

The University of Texas at Austin
School of Social Work

Spring 2003

SOCIAL WORK 310--UNIQUE NUMBER 61745
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL WELFARE

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CLASS TIME/PLACE: Monday and Wednesday 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM/SWB Rm. 2.106

*Each time a person stands up for an ideal,
or acts to improve the lot of others...
she/he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope,
and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring,
those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.*

Robert F. Kennedy (1925 – 1968)

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory social work course in which students learn about the profession of social work and the populations and issues that concern social workers. Students learn about social work practice and methodology, various fields of social work practices, and client populations. This course also includes an agency-related field experience.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Describe the American social welfare system and a variety of settings in which social workers practice, including the roles and functions that they perform;
2. Describe career opportunities in the profession at the BSW and MSW levels;
3. Identify some of the social, economic, and political forces that have shaped the evolution of social welfare policies and services in the U.S.;
4. Analyze the important ideologies, beliefs and values that have helped to shape social welfare and social work and that continue to guide the profession;
5. Explain the concepts of racism, sexism, homophobia and ageism and discuss important issues of human diversity related to women, people of color, gays and lesbians, people with disabilities and other special populations;
6. Describe various theories of poverty and discuss the impact that poverty has on other social issues;
7. Describe theory and practice approaches used in social work individuals, families, groups and communities;
8. Describe and analyze major issues and trends in various areas of social work practice such as child welfare, chemical dependency, medical social work, school social work, and others.

III. TEACHING METHODS

The primary teaching approach in this course will be collaborative learning. Collaborative learning requires student participation and cooperative efforts and interaction in class discussions, small group work and the course websites. There will be presentations by guest speakers and class members as well as the required service learning volunteer experience³ in a social welfare agency. The material for this course will be presented through assigned readings, lectures, videos, class and online discussion. Students will be responsible for assigned readings and course materials and respond in writing to those activities for the week. Students will be expected to analyze and integrate readings in class. Videos and guest speakers are tools to address key concepts in the course and information presented in these ways will be included in the quizzes. The videos are not available for individual student viewing. Class attendance and participation, therefore, is very important to the successful completion of this course.

IV. REQUIRED TEXT

DuBois, B. & Miley, K. K. (2002). *Social work: An empowering profession*, 4th Ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Grobman, L. (Ed.) (1999). *Days in the lives of social workers*, 2nd Ed. Harrisburg, Pa: White Hat Communications.

Hamner, D. M. (2002). *Building bridges*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

This class will be divided into four small groups. Each group will be responsible for reading and reporting on one of the following three books. Group assignments will be made after the first class. These books will be available at the Co-Op. It is not necessary to purchase all three of the following books. . .just the book your group is assigned to review.

Group 1.

Kozol, J. (1995). *Amazing grace*. New York: Crown. **ISBN:** 0060976977

Group 2.

Raphael, J. (2000). *Saving Bernice: Battered women, welfare and poverty*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University. **ISBN:** 1555534392

Group 3.

Seccombe, K. (1999). *“So you think I drive a Cadillac?” Welfare recipients’ perspectives on the system and its reform*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. **ISBN:** 0205283128

Group 4.

Ehrenreich, B. (2001). *Nickel and dimed: On (not) getting by in America*. New York, NY: Henry Holt. **ISBN:** 0805063897

Selected readings may be on reserve in the LRC and through the Electronic Library. Directions for accessing electronic reserves may be found at the back of this syllabus. Via e-mail, the instructor will advise students of electronic article availability as it occurs.

V. COURSE ACTIVITIES AND GRADING:

Student achievement in meeting course objectives will be evaluated on the following written, oral and experiential assignments as well as class participation.

