

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

SYLLABUS

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Course number: GRSW501 (T04)
Course title: Theory and Practice of Social Work I
Class time: Fall Semester, 2009
Saturdays, 8 am – 5 pm (9/12, 10/3, 11/7, 12/5)
Course location: SCB 326, UST
Course value: Three semester credits

INSTRUCTOR: Mary Tinucci, MSW, LICSW
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REQUIRED TEXT:

Miley, K., O'Melia, M. & Dubois, B. (2007). *Generalist Social Work Practice: An Empowering Approach (5th edition)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Collins, Donald, et al. (2007). *An Introduction to Family Social Work (2nd 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 AND POLICIES

Please Note:

Formats and directions regarding each assignment are found in the appendix of this syllabus.

Methods used in the course of study will include: lectures and class discussions, use of blackboard class discussion, in-class fishbowl student-led discussions, readings and examination of current research, use of small groups, in-class skill development through practice labs, video/discussion 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 (experiencing, reflecting, thinking, doing) students are expected to be *active learners* using all modes to master the knowledge/skills presented in class. 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.

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

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.

Attendance, Preparation and Participation in ALL 4 Class Sessions

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 required to attend all four of the class sessions, arrive on time, be prepared, and actively participate.**

A. Blackboard Discussion Posts (4 Posts)

B. In-Class Student Fish-Bowl Discussions w/Blackboard Prep Post (1x)

C. Values Self-Assessment Paper

D. Social History Write Up

VII. EVALUATION AND GRADING

- All written assignments must be double-spaced and typed
- Assignments must be presented professionally. Typographical or grammatical errors and assignments that are poorly written or otherwise of an unprofessional quality will be graded down.
- Students will be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit assignments to use the feedback of the instructor and obtain the grade desired.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Date Due</u>	<u>Points</u>
Participation	All 4 classes	40 (10 points per class)
Values Self-Assessment Paper	10/3	25 points
Taking/Writing a Social History	11/7	25 points
Fish-Bowl Discussion w/BB Collaboration	As assigned (1x) <i>(In class as assigned, on either 10/3, 11/7 or 12/5)</i>	30 points
Blackboard Discussion Posts	5pm Friday, 9/11 7pm Thursday, 10/1 7 pm Thursday, 11/5 7 pm Thursday, 12/3	20 points 20 points 20 points (case application) 20 points (case application)
		TOTAL POINTS = 200

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

Incompletes:

If you are forced by emergency circumstances to request an “incomplete”, we will negotiate and sign a written agreement setting forth the requirements and time line for completing the course. Requests for such an option must be student-initiated. As stated in the Student Handbook, incompletes can only be awarded if the student has completed a minimum of one-half the required coursework at a “B” quality or above. You would need to approach me at least two weeks before the end of the course. An incomplete cannot extend beyond May 1, 2010; if it does, it reverts to an “F”. An incomplete would ideally be completed prior to the beginning of spring semester.

VIII. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Disability Statement

Classroom accommodations will be provided for qualified students with documented disabilities. Students are required to contact the Enhancement Program at the University of St. Thomas and Resources for Disabilities at St. Catherine University 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, locate the Enhancement Program on the web at UST: <http://www.stthomas.edu/enhancementprog>. At SCU: Resources for Disabilities: <http://minerva.stkate.edu/offices/academic/oneill.nsf>.

IX. Pandemic Policy

The School of Social Work 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 MSW 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.

Appendix

A. Black Board Posts (4 posts)

(20 points each)

Students will post discussion reactions to the questions noted in the course schedule or as assigned in class.

