Meet with your team

April 10

Topics: Evaluating community interventions

Readings: CTB Chapter 39 Section 1

Exercise 4 due: Reflections on 'community'

April 12 – NO CLASS

Final meeting with your team

April 17

Topics: **Presentation of team projects**

April 19

Topics: **Presentation of team projects**

April 24

Topics: Becoming a community leader

Readings: CTB Chapter 13 Section 3

April 26 – Final Class

Topics: What have we learned? Class evaluation