

ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
MSW PROGRAM

## SYLLABUS

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Course number:</b>	GRSW 501 (C01)
<b>Course title:</b>	Theory and Practice of Social Work I
<b>Class time:</b>	Fall Semester, 2009 Monday, 4:40 - 7:05pm
<b>Course location:</b>	Mendel Hall, Room 109
<b>Course value:</b>	Three semester credits
<b>INSTRUCTOR:</b>	Theresa Kelly McPartlin, LICSW, CASWCM <a href="mailto:tkmcpartlin@stthomas.edu">tkmcpartlin@stthomas.edu</a> Home Telephone: 651-690-0614 Office: Fontbonne, Solarium B, CSC Office Telephone: 651-690-8647 Office Hours: By appointment, TBA

#### REQUIRED TEXT:

Miley, K., O'Melia, M. & Dubois, B. (2009). *Generalist Social Work Practice: An Empowering Approach (6th edition)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Collins, Donald, et al. (2010). *An Introduction to Family Social Work (3rd edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** Found on the School of Social Work web site.

### II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides the first year MSW student with the knowledge and skills needed for generalist social work practice. Students develop communication and interviewing skills which are used in work with client systems of all sizes. Basic content on working with family systems is also presented. It is taken concurrently with a field placement which serves as a practice lab for applying theory and skills learned in the classroom. Student self-awareness and self assessment are especially important since they facilitate the development of an authentic style of practice.

### **III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The course is based on the generalist and integrative models of social work practice, the strengths perspective and systems theory.

### **IV. COURSE OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of this course, students will have attained the following knowledge and skills:

#### **A. Knowledge of the following concepts:**

1. The integrative model of social work practice.
2. The core purposes, values and ethics of the social work profession with particular attention to how these fit with personal values and ethics.
3. The generalist model of social work practice.
4. The strengths perspective and empowerment principles with particular application to diverse and at – risk populations including the elderly.
5. Social Justice as an organizing principle for clinical social work practice.
6. Basic principles of family systems theory with particular attention to assessment and intervention strategies. Special attention is given to how these theories operate with clients who are identified from a population at risk.
7. Practice evaluation and its importance to social work practice and a cursory overview of selected materials
8. A basic understanding of Feminist and Narrative theories and how they contribute to our generalist practice model in understanding issues of race, class, or ethnicity.
9. Assessing, analyzing and gathering data about a client’s resources from a strengths perspective as it relates to clients who vary in age, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, as well as social , cultural, racial, spiritual and class background.

**B. Skill in:**

1. Developing active listening techniques (furthering responses, paraphrasing, empathic responding, summarizing), judicious use of questions, confrontation and self-disclosure.
2. Developing professional relationships characterized by mutuality, collaboration, respect for the client system, and authenticity of the social worker.
3. Developing the use of self, paying close attention to self-awareness, critical self-reflection and self-assessment.
4. Assessing client's strengths and their resources focusing on issues of social class, gender, race and ethnicity.
5. Applying the generalist perspective to a variety of client populations including but not limited to poor people, women and the elderly.
6. Application of the strengths perspective and empowerment principles to survivors of abuse, various ethnic groups, the economically poor and the elderly.
7. Identifying the impact of psychosocial problems on family systems and developing strategies for family systems interventions.
8. Evaluating one's own practice.
9. Defining the impact of problems on family systems and developing strategies and goals for family work.
10. Identifying social work values and ethics as they relate to generalist practice.

**V. CONTENT OUTLINE**

1. The integrative Model of Social Work Practice: Individual, Environmental and Societal Integrations
  - a. Generalist Social Work Practice
  - b. Integrative model of social work practice
  - c. Eco systems perspective
  - d. Teaching Justice Principles
  - e. Professional values and cultural competence
  - f. Strengths and Empowerment

2. An Empowering Approach to Generalist Practice
  - a. Overview
  - b. Dialogue
    - i. Forming partnerships
    - ii. Articulating situations
    - iii. Defining directions
  - c. Discovery
    - i. Identifying strengths
    - ii. Analyzing resource capabilities
    - iii. Framing solutions
  - d. Development
    - i. Activating resources
    - ii. Creating alliances
    - iii. Expanding opportunities
    - iv. Recognizing success
    - v. Integrating gains
  - e. Skill Development
    - i. Nonverbal attending and client observation
    - ii. Verbal following
    - iii. Empathic responding
    - iv. Paraphrasing
    - v. Use of questions
    - vi. Uses of self-disclosure
    - vii. Dealing with resistance
    - viii. Confrontation
    - ix. Applying strengths perspective
    - x. Applying empowerment principles
3. Family Systems Interventions
  - a. Introduction to family work
  - b. Examining family systems
  - c. Role of the worker
  - d. Joining with families
  - e. Best practices in family work

