



SWK 503: Generalist Practice with Organization & Communities

COURSE SYLLABUS: **SPRING 2026**

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: **Dr. Avril W. Knox, DSW**

Office Location: Commerce-Henderson Bldg. 317

Office Hours: By Appointment

University Email Address: Avril.Knox@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: Email queries within two business days

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required:

Kirst-Ashman, K. K. & Hull, G. H., Jr. (2018). *Generalist practice with organizations and communities*. (7th ed.). Cengage Learning.

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Software Required

Optional Texts and Materials

All MSW students must purchase the following study materials to prepare for the Graduate Comprehensive Exam they will take in their final semester. You must pass the exam to receive your degree. It is never too early to begin studying for the exam.

**Comprehensive Study Guide (Masters, Clinical, Adv. Generalist) Version 9.0.
Social Work Examination Services.**

[www.https://swes.net/studymaterials/comprehensive-study-guide-lmsw/](https://swes.net/studymaterials/comprehensive-study-guide-lmsw/)

Course Description

The course emphasizes macro practice as a mechanism for social change grounded in ethical values and a commitment to advancing human rights and social, political, cultural, economic, and environmental well-being. Students examine how macro, mezzo, and micro levels of practice are interconnected and how these levels collectively influence communities and organizations. Throughout the course, students engage in critical self-reflection on social ideologies and value systems related to different population groups, as well as common challenges communities face in accessing services. Students develop knowledge of theoretical frameworks, intervention models, and practical skills for engaging, assessing, and intervening with communities and organizations. Particular emphasis is placed on program development, implementation, evaluation, community organization, and empowerment-oriented practice approaches that support effective and ethical social change.

Relationship to Other Courses:

Student Learning Outcomes (Should be measurable; observable; use action verbs) 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. Listed below are the competencies and associated knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the expected outcomes for this course.

	Activity/Assessment	Dimension
<i>Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior</i>		
make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within	Engagement and Community Practice Analysis	Knowledge Skills

the profession as appropriate to the context;.		
demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;	Engagement and Community Practice Analysis	Knowledge Skills Values
use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and	Engagement and Community Practice Analysis	
use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.	Engagement and Community Practice Analysis	
<i>Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</i>		
apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and	Engagement and Community Practice Analysis	Knowledge Skills
use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with	Engagement and Community Practice Analysis	Knowledge Skills Values

clients and constituencies.		

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

In this class, you will utilize the Learning Management Systems (LMS) D2L for instructional and learning opportunities, submitting assignments, participating in online synchronous and asynchronous discussions, accessing resources, and completing quizzes/tests. Additionally, you have knowledge and skills in using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Outlook Email. If you have any issues with using the various systems or software, you must contact support services and notify the instructor of the problem.

Instructional Methods

This course will be delivered via synchronous and asynchronous sessions via D2L. It will consist of live class sessions, pre-recorded lectures, group engagement activities, and various assignments, including experiential learning and practical application of the content areas. In addition, small lectures, discussion activities, and workshops may provide instruction during this course.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

As a student in this course, you are responsible for engaging in active learning and reaching out to the instructor if problems or challenges interfere with optimal learning. Communication is vital when engaged in a fully online, virtual environment.

Expectations for success include:

1. Always demonstrate professional behavior, including respect for the instructor and peers and being open to feedback and guidance throughout this class and the program.
2. Adhered to the School of Social Work and University student code of conduct and the NASW Code of Ethics.

3. Begin reading the assigned text and supplemental readings as soon as possible, focusing on completing all readings before engaging with the instructor or peers.
4. Prepare to engage in live class sessions, discussions, and other activities to be a contributor and receiver of knowledge and skills.
5. Actively participate in engagement activities, which will include live virtual class sessions, online discussions, and interactive learning opportunities -as this is vital for learning and success in both this course and the program.
6. Work ahead when possible, completing assignments before the due date so you are prepared to submit them on the due date.
7. Sign into the D2L course multiple times weekly to access updated announcements or posted resources.
8. Check your university email daily. This is the official method of communication by the university, department, and instructor.
9. Be open and focused on the “process” and not the “product,” as earning this degree requires time, effort, work, and growth in knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal and professional attributes.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

- A = 90%-100% of total points
- B = 80%-89%
- C = 70%-79%
- D = 60%-69%
- F = 59% or Below

Course Assessment Values

Assignment	Weight
Community Overview	20%
Theoretical and Interprofessional Application	20%

Empathy and Reflective Engagement	20%
Reflective Summary	20%
Presentation	20%
TOTAL	100%

Assessments

Assignment #1

Engagement and Community Practice Analysis

EPAS 2022 Competencies Addressed

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Make ethical decisions by applying standards to NASW Code of Ethics

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies.

