



# SWK-S 331 Generalist Social Work Practice I: Theory and Skills (3 cr.)

## Course Information

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

**Instructor:** XXXXX XXXXXXXXXX  
**Office:** XXXX  
**Email:** XXXX  
**Phone:** XXXXX  
**Office Hours:** XXXXXXXXXX

## Course Description

This course focuses primarily on the application of basic generalist social work skills that demonstrate an understanding and application of the continuum of social work practice in the helping relationship. The course focuses on the beginning phase of the problem-solving process and related skills. This course is designed to provide students with a beginning understanding of generalist social work practice. This course uses a range of perspectives including strengths perspective, empowerment perspective and person-in-environment perspective. Theory and Skills I is the first course in the Social Work practice professional foundation area. The course is based on the assumption that professional practice is built on a combination of knowledge, skills, and values. Integration of these Social Work concepts is accomplished mainly by lectures, role playing, and exercises.

## Course Competencies

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

### Primary

- 6: Engage with Individuals and Families

Social workers understand theories of HBSE and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies (CSWE, 2015 EPAS, p. 8).

- 7: Assess Individuals and Families

Social workers understand theories of HBSE and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies (CSWE, 2015 EPAS, p. 9).

### Secondary

- 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

## Course Objectives

- S331-01:** Develop an understanding and appreciation of generalist Social Work practice.
- S331-02:** Explain the Social Work Code of Ethics and professional values.



- S331-03:** Explain the process of the helping relationship in Social Work practice including the evaluation of personal values and the professional use of self.
- S331-04:** Apply knowledge and core interactional skills associated with the beginning phases of the helping process.
- S331-05:** Understand professional practice as it relates to ethnic minorities of color, women, gay men and lesbian women, and other populations-at-risk.
- S331-06:** Apply beginning skills in completing the assessment of individual clients in the context of family and community environment
- S331-07:** Identify the multiple purposes of recording in Social Work practice.
- S331-08:** Analyze the research literature which supports the knowledge base and practice skills of the Social Work profession.

## Required Texts

Chang, V. N., Decker, C. & Scott, S. T. (2018). Developing helping skills: A step-by-step approach. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Thomason Learning.

## Course Content

This course examines how social work theory, ethics, and professional identity contribute to social work practice, primarily at a micro level. This course strives to facilitate growth in student self awareness and understanding of how the student is impacted by their own culture and biases, and how these can be managed in the best interest of the vulnerable client. Interviewing skills to facilitate collaborative relationships with diverse clients, and that lay the foundation for effective assessment and intervention are introduced and actively practiced.

A variety of teaching/learning methods and experiences will be used in an effort to help students meet the course objectives. Activities will include lectures, discussion, role-playing, and videotaping. Students should have read the assigned readings in order to participate knowledgeably and constructively in class discussions. Since the course is designed for learning by doing, experiencing, and practicing. **Your attendance and participation is very important in this course.** You will address your conduct in class in Assignment 5.

The major evaluation of students' progress in accomplishing the learning objectives of this course is the signature assignment of a 10-20 minute videotape demonstrating basic generalist skills, a portion of which students will review individually with the instructor.

While there will be structured opportunities at the beginning and at the conclusion of this class for your feedback to the instructor, your reactions and suggestions to improve the course will be appreciated at any time.

## Course Outline

### Module 1: Overview of Generalist Practice

Date:

#### *Overview*

- A. Icebreaker & getting to know each other (Creating a Safe Environment)



- B. Syllabus Review (Please come with questions)
- C. Review of structure of course
- D. Discussion of course requirements
- E. Learn the definition of Social Work
- F. Helping vs Rescuing
- G. Introduction to Research (Evidence) Based Practice and Professional Opinion-Based Practice

## Module 2: Ethics and Values in Generalist Social Work Practice

Date:

### Overview

- A. Generalist social work practice: skills, knowledge, and value bases
- B. Levels of intervention in generalist practice
- C. In-class exercises to highlight generalist skills and values (Optional Review of Exercises 3.1, 3.2, & 3.3 in Chang, V., Scott, S., & Decker, C. (2018)

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Chang, V., Scott, S., & Decker, C. (2018). Developing Helping Skills. Preface & Chapter 4 Professionalism and Professional Relationships
2. Miley, K. K., O'Melia, M., & DuBois, B. (2017). Generalist Social Work Practice. pp. 1 - 19
3. NASW Code of Ethics (print copy and bring to class, here is the website: [NASW Code of Ethics](#))
4. Horner, R., & Kelly, T.B. (2007). Ethical decision making in the helping professions: A contextual and caring approach. *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work*, 26(1), 71-88.

