

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:	Summer 2007	Office phone:	512-471-4219
Meeting time/place	Monday and Wednesday 5:30-8pm Room 2.132	Office hours:	Wednesdays 2-4pm
Teaching Assistant:	Kristy Lagana-Riordan	Email:	clagana@mail.utexas.edu

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-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:

Kirst-Ashman, K. K. (2008). Human behavior: Communities, organizations, and groups in the macro social environment. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks-Cole

Fellin, P. (2001). The community and the social worker. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks-Cole.

Additional readings on Blackboard

Grading Matrix

A	Student <i>mastered</i> knowledge of the dynamics communities and organizations on human development, <i>thoroughly</i> comprehends theories of communities and organizations, applies knowledge accurately to case studies, deconstructs concepts for synthesis with case study, and strongly supports their evaluation of communities and organizations. The assignment presents a logical argument, is well written, and follows APA-style.
B or S	Student developed <i>comprehensive</i> knowledge of the dynamics communities and organizations, <i>ample</i> comprehension of theories of dynamics communities and organizations, and applies knowledge to case studies.
C	Student developed <i>basic</i> knowledge of the dynamics communities and organizations, and <i>fundamentally</i> comprehends how communities and organizations influence human development.
D	Student developed cursory knowledge of the dynamics communities and organizations.
F	Student did not develop knowledge about the dynamics communities and organizations

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.). If the student includes in-text citations for a reference list and more than 5 of these citations/references are incorrect, then paper will be automatically reduced by 15 points.

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:

Community paper: 15% of grade

In this assignment you are to think about the different “communities” you have belonged to and then describe the community. In describing the community you should discuss how a person(s) become a part of the community. What are the norms for that community? What are the boundaries, strengths, and weaknesses of the community? You are also required to integrate the readings from the first two weeks of class in your discussion of the community. 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 your community, and constructively critique the readings. This paper should be 7-10 pages, reflect APA style, and represent a coherent analysis of the readings and the community that you choose.

Mid-term exam: 25% of grade

Major assignment: 60% of grade

Major assignment

1. Identify a community (as defined by the readings) that you are interested in learning more about.
2. Describe the community in terms of the number of people a part of that community, the boundaries of that community, and community norms
3. Assess the community for problems the community faces, the strengths of the community, and the ways in which the community is attempting to deal with the community.
4. Pick a theory of communities that might explain the community problems and how the community members are reacting to the problems.
5. Provide a rationale for your choice of theory and how the theory helps better explain the community dynamics or problems
6. Using theories of communities and your assessment of the community, identify the areas in which you could intervene. Explain how your decisions are informed by your understanding of theories of communities and assessment. Also answer the following questions:
 - 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?
7. What barriers will you face if you were to implement this intervention? What would you do to overcome these barriers?

Paper grading criteria:

Correctly used APA-style and is grammatically correct (15 points)
Applies knowledge accurately to case study (30 points)
Deconstructs concepts from readings and lectures (15 points)
Synthesizes concepts from readings for use in their description of community (15 points)
Strongly supports their evaluation of their communities (30 points)

Course Schedule

Class Number	Date	Topic	Readings
Class 1:	4 June 2007	Introduction to class, blackboard, and each other	Black board readings, Fellin Chapter 1; Kirst-Ashman Chapter 1
Class 2:	6 June 2007	Systems perspective and person-in-environment	Blackboard readings, Fellin Chapter 3 Kirst-Ashman chapter 10 and 4
Class 3:	11 June 2007	Defining communities and organizations	Black board readings, Fellin Chapter 4 and 7 Kirst-Ashman chapter 8
Class 4:	13 June 2007	Systems in communities and organizations Community paper due	Black board readings Fellin Chapter 14 and 5 Kirst-Ashman chapter 9 and 6
Class 5:	18 June 2007	Social structure	Black board readings Kirst-Ashman chapter 7 and 5
Class 6:	20 June 2007	Collectivity and social norms MID-TERM Exam	Black board readings Fellin Chapter 6 and 8 Kirst-Ashman chapter 11
Class 7:	25 June 2007	Race, class, and gender	Black board readings Fellin Chapter 13 Kirst-Ashman chapter 2
Class 8:	27 June 2007	Conflict	Black board readings Fellin Chapter 2 Kirst-Ashman chapter 11
Class 9:	2 July 2007	Conflict and social welfare	Black board readings Fellin Chapter 10
Class 10:	9 July 2007	Education	Black board readings Fellin Chapter 9
Class 11:	11 July 2007	Health care	Black board readings Fellin Chapter 11
Class 12:	16 July 2007	Economics	Black board readings Fellin Chapter 12
Class 13:	18 July 2007	Politics	Black board readings Fellin Chapter 15 Kirst-Ashman chapter 12
Class 14:	23 July 2007	Final Paper due and class evaluations	

CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PRACTICES

1. As students enter the UT School of Social Work, they are simultaneously entering into a profession that puts forth a set of ethical responsibilities and values that all social workers must follow. As such, students are held to the NASW ethical mandates and Standards for Social Work Education as outlined in the Student Handbook
2. Grades are assigned based on the following criteria: A grade of A are given for outstanding work that engages course materials with original thought and creativity or a mastery of technical skills. A grade of B is given for doing all of the work well. A grade of C is given for meeting all course requirements. To obtain a high grade, students must 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.
3. Students are expected to share perspectives and opinions as part of skill development for social work practitioners. Students are expected to behave respectfully toward others who 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. Students are expected to critically examine all perspectives and before determining which best fits the situations discussed in class.
4. Phone calls, pagers, and other communication devices are restricted from being on or placed in 'silent' mode while in class. 'Ear buds' are also not allowed.
5. Assignments are to be handed in within the first fifteen minutes of class and on the due date. Late assignments are accepted at the discretion of the professor.
6. The professor is available to students during office hours. Emails and telephone calls will only be returned at that time as well.
7. Disrespect toward the professor or other students is not tolerated and will be handled directly and in the context in which it occurs. Disrespectful behavior includes overt acts, such as talking over others or making derogatory comments based on another person's race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religious preference, and/or ability/disability. Moreover, covert acts of disrespect, such as sneers and other derogatory facial expressions, excluding class members from classroom tasks, etc. are also unacceptable.

8. Students are permitted one excused absence. A student is considered absent if they arrive more than 10 minutes late to class, leave early, or are unable to come to class. Any other absences will result in a reduction by one letter grade.
9. Students have the opportunity to evaluate the professor and are expected to critique the course in time for the professor to make changes that will benefit them. If students think the professor has failed to live up to the principles or philosophies listed, they are expected to communicate their concerns directly to the professor and in a constructive manner.