Purpose

With the help of this assignment, students have an opportunity to reveal their ability to interact with groups, organizations, and communities effectively with the help of professional knowledge about human behavior, the person-in-environment outlook, and interprofessional collaboration. To identify the needs of the community and the practices of enhancing engagement, students must use empathy, reflective practice behaviors, and interpersonal competencies.

Assignment Description

Students will choose a community group, organization, or coalition serving a specified social issue, including access to housing, family stability, mental health and youth development. Using the lens of person-in-environment, as well as an interprofessional perspective, students will critically examine the engagement process and offer evidence-based professional strategies to enhance collaboration and participation.

Assignment Components

Part I: Community Overview (2–3 pages)

Describe the selected community group or organization and its mission.

Identify the population served and the presenting concern or need.

Apply the person-in-environment framework (how individuals are influenced by their environment) to explain how environmental, social, and institutional factors shape engagement (change over time through interaction).

Part II: Theoretical and Interprofessional Application (2 pages)

Select one theoretical model (e.g., systems theory, ecological model, or empowerment theory) to guide your engagement approach.

Discuss how interprofessional collaboration contributes to effective communication and coordinated action within the organization or community setting.

Identify at least two potential collaborative partners (e.g., social workers, healthcare providers, educators, faith-based leaders, or civic agencies).

Part III: Empathy and Reflective Engagement (2 pages)

Explain how empathy, listening, and self-reflection enhance professional engagement with the group or organization.

Provide an example of a communication strategy or activity that demonstrates empathic practice.

Discuss two professional engagement strategies to foster participation and trust.

Part IV: Reflective Summary (1–2 pages)

Summarize what you learned about effective engagement in macro-level practice.

Reflect on your personal growth and professional awareness regarding group and community interaction.

Identify goals for continued improvement in your interpersonal and reflective practice skills.

Assignment #2

Five to Seven-minute presentation summarizing the student’s analysis from the written paper.

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 the 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.spx?source=universalmenu

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 coursework promptly and satisfactorily. Each student needs 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 get in touch with your instructor.

Technical Support

If you have technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please get in touch with 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

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please get in touch with your instructor via email. The instructor will respond to email queries within two 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>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information about interacting with students online: <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 their academic 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. 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

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom and online courses with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination based on 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 carrying a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and possess a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in Texas are also permitted to do so. Under Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed firearm in restricted locations.

Please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns on Campus document and consult your event organizer for a list of locations.

Web URL:

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

Under 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 connections to student community resources. 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 and Council on Social Work Education Specific Policies

Course Engagement

Final Evaluation and Grade Depend 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 competency within a specific course, students must demonstrate 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 –defined as engagement. Engagement is defined as interacting with the instructor, peers, and 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 may include but are not limited to participation in 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 of the time set during a semester by the instructor.

Instructors are experts in each course content area and set the standards for students to meet for successful course completion.

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*.

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 the Department Head. More severe offenses can be referred to the University Police. Department and the Judicial Affairs Office for disciplinary action" (Student Guidebook p 35) Social Work students conduct themselves ethically and professionally. The social worker's compliance with the profession's ethical standards is closely linked with

professional recognition. Professional social workers must be competent and ethical in practice if the profession is to maintain public trust. Each social work student must thoroughly understand the ethical principles that guide practice and actively demonstrate behavior, both in and out of the classroom. Student conduct is to reflect the NASW Code of Ethics tenets (<https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>) on the NASW website: <https://www.socialworkers.org>.

University Code of Conduct is in the *Student Guidebook* 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.