## Module 3: Understanding Research - Based versus Professional Opinion-Based Practice

Date:

### Overview

- A. What is a theory?
- B. The role of assessment in individual and family social work
- C. Discussion and activity on the dual perspective
- D. Feminist theory
- E. The eco-systems perspective
  1. Assumptions
  2. Strengths
  3. Critiques
- F. Critical Theory - Anti-Oppressive Approach
- G. Post-colonial Theory

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Plath, D. (2006). Evidence-based practice: Current issues and future directions. *Australian Social Work*, 59(1), 56-72.



2. Chang, V., Scott, S., & Decker, C. (2018). Chapter 2, Ways of Understanding and Perceiving Self and Others

## Module 4: Professional Relationships – Strengths, Empowerment, and Multi-cultural Humility

Date:

### Overview

- A. What is a profession?
- B. What is the role of professional social worker
- C. Preparing to visit an agency
- D. Strengths Perspective
- E. Developing rapport
- F. Cultural Humility

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Chang, et al. Chapter 4 & 5 Add titles to the chapters for clarity (my books are in boxes)
2. Cowger, C. (1994). Assessing client strengths: Clinical assessment for client empowerment. *Social Work*, 39(3), 262-268
3. Miley et al. Ch. 3 Values of Multicultural Competence

## Module 5: Cultural Humility

Date:

### Overview

- A. A. What are values?
- B. How do we develop multicultural competence?
- C. How can we help others if we do not understand ourselves?
- D. How do we perceive the world around us?
- E. Discuss Chang exercises
- F. What questions do you have about cultural competency?

### Assignments

#### Readings:

1. Chang, V., Scott, S., & Decker, C. (2018). Ch. 1 Importance of Self-Understanding, Ch. 2 Ways of Understanding and Perceiving Self and Others, Ch. 3 Values, Ethics, and Legal Obligations
2. Miley, K. K., O'Melia, M., & DuBois, B. (2017). Chapter 3 Values and Multicultural Competence
3. DeJong, P., & Miller, S. D. (1995). How to interview for client strengths. *Social Work*, 40(6), 729-736.

## Module 6: Cultural Humility continued

Date:

### Overview

- A. Review of Empathizing with persons different from us
- B. How do we learn to work with people that are different from us



- C. Discussion of Family Structures
- D. Considerations for Assessing Minority People

### *Assignments*

#### *Readings*

1. NASW (2001). National Association of Social Workers Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice. Retrieved from [link for NASW Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice](#)
2. Fisher-Borne, M., Cain, J. M., & Martin, S. L. (2015). From mastery to accountability: Cultural humility as an alternative to cultural competence. *Social Work Education*, 34(2), 165-181.

#### *Due*

1. Assignment 1: Cultural Humility Paper
2. Mock Interview recording

## Module 7: Basic Skills Part 1 Forming Partnerships

Date:

### *Overview*

- A. Preparing for clients
- B. Recording
- C. Review of first 3 Interpersonal Skills: Observing, Attending, and Listening
- D. Learn how to Show and Express Observing, Attending, and Listening
- E. Learn how to Evaluate Observing, Attending, and Listening
- F. Practice in groups of 3 how to use Observing, Attending, and Listening

### *Assignments*

#### *Readings*

1. Chang, V., Scott, S., & Decker, C. (2018). Ch. 6 **Foundational Interpersonal Skills**
2. Saxon, C., Jacinto, G.A., & Dziegielewski, S.F. (2006). Self-determination and confidentiality: The ambiguous nature of decision making in social work practice. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 13(4), 55-72.