Portfolio Assignment

During the semester, students will develop a “portfolio” of their work using an online tool called the Learning Record Online (LRO) (www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~syverson/olr/). You must complete all assignments in the LRO in order to receive credit for this course. The LRO is turned in twice during the semester: at midterm and at the end of the course. Processing of your volunteer experience should appear throughout your portfolio including (description of the agency, purpose, mission, etc., training you received, relationships established with staff, deidentified client observations, observations of staff, etc.). Ideas regarding specific content related to your volunteer experience will be incorporated into a separate handout. The LRO will be discussed throughout the semester to insure students are successfully working with this tool. (30 points)

Five Quizzes

The purpose of the quiz is to assess knowledge of the course content. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice and short essay questions developed over at least two weeks of course readings, lecture, and guest speaker materials. Each quiz may contain a combination of short answer, multiple choice, matching, true-false and sentence completion. Quiz dates: Feb. 12, Feb. 26, March 19, March 26, and April 9. (10 points)

Group Presentation and Group Paper on Selected Reading

Using the assigned book as the basis or background, develop a presentation about the populations depicted and current social welfare policy and programs that serve/intervene with them. Be creative in your presentations to help the class understand the problems people with the problems depicted in your book face, stereotypes the broader society has about them, their strategies for survival and how social institutions and the community respond. Remember, your group is the only group to have read the book you’re assigned. As you are taking this class during the 78th Texas Legislative Session, be sure to refer to current proposed legislation, funding, problems in service delivery. Clarify the positions of representatives from the different political parties regarding dealing with these people and their problem(s). Develop a clear statement of recommendations to policy makers in the form of a letter to your local legislators on a specific issue derived from your assigned reading. Present your letter to the course instructor prior to your class presentation so that copies may be made available to the class during your presentation. Further, develop a second one-page handout including a *systems diagram* of the agencies and populations from your book, basic statistics related to the problem and whatever other information you believe pertinent to a basic introductory understanding of the problem and issue discussed. Sample scenarios and systems diagrams will be presented throughout the semester. Include the name of each group member and their roles in developing the presentation on this handout. Students will be graded separately based on role in developing/presenting and entry discussion re: reaction and learning from the assigned book that appears in the portfolio (LRO), (15 points)

Presentation dates:

Group 1 Amazing grace: April 14,

Group 2 Saving Bernice: April 21,

Group 3 “So you think I drive a Cadillac?": April 16,

Group 4 Nickel and Dimed: April 23.

Volunteer and Experiential Requirements

One of the requirements of this course set by the School of Social Work is an experiential component of 45 volunteer hours or 75 hours if taken with SW 312 concurrently. The main objective of this requirement is to integrate concepts learned in class with experiences and observations in the field. Students are expected to locate and arrange to complete the volunteer hours during the semester at an approved human service agency. Each student will select an agency and return the **Volunteer Placement Form** (back of syllabus) to me by **Thursday, February 12**. Students can find volunteer placements by visiting the Austin Volunteer Network at www.utexas.edu/depts/sswork/cdar/avn.html. The Director of the Career Development Office with the School of Social Work will visit class to talk about this process with you. When available, agency representatives will present volunteer opportunities directly to the class. This assignment will be further explained in a separate handout. There are three required forms related to this assignment: *Volunteer Agency Selection Form*, **Volunteer Agency Supervisor Evaluation Form**, and the **Volunteer Time Log**. These forms will be posted on the class Blackboard page in the near future and hard copies will also be made available.

Participation

Attendance and an active presence in this class is critical to developing a meaningful dialogue and each participant's learning and growth experience.

Dialogue/Interaction Guidelines (excerpted from “The Way Home, Conversation Guide, The World Trust Organization)

Dialogue is a process that is different from discussion. Discussion usually consists of people talking “at” each other while defending or perpetuating their own ideas. Dialogue is concerned with creating meaning by listening to others and being willing to be influenced by their wisdom.

As this is an experiential/interaction based course, class participants are asked to read and agree to follow this list of guidelines. Your patience and willingness to understand differing points of view will be required. We must each work to create an environment that models openness and respect.

- ☞ What you share within the context of the conversation is confidential, honored and respected.
- ☞ Use “I” statements.
- ☞ Avoid critiquing the video or others’ experiences; focus on your own experiences and feelings.
- ☞ Be honest and willing to share.
- ☞ Listen with curiosity and the willingness to learn and change. Resist the desire to interrupt.
- ☞ Be brief. Do not monopolize the precious little time that we have together.
- ☞ When sharing in the larger group, build on others’ stories.
- ☞ Acknowledge when someone’s comments have “touched” you.
- ☞ Verbally ask for support for risking. Verbally provide support after someone’s taken a risk to share.
- ☞ Suspend judgment. Be open to the kernel of wisdom in each person’s story.