## VI. ASSIGNMENTS

Methods used in the course of study will include: lectures and discussions, reading, examination of current research, use of small groups, and applications to generalist practice and family practice with diverse populations. Since the integration of theory and practice can be best learned by following the scheme of experiential learning, i.e., experiencing, reflecting, thinking and doing, students are expected to be active learners using all modes to master the knowledge and skills presented in the course.

**Please note:** *If classes are cancelled for any reason, please check the course Blackboard site for directions on how to proceed with your study.*

**The only 'political correctness' appropriate to this course is the search for truth and the commitment to encounter and engage the course goals, the texts and each other with openness, honesty and respect.**

### A. Attendance and Preparation

Professional education involves experiential and collaborative learning and the development of high standards of personal and professional responsibility. Each student is a valuable resource in the learning experience. Course content and class activities are fundamental to effective social work learning. Students are expected to attend class, arrive on time, be prepared, and participate. Attendance will be recorded in each class. Because attendance is so important, it will contribute to the final grade (15%). Students who demonstrate good attendance are therefore rewarded for their effort.

**All cell phones and or pagers must be turned to vibrate or off. Any guests in class must be adults. Permission of the instructor is required to bring a guest.**

### B. Reading Refreshers

As an alternative to Each class will begin with a 5 minute reading refresher quiz to assist you in centering your thoughts and recapturing the thinking in the readings. These will begin in session two and end in session twelve.

### C. Ice Breakers

One or more students will lead an opening discussion to begin each class. They will prepare a discussion guide including quotes and questions drawn from the reading that small groups will apply to a case example.  
*Examples, ground rules, and a format will be distributed in the first two classes.*

### D. Self-Assessment

### E. Four Application Papers

## F. Ethics Practice and Personal Development

**NOTE: Formats and questions to be addressed for each of the assignments are found in the appendix of this syllabus.**

### VII. EVALUATION AND GRADING

- All written assignments must be double-spaced, typed, and written in gender-fair English.
- Assignments are expected to be professionally presented. Typographical or grammatical errors and assignments that are poorly written or otherwise of an unprofessional quality will be returned for a rewrite.
- Students will be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit assignments to use the feedback of the instructor and obtain the grade desired.
- Incompletes will be granted following the policy in the MSW Manual. Because this course is part of a sequence, all work must be completed by the start of the second term.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Date Due</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>% of Final</u>
Attendance	ALL	45	15%
Ice Breaker	As assigned	40	13.3%
Self Assessment	9/21	40	13.3%
Case Applications (4)	10/5, 10/19, 11/9, 12/7	140	46.6%
Ethics on Blackboard	12/17	35	11.6%

#### Grading:

A: 100 - 94%	C+: 80-78 %
A-: 93 - 91 %	C: 77 - 74 %
B+: 90 - 88%	C-: 73 - 71 %
B: 87-84%	D: 70 - 61 %
B-: 83 - 81%	F: 60% and below

### VIII. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Classroom accommodations will be provided for qualified students with documented disabilities. **Normally students use the office on the campus where that class is taught.** Students are required to contact the Enhancement Program at the University of St. Thomas and Resources for Disabilities at the College of St. Catherine about accommodations for their courses within the first two weeks of the term. Appointments can be made at the Enhancement Program by calling 651-962-6315 or the Resources for Disabilities office at 651-690-6563.

For further information you can locate the Enhancement Program on the web at <http://www.stthomas.edu/enhancementprog/>

Resources for Disabilities at <http://minerva.stkate.edu/offices/academic/oneill.nsf>

## IX. PANDEMIC PLANNING

The University of St. Thomas is committed to a healthy campus community. During the 2009-2010 academic year, there will be ongoing concerns regarding the prevalence among university faculty, staff and students of both the H1N1 virus and seasonal influenza. To help limit the spread of these illnesses, the Center for Disease Control has provided college campuses the following recommendation: students, faculty, or staff with influenza like illnesses (temperature of 100.0 or greater, plus a cough or sore throat) are directed to self-isolate (or stay home) for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine. In the event that students are unable to attend classes due to this self-isolation recommendation, they should consult the university's pandemic web site <http://www.stthomas.edu/pandemic/plan/default.html> and complete an on-line form informing professors of their absence. In accordance, faculty will provide opportunities for these students to participate in alternative educational delivery due to this illness.

