

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number:	SW 334	Instructor's Name	Steve McKee, MSSW
Unique Number:	63500	Office Number:	SSW 3.104A
Semester:	Fall 2009	Phone:	328-5688
Meeting Time/ Classroom:	M-W 4:00-5:30 SSW 2.122	Email Address:	sdmckee@mail.utexas.edu
Office Hours:	Wednesdays 3:00 - 4:00 and by appointment		

Social Work Practice Organizations and Communities
SW 334

I. Course Description

This course in the practice sequence integrates social work theory, practice methods, and professional skills as they relate to assessment and intervention at the organizational and community levels. The course considers models for understanding human service organizations and administrative practice in organizations and for understanding communities, issues of social stratification, conflict and integration in communities, assessment of community needs, and identification of community resources. Strategies for initiating change in organizations and communities are identified, including different points of intervention, sources of resistance to change, and methods for overcoming such resistance. Throughout the course, special attention is given to factors affecting diverse population groups, including, but not limited to, groups distinguished by race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin. Prerequisites include admission to the social work major and previous or current enrollment in PSY304, SW310, SW312, SW313, SW325, and SW327.

II. Course Objectives

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Explain the role of the generalist social worker as an interactive influence in organizational dynamics and the service delivery process;
2. Explain and apply the systems/ecological frameworks to organizations and communities;
3. Explain and illustrate how organizational dynamics can influence service delivery;
4. Identify and assess barriers, strategies, tactics and skills involved in achieving organizational change to improve service delivery;
5. Demonstrate the basic knowledge and skills needed for the assessment of social problems at the community level and the mobilization of community interest, opinion, and support to address those problems;
6. Describe how community work can be used as an intervention strategy for meeting client needs, creating new service delivery systems, and promoting social and economic justice;
7. Identify factors affecting people with diverse backgrounds, including, but not limited to, groups distinguished by race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin; both as service users and as organizational staff members;

8. Demonstrate an understanding of how research is used to acquire knowledge and to evaluate self in practice with organizations and communities;
9. Demonstrate an understanding of social work values, particularly the pursuit of social and economic justice, and their implications for social work practice with organizations and communities.

III. Teaching Methods

The Instructor will incorporate a variety of teaching methods including interactive lectures, experiential group activities, reading assignments, case studies, field trips and audiovisual material to help students understand social work practice with organizations and communities. Students are expected to contribute to their own learning through asking questions, sharing experiences and actively participating in class discussions.

IV. Required and Recommended Texts and Materials

Kirst-Ashman, K. K. & Hull, G. H. Jr. (2008). ***Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities. 4th Edition.*** Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishers.

The Instructor will assign additional reading to supplement the text. Supplemental articles are posted to Blackboard and may also be referenced in a bibliography attached to this Syllabus.

V. Course Requirements

Course requirements consist of two written exams and a small group assignment. Students will be evaluated on these required assignments as well as class participation and contribution.

1. Attendance, Preparation, Contribution (10 points)

Students are expected to attend all classes, to arrive on time, and to come prepared to participate meaningfully in class discussion, small group activities and assignments. Students are expected to call upon relevant experiences and course readings for contributions. A portion of the grade for this course will depend on your level of attendance, preparation, participation, and contribution. For some, this means learning to speak up, to add comments or to raise questions. For others, it means being sensitive and allowing others to contribute.

2. Exam #1 (25 points)

October 7, 2009

The first exam will include material covered in the first half of the class. Each exam is worth 25% of your final grade. The exams will draw heavily from the readings and class discussions. Format for exams may include multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions. Only in the case of documented illness or other unforeseen emergencies will make-up exams be given. The format of make-up exams is at the discretion of the instructor.

3. Exam #2 (25 points)

November 18, 2009

The second exam will cover material from the second half of the text, lectures and assigned readings.

4. Group Assignment (40 points)**November 30, 2009**

In this project, students will work in teams of 2-3 students to conduct an assessment and evaluation of one organization/interest group currently active in the greater Austin area. This assignment will involve two parts: a 15-20-page double-spaced written report (25%) and an in-class presentation (15%). This syllabus includes the specific, written guidelines for this assignment and the Instructor will review these during the second week of class.

