



A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

SWK 514.01W: Social Work and the Law Online Course

COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer 2023

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dawn Nelson, LCSW-S, ACSW, SAP, CART

Office Location: Mesquite Metroplex

Office Hours: Request zoom meeting through email

University Email Address: dawn.nelson@tamuc.edu

Cell Phone: 972-989-2799

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.

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

Law Scavenger Hunt	100
Interview	200
Advocacy Video	100

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

SCAVENGER HUNT ON THE LAW (100 total): You will be given ten questions about Texas and federal laws. You will need to find the answers by looking up the legal statutes.

INTERVIEW (200 points): 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. 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. For this interview, students are to write a 3-4 page paper with 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 as it relates to rights of citizens, contact with victims, and other vulnerable populations. 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 name and email address 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. You will upload it in the Assignments section to the submission folder titled "Interview Paper" on D2L Brightspace.

Example of personnel to interview:

ICE Officer	Jury Coordinator
Criminal Investigator	Law Clerk
Customs Officer	Legal Researcher
Deputy U.S. Marshal	Paralegal
Environmental Protection Agent	Public Information Officer
Federal Agency Investigator	Victim Advocate
Forensic Scientist	Prosecutor
Insurance Fraud Investigator	Clerk of Court
Loss Prevention Officer	District Attorney
Park Ranger	Juvenile Magistrate
Police Dispatcher	Law Librarian
Polygraph Examiner	Mediator
Private Investigator	Public Defender
State Trooper	Defense Attorney
BATF Agent	Trial Court Administrator
Border Patrol Agent	In-court Interpreter
Secret Service Agent	Pre-sentence Investigator
Postal Inspector	Juvenile Detention Officer
Police Officer	Fugitive Apprehension Officer
Police Administrator	Drug Court Coordinator
Military Police Officer	Correctional Officer
Highway Patrol Officer	Community Liaison Officer
Fingerprint Technician	Officer Corrections
FBI Special Agent	Dietary Officer
Criminal Profiler	Home Detention
Deputy Sheriff	Supervisor Job Placement
Drug Enforcement Officer	Officer Juvenile Probation
Arbitrator Bailiff	Officer Parole/Probation
Court Reporter	Officer Prison Industries
Judge	Warden or Superintendent

ADVOCACY VIDEO (100 points): You and your partner will create a video that highlights a specific aspect of the legal system you believe needs reform. You and your partner will take opposing sides of the issue. You will have a discussion in which you and your partner discuss and attempt to convince the other person of the validity of your viewpoint. You will use at least three sources (peer-reviewed or scholarly) to support your stance. You will incorporate the references to appeal to your audience, the public and legislators. **NO notes, powerpoints, cue cards allowed.** Remember you need to appeal to those people who may disagree with you so your intonation and word choice are important. References should be submitted in the thread section under the link provided for submissions in the Discussion section of D2L. The thread will be located in D2L on the week the assignment is due. Be certain each student's name is on the project for credit to be received.

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_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universitymenu

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.

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/studentGuidebook.aspx).
<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.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

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<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.

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

School of Social Work

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>

RUBRICS

Law Scavenger Hunt (100 points)

Criteria	Level 4 10 points	Level 3 8 points	Level 2 7 points	Level 1 6 points	Criteria on Score
Criterion 1 Correct answers for each of 10 questions	Completely correct	Correct but minor omission	Correct section of the law but some aspect is incorrect or missing	Wrong section of the law	/100

Interview (200 points)

Criteria	Level 4 50 /67.5 points	Level 3 40/60 points	Level 2 30/45 points	Level 1 20/37.5 points	Score
Criterion 1 Interviewee is active in legal field	Interviewee is active in legal field	Not acceptable	Not acceptable	Not acceptable	/50
Criterion 2 Information is about the person's official duties as it relates to rights of citizens, contact with victims, and other vulnerable populations	Interview is well-rounded and conveys the information requested	Interview is very good but lacks some minor details	Interview is acceptable but lacks major details	Interview is lacking major information	/75
Criterion 3 Professional Writing	Professionally written with no grammar errors	Minor mistakes but overall is professionally written	Professional writing needs improvement or proofreading	Lacks professionalism or major mistakes	/75

Advocacy Video (100 points)

Criteria	Level 4 30 points	Level 3 24 points	Level 2 21 points	Level 1 18 points	Score
Criterion 1 Topic is a city, county, state, or federal law	Topic is a city, county, state, or federal law	Not acceptable	Not acceptable	Not acceptable	/30
Criterion 2 Discussion uses three scholarly or peer-reviewed references	Three references with no cue cards, etc.	Three references with cue cards, etc.	Two references	One reference	/30
Criterion 3 Conversation is professional and polite	Tone is professional and polite	Tone is polite but lacks some professionalism	Tone is on the verge of rudeness	Tone is rude or unprofessional	/30
Criterion 4 Appeal is convincing	Convincing appeal	Majority of appeal is convincing	Appeal is adequate	Appeal is not convincing	/10

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Schedule subject to change to accommodate guest speaker schedules)

Date	Topic/Activities	Assignments
Week 1	Introduction to Social Work and the Law	See weekly D2L Content for Assignments
Week 2	Social Work Laws : BHEC and State Board of Social Work Examiners	See weekly D2L Content for Assignments OPTIONAL ZOOM CHAT
Week 3	Administrative & Occupational Codes	See weekly D2L Content for Assignments LAW SCAVENGER HUNT DUE
Week 4	Testifying and Legal Terms	See weekly D2L Content for Assignments
Week 5	Ethics & The Government	See weekly D2L Content for

		Assignments Guest Speaker
Week 6	Family Law	See weekly D2L Content for Assignments
Week 7	Social Work Danger Zones	See weekly D2L Content for Assignments Interview Due
Week 8	Sex Crimes, Intimate Partner Violence, Human Trafficking	See weekly D2L Content for Assignments Guest Speaker
Week 9	Criminal Justice System	See weekly D2L Content for Assignments Guest Speaker ADVOCACY VIDEO DUE
Week 10	Title VII, Title IV, Right appeal rulings of administrative bodies, general Civil Rights, Privacy Act, HIPAA and Affirmative Action (work and higher education)	See weekly D2L Content for Assignments