

Course Syllabus

Seton Hall University, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work

Introduction to Social Work (SOWK AB1111)

Fall 2011 Tuesday and Thursday 11:30 – 12:45

A&S Hall- Room 106

Scheduled Date of Final Exam:

Instructor: Nelida Arancibia, LCSW

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Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday: 1:30 - 3:00 PM

(Additional office hours may be scheduled by appointment and additional office hours will be available and promulgated during the registration period for the spring semester.)

No office hours may be used for discussion of any exam or other assignment on the day of, or the class day prior to, a respective exam/assignment. Otherwise, I am available for consultation. Office hours are also available for discussion of any grade on any assignment; however, not on the respective date that the student receives the grade; take time and read instructional comments and rationale for grade on materials that are returned prior to seeking consultation.

I strongly suggest that you print this syllabus and bring it to class each period. This provides a ready, tangible method for assuring that we are clear about where we have been, are, and are going in terms of learning from period to period and cumulatively.

Academic Integrity:

Exams and papers are expected to represent the student's own work. Information, ideas, and so forth which are attributable to others require documentation as such. In the event a student is unsure about documentation, please see the instructor at least several days prior to submission. Any exam or paper which misrepresents the work of others as the student's own (cheating) will be counted as zero in the computation of the student's final grade. Particularly with regard to the term paper, the instructor strongly recommends that students keep notes, drafts, and similarly in order to demonstrate originality of work in the event that originality is challenged by the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to demonstrate the originality of work submitted in the event the instructor questions this.

Inappropriate use of computers, texting, cell phones, games, other "gadgets", and similarly is unacceptable, but it is your time and future so sit in the back if you just want to waste your time; and this way your actions will not be observed by others and thus not be a distraction. What you do or don't do, as an adult, is up to you. However, behaviors must not interfere with the learning of others. If you speak or act in a manner that appears to violate the mission of the University, or are disrespectful to others in the class, the instructor, typically and depending upon the circumstances, will address this (once) by referring to this syllabus and expectations for behavior. Repeat behavior that disrespects/distracts others in the class or interferes with the learning of others will result in ejection from the course and a final grade of F. In other words, this is considered an adult learning environment and what you do or don't do is up to you; but there is zero tolerance for actions that disrespect or interfere with others. Students, and the instructor, are expected to show up on time, prepared, and remain and participate for the entire class period. This course has full-enrollment so lateness is likely to be disruptive.

Policy on Special Conditions and Accommodations - DSS Syllabus Statement:

It is the policy and practice of Seton Hall University to promote inclusive learning environments. If you have a documented disability you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in compliance with University policy, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and/or the New Jersey Law against Discrimination. Please note, students are not permitted to negotiate accommodations directly with professors. To request accommodations or assistance, please self-identify with the Office for Disability Support Services (DSS), Duffy Hall, Room 67 at the beginning of the semester. For more information or to register for services, contact DSS at (973) 313-6003 or by email at DSS@shu.edu.

The social work program enthusiastically supports the intent and mandate of legislation/policy providing optimal learning environments for all students.

Course Pre-requisite(s): none. This course is generally taken as the first course for those pursuing the major or minor in social work. It is a pre-requisite for all social work courses at the 3000 level and higher.

Required Texts:

Berg-Weger, M. (2010). *Social work and social welfare: An invitation* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge. ISBN # 0-415-80504-X. This book is available at the college bookstore.

Grobman, L.M. (2005). *Days in the lives of social workers*. Harrisburg: White Hat Communications. ISBN# 1-929109-15-6. This book is available at the college bookstore.

Other: The social work program has a library that includes numerous books, journals, pamphlets, and other materials that are available for in-office use (up until one week before the final paper is due). Students are strongly encouraged to come to program offices, and also our dedicated librarian at Walsh Library, and seek help for reference material.

Note: It is very strongly recommended that students who are, or are considering, majoring in social work keep all books used in social work and cognate courses. These will prove an invaluable resource reference as one proceeds through the curriculum. This includes all instructional handouts and recommended sources for print-outs.

Social workers are particularly concerned with ethical comportment and the values that underlie these. Chapter 6, Berg-Weger, will be covered in depth and also students are referred to www.socialworkers.org and scroll to the complete *Code of Ethics*.

Social workers are particularly concerned with competency. A list of competencies are included in the Berg-Weger textbook, pp. 301-302. These competencies are promulgated in the Social Work Program Handbook, posted on bulletin boards, and are also available through www.cswe.org and scrolling to EPAS 2008 competency requirements. Considering the vast amount of information needed to begin to introduce students to social work, these competencies will be addressed indirectly by means of the content areas and means of assessment presented below.