It is your instructor’s contention that people have the capacity for holding multiple perspectives, thoughts, and feelings. And while complex issues can often become over simplified or reduced to standard responses and reactions (i.e. things are either “right” or “wrong”, “good” or bad,” etc.) it is important to practice “sitting” with discomfort, especially if we are feeling hopeless about our seeming inability to affect the outer world/the enormity of an issue/problem. Learning to “sit” with discomfort is a critical skill for social workers/culturally proficient individuals and groups. Developing this skill can be the first step toward being able to effect change.

Final Grades

A total of 100% may be earned for the above activities/performance. Grades will be assigned as follows:

90-100 A = Significantly exceeds assignment/performance expectations (evidence of critical thinking and analysis that resulted in work additional to that laid out in the assignment directions);

80-89 B = Assignment/overall performance in course meets all the requirements with evidence of critical thinking and analysis (i.e. coherence and integration of ideas);

70-79 C = Average. Assignment/performance meets all the requirements but lacks evidence of in depth thinking and analysis;

69- below No Pass = There are important gaps in the assignment both in terms of requirements and critical thinking and analysis.

VI. CLASS POLICIES

1. Social Work students adhere to the Student Standards for Professional Conduct of the School and the NASW Code of Ethics and assume responsibility for their conduct. Scholastic honesty and integrity are consistent social work values.
2. Assignments or quizzes that show evidence that they have not been completed directly by the student will not be accepted and may result in automatic failure for the course. The instructor will comply with University guidelines regarding scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating during examinations.
3. Social work practitioners respect others. Therefore, differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected.
4. Punctuality and timeliness are important for social work practitioners. Class attendance is expected. Attendance at less than 90 percent of the classes will result in loss of a letter grade and four unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course. The instructor should be notified in advance of any planned absence and as soon as possible in case of an unforeseen, serious emergency.
5. Students are expected to be active in the learning process, to do the assigned readings and participate in the class activities and discussions, including the class Blackboard and Learning Record. If you do not have a personal computer with Internet access, there are computers available for your use at the SW Learning Resource Center (LRC), the Flawn Academic Center, campus and public libraries. Computers with text readers are available.
6. Assignments are due on schedule, barring serious, unforeseen medical illness or family emergencies. There will be a five-point penalty for late assignments. The weekly class page assignments must be turned in each week, not as a cumulative effort. The deadline for a weekly submission is the Sunday evening (prior to midnight). The paper on your volunteer experience is due at the time of your presentation.
7. The submission of all assignments does not constitute an A in itself. It means you have met the basic requirements of the course. Your class performance and the quality of your work will determine whether you earn an A or a B or a lower grade.
8. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) is the style manual to be used by all students. If you do not know how to reference, please check the Internet or APA manual before you submit your report. Citations are required for your paper. A handout on APA style is available at the SSW Student Services Office or the LRC. The Publication Manual is available at the library or for purchase at the Co-op.
9. Present yourself as a professional in the oral presentations and in the volunteer placement. Dress codes may vary in the specific agencies; however, you will be representing the School of Social Work and the University of Texas at Austin in your contact with these agencies. Ask about expectations. Show respect for the culture of the agency, its staff and its clients by your appearance.

This is an introductory course to the profession and offered within a professional school. When you are presenting to the class, dress for work and not in extremely casual attire. If your presentation involves a dramatic reenactment, please clarify this with the audience.

10. Social work practitioners are assertive and provide comments in their functioning as team members. Comments are welcome about the course and my instruction. The course will be viewed as a joint effort between students and the instructor.

11. A positive relationship between the student and the instructor is important. The instructor will be available to the students during regularly scheduled office hours and by appointment. Students may contact the instructor by telephone and by email. Confidentiality will be maintained unless the subject matter is required to be reviewed by the School of Social Work or is to be reported by law. Please refer to the Student Handbook of the School of Social Work.

12. Students are expected to use and ask for feedback. As the instructor, I will work with you throughout the semester and provide you with initial feedback and suggestions for revisions on assignments.

13. Safety. As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.

14. Students with Disabilities. The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

15. At the end of the semester, you will have the opportunity to evaluate the instructor using the official Course Instructor Survey of the School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin.

VII. SAFETY

As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.