Grading Policy/Grading criteria:

To receive an “A” in this course you must have excellent attendance, participation, and you must produce work that is of superior quality. Should you have questions about any assignment for this class please consult with the Instructor well in advance of the due date.

Maximum points per assignment:

Attendance, Preparation, Contribution	10 (10%)
Exam 1	25 (25%)
Exam 2	25 (25%)
Group assignment	40 (40%)
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE	100 (100%)

Grades will be assigned as follows:

94-100 points	A (excellent)
90–93 points	A- (very good)
87-89 points	B+ (well above average)
84 -86 points	B (above average)
80–83 points	B- (slightly above average)
Work earning grades of B+, B or B- generally <u>exceeds</u> assignment/performance expectations; demonstrates varying degrees of in-depth critical thinking and analysis that resulted in work additional to that laid out in the assignment directions (i.e., coherence and integration of ideas);	
77-79 points	C+ (average)
74–76 points	C
70-73 points	C-
Work earning grades of C+, C and C- may substantially to minimally meet requirements, have minor to more significant gaps, and lack evidence of in depth thinking and analysis. Social Work majors must make a grade of C- or above to avoid having to repeat the course.	
67-69 points	D+ (below average)
64-66 points	D
60-63 points	D-

Grades in the D range reflect work that has important gaps in the assignment both in terms of not meeting the requirements and lacking critical thinking and analysis.

59 points or below

F (failing)

Papers, responses to essay questions and presentations awarded the highest grades include the following elements:

- Evidence of independent, critical thinking
- Citations of research from peer-reviewed professional journals and from recent books
- Integration of material from lectures and course readings

Papers must be typewritten in 12pt font, double-spaced, proofread for spelling and grammatical errors, and must follow the APA style format.

VI. Class Policies

1. Attendance. It is important for social work practitioners to be punctual in both attendance and in meeting deadlines. Therefore, class attendance is expected, as is handing in assignments on time. Students anticipating being absent from class for a legitimate reason (illness, family emergency) should notify the Instructor in advance by e-mail. **Students who fail to attend class on a regular basis (missing more than one class without a valid excuse, e.g., medical documentation) will be subject to having their final grade lowered by one point for each class missed beyond the first unexcused absence.** In extenuating circumstances of absence, students are to notify the Instructor. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences. Any student missing more than 3 classes (excused or unexcused) may be in jeopardy of not passing this course.

Policy on Absence for Religious Holidays:

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

2. Late Assignments. All assignments must be turned in on the due date and must be submitted at the beginning of the class period. Changes in work schedules, personal celebrations, transportation problems, computer/printing problems, etc. are not considered legitimate reasons for missing and late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of three (3) points each day late. Any legitimate adjustments in due dates must be discussed with the instructor at least 24 hours PRIOR to the scheduled due date.

3. The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>)

4. APA. The School of Social Work uniformly requires APA editorial style as the standard format for all written assignments. Details of the APA style are included in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Information on APA style and format can also be found at the Learning Resource Center (LRC) in the School of Social Work.

5. Mutual Learning. The Instructor welcomes feedback about the course and the course will be viewed as a mutual learning process between students and the Instructor. Students are encouraged to request and to provide feedback during office hours, by phone, by e-mail, and by appointment if they desire. The Instructor may also utilize a mid-course evaluation to gain student feedback.

6. Professional Conduct in Class. The professor expects students to act like professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

Please demonstrate professionalism and respect for others by observing the following:

- Arrive in class on time ready to participate in discussion;
- Turn cell phones, pagers and MP3 players off and stash away in backpacks;
- Refrain from engaging in side conversations while the Instructor or others are speaking.

Some material provided in the class may be of a confidential nature since part of the material will involve examination of ongoing human service organizations. Therefore, all class participants must observe strict rules of professional conduct including treating all information about current human service organizations as confidential, not to be discussed with anyone other than classmates or the Instructor.