Course Description:

This course currently satisfies three Social/Behavioral Sciences credits in the College of Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum; is a course applicable to the 18 credit minor in social work; and, as a general rule, is the first course in social work for students who are majoring or minoring in social work. In addition, the course is open to all students who wish to enhance their understanding of social work and social welfare: as servant-leaders in our society; working with social workers and understanding their relationship to social policies; and as potential consumers of social work services. Although the profession is too complex to be reduced to a dictionary definition, a widely accepted brief definition is: ***“the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, and communities enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating societal conditions favorable to that goal”*** (National Association of Social Workers, 1973). Additionally, in 1996, The National Association of Social Workers stated that: ***The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historical and defining feature of social work is the profession’s focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.”***

The Social Work Program at Seton Hall provides “generalist” preparation for social work practice. The author of our text, Berg-Weber (21010,p.1.6), defines generalist social work practice as : “A method of social work practice that encompasses a broad based set of knowledge, skills, and values that are applied to assessment and intervention with client systems at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels”.

The course uses assigned readings, lecture, discussion, case studies, independent reading, media, and other teaching/learning techniques and methodologies in an effort to help students to know and understand, albeit at an introductory level, the above definitions in terms of: what it takes to be a social worker; what do we do; where and with whom; and why and this will include our history. There is emphasis on methods that social workers use; our devotion to a very clear system of values and ethics; and diversity and cultural competency. Although all syllabi for each section of this course is standardized respective instructors have academic freedom regarding their respective teaching methodology.

We realize that this introductory course counts as a social science in terms of college core, is part of the social work minor, can be a free elective, and is the first social work course taken by majors. Despite that this is a diverse student constituency, we will

introduce everyone to social work as per this syllabus, however also relate al dimensions of this course to required competencies of social workers and social work education as promulgated by the Council on Social Work Education.

Course Objectives:

For students:

to understand the purposes and mission of social work;

to be acquainted with the knowledge, skills, and methods of social work, at various levels of practice and education, and the profession's approach to systems, problem-solving, and using client strengths;

to be informed of major developments in the history of social work;

to gain knowledge of the values and ethics that guide social work;

to understand how social workers competently respond to, respect, and nurture human diversity through cultural competence;

to comprehend the array of organizations, and their respective focus of attention, in which social workers practice; this to include beginning understanding of social welfare systems;

to understand the traditional, historic, and continuing commitment of social work to social justice and to serving people who are at-risk, vulnerable, and/or oppressed.

Learning Outcomes:

As a result of the learning experiences in this course which focus on the above objectives broadly, each student is expected to:

define social work and describe how and where social workers learn to be social workers and where they practice;

describe various types of organizations and types of social work practice;

discuss major historical developments in the evolution of social work and social welfare;

differentiate and contrast levels and types of social work practice and differentiate and contrast social work with regard to other helping professions;

articulate the major values and principles of social work and explain why social workers embrace these as fundamental;

explain basic skills used by social workers, including problem solving and strengths perspective strategies and techniques;

articulate why social workers must be cognizant and respectful of human diversity as well as why cultural competency is a requisite, imperative skill for social workers;

explain what social workers (and others – social workers aren't the only people who care about these serious matters) mean by the terms vulnerability and oppression; being at-risk; and prevention and elimination of social problems in the interests of social justice and what social workers do and have done in terms of these social conditions.

Evidence of Learning (basis for grades):

Details below:

Midterm Exam	20%
Term Paper	30%
Attendance/Class Participation	10%
Class presentation	20%
Final Exam	20%

There will be a **midterm and a final exam**, each lasting for seventy five minutes; Exams are not cumulative and each counts for **20%** of the final course grade. Exams are based on the content in respective units of instruction (below) which focus on specific course objectives, designed to help students meet learning outcome requirements.

Instructions for **group class presentation** will be provided few weeks before the assignment is due. **Term paper worth 30% of the final course grade.** The paper is to be submitted in **hard copy** on or before **December 8, (the last day of class, not the exam period)**. The paper will be returned, graded and with instructional comments, on the date of the final exam.

Please note that the Program will sponsor two “tutorials” over the course of the semester, for all majors and anyone else interested, regarding how to locate valid, reliable source material and also how to cite it using APA style. The date and time will be announced in all classes, posted on the Department website, and paper announcements posted on bulletin boards.

Cosmetics: approximately four (not counting a cover page and Works Cited or References page), typed double spaced, #12 font, reference to at least four legitimate (see below) sources, one of which should be the text and there should be multiple references to the text; cover page with student's name, title of paper, and stapled in the upper left corner. Paper should have citations in the body of the text and on a Works Cited page, using APA style for anyone who's major is a social-behavioral science. Try your best with this and feel free to seek consultation about this; the instructor understands that for many students, this is their first attempt at professional, scholarly writing in the social sciences. This is to be your paper and not merely the stringing together of quotes; what is the point you are trying to make and how is this backed up by professional literature and what you have learned in this course. Use subsections as appropriate. The Berg-Weger textbook has extensive reference material in R-1. This paper is specifically designed to address topics specifically covered in the course and must indicate this.

Content: The title of the paper will be *Social Injustice, XXXXXXXXX(your topic) and Social Work*. You may use the Berg-Weger book as one of your sources and the author defines “isms” on page I-8 and has readings from pages 104 to 114. If one of the topics presented by the author is not a topic you wish to discuss, meet with the instructor for assistance.

