COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Course Description: (3 semester credit hours). This course builds on the generalist practice with individuals, families and group class, extending the concepts of empowerment based practice and the strengths perspective to macro client systems such as organizations and communities. The relationships between organizations and communities and at-risk populations are infused throughout the course.

GOAL & COMPETENCIES:

1. Prepare MSW graduates for professional advanced generalist practice that reflects application and integration of critical thinking, theoretical frameworks, and differential interventions. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

   C 1.1 Apply critical and independent analysis of practice situations and effectively communicate their judgments, reasoning and decision-making processes (2.1.3)

   C 1.2 Apply and contribute to evidence-based and best practice approaches to continuously assess and improve the efficacy and effectiveness of practice (2.1.6).

   C 1.3 Differentially apply theories and frameworks of HBSE and critique interactions between and among biological, psychological, social, spiritual and cultural systems and their reciprocal relationships with HBSE. (2.1.7).

   C 1.4 Demonstrate autonomy in dynamic practice activities that involve (2.1.10):
C. 1.4 (a) Effective relationship-building interactions at all levels of systems focused on enhancing client choice, motivation, and hopefulness in the change process.

C. 1.4 (b) Use of a variety of multi-dimensional evidence-based assessment tools and intervention approaches.

C. 1.4 (c) Effective interventions with complex problems and multi-level systems that provides amelioration as well as prevention strategies.

C. 1.4 (d) Response to the evaluative feedback process for interventions implemented with client systems.

2. Enable MSW graduates to apply ethical reasoning to advance equality, justice, and social change. Graduates will be able to reflect the following competencies:

   C. 2.1 Promote effective social policies to improve quality of service delivery systems and enhance well-being of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (2.1.8).

   C. 2.2 Apply social work ethical principles to resolve dilemmas and create positive change among individuals, families, groups, organizations & communities (2.1.2).

   C. 2.3 Demonstrate the ability to build strengths based on mutual engagement with diverse populations (2.1.4).

   C. 2.4 Develop strategies to address discrimination, reduce disparities, and promote social and economic justice for all populations (2.1.5).

3. Promote leadership and service that is relevant to individual contexts of practice and enhances well-being and quality of life. Graduates will be able to reflect the following competencies:

   C. 3.1 Exemplify and model professional social work standards and strive to enhance their professional growth and development (2.1.1).

   C. 3.2 Use leadership skills indicative of an advanced generalist practitioner to proactively respond amidst changing contexts (2.1.9).

   C. 3.3 Apply innovative solutions to emerging social and organizational dynamics.

   C. 3.4 Effectively intervene with individuals, families and groups, and provide administrative leadership and direction in organizations and communities as advanced generalist practitioners.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will learn the major theories of organizational and community functioning in the United States.
2. Students will apply the skills of practice intervention in organizations and communities.

3. Students will explore the effects of oppression and exclusion as they affect the well-being of at-risk populations in organizations and communities.

4. Students will assess their own values and beliefs relating to organizational and community life.

5. Students will evaluate the effectiveness of practice interventions with organizations and communities.

6. Students will impact the political processes that affect client systems served by the profession.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will be able to summarize the role of “community” in social work practice.

2. Students will learn the major theories of organizational and community functioning in the United States.

3. Students will apply the skills of practice intervention in organizations and communities.

4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how oppression and exclusion affects the well-being of at-risk populations in organizations and communities.

5. Students will apply relevant social work values and ethics to organizational and community life.

6. Students will impact the political processes that affect client systems served by the profession.

8. Students will demonstrate leadership skills that will impact client systems. Students will engage in activities that reflect professional standards of the social work profession.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES

This course builds on foundation content in SWK 503, SWK 513 and SWK 521 relating to organizations and communities. It also incorporates content from SWK 541 relating to the roles of at-risk populations in organizations and communities. This course examines the dynamics of services to at-risk populations by formal organizational systems. The course provides theoretical content which supports SWK 508, Social Work Administration. In addition, it addresses specific practice skills related to community development and social policy advocacy.
OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Demonstrate understanding of assigned readings – 150 points**
   - Multiple Choice quizzes
   - Graded Exercises
   - Presentations and assignments

   **Due Weekly BY ASSIGNED DATES**
   Students will complete Multiple Choice quizzes over readings, graded exercises, presentations, and assignments. If quizzes, exercises, presentations, and assignments are not completed in the allotted time and by the required dates, no points will be awarded.

