



*SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK*

**SWK 507: Organizations, Communities, and Social Policy  
Summer 2016**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**Course Description:** (3 semester credit hours). This course builds on the generalist practice with individuals, families and groups 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 f 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)

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

8. 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 – 100 points** **Due Weekly BY ASSIGNED DATES**

Each week, students will complete weekly Multiple Choice quizzes over that week's content. If quizzes are not completed in the allotted time and by the required dates, no points will be awarded.

Each week will also include graded exercises and/or postings to discussion. These assignments will be described in more detail in each unit. Student responses to questions or other assignments should demonstrate that assigned readings have been completed. Students should carefully read the **MyTasks Checklist** (see navigation bar on the left of eCollege screen) weekly to assure all requirements have been completed. Students are not to use casual language or slang. Students are encouraged to write responses (either to journal or threaded discussion postings) in a Word document before posting to ensure proper grammar, spelling and punctuation. While occasional "mishaps" (ie, misspellings or typos) is to be expected, repeated inattention to the quality of postings will result in point deductions. **In addition, after the first week, improper "placement" (assignments posted in the wrong place) will also be penalized. Please follow the directions!**

For classes that are held online, failure to log in and/or post will be regarded as an absence as well as penalized for points reflecting weekly activities.

### 2. **Petition for Change – 50 point**

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](http://www.change.org)). Each group should submit ONE draft of the petition into the **Petition for Change DropBox**. 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 **incorporating any changes**

**recommended/required by the instructor.** This assignment is intended to have 2 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 – 50 points**

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 Ch. 8. Students are encouraged to check with instructor to ensure appropriate organization.** 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 content in Ch. 7. This assignment should be submitted in the **Drop Box for Week 7 in a Word document (not rtf)**. Papers will be graded on both content and quality of writing. **DO NOT LIFT INFORMATION FROM THE WEBSITE TO INCLUDE EXPLICITLY 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**

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) 6<sup>th</sup> edition guidelines. Special attention should be given to the **correct style of referencing**. Papers need to be original, typed, with fresh writing, clear thinking, and lucid analyses.

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 sections related to a **description of the problem is due Jun 30.**

**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. Weekly unit quizzes and assignments	100 points
2. Grass Roots Community Bldg.	50 points
3. Petition for Change	50 points
4. Community Intervention Paper	100 points
5. Comprehensive Final	100 points
Total Points Possible	<b>400 points</b>

Scale: 90 – 100% of possible points = A  
 80 – 89% of possible points = B  
 70 – 79% of possible points = C  
 < 69% of possible points = Fail

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**

*F2F 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:*

<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Up to 2 absences No penalty</i>	<i>3 absences 1 letter grade drop</i>	<i>4 absences Class grade of "F"</i>	
<i>Bi-weekly</i>	<i>Up to 3 absences</i>	<i>4 absences</i>	<i>5 absences</i>	<i>6 absences</i>

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	<i>No penalty</i>	<i>1 letter grade drop</i>	<i>1 letter grade drop</i>	<i>Class grade of "F"</i>
<i>Summer 10-week</i>	<i>Up to 1 absence No penalty</i>	<i>2 absences 1 letter grade drop</i>	<i>3 absences Class grade of "F"</i>	

**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:** All assignments are DUE as indicated... generally online submissions are by Sunday midnight unless stated otherwise. ANY submissions, regardless of the reason, after midnight are regarded as LATE and will have stated point penalties. 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 "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

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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).