VIII. SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Description	Text / Readings
1/13/03 1/15/03	Introduction --- overview and philosophy of course; Syllabus review/discussion	Hamner, Chapters 1-4
1/20/03 1/22/03	MLK Jr. Holiday – No Formal Class Introduction to Social Work, Portfolio— Learning Record On-Line	Dubois & Miley, Chapter 1 & 2
1/27/03 1/29/03	Assign Reading Groups & Presentation Dates Social Systems Theory and Methods	Hamner, Chapter 5 Dubois & Miley, Chapters 3 & 4
2/3/03 2/5/03	Delivery Systems, Social Policy Developing Systems Diagrams	Dubois & Miley, Chapter 10 Hamner, Chapter 6 Grobman, Chapters 41, 47, 48
2/10/03 2/12/03	Social Work Perspectives: Values and Ethics Generalist Social Work: Processes, functions and roles Quiz #1 Volunteer Placement Form Due	Dubois & Miley, Chapter 5 Dubois & Miley, Chapters 8 & 9
2/17/03 2/19/20	Poverty, Social Work and Social Justice: Integrating practice, policy and research, School Social Work Conference: No Formal Class —Volunteer Opportunity	Dubois & Miley, Chapter 6 Hamner, Chapter 7 Grobman, Chapters 32,34, 35
2/24/03 2/26/03	Social Work in the public domain, Military Social Work Quiz #2	Dubois & Miley, Chapter 11 Grobman, Chapters 17, 18, 25

3/3/03	Gender	Grobman, Chapters 44, 45, 50
3/5/03	Portfolio—Learning Record to date Due	
3/10/03	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
3/12/03		
3/17/03	Cultural Competence and Diversity	Dubois & Miley, Chapter 7 Grobman, Chapters 7, 15, 30
3/19/03	Quiz #3	
3/24/03	Social Work and Health Care Systems	Dubois & Miley, 12 Grobman, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6,19,20
3/26/03	Quiz #4	
3/31/03	Substance Abuse/Chemical Dependence	Grobman, Chapters 26, 27, 28
4/2/03	Social Work with Groups	
4/7/03	Social Work with Families and Youth	Dubois & Miley, 13 Grobman: 13,14,16,
4/9/03	Social Work with Adults and the Elderly Quiz #5	
4/14/03	Group 1: Presentation (Amazing Grace)	Dubois & Miley, 14 Grobman, Chapter 36, 37, 38, 39
4/16/03	Group 3: Presentation (“So you think I drive a Cadillac?”)	
4/21/03	Group 2: Presentation (Saving Bernice)	
4/23/03	Group 4: Presentation (Nickel and Dimed)	
4/28/03	Course Summary and Evaluation	
4/30/03	LRO Final Portfolio Due; Volunteer Hours Form and Supervisor Evaluation Due	

Bibliography

- Albert, V. (2000). Reducing welfare benefits: Consequences for adequacy of and eligibility for benefits. *Social Work*, 45(4), 300-311.
- Courtney, M. & Specht, H. (1994). *Unfaithful angels: How social work has abandoned its mission*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Donahue, A. B. (2000). Riding the mental health pendulum: Mixed messages in the era of neurobiology and self-help movements. *Social Work*, 45(5), 427-438.
- DuBois, B. & Miley, K.K (Eds.) (2002). *Social work: An empowering profession*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Eamon, M. K. (2001). The effects of poverty on children's socio-emotional development: An ecological systems analysis. *Social Work*, 46(3), 256-266.
- Gitterman, A., & Shulman, L. (Eds.) (1994). *Mutual aid groups, vulnerable populations, and the life cycle*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Homan, M. (1994). *Promoting community change: Making it happen in the real world*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Mattison, M. (2000). Ethical decision making: The person in the process. *Social Work*, 45(3), 193-288.
- Popple, P. & Leighninger, L. (Eds.) (2002). *Social work, social welfare, and American society*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Weick, A. (2000). Hidden voices. *Social Work*, 45(5), 395-402.