2. **Petition for Change – 50 points**
   **Draft due July 8 and online submission due July 15**
   Students are to work with their assigned group and decide on a social or community problem and strategy to enhance social justice and quality of life. Students are to write a petition to be submitted through Change Communications (www.change.org). Each group should submit ONE draft of the petition by **Wednesday, July 8**.
   Groups are encouraged to get approval from their instructor on their selection of problem. One member of the group shall then submit the petition online after receiving instructor approval by **July 15, incorporating any changes recommended/required by the instructor**.
   This assignment is intended to have two purposes: one is to require students to use group skills and the other is to allow students to actively engage in community change and impact a social problem using an electronic venue. Points awarded for this assignment will include instructor’s assessment of “group process,” meaningful and constructive contributions, group member feedback directly to the instructor AND number of votes that petition generates in the week following the posting (use your Facebook or other means to encourage others to sign your petition)!

3. **Grass Roots Community Building Initiative – 100 points Due July 22**
   Students are to choose a state or national grass roots organization or initiative. Students are to contact the founder, executive director, or other key staff to interview them about the organization. **It should be a grassroots organization, NOT A SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY, as described in Chapter 8. Students are encouraged to check with instructor to ensure an appropriate organization is chosen.** Students are to include the role and relationship of clients in the operations of the program. Students are to write a 4-5 page summary of the information learned (paraphrase the input from the interview), and relate what they learned about the organization to the content in Ch. 7. Papers will be graded on both content and quality of writing. **DO NOT LIFT INFORMATION FROM THE WEBSITE TO INCLUDE IN PAPER.** The bulk of the content should be from the individual interviewed.

4. **Community Intervention Paper (75 points) & Community Presentation (25 points): 100 points (due July 29)**
   This assignment involves writing a 6-8 page paper that proposes a community intervention to a significant LOCAL community problem. This paper should reflect the content from all applicable assigned readings. The paper must be correctly referenced using American
Psychological Association (APA) guidelines. Special attention should be given to the **correct style of referencing**. Papers need to be original, typed, with clear and lucid analyses, and excellent grammar.

Please note that this is a graduate level course and the expectations are considerably higher than those at an undergraduate level. This research paper is intended to demonstrate your ability to **apply a macro-level model of intervention to a real problem situation**. The paper should be written in a formal, scholarly format.

In addition to reflected problem analysis, planned intervention and proposed change efforts consider issues related to economics, social policies, political influences, and involvement of various levels of systems (individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities). Papers will be graded on quality of analysis, creativity, incorporation of theories and knowledge, and quality of writing.

Your selected problem should target **one specific community or regional area** and the content related to community assessment and resources should be specific to that community. The initial selections related to a **description of the problem is due July 1**.

**Presentation** – You will be expected to present your identified problem, assessment data, and proposed solution to a body of **LOCAL POLICY DECISION-MAKERS** (such as city council, county commissioners, local school board, Council of Governments, public hearing on a particular issue, etc.). All communities have decision-making bodies that are open to public comment and input. However, you will need to find out the parameters of such input AHEAD OF TIME. Sometimes there is a time limit and advance request for permission to speak. Failure to present before an appropriate group will result in point deductions. **You will need to include documentation (including a contact person) that can verify your presentation.**

**Course Grading**

1. Quizzes/assignments 150 points
2. Grass Roots Community Bldg. 100 points
3. Petition for Change 50 points
4. Community Intervention Paper 100 points
5. Comprehensive Final 100 points

  **Total Points Possible 500 points**

Scale:
450-500 pt=A
400-449 pt=B
350-399 pt=C
< 349 points = Fail
CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Attendance Policy - Students are expected to attend class, reflecting responsibility which is inherent in the development as a social work professional. Roll will be taken regularly. Students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate when class begins as well as be present throughout the entire class meeting. Classroom exercises, discussions, role plays, guest speakers and other in-class experiential exercises are essential for a student’s professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. Tardiness (or early departure) of more than 15 minutes will count as .5 absence (2 tardies/early departures = 1 absence). A student is considered absent if he/she arrives more than 30 minutes late to class, leaves 30 or more minutes early or does not come to class.