Appendix A: Supporting Rubric Documents

Empathic Engagement and Person-in-Environment Analysis in Community Practice Rubric (Total 100 Points)

Section / Criteria	EPAS Competency Alignment	Dimensions	Excellent 20 points	Proficient 15 points	Developing 10 points	Needs Improvement 5 points	Total Points Earned
Part I – Community Overview	C6: Engage	Knowledge, Values	Demonstrates thorough understanding of the community or organization; clearly explains social, environmental, and institutional contexts using the person-in-environment lens	Adequate description of community and factors influencing engagement; shows basic application of person-in-environment concepts.	General or partial description; limited or inaccurate application of person-in-environment.	Minimal description; lacks theoretical or contextual understanding.	= 20 pts
Part II – Theoretical & Interprofessional Application	C6: Engage	Knowledge, Skills	Applies an appropriate theoretical model and accurately explains how interprofessional collaboration supports engagement; identifies meaningful professional partners and roles.	States a theoretical model with some explanation; identifies potential partners but with limited integration.	Mentions a theory or collaboration but lacks depth or clarity in application.	No clear theory or collaboration analysis provided.	= 20 pts
Part III – Empathy and Reflective Engagement	C6: Engage	Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes	Provides rich examples of empathy, listening, and reflection; proposes two or more realistic engagement strategies that enhance trust and participation	Provides clear discussion of empathy and reflection with at least one engagement strategy; moderate insight into professional self.	Limited discussion of empathy or self-reflection; strategies are vague or unsupported.	Lacks empathy, reflection, or strategy development.	= 20 pts
Part IV – Reflective Summary	C6: Engage	Values, Cognitive & Affective Processes	Insightful reflection on personal growth, professional identity, and ethical awareness; articulates specific future goals for continued skill development.	Adequate reflection on learning and professionalism; includes general goals.	Reflection is surface-level or disconnected from professional development.	Minimal reflection or self-assessment.	= 20 pts
Organization, APA, and Professional Writing	C1: Ethical and Professional Behavior	Skills, Values	Writing is clear, well-organized, and professional; adheres to APA 7 standards with minimal or no errors.	Mostly clear and organized; minor APA or grammar errors.	Several APA or structural issues; clarity needs improvement.	Unorganized, unclear writing; multiple APA or grammatical errors.	= 20 pts
Total							100 pts

Rubric (Total 100 Points)

**Virtual Presentation/Recording (Tailored to Person-in-Environment Analysis)
Rubric (100 Points)**

Criteria / Section	EPAS Alignment	Dimensions	Excellent 4 points	Proficient 4 points	Developing 4 points	Needs Improvement 4 points	Total Points Earned
1. Organization & Clarity of Presentation	C1: Professional Behavior	Skills	Presentation is logical, well-organized, and easy to follow; includes a clear introduction, body, and conclusion; transitions smoothly between topics.	Mostly organized; information generally clear with minor lapses in flow or clarity.	Organization unclear or incomplete; transitions abrupt; difficult to follow at times.	Disorganized, confusing, or incomplete presentation.	= 16 pts
2. Application of Person-in-Environment Framework	C6: Engage	Knowledge	Demonstrates clear understanding of the person-in-environment perspective; effectively connects environmental factors to community engagement.	Explains person-in-environment adequately with some relevant examples.	Mentions framework but with minimal application or limited understanding.	Fails to apply or incorrectly describes framework.	= 16 pts
3. Theoretical & Interprofessional Integration	C6: Engage	Knowledge, Skills	Clearly explains theoretical model and interprofessional collaboration; connects both to engagement strategies in the community or organization.	Identifies model and partners with moderate explanation.	References theory or collaboration without meaningful linkage to engagement.	No identifiable theory or interprofessional discussion.	= 16 pts
4. Empathy, Reflection, and Use of Self	C6: Engage	Values, Cognitive & Affective Processes	Effectively demonstrates empathy, self-awareness, and reflection; provides authentic insight into personal growth and engagement approach.	Demonstrates empathy and reflection with moderate insight.	Some evidence of empathy or reflection but lacks depth or connection to practice.	Little or no evidence of empathy, reflection, or professional self-awareness.	= 16 pts
5. Visual and Technical Quality	C1: Professional Behavior	Skills	PowerPoint is visually appealing, clear, and professional; appropriate use of graphics, minimal text, readable font, and consistent formatting.	Presentation is visually adequate but may contain minor issues in readability or design.	Limited visual appeal; slides are text-heavy or inconsistently formatted.	Visuals are unprofessional or distracting; formatting errors hinder understanding.	= 16 pts
6. Oral Delivery & Engagement	C1: Professional Behavior / C6: Engage	Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes	Confident, clear, and professional delivery; uses eye contact, appropriate pacing, and tone; effectively engages audience.	Delivery is generally clear with minor issues in pacing, tone, or engagement.	Uneven delivery; reads heavily from slides; limited audience connection.	Monotone, unclear, or unprofessional delivery; lacks engagement.	= 16 pts
Criteria / Section	EPAS Alignment	Dimensions	Excellent 1 point	Proficient 1 point	Developing 1 point	Needs Improvement 1 point	Total Points Earned
7. Professionalism & Time Management	C1: Professional Behavior	Values	Presentation meets time requirements (5–7 min), demonstrates preparedness, and reflects professionalism and ethical demeanor.	Mostly prepared; slightly off timing; maintains appropriate tone.	Somewhat disorganized or over/under time by >1 minute.	Unprepared, unprofessional, or significantly over/under time.	= 4 pts
Total							100 pts