## X. COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Assignments</u>
Session #1 September 14	Introduction to the course and colleagues Integrative Model of Generalist Practice Teaching Justice Principles Eco Systems Perspective Video – <i>Fish – Catch the Energy, Release the Potential</i> <b>Discussion: How do we create a Fish atmosphere in our learning together?</b>	<i>Generalist SW Practice (GSWP) – Chapter 1/2</i>
Session # 2 September 21	Professional Values and Cultural Competence Defining Ethical Behavior Techniques for Fostering Transcultural Relationships <b>Discussion: What do I need from this learning group?</b> <b>DUE: Self Assessment</b>	<i>GSWP - Chapter 3 NASW – Code of Ethics</i>
Session # 3 September 28	Strengths, Resilience and Empowerment Macro, Mezzo, Micro Interventions <b>Discussion – What changes in <u>relating</u> to clients when you use strengths-based interventions?</b>	<i>GSWP – Chapter 4/5</i>
Sessions # 4 October 5	Forming Partnerships <b>Discussion – What is a Helping Relationship?</b> <i>Communication Lab Skill – Non-verbal attending and client observation</i> <b>DUE: Application to Generalist Practice – 1</b>	<i>GSWP – Chapters 6</i>
Session # 5 October 12	Articulating Situations Defining Directions <b>Discussion – Whose goals are they anyway?</b> <i>Communication Lab Skill – Verbal following</i>	<i>GSWP – Chapters 7/ 8</i>

Session # 6 Identifying Strengths GSWP – Chapter 9/10  
October 19 Assessing Resource Capabilities  
**Discussion – How do we assist clients in identifying and using their strengths and assets?**  
*Communication Lab Skill – Empathetic Responding/Uses of Self-disclosure*  
**DUE: Application to Generalist Practice – 2**

Session # 7 Framing Solutions GSWP – Chapter 11/12/13  
October 26 Activating Resources  
Creating Alliances  
*Communication Lab Skill – Paraphrasing, Use of Questions*  
**Discussion – What does it take to make an effective referral?**

<i>Midway Evaluation of Class Effectiveness for Learning</i>
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Session # 8 Expanding Opportunities GSWP – Chapters 14/15/16  
November 2 Recognizing Success  
Integrating Gains  
**Discussion – How do clinical social workers use the generalist method?**  
*Communication Lab Skills – Dealing with Resistance/Confrontation*

Session # 9 Levels of Family Need Family Social Work (FSW)  
November 9 Generalist Approaches to Family Work Chapters 1-3  
**Discussion – How do we define family?**  
**DUE: Application to Generalist Practice – 3**

Session # 10 Models of Family Life Cycle/ Development FSW – Chapters 6, 9  
November 16 Fostering Family Resilience  
**Discussion – How do we foster family resilience?**

Session # 11 Family Assessment FSW – Chapters 4, 5, 7, 8  
November 23 **Discussion – How do we approach family assessment?**

Session # 12 Intervening in the Family FSW– Chapters 10, 11  
November 30 Using Case Management with Families  
**Discussion – How do we support change in families?**  
*Speaker: Working with Families*

Session # 13 Ending the Work FSW– Chapter 14  
December 7 **Discussion – How do we end well with a family?**  
A Look Ahead  
**DUE: Application to Generalist Practice – 4**

Finals Week **Online posting due by 12/17**

## *Appendix*

### *Self Assessment*

In completing this assignment take time to reflect on the questions in order to assure yourself you are completing an accurate assessment of your core values and skill level. NUMBER YOUR ANSWERS.

1. In your own words define critical thinking and describe your strengths and limits in thinking critically.
2. Identify **three values** that underpin your professional/work life. Discuss how each value is operationalized in your work behavior.
3. Compare the **three** values identified in question # 2 to those found in the *NASW Code of Ethics* and the values of *Social Work for Social Justice* reflecting on similarities, differences, and ways your values may strengthen/complement the social work values or ways your values may cause value conflicts with social work values.
4. Describe **three** specific skills you bring to the social work profession from your personal life and work experience, describing why you think each is important to social work practice
5. Discuss briefly what support you would like from this learning group to strengthen your values and to help you think critically.