The following penalties for absences (unexcused, or excused, according to university policy) will be administered:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Up to 2 absences</th>
<th>3 absences</th>
<th>4 absences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>No penalty</td>
<td>1 letter grade drop</td>
<td>Class grade of “F”</td>
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<td>Bi-weekly</td>
<td>Up to 3 absences</td>
<td>4 absences</td>
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<td>No penalty</td>
<td>1 letter grade drop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Up to 1 absence</td>
<td>2 absences</td>
<td>3 absences</td>
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<td>10-week</td>
<td>No penalty</td>
<td>1 letter grade drop</td>
<td>Class grade of “F”</td>
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Final evaluation and grades depend on both presence and participation. Students’ grades will be significantly impacted by inadequate participation or lack of required time commitment each week.

Class participation has three components: (1) Appropriate interactions with classmates, (2) Attentiveness, and (3) Active involvement in class activities. Evaluation of class participation is based on instructor observation. Students will be given feedback if problems are evident.

POLICY ON DUE DATES: All assignments are DUE as indicated. For major assignments, submission after the due date on midnight will result in 5 points PER DAY penalty. No points will be awarded for submissions after 6 days of due date.

POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Every student is expected to do his/her own work. Law, ethical standards, university policy, and departmental policy demand that students refrain from plagiarism and any form of cheating. Plagiarism is the ”Act of appropriating the literacy composition of another, or parts of passages from of his [or her] writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the products of one's own mind” (Black's Law Dictionary, Abridged Fifth Edition, 1983). When using others' words, phrases, or ideas in writing, the original author should be given proper credit.

Cheating may take different forms. These include, but are not limited to, copying others' answers during an exam, using notes or other forms of help during an examination or quiz, except when explicitly permitted by the instructor, giving or receiving help on exams or assignments, or submitting work for one class which has already been submitted for another class for credit. Use of citations from the Internet without paraphrasing content AND proper referencing is regarded as plagiarism. Professors have the right
to use electronic review programs (such as Turn It In) to identify plagiarism.

The department does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. A student found to be engaging in such illegal and unethical conduct may receive a failing grade in the course and may be subjected to further disciplinary proceedings. Any assignment or exam that lacks honesty will be given a grade of "zero".

**ACCEPTABLE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:**

“Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws, in addition to the regulations of the University. The standards of Student Conduct including disciplinary rules and procedures are designed to provide and conform to the basic tenets of due process, as developed by institutions of higher education. As such, the University distinguishes these procedures and regulations as an educational and growth process which is not intended to conform to adversary proceedings as in a court of law” (Student’s Guide Book, 2011, p. 35).

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS**

The Department of Social Work expects all social work students to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional manner. Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession articulates its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards as set forth in the *NASW Code of Ethics* to guide social workers’ conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. Accordingly, we expect social work students to demonstrate courtesy, respect and support for fellow students, instructors, clients, and all other persons.

All students enrolled in BSW or MSW classes are expected to observe the tenets of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Social Work Student Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct is reflective of professional and academic expectations – a student who cannot demonstrate appropriate behaviors will not be appropriate for practice in the social work profession. Students who violate these Codes may be asked to meet with appropriate Social Work faculty (instructors or Program Directors). In addition, the department’s Academic and Professional Issues (API) Committee is responsible for dealing with student issues when requested by faculty.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

It is the policy of Texas A&M University-Commerce and the Social Work Department to do everything we can to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law, and the University’s commitment to providing equal opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example, in accessibility, seating placement or in arrangements for examinations should not hesitate to inform the instructor. If required, large type, Braille or cassette recordings of syllabus or assignments can be provided.

