

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course number:	SW 381T	Instructor:	Jemel P. Aguilar, M.S.W., PhD
Unique number:	65930	Office number	3.130M
Semester:	Fall 2006	Office phone:	512-471-4219
Meeting time/place	5:30-8:30 pm Room 2.132	Office hours:	Wednesdays 2-4pm

DYNAMICS OF ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

Standardized Course Description:

This course familiarizes students with the macro context of social work practice. It examines the reciprocal relationship between human behavior and social environments and explores the consequences of that interaction for populations at-risk and people from diverse backgrounds. It examines the impact of social structure and other societal factors on one's personal life chances in relation to equity, fairness, opportunity, and other issues of social and economic justice. Drawing on a systems-ecological perspective, this course helps students develop skills at using systems thinking approaches to understanding organizations and communities with special emphasis on their application to a variety of oppressed and disadvantaged populations and multiple levels of intervention. Special emphasis is given to the development of assessment skills and intervention methods that are relevant to empowerment, capacity building, and social change within organizations and communities. Understanding the role of age, race, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical and mental ability is an integral part of this course.

Standardized course objectives:

1. Discuss communities and organizations as a context for professional practice to meet individual needs, build community capacity, and promote social and economic justice;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the value dilemmas and ethical issues confronting social work professionals and their implications for social work practice with organizations and communities;
3. Assess the influence of community norms, priorities, and competitive community factions on the social structure of communities and the delivery of human services

4. Assess various evidenced-based intervention approaches for working with organizations and communities;
5. Analyze the impacts of organizational and community dynamics on populations at risk and relate those impacts to the participation of such populations in organizational and community governance, human service provision, and policy formulation;
6. Evaluate alternative strategies for initiating change in organizations and communities, including planning models, coalition building, community development, direct action, and legislative advocacy;
7. Understand the relevance of age, race, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical and mental ability in social work practice that is grounded in social and economic justice.

Required texts:

Hardina, D. (2001). *Analytic methods for community practice*. Columbia University Press: New York

Loeb, P. R. (1999) *Soul of the citizen: Living with conviction in a cynical time*. St. Martin's Griffin: New York

Additional reading is on reserve in the Learning Resource Center

Grading:

A = 100-96 SUPERIOR: Significantly exceeds assignments and performance expectations, demonstrates a high level of in-depth critical thinking and analysis that involved coherence and integration of ideas.

A- = 95-90

B+ = 89-87 GOOD: Assignment/overall performance in course meets all the requirements with evidence of critical thinking and analysis.

B = 86-84 B- = 83-80

C+ = 79-77 AVERAGE: Assignment/performance meets the requirements, lacks evidence of in depth and analysis of the material.

C = 76-74 C- = 73-70

D+ = 69-67 BELOW AVERAGE: Requirements for assignments and critical thinking and analysis skills is lacking.

D = 66-64 D- = 63-60

59 and below F

Requirements for all Written Assignments

All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and formatted in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). The instructor will evaluate your writing on the basis of content, format, and writing style (organization, clarity, grammar, punctuation, etc.).

All students are expected to conform to the rules of scholastic honesty as outlined in the General Bulletin of the University of Texas at Austin. Scholastic misconduct will result in ***automatic failure*** of the course.

Persons with Disabilities.

The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641.

Assignments:

Reflection papers are design to integrate readings, lectures, classroom discussions, and your opinion. With that said, it is important that you identify the main points or concepts in the readings, understand how the main points or concepts can be manipulated and applied to practice situations, and constructively critique the readings, theories, ways the concepts are applied in practice situations, and how you would use the concepts or ideas within your social work practice. All reflection papers are to be 5-7 pages, reflect APA style, and represent a coherent analysis of the readings, lectures, classroom discussion, and your opinion.

Group Project and Presentation is described at the end of this syllabus.

Final exam is a take home assignment that will be discussed at the end of the semester.

*Course Schedule**

Class Number	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Class 1:	31 August 2006	Introduction to class and structure	Read "Soul of the Citizen" Hardina - Chapter 1	Reflection paper (10 points) Due: 14 September 2006
Class 2:	7 September 2006	Ethics and roles of social work in community leadership	Hardina Chapter 2, Soul of the citizen	
Class 3:	14 September 2006	Roles of social worker in community and organizations	Soul of the Citizen	
Class 4:	21 September 2006	Social worker as manager	Kirst #1, Gummer article, Schmid article,	
Class 5:	28 September 2006	Social worker organizer	Coleman article Nolan article	Reflection paper (10 points) Due: 12 October 2006
Class 6:	5 October 2006	Movie: Norma Rae		
Class 7:	12 October 2006	Assessing the community terrain	Hardina, 3, 4, 6 Coulton article Kirst #2	
Class 8:	19 October 2006	Assessing the organizational terrain	Hardina, 3, 4, 6 Coulton article Twiggler-Ross and Uzzell article	
Class 9:	26 October 2006	Translating the assessment into an intervention	Pippard article Ohmer article Hardina 9	Reflection paper (10 points) Due: 2 November 2006
Class 10:	2 November 2006	Interventions continued	Hardina 10-14 Anderson article	
Class 11:	9 November 2006	Program development and administration	Hardina 11 Mulroy article Holley article	
Class 12:	16 November 2006	Program development and administration continued	Hardina 12 Fraser article	Group Presentations (15 points)
Class 13:	30 November 2006	Evaluating the intervention	Hardina 14 Queralt article	Major Project (25 points) Due: 7 December 2006 by Noon
Class 14:	7 December 2006	Wrap-up and review		
Class 15:	Finals week			Exam due at class time (30 points)