Only valid, reliable scholarly and governmental sources are acceptable as reference material. In other words: no internet, .com, and the like. You can't really “Google” this. Use the library electronically and go to scholarly and governmental sources, look at the vast reference material in the text, examine the extensive materials we have on hand in our offices. Also government sources should be those that contain factual information.

Governmental websites are likely to be propaganda so keep in mind that you are looking for facts.

Include any pertinent content from the course (this paper is an integral part of the course, not something just “tacked on” at the end). Thus the paper can be written using both the first and third person – this is your paper and your presentation of evidence of your learning.

First Section: Define social injustice. The instructor will use Blackboard and provide you with a definition of social justice from Barker’s (2003) *The Social Work Dictionary*: Washington DC. NASW Press. Please note that Barker defines social justice, so your definition should be the opposite of this.

Second Section: Present factual information about the social condition and/or group you are focusing on in terms of suffering social injustice.

Third Section: Based on your learning in class, readings, and literature you have examined, explain how social work relates to this social condition/group in terms of what we know, value, practice, and are competent at in terms of working toward eliminating this social injustice.

Fourth Section: How do social work values (be specific) relate to this issue and why.

Fifth Section: What competencies (include as many as you think possible) relate to this issue and why.

Works Cited or References Page.

Additional Comment Regarding Grades:

As is historic in the social work program, and in conjunction with protocols for such promulgated by the Registrar, there are no automatic incomplete grades. If a student misses an exam, there will be one opportunity for a make-up at the convenience of the instructor. While the make-up focus on specific objectives and learning outcomes, expect a much different exam than that originally given on schedule.

Students who have not fulfilled requirements will receive a grade of F, which can be considered for change when school re-opens in the spring. If a student has a legitimate (as defined by the instructor) reason for not completing requirements, a request for INC. form must be signed by both the student and the instructor and received by the Registrar prior to the last day of class. Nevertheless, there is common sense involved; things happen. The issue is that unless there is sufficient and timely notice, a grade of F is submitted and this may be revisited when the University re-opens. This instructor, as all instructors in the

social work program, submits grades on time. Any unplanned special circumstances that can happen will be addressed, but the grade at the date it is due, will be submitted as warranted. Try to stay healthy; best to take exams and submit assignments on time. There is very little consideration for late assignments. Students can start working on the assignments at the beginning and throughout the semester. Late papers will receive a one full grade penalty for each calendar day late and this “late” paper can only be submitted directly to the instructor –no under the door, submission to another staff member, or similarly. In other words, best to get this in on time. Email me for special circumstances. The point is that this course has been set up such that there is room for contingencies, planning throughout the semester with consultation, and opportunities for make-up. However, this ultimately means that exams should be taken on time and assignments should be submitted on time.

Please note that near the end of the mid-point of the semester, the instructor will distribute a confidential evaluation form that is designed for use by the instructor as an indicator of the degree to which objectives and outcomes are being met. At the end of the semester, in addition to the availability of on-line course evaluations, each instructor in the social work program will ask their respective class(es) to complete a course and instructor evaluation document that is specifically focused on social work and these will confidentially be submitted to the Program Director for continuous enhancement of our learning experiences

Course Content Outline: Students should read the preface of the Berg-Weger book as soon as possible. The first day of class is the first day of instruction. There are competency requirements (learning outcomes) applicable to each of the units (obviously). Class participation is a positive approach for gaining competence. Different instructors proceed through units in different ways (although the objectives and learning outcomes are consistent for all instructors and course sections). Thus no dates are provided for the units below. We will use *Days in the Lives of Social Workers* throughout the course and students will be able to more comprehensively discuss the various reasons as they learn more and more throughout the semester. Chapters indicated below refer to the Berg-Weger text. **Please note that exams and assignments will not be “sprung” on students. We will discuss the respective timetable with sufficient notice.** Also, please note that the units below and assigned chapter readings are not in the order presented by the author, but rather have been conceptualized in terms of the desired flow of objectives of this course. The instructor reserves the right to re-conceptualize the following depending upon how the class progresses. The intent is to assure a smooth flow of learning; meet course objectives; yet, not be “under arrest” by the below such that some content may be unfairly “jammed” into the course. We will do this course smoothly and with no surprises and we

will periodically evaluate how we are progressing in an effort to assure content in a fair manner.

Unit I. The work of social work and becoming a social worker.

What social workers do, comparison with other helping professions, the meaning of profession, education for the profession, public perceptions and career opportunities. The larger environment we work within.

Chapters One, Twelve, and Four

Unit II. Values and ethics in social work practice

The nature of values; why values are important in social work; values and social injustice; “isms”, values and cultural competency.

Chapters Six and Five

Mid-Term exam about here.

Unit III. Social work perspectives, skills, and methods: generalist; person-in-environment; problem solving; strengths perspective. Relationship of generalist practice to fields of practice.

Chapters Seven and Eight

Group class presentations

Unit IV. The history of social work and our current work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and public policy.

Chapters Two, Nine, Ten, and Eleven

Final exam- scheduled date (no exceptions)