Students with conditions that require special attention or accommodation should contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services at 903-468-5150 (located in the Library, Room 132).
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>UNIT 1: Introductions and Overview of Community Practice</td>
<td>• Complete all orientation and introduction activities</td>
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<td>• Review Ch. 1 PowerPoint</td>
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<td>• Graded Exercise (5 pts)</td>
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<td>• Assign theory presentations</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>June 17</td>
<td>UNIT 2: Theories of Community Practice</td>
<td>• Read Ch. 2 – Overview of Community Practice Theories of Community Practice</td>
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<td>• Review Ch. 2 PowerPoint</td>
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<td>• Graded Exercise: PP Presentation (min. 15 slides) on assigned theory (10 pts)</td>
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<td>• Assign communities for Presentations</td>
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<td>• Ch. 1 &amp; 2 Multiple-choice quiz (5 pts)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>June 24</td>
<td>UNIT 3: Nature of Community/Social Problems</td>
<td>• Read Ch. 3 &amp; 4 – Nature of Social &amp; Community</td>
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<td>UNIT 4: Different Views of Community</td>
<td>• Problems &amp; Concept of Community in Social Work Practice</td>
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<td>• Review Ch. 3 PowerPoint</td>
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<td>• Graded exercise – Individual problem vs social condition discussion (5 pts)</td>
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<td>• Graded exercise – PP Presentation (min 15 slides) on different communities (5 pts)</td>
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<td>• Multiple-choice quiz (10 pts)</td>
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<td>• Assign “Drive About” assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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| 4 July 1 | UNIT 5: Documenting and Assessing Communities | - Read Ch. 5 & 6 – Assessment: Discovering and Documenting the Life of a Community & Using Assessments in Community Practice  
- Review Ch. 5 PowerPoints  
- **Part I of Community Paper DUE (problem id)**  
- Review Ch. 6 PowerPoints  
- Graded exercise: Complete a “Drive About” Exercise And Recorded Observations (10 pts)  
- Multiple-choice quiz (5 pts) |
| 5 July 8 | UNIT 6: Using Advocacy | - Read Ch. 12 & 13: Using the Advocacy Spectrum & Using Organizing: Acting in Concert  
- Review Ch. 12 PowerPoints  
- Review Ch. 13 Powerpoints  
- Multiple Choice Quiz (10 points)  
- As a group, select a significant social problem and work on a strategy for a Group Petition - **DRAFT DUE** |
| 6 July 15-Outside Of Class | UNIT 7: Organizing in Community Practice (Intervention in Macro Practice) | - Work on Paper; interview should be complete by now  
- **SUBMIT A PETITION FOR CHANGE THROUGH CHANGE.ORG** |
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| 7 July 22— | UNIT 8: Using Self and the Agency in Community Practice | • Read Ch. 7 & 8: Assertiveness: Using Self in Community Practice & Using Your Agency  
• Review Ch. 7 PowerPoints  
• Review Ch. 8 PowerPoints  
• **Multiple Choice Quiz – 5 points**  
• **GRASS ROOTS INTERVIEW PAPER DUE** |
| 8 July 29 | UNIT 9: Using Groups and Networks | • Read Ch. 9 & 10: Using Work Groups: Committees, Teams and Boards & Using Networks and Networking  
• Review Ch. 9 PowerPoints  
• Graded exercise: Journal experience in group process (5 points)  
• Review Ch. 10 PowerPoints  
• **Graded exercise: Agency Network Analysis: Vertical and horizontal relationships (10 points)**  
• **Community Problem/Solution Presentation and Paper Due**  
• **Multiple-choice quiz (5 pts)** |
| 9 August 5 | | • Read Ch. 11: Using Marketing  
• Review Ch. 11 PowerPoints and Voice Thread  
• **Graded Exercise: Develop a marketing brochure (5 pts)**  
• **Multiple-choice quiz (5 pts)** |
| 10 August 12 | | **COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM** |
BIBLIOGRAPHY:


