



## **A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health**

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

Please, click on the following link to access A&M-Commerce Covid 19 Information, <https://new.tamuc.edu/coronavirus/>

## **SWK 514.01W: Social Work and the Law Online Course**

COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer 2022

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Instructor: Alma Hernandez, JD, LMSW  
Office Location: Rm 322, Henderson Hall, Commerce Campus, Rm 322  
Office Hours: Request zoom meeting through email  
University Email Address: [alma.hernandez@tamuc.edu](mailto:alma.hernandez@tamuc.edu)  
Preferred Form of Communication: **email**  
Communication Response Time: 48 hours

### **COURSE INFORMATION**

#### **Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings**

**Textbook(s) Required:** No textbook is required for this course. Materials will be made available throughout the weeks.

**Software Required:** Access to MyLeo and MyLeo Apps such as D2L Brightspace, Gee Library Search Engine also word processing programs like MS Word or Google docs. Also access to Zoom platform.

## Course Description

This elective introduces students to the intricacies of the United States legal system. Course content will delve into the connection between social work and the legal system, including constitutional rights, rights granted by law and other protections within administrative proceedings, civil proceedings, and the criminal justice system at the local, state and federal levels of government. Special attention will be paid to rights of community members under the U.S. Constitution, U.S. code and other laws that grant protections against violation of a person's rights.

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES:

#### PROGRAM GOALS:

1. Prepare MSW graduates for professional advanced generalist practice that reflects application and integration of critical thinking, theoretical frameworks, and differential interventions.
2. Enable MSW graduates to apply ethical reasoning to advance equality, justice, and social change.
3. Promote leadership and service that is relevant to individual contexts of practice and enhances well-being and quality of life.

#### CORE COMPETENCIES

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires a competency-based approach to identify and assess what students demonstrate in practice. In social work, this approach involves assessing students' ability to demonstrate the competencies identified in the educational policy. Students achieve programmatic goals listed above through demonstration of the following competencies for Advanced Generalist Practice (AGP). *Students achieve programmatic goals listed above through demonstration of the following **bolded competencies** for Advanced Generalist Practice (AGP).*

Competency 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly

Competency 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

Competency 2.1.3 Apply Critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

Competency 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice

Competency 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Competency 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

Competency 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Competency 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance well-being and deliver services

Competency 2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice

Competency 2.1.10 (a)-(d) Engages, assesses, intervenes and evaluates individual, families, groups, organizations, and communities

### **Student Learning Outcomes** (Practice Behaviors)

Each competency (outlined above) describes the knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes that comprise competency at the Advanced Generalist Practice (AGP) level. While content and activities of each course in the MSW curriculum covertly or overtly addresses each of the nine competencies, identified within each course is a set of specific practice behaviors representing observable components of one or more competencies. Content and Assessment in this course reflect the following practice behaviors:

2.1.1.2 Advocates for client access to services of social work

2.1.3.3 Demonstrates effective communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and colleagues.

2.1.8.1 Is skilled at analyzing, formulation, and advocating for policies that advance social well-being

2.1.8.2 Is skilled at collaborating with colleagues and clients for effective policy practice

2.1.10[b].1 collect, organize and interpret client data

2.1.10[c].2 Implement prevention interventions to enhance client capacities

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Minimal Technical Skills Needed**

Students are expected to be skilled at using and traversing D2L Brightspace, logging on to online chats software (e.g. Zoom), and have knowledge of MS Office programs (Word, Powerpoint, Excel, etc.) and other word processing software.

## Instructional Methods

Your responsibilities in this class are:

- To understand the commitment that you have made to yourself and to this program upon admission, which is to learn the skills required to be an effective social worker
- To attend class regularly (or keep up with the material), of course, but also to be engaged, alert and committed to its purpose throughout the course and not let distractions interfere with the learning process.
- To read the textbook as required per the schedule
- To complete assignments and TK20 paperwork in a timely manner and within the standard and instructions set out in the syllabus and by the professor
- To reach out for help when in need of additional guidance
- To not wait until the end of the semester or the day of the deadline to reach out for such help
- To prioritize your education for the time that you are in the program

## GRADING

### Assignment Scores Total

Discussions (weekly; 10 pts. each):	100
Quizzes (bi-weekly: 20 pts. each)	100
Interview Paper	100
Advocate for Change Paper	100

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400

### Grading Scale

460-400 points	A
419-459 points	B
378-418 points	C

Grades below a C are considered failing the class

## Assessments

### SWK 597 Assignments

### DISCUSSION REACTION/RESPONSE ASSIGNMENTS (10 points each; 100 total):

You will have ten (10) (1 per week) class discussions that will be found under the "Discussion" tab in D2L Brightspace. The discussions are an integral part of this learning experience during this online course. Each week there will be a discussion topic that you will need to address and then respond to the posting of your classmates. At the Masters level, the expectation is that there will be appropriate use of grammar and conceptual theoretical frameworks. Also your responses are expected to be thoughtful, insightful and to make use of your analytical thinking skills. Short, limited, thoughtless and half-hearted responses will be graded accordingly. Read: Put effort into your interactions in the weekly discussions. They are a vital component for a successful

and meaningful academic attainment in this web-based class.

The discussion will open on Monday at 12:00 am and the student will be expected to respond to the discussion post by Wednesday at 11:59 p.m. The response to the prompt will need to be 7- 10 sentences in length, using your critical thinking skills. Additionally, you will need to respond to **TWO** of your peers' post between Thursday at 12:01 am and Sunday at 11:59 pm. Responses should be 3-5 sentences, again using critical thinking skills. Do not be afraid to challenge the class with original ideas and controversial thoughts. **Anything can be addressed respectfully. Students are expected to behave in these discussions as you would in person. Respectful in action and respectful in reaction.** Remember that respect and civility is tantamount to professional behavior. Inappropriate messages or interaction will be handled as a disciplinary issues and dealt with accordingly. The discussion will close on Sunday at 11:59 p.m. If these deadlines and guidelines for the discussion are not met, the student will receive a zero for that week's assignment.

**QUIZZES (20 points each; 100 total):** Every two weeks there will be a quiz posted covering the material of the previous two weeks. The questions will come from assigned reading and material covered in the class. These quizzes are intended to be completed by each individual student on his/her own. They are not buddy-up quizzes. The quizzes will be available during the scheduled time of the unit. You will be allowed to enter each quiz ONE TIME only and will have ample time to complete them. The quizzes will be multiple choice, true or false and some short essays. I will provide every opportunity to help ensure that you will be successful and prepared for each quiz. Please do NOT stress about these.

**INTERVIEW (100 points):** Social Work and The Law students are to interview a professional currently active in the legal field (see sample list below). Students shall conduct a thorough interview regarding the person's duties, experience and nature of their work. You will need to set this interview up yourself. The interview should be conducted in person, on the phone, via zoom or another method. Depending on circumstances given CoVID-19 related precautions, you may consider an office visit with the professional, ride-along with a patrol officer or another similar activity where you are visiting a law enforcement work site or the work site of the person you have chosen to interview. The interview should relate to topics covered in this course and you should keep in mind the requirements of the Advocates for Change paper below. For this interview, students are to write a 3-4 page paper of the information learned from the interview (paraphrase the input from the interview), and relate what was gained about the person's official duties and information on their agency and their as it relates to rights of citizens, contact with victims and other vulnerable population. This is not a research paper. There is no need to use sources outside of your interview subject unless they require you to do so. **Please include the email address and name of the person that you interview in the comments box when you upload the paper.** This assignment should be submitted in APA style format including a cover page. It will be uploaded to the submission folder titled "Interview Paper" on D2L Brightspace.

Example of personnel to interview:

