

SWK-S 141 Introduction to Social Work (3 cr.)

Course Information

Semester Year: XXXXX
Section Number: XXXXX
Location: XXXXX
Day: XXXXX
Time: XXXXX

Instructor: XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX
Office: XXXX
Email: XXXX
Phone: XXXXX
Office Hours: XXXXXXXXXXXX

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the profession of social work and the philosophical, societal, and organizational contexts within which professional social work activities are conducted. This course provides the opportunity for students to explore their interest in and potential for a career in social work. It introduces the knowledge, skills and values of social work as a profession and explores the role of social workers within the broad area of social welfare and social services. Social work practice requires extensive knowledge about the human condition, problems in living, problem solving, the delivery of human services, and the institutions that comprise today's social welfare system. Cognitive and interaction skills necessary for competent practice are introduced in this course. This course emphasizes the value base of social work practice and its commitment to social and economic justice. It assists students in assessing the congruence between their own values and those of the profession.

Course Competencies

Council on Social Work Education (CWSE) 2015 EPAS Competencies addressed by this course:

Primary

- 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior (CSWE, 2015 EPAS, p. 7)

Secondary

- 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Course Objectives

S141-01: Demonstrate an understanding of social work as a profession.

S141-02: Demonstrate an understanding of the range of social work functions and how social workers carry them out.

S141-03: Demonstrate an understanding of the use of social science and behavioral theory in the helping process.

- S141-04:** Demonstrate an understanding of the interaction between people and environment as the focus of social work intervention.
- S141-05:** Demonstrate an understanding of the need for and significance of self-awareness in the helping role.
- S141-06:** Demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to diversity including race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, family structure, marital status, religion, physical, and mental abilities.
- S141-07:** Demonstrate awareness of one's own belief system and its fit with social work values and ethics, including a commitment to economic and social justice.
- S141-08:** Explain the organizations in which social work services are delivered.
- S141-09:** Demonstrate an understanding of social welfare as an institution.
- S141-010:** Identify the causes and consequences of oppression and the creation of populations-at-risk.

Required Texts

- Grobman, L. M. (Ed.). (2012). *Days in the lives of social workers* (4th ed.). Harrisburg, PA: White Hat Communications.
- Suppes, M. A., & Wells, C. C. (2013). *The social work experience: An introduction to social work and social welfare* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Recommended Text

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Course Content

This course explores the key theories and populations identified by the social work profession for students considering entering the field. Systems (Ecological) Theory and Strength Perspective creates the foundation for students to establish an understanding of work with diverse populations in variant settings. Students will become familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics and use them to evaluate multiple perspectives facing social service agencies at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. The major evaluation of students' progress in accomplishing the learning objectives of this course is the signature agency evaluation assignment. Use of peer reviewed journal articles and appropriate online materials will be necessary as students will be required to analyze perspectives that are consistent with social work values and reflect how this aligns with their personal values. Students will complete a written assignment that reflects an understanding of how individuals served by an identified agency are impacted using the components of Systems Theory.

Course Outline

Module 1: Course Overview

Date

Topics

- Welcome & Introductions
- Course Overview & Expectations

Reading Assignments

1. Course syllabus to include course, classroom, and university policies

Module 2: Professional Underpinnings – Part I

Date

Topics

- Mission, Core Values, Ethics

Reading Assignments

1. Suppes & Wells, Chapter 1
2. Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers

Module 3: Professional Underpinnings – Part II

Date

Topics

- Generalist Social Work practice
- Professional practice roles associated with generalist practice

Reading Assignments

1. Suppes & Wells, Chapter 1

Module 4: Theory in Social Work Practice – Part I

Date

Topics

- Systems-Ecological perspective
- Strengths perspective
- Levels of Intervention
- Phases of the Intervention Process

Reading Assignments

1. Suppes & Wells, Chapter 2

Due This Week

1. Quiz 1 (Professional Underpinnings)

Module 5: Theory in Social Work Practice – Part II

Date

Topics

- Level of Intervention
- Phases of the Intervention Process

Reading Assignments

1. Suppes & Wells, Chapter 2

Module 6: Cultural Diversity in Social Work Practice

Date

Topics

- Social identity
- Racism & “white privilege”
- Cultural Diversity & Culturally Competent Practice

Reading Assignments

1. Diller, J. (2007). *Cultural Diversity: A primer for the Human Services*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, pgs. 9 – 27.