#### *Due*

1. Assignment 1: Mock Interview is due on CANVAS
2. Reflective Journal

## Module 8: Basic Skills

Date:

### *Overview*

- A. Review of 4 Interpersonal Skills – Respect, Empathy, Warmth, & Genuineness
- B. Learn how to Develop, Show, and Express the 4 Interpersonal Skills with Clients
- C. Learn how to Evaluate the Respect, Empathy, Warmth, & Genuineness
- D. Practice in groups of 3 how to demonstrate the 4 Interpersonal Skills
- E. Review common mistakes



## Assignments

### Readings

1. Chang et al. Ch. 5 Developing Relationships

### Due

1. Reflective Journal

## Module 9: Opening and Closing a Meeting

Date:

### Overview

- A. Review of Skills: Opening and Closing a Meeting
- B. Making professional introductions
- C. Learn how to be Fully present in a meeting
- D. Learn how to Prepare to meet with a new client
- E. Learn how to Set the tone of the first meeting
- F. Learn how to Explain the process of a meeting/confidentiality
- G. Learn how to how to begin subsequent meetings
- H. Learn how to **Close** a meeting
- I. Practice in groups of 3 how to use open and close a meeting

## Assignments

### Reading

1. Chang, V., Scott, S., & Decker, C. (2018). Chapter 7, Opening and Closing a Meeting
2. Saxon, C., Jacinto, G. A., & Dziegielewski, S. F. (2006). Self-determination and confidentiality: The ambiguous nature of decision making in social work practice. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 13(4), 55-72.

### Due

1. Reflective Journal

## Module 10: Communicating with clients

Date:

### Overview

- A. Forming partnerships with clients
- B. Making Initial Contact
- C. Recognizing what clients bring
- D. Constructing Empowering Relationships
- E. Respecting and Violating Confidentiality
- F. Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication:
- G. In-class exercise practicing skills

## Assignments

### Readings

1. Chang et al. Chapter 8 Demonstrating Active Listening



### Due

1. Reflective Journals
2. Assignment 2: Cultural Humility Assignment

## Module 11: Expressing Understanding

Date:

### Overview

- A. Forming partnerships with clients
- B. Review of Next Skills: Reflecting - Reflecting Content, Reflecting Feelings, Summarizing, Reflecting Feeling & Content
- C. Learn how to Reflect what clients have articulated
- D. Learn how to Reflect Content of only what clients have said
- E. Learn how to Reflect Feelings of what client have expressed or showed in some way
- F. Learn how to Summarize points of discussions for better understanding and to bring closure to certain discussions
- G. Learn how to how to reflect both feelings and content back to client to allow them to move beyond their current view and understanding of the problem that brought them in

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Chang et al. Ch.9 **Using Questions**

### Due

1. Reflective Journals

## Module 12: Defining Directions

Date:

### Overview

- A. Review the Problem – Solving Process
- B. Review the following Skills: Using Questions to Explore, Identifying Strengths, Demonstrating Respect
- C. Learn about different types of questions: Open, Closed, Multiple etc.)
- D. Learn about different questioning patterns and approaches
- E. Learn how to ask questions to explore
- F. Learn how to identify strengths
- G. Learn how to demonstrate respect
- H. Learn about and how to use Goal Attainment scaling

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Chang et al. Chapter 8 Demonstrating Active Listening

### Due

1. Reflective Journal

## Module 13 Exploring and Assessing with Clients

Date:

### Overview

- A. Practice interviewing and assessment skills
- B. Practice making notes

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Chang et al. Ch 9 Using question, Ch. 10 Exploring and Discovering, & Ch. 11. Thinking about Readiness and Motivation

## Module 14: Mock Interviews 2

Date:

### Assignments

#### Due

1. Assignment 3: Video Recording and Analysis Paper
2. Meet with Instructor
3. Professionalism paper

This schedule is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.

## Assignments and Grading

### Assignments

1. Mock interview
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....
2. Cultural Humility
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....
3. Reflective Journal Notes
  - c. DUE: .....
  - d. Final Grade Percentage: .....
4. Video Tape Demonstrations (Signature Assignment)
  - e. DUE: .....
  - f. Final Grade Percentage: .....
5. Professional Behavior and Class Participation
  - g. DUE: .....
  - h. Final Grade Percentage: .....20%



## Assignment Details

### *Mock Interview (10 points)*

Conduct a 15-minute video recording with one of your classmates. This video recording will serve as a starting point to assess your interviewing skills as you progress in this class.

1. Interview teams will be assigned by instructor.
2. Each member of the team will take turns assuming the role of social worker and client.
3. In the role of client discuss any topic or event that matters to you (either past or present). The selected topic should **only** be a topic that you feel comfortable discussing with a classmate and video recording.
4. In the role of the social worker, respond to your classmate how you think a social worker would respond, based on your reading and interactions in this and other social work courses.
5. Submit your video recording and a one-page reflection paper describing what you observed about yourself in the role of social worker. This should include facial expressions, body language, communication patterns, language, etc. Be descriptive!