B. Student Fish-Bowl Discussions (In-Class/Sessions 2, 3 & 4)

(30 points)

In class sessions 2, 3 and 4, a small group comprised of 6-7 students will lead an opening discussion at the beginning of each class regarding the assigned readings. The student group will prepare a reaction to aspects of the reading, collaborate with the small group as to the delivery/content of the discussion, and participate in this discussion, as the rest of the class observes. *(For the purposes of preparation, the student group will hold a discussion on Blackboard prior to their in-class discussion).* After a set time, the full class will join this discussion with the small group. **The skills developed through this activity include:** understanding and integrating written content, application of this content into practice examples, collaboration, presentation skills and group work. *Further examples, expectations, a format and group assignments will be established in the first class.*

C. Value Self-Assessment (*due October 3rd, 2009*) (6-7 pages)

(25 points)

This assignment has an explicit focus on your own self-awareness related to values (yours and the profession's), biases with respect to certain problems/client populations, and personality characteristics. Each of these aspects impact your work with clients in significant ways. This sort of self-assessment is critical to good social work practice and continues throughout one's practice. It is especially important to begin this process in a deliberate and thoughtful way, realizing that each of these areas will change as you progress and develop as a practitioner.

Reflect on client issues or client populations that you suspect will present challenges to you in terms of putting the above into practice. These challenges likely reflect areas of values conflict, underlying assumptions and/or areas of incongruence between what you *believe* and what you *actually value and are able to put into practice*. We all have these areas of incongruence, and an important first step is becoming aware of them and having the courage to articulate them. Only then are we able to address these areas of incongruence in ways that will not harm clients. It is equally important to identify areas of congruence – things that already come quite naturally for you and are a good fit. These strengths are resources for you as you discover ways of dealing with challenges. In preparing for this assignment, it will be helpful to review several things:

- NASW Code of Ethics
- Social Work for Social Justice: 10 Principles
- Assumptions of a strengths perspective and empowerment principles

You will not be evaluated on the particular issues you raise since there are no right or wrong answers. Rather, the instructor will attempt to evaluate **the depth, thoroughness, and your willingness and ability to critically examine these dimensions**. Obviously, given this length, your assessment will be summary in nature. You simply cannot discuss everything in detail.

What is important is that you put your finger on the key issues, provide enough description so that you'll be able to come back to this later, and use it as a tool for on-going self-assessment.

Use the following questions as a guide, in addition to what is requested/noted above:

1. Identify three values that underpin your professional/work life. Discuss how each value is operationalized in your work behavior.
2. Compare the three values identified in question # 1 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.
3. Are the values that you identified that underpin your professional/work life the same as your top core values for personal living? Discuss how you deal with any differences in style in your professional and personal lives, and how you capitalize on similarities.
4. Describe three specific skills you bring to the social work profession from your personal life and work experience. What three specific skills do you anticipate learning within this first year of study, describing why you think each is important.
5. Discuss briefly what support you would like from this learning group to strengthen your values and develop new skills.

D. Taking & Writing a social history (due November 7th, 2009) (25 points)

Using the outline on page 268 in your text, locate a willing candidate in order to complete a social history. Use all 15 Headers on your paper, each should be highlighted and represent a separate paragraph. If the individual has no history in a given area, it is important to note that. It is important to reflect that you did ask this information, and the "client denied" any information... (Example: client denied any legal history. States she has never had any speeding tickets, or any difficulties with respect to the law).

If you forget to ask, or there is an important reason that you did not frame the particular area as so stated on page 268, then note that in the document and why. In a true client situation you might find yourself confronted with the following example related to #15/Future Plans: If a client is close to dying, then future plans may be things he/she believes to be very important before they die, (assuming the client wishes to engage in such a discussion). Always be respectful of the client in environment/situation, or adjust the question to the client situation.

After the interview, write a two-page summary of how you approached this task of taking a social history. What did you notice in terms of the process and the skills needed to proceed effectively. Note both your ease and your challenges as you completed the interview. This is the most important aspect of the written assignment. Please work to identify what the process was like for you, and what skills you saw emerge as strengths, and what areas and skills were challenging for you. I am not interested in the information of the social history, although you will include this in what you turn in to me. I am most interested in what you had to employ in order to get the information. The skills, the process, the tone, etc...Focus on these aspects of the experience.