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

Week	Dates	Topics	Assignments for the Week
1	June 6-12	UNIT 1: Introductions and Overview of Community Practice	<p>Complete all orientation and introduction activities</p> <p>Read Ch. 1 – Overview of Community Practice</p> <p>Review Ch. 1 PowerPoint</p> <p><b>Graded Exercise: Online activity</b></p> <p>Multiple-choice quiz</p>
2	June 13-19	UNIT 2: Theories of Community Practice	<p>Read Ch. 2 – Theories of Community Practice</p> <p>Review Ch. 2 PowerPoint</p> <p>Post to Threaded Discussion</p> <p><b>Graded Exercise: PP Presentation (min. 15 slides) on assigned theory</b></p> <p>Multiple-choice quiz</p>
3	June 20-26	<p>UNIT 3: Nature of Community/Social Problems</p> <p>UNIT 4: Different Views of Community</p>	<p>Read Ch. 3 – Nature of Social &amp; Community Problems</p> <p>Review Ch. 3 PowerPoint</p> <p>Post to Threaded Discussion</p> <p><b>Graded exercise – Individual problem vs social condition discussion &amp; links</b></p> <p>Read Ch. 4 – Concept of Community in Social Work Practice</p> <p>Review Ch. 4 PowerPoints</p> <p><b>Graded exercise – PP Presentation (min 15 slides) on different communities</b></p> <p>Multiple-choice quiz</p>

4	June 27 – July 3	UNIT 5: Documenting and Assessing Communities	<p>Read Ch. 5 – Assessment: Discovering and Documenting the Life of a Community</p> <p>Review Ch. 5 PowerPoints and Voice Thread</p> <p>Ch. 6 – Using Assessment in Community Practice</p> <p>Review Ch. 6 PowerPoints and Voice Thread</p> <p>Post to Threaded Discussion</p> <p><b>Complete a “Drive About” exercise and recorded observations</b></p> <p>Multiple-choice quiz</p>
5	July 4- July 10	UNIT 6: Using Advocacy	<p>Read Ch. 12: Using the Advocacy Spectrum</p> <p>Review Ch. 12 PowerPoints and Voice Thread</p> <p>Post to Threaded Discussion</p> <p>Multiple Choice Quiz (5 points)</p> <p><b>As a group, select a significant social problem and work on a strategy for a Group Petition - <u>DRAFT DUE</u></b></p>
6	July 11 – 17	UNIT 7: Organizing in Community Practice (Intervention in Macro Practice)	<p>Read Ch. 13: Using Organizing: Acting in Concert</p> <p>Review Ch. 13 PowerPoints and Voice Thread</p> <p>Post to Threaded Discussion</p> <p>Multiple Choice Quiz</p> <p><b><u>SUBMIT A PETITION FOR CHANGE THROUGH CHANGE.ORG</u></b></p>
7	July 18 - 24	UNIT 8: Using Self and the Agency in Community Practice	<p>Read Ch. 7: Assertiveness: Using Self in Community Practice</p> <p>Review Ch. 7 PowerPoints and Voice Thread</p> <p>Read Ch. 8: Using Your Agency</p> <p>Review Ch. 8 PowerPoints and Voice Thread</p> <p>Read Handout on “How to Run Meetings”</p> <p>Post to Threaded Discussion</p> <p>Multiple Choice Quiz</p> <p><b>GRASS ROOTS INTERVIEW PAPER DUE</b></p>

8	July 25 – July 31	UNIT 9: Using Groups and Networks	<p>Read Ch. 9: Using Work Groups: Committees, Teams and Boards</p> <p>Review Ch. 9 PowerPoints and Voice Thread</p> <p>Graded exercise: Journal experience in group process</p> <p>Read Ch. 10: Using Networks and Networking</p> <p>Review Ch. 10 PowerPoints and Voice Thread</p> <p><b>Community Problem/Solution Presentation and paper due</b></p> <p>Multiple-choice quiz</p>
9	Aug. 1 – Aug 7	UNIT 10: Social Marketing	<p>Read Ch. 11: Using Marketing</p> <p>Review Ch. 11 PowerPoints and Voice Thread</p> <p>Post to Threaded Discussion</p> <p>Multiple-choice quiz</p>
10	August 8 – 11	Wrap Up, Evaluations & Assessment	<p>Post to Threaded Discussion</p> <p><b>COMPREHENSIVE M/C FINAL EXAM</b></p>

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