COURSE DESCRIPTION

507. Organizations, Communities and Social Policy (3 sh) CONCENTRATION
This advanced practice course provides students with theory and practice skills necessary for independent practice and intervention with organizations and communities. This course extends the concepts of empowerment and strengths-based practice to work with macro systems. Consideration is given to the integral role played by policy and the importance of influencing or developing policies as a method of change.

GOALS AND 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)
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✓ 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 intervention 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. (** New AGP Objective)

C 3.4 Effectively intervene with individuals, families and groups, and provide administrative leadership and direction in organizations and communities as advanced generalist practitioners. (** New AGP Objective)

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 the 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 identify and 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.

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7. Students will identify and demonstrate leadership skills that will impact client systems.

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.

TEXTS:


OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. Literature Review (20 points): This is a condensed review of research related to the social or community problem of your choosing. This must include current professional research related to your topic. See Handout for details.

2. Community Needs Assessment (20 points): This is a proposed assessment of the resources and needs of a local community of your choosing. Your selected community may be based on identity, affiliation, location, common interest, religion or any other defined attribute so long as it is accessible. See Handout for details.

3. Program Evaluation (10 points): This is a detailed evaluation of a program from a social service organization which targets a specific social or community problem. This should include both summative and formative evaluation data. See Handouts for details.

4. Online Activities (40 points): You will be required to participate and complete weekly online activities, including discussion forums, quizzes, or journal entries. Please note this carries the greatest point value of all the course. You can NOT pass this course without completing these.

5. Comprehensive Examination (10 points): There will be 1 exam covering all of the course materials. This includes textbook content, hand-outs, class discussion, and any other relevant materials from the course. The format of the exam will be determined in class. A study guide will be provided prior to the exam, unless the format is open book/note.

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GRADING:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Assessment</td>
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<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Evaluation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Activities</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Possible</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Grading Scale

- A = 90 – 100 points
- B = 80 - 89 points
- C = 70 - 79 points* (not good for graduate students)
- D = 60 - 69 points
- F = 59 or less points

Note: Promptness in completing assigned tasks and reading is a requirement of this course. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Assignments submitted late will be penalized 5 points per day, beginning with the day they are due. Assignments over 7 days (actual calendar days) will not be accepted and a grade of "0" will be given for the assignment. Students who do not complete all class assignments cannot earn higher than a “C” for the class.

STUDENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO LOG ON to eCollege for specific weekly activities, discussions, and exercises. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL COMMUNICATE IN CLASS OR THROUGH MyLeo email accounts when activities or assignments are posted. These will be included in the points assigned for Learning Activities. Late postings or failure to correctly follow eCollege directions will result in no points for the assigned week/activity.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Up to 2 absences (No penalty)</th>
<th>3 absences (1 letter grade drop)</th>
<th>4 absences (Class grade of “F”)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bi-weekly</td>
<td>Up to 3 absences (No penalty)</td>
<td>4 absences (1 letter grade drop)</td>
<td>5 absences (1 letter grade drop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Up to 1 absence (No penalty)</td>
<td>2 absences (1 letter grade drop)</td>
<td>3 absences (Class grade of “F”)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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ONLINE OR WEB-ENHANCED CLASSES: Just as students are required to attend face-to-face classes, students are required to log in and participate in online components. To receive credit for attendance online via eCollege, students must log in and complete assignments in a timely manner. Not logging in to eCollege (which can be monitored by the instructor) and completing assignments online during the appropriate time is the equivalent of an absence for each week this occurs.

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. Students are expected to spend a comparable amount of time in the online learning environment as they would in class (3 hours a week in the classroom). In addition, just as in traditional F2F classrooms, students are expected to spend time reading and studying class materials.

NOTE: PROBLEMS WITH YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION AND/OR COMPUTER ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS REASONS FOR LACK OF PARTICIPATION. You have access to the university’s computer labs (in the social work department AND other campus facilities, including the library) as well as local libraries and other access to computers and ISPs. If you believe that you are unable to fulfill the requirements for the course you should talk with your instructor about the possibility of dropping or withdrawing.

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:** Promptness in completing assigned tasks and reading is a requirement of this course. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Assignments submitted late will be penalized 5 points per day, beginning with the day they are due. Assignments over 7 days (actual calendar days) will not be accepted and a grade of "0" will be given for the assignment. Students who do not complete all class assignments cannot earn higher than a “C” for the class.

**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 "0".

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).
Class Schedule

SEE HANDOUT
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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