Research Resources/Websites

- Community Action Network, <http://caction.org>
- National Association for Mental Illness, <http://www.nami.org>
- Texas Commission on Drugs and Alcohol, <http://www.tcada.state.tx.us>
- Center for Public Policy Priorities, <http://www.cppp.org>
- National Institute for Mental Health, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>
- Social Work Action Network, <http://www.sc.edu/swan/>
- Council on Social Work Education, <http://www.cswe.org/>
- Clinical Social Work Federation, <http://www.cswf.org/>

How to Find Electronic Reserves

1. Go to <http://reserves.lib.utexas.edu/courseindex.asp>.
2. Find your course:
 - a. Browse by department or instructor, OR
 - b. Search by course, department, instructor, document title or document author.
3. Click on the course name.
4. A screen will appear with the course name at the top, a box for the course password and a copyright statement.
5. Type in the password
6. Read the copyright statement and click on “accept” or “decline.”
7. A screen will appear listing the electronic reserve items for your course. To access any item, click on it to launch in another window.
8. When you are through, be sure to close the browser or go to another web site to protect course materials.

SW325 Introduction to Social Work
VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT FORM

Please Print Legibly

Student Name: _____; Semester: Spring '03 Date: _____

Student's E-mail Address: _____

Student's Availability: [] Flexible, [] Weekdays, [] Weekends, [] Days, [] Evenings, [] Other _____

What specific times are you available: _____; Is transportation an issue [] Yes, [] No

Student's Skills & Interests: _____

Volunteer Placement: _____

Placement Address: _____

Placement/On-Site Supervisor: _____; Supervisor Office Phone: _____

Supervisor's Fax: _____; Supervisor's E-Mail Address: _____

Will there be formal volunteer training? [] Yes, [] No, If yes, hour many hours required? _____

Client population student will be exposed to: _____

Problems commonly experienced by this client population: _____

Problems commonly experienced in presenting services to this client population: _____

Volunteer opportunities/duties: _____

Volunteer Learning Objectives: _____

PORTFOLIO DISCUSSION OF VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

The focus of the discussion of your volunteer experience in your portfolio is to integrate the your volunteer experience with the course learning objectives. Volunteer Experience entries are due both with the mid-term and the final submission of your portfolio, and should include the following outline based on the Hamner (2002) text, Building Bridges, and specific chapters from Dubois & Miley (2002):

A. The Agency: with Dubois & Miley, Chapters 3 & 4 as a guide, describe the type of social service setting, the sources of funding, the staffing patterns and role of technology in service delivery, the use of volunteers, self-help groups and the service delivery network. Consider the agency from an ecosystems perspective and a social justice perspective.

- The agency’s mission statement, age, basic services, and whether it is public, private, non-profit or for-profit, sectarian or nonsectarian.
- The organizational structure of the agency, including its governing body and its funding sources.
- Information about the ethnicity, gender, age range, income level, sexual orientation and disabilities of the populations served by the agency and the agency’s requirements for receiving services.
- A description of specific program components provided by the agency.
- An organizational chart and a brief description of all staff jobs and responsibilities and how they relate to one another and to the volunteer responsibilities.
- The gender, ethnic makeup, types of professions and educational background of staff.
- The limitations of the agency’s services (staff size, funding, service area, eligibility requirements, policies and procedures, etc.)
- Immediate and long-range plans of the agency.
- A diagram of the agency, its clientele and its relationship to the community applying Systems theory.

B. Social Work Services: (D & M, Chapters 5, 7, 8 & 9) discuss the social work processes in the setting; how does the “service” impact the “clients” and others in the community? Does this agency reflect generalist practice principles and methods?

- What social worker roles and functions are there? Micro, mezzo or macro?
- Explain what social work paradigm or framework is used.
- Identify the social work values (or value conflicts) that you saw demonstrated at the agency.
- Are social workers involved with their professional organizations?
- If the agency does not employ a social worker, describe how a social worker in the agency would enhance their services.

C. Your Volunteer Experience: (Hamner) reflect on the clients’ experiences and your own.

- Describe a valuable learning experience received from this volunteer work.
- Identify three strengths that you demonstrated in your experience.
- Identify three areas where you could use additional development in order to be more effective.
- Briefly discuss the ways that your experience has helped you to evaluate your desire to enter or not enter the social work profession.

The Learning Record/Portfolio Project

LRO Credits and Acknowledgments may be found at <http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~syverson/olr/credits.html>

The Learning Record is a document that enables teachers and students to observe and document a student's learning process over the course of a semester.

The Learning Record provides a framework for gathering, organizing, and analyzing diverse evidence of student learning over time.