*I reserve the right to change assignments, workload, etc as long as I provide students with at least two weeks lead time before an assignment is due.

Guidelines for the classroom

Students and faculty will enter into the classroom setting with various opinions and perspectives that guide their daily interactions. What is more, these same students and faculty are becoming or already a part of the Social Work profession that has an established set of ethical mandates for social workers. The competing belief and ethical perspectives students' hold can cause conflict and inhibit the learning process for all students. Thus, I am putting forth a clear set of guidelines that assists in establishing a learning environment whereby students are free to discuss openly the pressing social issues facing oppressed and vulnerable populations. The following guidelines attempt to serve that purpose.

1. As you enter the UT School of Social Work, you are simultaneously entering into a profession that puts forth a set of ethical responsibilities and values that all social workers must follow. As such, you will be held to the ethical mandates as outlined in the Social Work code of ethics. Lack of awareness or understanding of these ethics is not just cause for unethical conduct. I suggest that you review the code of ethics and become familiar with what is required of you.
2. As a scholar, the focus of my educational work is to shape a cadre of professional social work practitioners that provide ethical and competent social work services to many of the populations that the profession serves. It is with this mandate in mind that I assess student performance in the classroom and on homework assignments.
3. As with any challenge in life, students and faculty must manage several priorities, such as family, school, work, and personal lives. To obtain a high grade in my class, however, requires the student to find the time to complete assignments in a way that integrates and extends readings, lectures, classroom discussions, and your own critical perspective on the topic. I reserve grades of A for outstanding work that engages course materials with original thought and creativity or a mastery of technical skills. You can receive a B by doing all of the work well and a C by meeting all course requirements.
4. Sharing one's perspectives and opinions are an important skill for social work practitioners. Therefore, during class I will strongly encourage you to discuss your perspective with others to enrich class discussions. With that said, it is important to remember that others may (and most likely will) view similar situations from a different vantage point. These differences in perspectives do not make one right and the other wrong. Our job becomes examining all perspectives and determine which best fits the situation we are discussing.

5. No phone calls while in the classroom. Turn off all phones, pagers, and other communication devices. Setting these devices to “silent” does not diminish the noise created through, for example, vibrations.
6. Assignments are to be handed in within the first fifteen minutes of class and on the due date. Late assignments are accepted at my discretion.
7. You will have the opportunity to evaluate me and to critique the course in time for me to make changes that will benefit you. If you think I have failed to live up to the principles or philosophies listed, please let me know about it.
8. I am available to you during office hours and by appointment. I will be open to meeting at nights and on the weekends, if necessary.
9. I approach social work with a sense of humor about the situations we will find ourselves in and/or the programs and policy situations. This levity is meant to poke fun at the ridiculousness of some situations and in no way is directed at demeaning groups of people. In my classes, I follow the social work values of regarding respect and advocacy on behalf of oppressed populations.
10. Disrespect will absolutely not be tolerated and I will handle it directly and in the context in which it occurs.

Major assignment

1. Identify an organization working on the macro level
2. Determine the organization's view of a community problem
3. Identify organizational initiatives directed toward solving a community problem
4. Identify the underlying theoretical framework for the organization's intervention
5. Conduct an assessment of the community using the framework provided by Hardina
6. Compare and contrast your community assessment with the theoretical framework for the organizational initiative
7. Pick a theory of communities that might explain the community problems and how the community residents are reacting to the problems. Alternatively, you can select a theory of organizational process to determine how the change the focus of the organizational initiative and organization to meet the needs of the community.
8. Provide a rationale for your choice of theory and how the theory helps better explain the community or organizational dynamics
9. Develop a framework for an intervention based on your community assessment, choice of theory, stakeholders involved in the community development efforts. Consider the following questions when you are developing your intervention:
 - a. How are you going to motivate community member and organizations to join with you in implementing the intervention?
 - b. What organizational resources are you going to need or have available?
 - c. What barriers will you face if you were to implement this intervention? What would you do to overcome these barriers?

Bibliography

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