**Due: September 21**

**Value: 40 points**

### *Application # 1*

*Summary:* Elana is a thirty-eight year old woman who is facing eviction. She lives with the two youngest of her four children in an apartment in a Twin Cities suburb. Jimmie is 15 and Mara is 17. She is connected to several social service agencies and their programs for people in poverty.

Elana has not completed high school. She is not working because of back pain and depression. She has had on-going chemical dependency issues. She is on MFIP. She has used her emergency assistance and Family Support Funds. This eviction comes after her failure to pay two months rent and to report that her ex-husband a convicted felon is living with the family once again.

The children are completing their school year. They are both excellent students. They are concerned about being homeless again and whether or not they will be able to return to their current high school in the Fall.

*Summary:* James is a 58 year old African-American man who lives alone. He is on SSI because of serious health issues. He is a college graduate and has worked in human resources in a large corporation. It is important to James that he take care of his own personal business. He has a community social worker from a private agency that works with him in the role of case manager. Together they have identified resources that allow James to maintain his independence. He is pleased with their working relationship.

A crisis is at hand because James failed to pay his pharmacy bill on time and sent his SSI reports in late to the County. Someone on the county team called a meeting of all providers and James and warned him that he would lose his county support and independence, if he would not allow her to appoint a guardian. She is “tired of doing extra paperwork” for people who are not responsible.

Before the meeting James had spoken to the pharmacy and arranged a payment plan. He did miss his county report once last year while he was hospitalized. The county worker told his case manager just before the meeting that she had not done her job properly and that “these people just don’t know how to be responsible.” This is why she was going to push for a guardianship.

**Choose one of the two situations described above to answer the questions below.**

1. Discuss how the eco-systems perspective and the integrative model apply to this situation, ie, what systems would you need to consider in your work with this client.
2. Describe how you would use EACH of the theories of strengths, resilience, and empowerment in approaching work with this individual or family.  
(15 points)
3. In both cases a partnership has been formed between the client and a social worker. Explain **three** qualities or methods you believe are key to forming an effective working relationship with this particular client system.

**Due: October 5**

**Value: 30 points**

## *Application # 2*

1. Describe your communication strengths and challenges, then choose a concept in Chapter Seven – “Articulating Situations” that is new to you or difficult for you to employ. Discuss two ways you can use your internship experience to expand your use of this skill.
2. Discuss how you believe a social worker can work with client resistance and foster motivation in the change process.
3. Assess your field placement agency’s administration and staff using the ecosystems framework (*Miley, pp.268-269*) – specifically addressing: a. the structural dimensions of closeness; b. the structural dimensions of power; c. the interactional dimensions; d. the cultural dimensions. Based on this assessment make **two suggestions** for change that will strengthen the organization.  
(20 points)

**Due: October 19**

**Value: 30 points**

## *Application # 3*

*For #1 and 2 - Briefly describe a client’s problem situation or a problem your work team is facing in less than a page.*

1. Identify and briefly describe **three strengths** you ascribe to the client system from your assessment. Identify and briefly describe **three barriers** you see for this client system from your assessment.
2. Identify **three measurable outcomes** you would suggest as part of your work, the risks and benefits of each to the client, and your reasons for choosing each of those outcomes.
3. Describe a social policy issue that affects the people you are working with at your field agency and ideas for policy change you have to address it. (10 points)
4. Identify three values you see in your field agency from those articulated in *Social Work for Social Justice* and describe how they complement the mission of the agency.

**Due: November 9**

**Value: 40 points**

### ***Application # 4***

1. Discuss **two ways** you could apply theory on the family life cycle and family development to better understand and act in your own family.
2. Using the case posted on Blackboard under “Course Materials,” describe how you would engage the family, and what qualitative and quantitative approaches you would use in assessment with them.
3. Using the case posted on Blackboard under “Course Materials,” describe how Froma Walsh’s framework on family resilience applies to their situation.
4. Discuss your emerging professional beliefs and style in working with families diverse from yourself.

**Due: December 7**

**Value: 40 points**

### ***Ethics Practice and Personal Development***

Complete the *Ethics Practice and Personal Development Survey* and create an entry in the Discussion Board of Blackboard about one of the areas you found personally challenging and how you might seek consultation and support to continue your work.

**Due: December 17**

**Value: 35 points**