The model addresses many, if not most, of the problems about assessing student performance, whether in the classroom or in large scale assessment.

Instead of setting arbitrary standards for achievement, it attempts to help the development of students toward their goals in coordination with the social and physical structures in their environments.

It consists four interrelated sections:

- * Part A: Background
- * Part B: Analysis
- * Part C: Evaluation
- * Evidence: Observations and Work Samples

Student development is assessed in terms of course strands and dimensions of learning which describe stages in student development as readers, writers, and thinkers.

- * Course Strands, sometimes called objectives or themes of the course, are specific to each course and are the subject areas where teachers and students can expect to see student development.
- * Examples from a writing course might be: rhetoric, research, collaboration, information and technology.
- * The five Dimensions of Learning are consistent across courses:
 - * confidence and independence
 - * skills and strategies
 - * use of prior and emerging experience
 - * knowledge and understanding
 - * critical reflection
- * Select [Dimensions of Learning](#) to view definitions of each dimension (page will open in new window).
- * Course work is analyzed and interpreted in terms of the Course Strands and Dimensions of Learning.
- * The Course Strands and Dimensions of Learning provide a shared conceptual framework for teachers and students.

Part A provides background about the student's experience and development in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and course strands at the beginning of the course.

- * Part A helps establish the student's starting point for development over the course of the class.
- * It provides instructors with the ability to consider individually the learning process of each student.

* Part A consist of an interview with someone someone (parent, teacher, close friend) who knows something about the student's recent development, and the student's reflection about their own development across the five dimensions of learning.

In Part A: Background - Student Reflection, students discuss their recent education as a thinker, writer, and reader, in terms of the course strands and the five dimensions of learning.

- * Part A: Background engages students in first-hand research on a subject of great personal interest to them -- themselves.
- * Students are introduced to interviewing skills and strategies, gathering field notes, and making summary interpretations which become a part of the Learning Record.
- * Part A is assigned and completed within the first two weeks of class.

A student's Observations are short descriptions of activities they believe relate to work they are doing in the course.

- * Unlike entries in a journal, Observations focus on what is actually observed, without additional interpretation or evaluation.
- * A series of observations taken over time provide important information that supplement a student's samples of work.
- * They are particularly helpful in documenting aspects of learning not easily accounted for by conventional methods of grading or assessment, such as:
 - * development of collaborative skills
 - * increased independence, reflectiveness
 - * other activities not well represented in course products

Students keep a comprehensive portfolio containing all work, including notes, diagrams, peer responses, final revisions, and teacher comments.

- * The portfolio provides important evidence that all assigned work has been completed.
- * It can include examples of informal and formal work, drafts and finished work, comments written for other students, and any other kind of work that will provide readers with a good sense of the student's activities and development over time.
- * The Observations and Work Samples function as the data students analyze when estimating their final grade.
- * When submitting their Midterm and Final Learning Records students select work they believe represents their development.

In Part B: Analysis students engage in synthesizing and analyzing their Observations and Samples of Work in light of Part A: Background.

- * In the Part B: Analysis students frame their work and classroom activities in terms of the course strands and the dimensions of learning.
- * Students make interpretations and come to some conclusions about their own learning in the course.
- * Students highlight areas in which they have developed and consider how their work illustrates that development.
- * Students prepare an analysis and the midterm and at the end of the term.

In Part C: Evaluation students consider their learning experience and provide a grade estimate based on their analysis in Part B.

- * Students evaluate their progress and development, suggest future steps for development, and provide the instructor with suggestions.
- * Part C engages students in the process of making informed judgments based on specific rhetorical processes:
 - * interpreting the quality of their own work
 - * matching evidence in the Learning Record with the appropriate grade criteria
 - * making an argument for the judgment supported by evidence, interpretations, and reasoning in the Learning Record
- * Students submit Midterm and Final versions of Part C: Evaluation.
- * Teachers assign grades that reflect the evidence in the Learning Records.

In the Print View teachers and students can view a Learning Record as one printable document.

- * There are two versions of the Print View:
 - * with teacher comments
 - * without teacher comments
- * The Learning Record is presented in a single, scrollable window (note: the document tends to be quite long).
- * The complete text of Work Samples can be accessed by hyperlinks.