### *Assignment 2: Cultural Humility (25 points)*

**\*\*Part I (3 pages):** Describe the various aspects of your social identity in terms of gender, ethnicity/nationality, race/color, sexual orientation, ability/disability, social class, and religion/spirituality. Discuss how these attributes and dimensions of your identity might influence your attitudes toward and interactions with others who are “different,” or similar. Also discuss how their attitudes toward and interactions with you might be impacted. This aspect of the assignment is to heighten your awareness of your own identity and its various dimensions: gender, ethnicity/nationality, race/color, sexual orientation, ability/disability, social class, and religion/spirituality, and to assist you in developing a sense of self in relationship to others with shared or dissimilar social identities.

**\*\*Please note this part of the assignment was adapted from Faye Y. Abram, PhD, St. Louis University.**

**Part II (4 pages):** The purpose of this part of the assignment is for you to summarize your understanding of generalist Social Work practice with an oppressed group. Specifically, describe what you think it would be like as a social worker to work with clients from an oppressed population.

- Select one oppressed group you are interested in learning more about. If you are member of an oppressed group, **choose a different group**. For example, if you select gender and you are a woman, then you can explore transgender, or males, or some other gender orientation. If you have a learning disability and select disabilities, you need to explore a different disability. You can choose a group from one of the following categories:
  - a. Ability/disability
  - b. Social Class
  - c. Gender
  - d. Religion
  - e. Sexual orientation
  - f. Race or ethnicity



- Read about this group and how to engage in culturally competent practice from each of the following three sources:
  - a. social work textbook
  - b. the *Encyclopedia of Social Work*
  - c. professional social work journal
- Based on your academic reading:
  - a. Provide a brief history of how your chosen group has been oppressed
  - b. Discuss **three** of the following areas with regard to the oppressed group you have selected:
    - General information about family structures within this group (for example, nuclear, extended, single-parent)
    - Education disparities
    - Health concerns and disparities
    - How might members of this group access and respond to mental health services.
- Describe/discuss culturally competent social work practice guidelines for this group and what it might be like to provide culturally competent services in the U.S. for this group. Use the NASW Cultural Competence Guide. How might a member of this group respond to help from sources, such as a social worker who is outside of their culture or group or a member of their group?
- We all have actual and potential biases. Given the various aspects of your own social identity what are some of the potential ‘challenges’ that you might face in working with this population – both from the client and within yourself? What would you do to address these potential biases? The paper length is a total of 7 pages which does not include the title and reference page. The paper should be formatted using APA 6 writing style. Cite and paraphrase your sources and do not use more than 2 direct quotations. Provide a complete list of references on your reference page using APA 6 formatting.

### *Reflective Journal Notes (10 pts @ 2 points each)*

As you are learning the practice skills you will reflect on your learning by writing reflective journal notes. Submit each note via Canvas after each in-class skill practice session. Each note should no less than 1 page.

1. Describe how the “client” reacted to each skill
2. Reflect on the feedback from the observer and client
3. Describe what you learned about yourself as you practiced the skill by identifying your strengths and areas that need work. (If you write about anything you learned from the readings be sure to cite your source.)
4. Identify any theoretical perspective you utilized and why you selected that approach
5. Identify any ethical concerns that emerged or could emerge from the interaction.



### *Video Tape Demonstration (Signature Assignment)*

Complete a 10 - 20 minute videotape demonstrating basic generalist skills (establishing rapport, attending skills, active listening, engagement, reflecting, open and closed ended questions, demeanor and affect, seeking clarification, and opening and closing a meeting).

Then review your video and write a critique of the video identifying strengths and areas you need to continue to work on. More detailed instructions and evaluation criteria will be provided at a later date. Be sure to apply ethical principles of professional practice.

### *Professional Behavior and class participation (10 points)*

Overall evaluation of level of professionalism will take into account the manner and extent to which you:

- A. Attend regularly and on-time;
- B. is courteous to others in class;
- C. share own experiences, viewpoints, and reactions;
- D. raise relevant questions and issues;
- E. participate in discussions;
- F. give and use feedback constructively; and
- G. complete class exercises.

You will complete a self-evaluation of professionalism due on April 30 through Oncourse. This self-evaluation must be in APA style and 3 - 4 pages long. Provide examples of how you have fulfilled each of these areas of professionalism.

## 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