7. 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 notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

8. Documented Disability Statement

Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

9. Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Description	Text / Readings
Week 1 08/26/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to course and to colleagues • Academic/professional biographies and learning objectives • Course Syllabus 	Syllabus
Week 2 08/31/09 09/02/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities • Group Assignment Guidelines and overview of Austin-area health and human services agencies, public and nonprofit 	Kirst-Ashman and Hull, Chapter 1 Read assignment guidelines and Vision, Mission and Values article/handout
Week 3 09/09/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Micro Skills in the Macro Environment 	Kirst-Ashman and Hull, Chapter 2
Week 4 09/14/09 09/16/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Skills for Organizational and Community Change; Case example: The Skilled Facilitator, Roger Schwarz • Understanding Organizations 	Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Chapter 3 pp.; Schwarz, Groundrules for Effective Group Facilitation. Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Chapter 4; Farruggia: How is the Nonprofit Sector Changing?
Week 5 09/21/09 09/23/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Organizations –the use of assessment tools in understanding organizations • Developing and Managing Agency Resources 	SWOT, Peter F. Drucker Assessment, Wilder Nonprofit Lifestages Assessment Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Ch. 14, pp. 488-499; McKinsey Capacity Assessment

<p>Week 6 09/28/09</p> <p>09/30/09</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making for Organizational Change Implementing Macro level Interventions and Facilitating Organizational Change 	<p>Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Chapter 5; specific pages and additional readings to be assigned</p> <p>Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Chapter 6</p>
<p>Week 7 10/05/09</p> <p>10/07/09</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Implementation and Program Development/Exam Review EXAM 1 	<p>Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Chapter 7</p>
<p>Week 8 10/12/09</p> <p>10/14/09</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Workday and Case Examples: Understanding and Evaluating Strategic Plans, Assessing Organization Financial Performance Understanding Neighborhoods and Communities 	<p>Sample agency budgets and strategic plans</p> <p>Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Chapter 8</p>
<p>Week 9 10/19/09</p> <p>10/21/09</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macro Practice in Communities/ Tour Blackland Community Development 	<p>Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Chapter 9</p> <p>http://www.main.org/blacklandcdc/projects.html</p>
<p>Week 10 10/26/09</p> <p>10/28/09</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating Macro Practice Advocacy and Social Action with Populations at Risk/Saul Alinsky Video 	<p>Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Chapter 10</p> <p>Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Chapter 11 (selected)</p>
<p>Week 11 11/02/09</p> <p>11/04/09</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics and Ethical Dilemmas in Macro Practice Social marketing 	<p>Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Chapter 12</p> <p>Ch. 12, Hardcastle and Powers</p>

<p>Week 12 11/09/09</p> <p>11/11/09</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress and Time Management • Diversity in macro practice 	<p>Kirst-Ashman & Hull, Chapter 15: Wounded Healers, Maeder; Holmes and Rahe: Life Events Scale</p> <p>Case material will be assigned</p>
<p>Week 13 11/16/09</p> <p>11/18/09</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam Review • EXAM 2 	<p>Exam review outline</p>
<p>Week 14 11/23/09</p> <p>11/25/09</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Planning Process: The Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Central Texas • Group Project in-class consultations • NO CLASS 	<p>Additional readings to be assigned</p>
<p>Week 15 11/30/09</p> <p>12/02/09</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Papers Due • Group Presentations 1, 2 & 3 • Group Presentations 4, 5 & 6/ Course Evaluations 	<p>Self-evaluations and group member evaluations</p>

SW334
Stephen McKee, MSSW, Lecturer
Fall 2009

Group Assignment:

Community-based Organization Assessment.

During the first weeks of this course we read about social work practice with organizations and communities. We gain knowledge of micro skills and group skills that are necessary tools for effective intervention in macro systems. We examine different organizational theories; learn to think about organizations systemically; and to identify the major components of organizations. We gain familiarity with these concepts through discussion of case examples in the classroom. Throughout, we stress the importance of critical thinking skills in assessing, planning for and evaluating organizations and communities.

When you enter professional practice you will likely work both with and within organizations and communities. Some of this will involve working on teams, committees, boards and various community associations.