Due This Week

1. Quiz 2 (Theory in Social Work Practice)

Module 7: Social & Economic Justice on Behalf of Vulnerable Populations

Date

Topics

- Poverty
- Vulnerable Populations
- Social & Economic Justice

Reading Assignments

1. Suppes & Wells, Chapter 4

Module 8: Social Welfare & Social Welfare Policy

Date

Topics

- Defining social welfare
- History of social welfare in the United States
- Social welfare policy

Reading Assignments

1. Suppes & Wells, Chapter 3
2. Carlton-LaNey, I. (1994). The career of Birdeye Henrietta Haynes: A pioneer settlement house worker. *Social Service Review*, 68(2):254-273.

Module 9: MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Date

Topics

- Review of 2nd half of course

Due this Week

1. Midterm Examination

Module 10: Field of Practice: Services to Children & Families

Date

Topics

- Social Work with Children and Families

Reading Assignments

1. Suppes & Wells, Chapter 5
2. Grobman, Chapter 19

Due This Week

1. Reflection Writing – Chapter 5

Module 11: Field of Practice: Mental Health

Date

Topics

- Social Work in Mental Health

Reading Assignments

1. Suppes & Wells, Chapter 6
2. Grobman, Chapter 26

Due This Week

1. Reflection Writing – Chapter 6

Module 12: Field of Practice: Substance Abuse

Date

Topics

- Social Work services in Substance Abuse

Reading Assignments

1. Suppes & Wells, Chapter 9
2. Grobman, Chapter 27

Due This Week

1. Reflection Writing – Chapter 9

Module 13: Field of Practice: Health Care

Date

Topics

- Social Work services in Health Care

Reading Assignments

1. Suppes & Wells, Chapter 7
2. Grobman, Chapter 1

Due This Week

1. Reflection Writing – Chapter 7

Module 14: Field of Practice: Developmental Disabilities

Date

Topics

- Social Work services with Persons with Developmental Disabilities

Reading Assignments

1. Suppes & Wells, Chapter 12
2. Grobman, Chapter 20

Due This Week

1. Reflection Writing – Chapter 12

Module 15: Wrapping up

Date

Topics

- Putting it all together

Due This Week

1. Agency Assessment Paper

Assignments and Grading

Students admitted to the Bachelor of Social Work degree program are expected to provide evidence of Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) mandated competencies defined in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Assignments demonstrate introductory learning in accordance with these educational standards. Five (5) assignments are required of students enrolled in the course.

Assignments

The overall course grade is determined by the student's performance on the five assignments described above. The evaluation/grading framework is delineated below.

1. Quizzes (2)
 - a. DUE:
 - b. Final Grade Percentage:.....
2. Midterm Exam
 - c. DUE:
 - d. Final Grade Percentage:.....
3. Critical Reflection Writings
 - e. DUE:
 - f. Final Grade Percentage:.....
4. Agency Assessment (Signature Assignment)
 - g. DUE:
 - h. Final Grade Percentage:.....

5. Class Participation

- i. DUE:
- j. Final Grade Percentage:

Assignment Details

Quizzes

Two (2) quizzes will be given in-class Weeks 4 and 6. Quizzes will be given at the start of the class session, and will be based on assigned readings and other material covered in class. The two quiz grades count for 20% of the final grade.

Midterm Examination

A midterm examination will be given in-class Week 9. The exam will be derived from readings and material covered in class during the first eight weeks of the course. The midterm examination counts for 25% of the final grade.

Reflection Writings

This assignment asks the student to select and critically reflect on the central focus of two of the five chapters addressing the various fields of practice. Reflection writings must be submitted on the day the selected chapter will be discussed in-class. In combination, the two critical reflection writings count for 20% of the final grade.

Agency Assessment

Each student will complete a formal paper based on his or her learning and research. The purpose of this paper is for students to utilize their learning experience, research, and critical thinking to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts and theories presented in the course. Students will reflect upon and analyze their experiences with an identified agency as they relate to broader social issues. Special emphasis will be on the analysis of experience as they relate to social work values, systems theory, the strengths perspective, and scholarly research. This paper will be turned in the final week of the semester and counts for 25% of the final grade.

Class Participation

Class participation is an integral component of the student's overall success in the course. Class participation is conceptualized broadly as engagement in assigned readings prior to class, attending class, and participation in classroom discussion and exercises. Students are expected to prepare for and attend each class. Students will be engaged regularly in in-class activities and writing exercises around the readings. A participation grade will be determined for each of the class sessions based upon the student's presence in class, participation in classroom activities, and submission of short in-class writing exercises. Class participation counts for 10% of the course grade.

Signature Assignment: Agency Assessment

Each student will complete a formal paper based on his or her learning and research. The purpose of this paper is for students to utilize their learning experience, research, and critical thinking to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts and theories presented in the course. Students will reflect upon and analyze their experiences with an identified agency as they relate to broader social issues. Special emphasis will be on the analysis of experience as they relate to social work values, systems theory, the strengths perspective, and scholarly research. Along with an in-class presentation,

this paper will be turned in toward the end of the semester and will be considered the final course assessment.