ICE Officer	Arbitrator	Activity Therapy Admin
Criminal Investigator	Bailiff	Case Manager
Customs Officer	Court Reporter	Chemical Dependency
Deputy U.S. Marshal	Judge	Manager
Environmental Protection	Jury Coordinator	Children's Services
Agent	Law Clerk	Counselor
Federal Agency	Legal Researcher	Client Service Coordinator
Investigator	Paralegal	Community Liaison Officer
Forensic Scientist	Public Information Officer	Corrections Dietary Officer
Insurance Fraud	Victim Advocate	Field Administrator
Investigator	Prosecutor	Home Detention Supervisor
Loss Prevention Officer	Clerk of Court	Job Placement Officer
Park Ranger	District Attorney	Juvenile Probation Officer
Police Dispatcher	Juvenile Magistrate	Parole/Probation Officer
Polygraph Examiner	Law Librarian	Prison Industries
Private Investigator	Mediator	Superintendent
State Trooper	Public Defender	Programmer/Analyst
BATF Agent	Defense Attorney	Recreation Coordinator
Border Patrol Agent	Trial Court Administrator	Researcher
Secret Service Agent	In-court Interpreter	Sex Offender Therapist
Postal Inspector	Rehabilitation Counselor	Statistician
Police Officer	Psychologist	Warden or Superintendent
Police Administrator	Program Officer/Specialist	Youth Supervisor
Military Police Officer	Pre-sentence Investigator	Business Manager
Laboratory Technician	Mental Health Clinician	Youth Service
Highway Patrol Officer	Juvenile Detention Officer	Worker/Coordinator
Fingerprint Technician	Human Services	Vocational Instructor
FBI Special Agent	Counselor	Substance Abuse
Criminal Profiler	Fugitive Apprehension	Counselor
Deputy Sheriff	Officer	Legal system social worker
Drug Enforcement Officer	Drug Court Coordinator	Residence Supervisor
Classification Officer	Correctional Officer	Child
Chaplain	Clinical Social Worker	Care Worker

**INTERVIEW PAPER is due on D2L Brightspace by 11:59pm on Week 5.**

**ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE PAPER (100 points):** You will write a 5-6 page paper based on the interview you conducted in the previous assignment. In the paper you will advocate for change of a specific aspect of the legal system that you believe needs reform and relates to the field the person you interviewed is in. For example, if you interview a corrections officer, your paper may be about legal rights of felons after conviction or treatment of prisoners while incarcerated. Your points will be supported by peer-reviewed articles, statistics collected from legitimate sources and information

learned from your interviewee. You will use no less than 5 references including your interview; at least three of those sources should be peer-reviewed articles or books. **YOU ARE NOT** an appropriate source of information. Every bit of information should be cited to a source. Papers will be graded on both content and quality of writing. Written work for this class must be in APA style using 12-point font Times Roman or other acceptable font. **Proper in-text citation under APA guidelines is expected and required. Work that is not cited properly will be deemed conjecture and will not receive any credit.** Grading criteria for written work includes: thoroughness, logical development of points, clarity of written expression, application of scholarly research and appropriateness of information presented as it relates to topic chosen. This is a graduate level course and expectations are considerably higher than those at an undergraduate level. It is important to demonstrate your ability to do research at the library, to critically analyze various positions, comparing and contrasting strengths and weaknesses, and presenting facts in a manner persuading the reader to his/her own conclusions. In conducting scholarly research, sources included should cover legislation and/or public documents, books and journal articles.

**PAPER DUE ON D2L Brightspace by Sunday at 11:59pm on Week 9.**

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

### LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_supp ort.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_supp ort.htm)

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-SystemRequirements>

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the

requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary

use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

### **Technical Support**

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement**

Instructor will respond to email queries within 2 business days.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Course Specific Procedures/Policies**

#### **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

### **University Specific Procedures**

#### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studen>



[tGuidebook.aspx](#)

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

## **TAMUC Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

## **Academic Integrity**

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

## **Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&MCommerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903886-5868 or 9-1-1.

### **Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content**

#### **Engagement Policy**

*Final Evaluation and Grade Depends on both Classroom attendance and Participation*

Inadequate participation or lack of required time commitment in each class significantly affects students' grades. No matter the course venue, students must engage in a

comparable amount of time. Expectations of both Face-to-Face classes and those with Online components include time spent reading and studying course material.

To earn a level of competency within a specific course, students must demonstrate both mastery of content and active engagement.

Mastery of content areas is evidenced by successful completion of course assignments such as written papers, group project deliverables, tests/quizzes and other tangible products designed by instructors to evaluate knowledge and skills.

Additionally, the Social Work Profession is built upon human interactions and building human relationships – which is defined as engagement. Engagement is defined as meaningful involvement in interactions with instructor, peers, outside stakeholders as appropriate (such as contacting a social worker to interview for a required assignment). Within the classroom setting, whether virtual or F2F, students must actively participate in 80% of engagement activities as outlined by individual instructors. These activities can include participation in a live, synchronous virtual classes, attending a Face to Face course when appropriate, interacting with peers in posted discussions and collaborating in group interactive projects.