**Appendix B:
COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

Week – Date	ZOOM Class Gatherings	Course Curriculum / Content	Weekly Activity/Quiz
Week 1 of Jan 19	<p><u>Introduction Video</u> Wednesday, January 21, 2026</p> <p>Class Gathering for Course Discussion Wednesday, January 21, 2026 <u>Join Zoom Meeting</u> Time: Jan 22, 2025 07:00 PM Every two weeks on Wednesdays</p>	<p>Welcome and Student Introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review course objectives, review course assessments, policies, and content. Discuss class gathering times and meeting dates <p>Chapter 1 Introduction to Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities • Review required reading material</p>	
Week 2 of Jan 26		<p>Chapter 2 Stress and Time Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review required reading material 	
Week 3 of Feb 02	<p>Class Gathering for Course Discussion Wednesday, Feb 5</p>	<p>Chapter 3 Using Micro Skills with Organizations and Communities • Review required reading material</p>	
Week 4 of Feb 09		<p>Chapter 4 Group Skills for Organizational and Community Change • Review required reading material</p>	

<p>Week 5 of Feb 16</p>	<p>Class Gathering for Course Discussion Wednesday, Feb 19</p>	<p>Chapter 5 Understanding Organizations • Review required reading material</p>	
<p>Week 6 of Feb 23</p>		<p>Chapter 6 Decision-Making for Organizational Change • Review required reading material</p>	
<p>Week 7 of Mar 02</p>	<p>Class Gathering for Course Discussion Wednesday, Mar 5</p>	<p>Chapter 7 Implementing Organizational Change: Agency Policy, Projects, and Programs • Review required reading material</p>	
<p>Week 8 of Mar 09</p>	<p>NO CLASS SPRING BREAK – Campus Closed March 09 – March 13</p>		
<p>Week 09 of Mar 16</p>	<p>Class Gathering for Course Discussion Wednesday, Mar 19</p>	<p>Chapter 8 Understanding Neighborhoods and Communities • Review required reading material</p>	
<p>Week 10 of Mar 23</p>		<p>Chapter 9 Macro Practice in Communities • Review required reading material</p>	

Week 11 of Mar 30	Class Gathering for Course Discussion Wednesday, Apr 2	Chapter 10 Evaluating Macro Practice • Review required reading material	
Week 12 of Apr 06		Chapter 11 Advocacy and Social Action with Populations at Risk • Review required reading material	
Week 13 of Apr 13	Class Gathering for Course Discussion Wednesday, Apr 16	Chapter 12 Ethics and Ethical Dilemmas in Practice with Organizations and Communities • Review required reading material	
Week 14 of Apr 20		Chapter 13 Using Supervision • Review required reading material	
Week 15 of Apr 27	Class Gathering for Course Discussion Wednesday, Apr 30	Chapter 14 Developing and Managing Agency Resources • Review required reading material	
Week 16 of May 04	May 07, 2025 Make-up Week		