The suggested length of the paper is 8 pages not including the cover page and reference page. The paper must follow APA style. No abstract or conclusion is required, however, the paper must include a title page, running header with pagination, be double spaced using Times New Roman 12 pt. font, use in-text citations where necessary, and include a separate reference page.

The Agency Assessment assignment asks students to identify the main issue/problem that the assigned agency addresses. It also asks students to identify at least 2 perspectives on the issue. For example, if the issue is housing, one perspective might be that local communities should take the lead while a second perspective is that the federal government should play a larger role. Research is a major requirement for this part of the assignment. Sources that are NOT appropriate for an academic paper include, Wikipedia (although this site is a good starting point for finding initial ideas about a topic, some of their information and attached resources may not be reliable), Blogs, tweets, personal websites, Forums, questionable sites created by organizations that may have political or biased agendas, sites that provide biased information, self-published sources, opinionated articles such as editorials and sites of companies that conduct their business over the internet. On-line sources with an .edu or .org are more likely to be reliable sources. At least one source must be a peer reviewed article from a scholarly journal. Headings for this paper are listed below. Include headings in the paper as indicated.

Heading 1: Primary Issue (suggested length 1 page)

1. What is the main issue/problem that your identified agency is designed to address?
2. Using research including at least one peer reviewed article, what are two perspectives on this issue?

Heading 2: Social Work Values (suggested length 2 pages)

1. Using a “social work lens” to analyze the perspectives, what is the perspective that is the best fit with social work values?
2. What are at least two social work values that are most important?

Heading 3: Systems (Ecological Theory) (suggested length 2 pages)

1. What societal conditions create the need for the services provided by this agency? (For example, economic inequality, racism, health disparity, etc.)
2. How do systemic conditions impact the individuals who receive services and contribute to the conditions that warrant services? (Think person-in-environment and a demonstration of your understanding of systems theory using citations in your answer.)

Heading 4: Strengths Perspective (suggested length 1 page)

1. Using your experience, is the strengths approach utilized in the agency setting? If so, describe. If not, how could the strengths perspective/approach be utilized in this setting?
2. How might that approach benefit the clients/consumers of services?

Heading 5: Self-Reflection (suggested length 2 pages)

1. What were your pre-conceived ideas about the population served by your agency?

2. How did your experience counter or confirm your ideas?
3. Did you encounter any value conflicts?
4. As a social worker, what would you do if you encounter a situation or issue that conflicts with your personal values? Examples include abortion, religion, marriage equality or how people in poverty use resources.
5. Is this an agency or population you would like to work with in the future? Explain.

Grading Standards

Papers are graded on the quality of the final product not on the effort you extended completing them. The grade of A is reserved for truly outstanding work that goes beyond basic requirements.

Grades of A reflect Excellence. Excellent scholarly products and academic or professional performances are substantially superior to the “good,” “the high quality,” “the competent,” or the “satisfactory.” They are unusual, exceptional, and extraordinary. Criteria for assignments are not only met, they are exceeded by a significant margin. Excellence is a rare phenomenon. As a result, relatively few BSW students earn A grades.

Grades of B signify good or high quality scholarly products and academic or professional performance. Grades in the B range reflect work expected of a conscientious student in a professional program. Criteria for assignments are met in a competent, thoughtful, and professional manner. However, the criteria are not exceeded and the quality is not substantially superior to other good quality products or performances. There is a clear distinction between the good and the excellent. We expect that most BSW students will earn grades in the B range—reflecting the good or high quality work expected of competent future helping professionals.

Grades of C and C+ signify work that is marginal in nature. The scholarly products or professional performances meet many but not all of the expected criteria. The work approaches but does not quite meet the standards of quality expected of a student in a professional school. Satisfactory in many respects, its quality is not consistently so and cannot be considered of good or high quality. We anticipate that a minority of BSW students will earn C and C+ grades.

Grades of C- and lower reflect work that is unsatisfactory. The products or performances do not meet several, many, or most of the criteria. The work fails to approach the standards of quality expected of a student and a future BSW-level professional. We anticipate that a small percentage of BSW students will earn unsatisfactory grades of C-, D, and F.

Grading scale

Grade minimums are as follows [Note: grades below a C are Unsatisfactory in the BSW Program]:

A	93%	Excellent, Exceptional Quality
A-	90%	Superior Quality
B+	87%	Very Good, Slightly Higher Quality
B	83%	Good, High Quality (expected of most BSW students)
B-	80%	Satisfactory Quality
C+	77%	Marginal, Modestly Acceptable Quality

C 73% Marginal, Minimally Acceptable Quality

C- 70% Unsatisfactory Quality

The above schedule and procedures are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.