Students must meet standards for content mastery on tangible assignments and meet the threshold of active engagement 80% of the time during a semester. Instructors are experts in each course content area and set the standards for students to meet for successful completion of the course.

As we enter the Fall semester, we are all working under stresses and strains related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is imperative we communicate consistently and frequently. If, for any reason, you are not able to complete assignments or actively engage in the course, you **MUST** reach out to your instructor and let him or her know.

### **Student Conduct**

Students preparing to become professional social workers must adhere to the *University Code of Conduct, Department Code of Conduct and National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics*.

**University Code of Conduct** located in the *Student Guide Book* at <http://www.tamuc.edu/campuslife/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf> (pp 34- 66). On the University Website under Campus Life Documents

To become aware of University policies related to student academic and behavioral expectations for students refer to the Guidebook.

### **Department Code of Conduct**

*"Faculty have the authority to request students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the class/lab/internship practicum or to block access to online courses and may refer offenses to the [Academic and Professional Issues Committee (API)] or to the Department Head. More serious offences by be referred to the University Police Department and/or the Judicial Affairs Office for disciplinary action" (Student Guidebook p 35)*

Social Work students conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner.

Closely linked with professional recognition is the social worker's compliance with the profession's ethical standards. It is imperative for professional social workers to be competent and ethical in practice if the profession is to maintain the public trust. It is essential that each social work student gain a thorough understanding of the ethical principles that guide practice and actively demonstrate in behavior, both in and out of the classroom. Student conduct is to reflect the tenets of *NASW Code of Ethics* (located at <https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp> ) on the NASW website: <https://www.socialworkers.org>

## TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week #	Topic for the week	Discussion	Assignment/ Activity	Due Dates
<b>Week 1</b>	Introduction to Social Work & The Law	Role of the Social Worker within the legal system; advocating within the law; historical background of social work and the law; General information about the legal system	WATCH: Lesson VIEW: PowerPoint	Discussion/Response
<b>Week 2</b>	Administrative Procedures and Protections related to vulnerable populations	Title VII, Title IV, Right appeal rulings of administrative bodies, general Civil Rights, Privacy Act, HIPAA and Affirmative Action (work and higher education)	WATCH: Lesson VIEW: PowerPoint	Discussion/Response <b>Quiz due</b>
<b>Week 3</b>	Criminal Justice System	Overview of the criminal justice system; criminal procedure from investigation to prosecution and conviction; rights of the defendant; testifying in court	WATCH: Lesson VIEW: PowerPoint	Discussion/Response
<b>Week 4</b>	Criminal Justice System	Basic overview of crimes and punishments, matters in aggravation, sentencing, victim's rights, consequences of criminal convictions	WATCH: Lesson VIEW: PowerPoint	Discussion/Response due <b>Quiz due</b>
<b>Week 5</b>	Criminal Justice System	Indigent defendants; rights of undocumented immigrants and immigration offenses; constitutional protections; root causes of crime;	WATCH: Lesson VIEW: PowerPoint	Discussion/Response <b>Interview paper</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	Criminal Justice System	Sex Crimes (adult and children); Intimate Partner Violence, human trafficking	WATCH: Lesson VIEW: PowerPoint	Discussion/Response due <b>Quiz due</b>
<b>Week 7</b>	Criminal Justice System	Drug offenses including illicit and misuse of prescription drugs; alcohol, treatment and rehabilitation programs vs. punishment	WATCH: Lesson VIEW: PowerPoint	Discussion/Response due
<b>Week 8</b>	Prisons	Appeals, rehabilitation programs, life after conviction (lost rights of felons, housing, employment); Sexual predator laws in TX	WATCH: Lesson VIEW: PowerPoint	Discussion/Response <b>Quiz due</b>

<b>Week 9</b>	Child Protective Services	CPS process top to bottom: Investigation, conservatorship, foster care, adoption	WATCH: Lesson VIEW: PowerPoint	Discussion/Response <b>Paper due</b>
<b>Week 10</b>	Civil Matters and Procedures	Divorce, Child Support and Child Custody, bankruptcies, foreclosures, evictions, credit reporting, ombudsman, workers compensation, and unemployment	WATCH: Lesson VIEW: PowerPoint	Discussion/Response <b>Quiz due</b>