“Reading about and discussing communities and organizations is one way for students to become familiar with the complexity and range of variation found in communities and organizations. However, becoming involved in an actual assessment project can enhance the learning experience and helps students translate the abstract concepts and theories about communities and organizations into meaningful and practical applications for the design and maintenance of effective community-based organization.” (Calvin Streeter, Ph.D., SW 381t course syllabus, 2008).

Students will work in teams of 3-4 students to conduct an assessment and evaluation of one organization/interest group currently active in Austin, Texas. Groups can identify an organization/interest group of their own (with approval from the instructor) or select from an approved list provided by the instructor.

In selecting the organization/group, the students should make sure that it is currently working to address a problem/issue specific to Austin and has enough of a history so that we can see how it has evolved and changed over time.

This project is worth 40% of your course grade. It will involve two parts: a 15-20-page double-spaced written report (25%) and an in-class presentation (15%).

Framing the assignment:

Your team is part of an independent, private nonprofit consulting and training organization that has been contracted to do the organization/interest group assessment. You will publish your written findings and present them to the board of Community Foundation (your colleagues in class) that is considering allocating funds to organizations that show evidence of effectiveness in addressing pressing social issues and meeting community needs.

Written report.

Each group will produce a written report that includes a title page, acknowledgments (if appropriate), an executive summary, the body of the report, and a bibliography. The final report should be well organized, concisely written, neatly presented, and follow the APA style. The body of the report should include these sections:

Vision, Mission, Values and goals. Identify the organization’s vision, mission, values statements (if available), and goals. In your assessment are its goals aligned with its mission and vision?

History. Briefly describe the history of the organization and list its major accomplishments. How has the larger community shaped the organization and how has the organization contributed to changes in the larger community. How has the organization evolved or changed over time? Does it use different strategies and tactics now than it did when it first started? Why?

Theory of change. Most organizations like this are guided by a “theory of change.” That is, a theoretical model that specifies the assumed cause-effect relationship between the conditions being addressed, the nature of the intervention, and the expected outcomes of their activities. Sometime this theory is clearly articulated. More often it is implied. Based on your assessment, how would you define the “theory of change” that guides this organization’s work? How do its recent activities align with its “theory of change” philosophy?

Structure and leadership. Describe the structure (include an organizational chart) and leadership of the organization.

- What is the governance structure? Describe the board and its committees and if possible review minutes of recent meetings to determine if the board is active, has clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and identifies and acts upon major strategic policy decisions.
- How would you define the management style (refer to readings)? Identify the positions involved in major decision-making and programmatic implementation and evaluation.

Programs/services. What are the strategies (programs, services) that the organization has developed to meet its mission and goals? Briefly describe: the service, how it aligns with (or doesn’t align with) the mission and goals, how it is staffed, and its outputs.

Constituents. What constituencies (client populations, target communities, specific conditions) are served by the organization and what are the limits of that service (geographic, severity of need, eligibility guidelines, etc.)? Identify the allies or strategic partners of the organization.

Funds development. How does the organization finance its activities and what percentage of the revenue budget comes from the each following:

- Governmental grants and contracts,
- Private foundations and corporations,
- Individual contributions and fundraising special events, and
- Earned income (fees for service).

(You may want to insert a summary spreadsheet that shows the revenue budget).

Is the organization engaged in entrepreneurial activities or ventures that produce unrelated business income? How would you evaluate the overall business planning capacity and financial stability of the organization?

Marketing and public awareness activities. How does the organization make its constituencies aware of its mission and services? Does the group have a marketing plan and if so, how is it implemented?

Overall assessment. This is where you can show the depth of your understanding of the organization, and put forth an analysis based upon critical thinking skills and knowledge gained through the course. Think first about the outcomes that really matter, and that would demonstrate that the organization is really

making a difference in the lives of people. What evidence exists that the organization is effective in achieving these outcomes for clients?

What recommendations might you offer to help the organization move successfully into the future, and to be even more competitive for support from public and private funders?

Presentation.

Each group will present their project to the class on the assigned date in December 2009. The presentation will follow the outline of the paper and may include overhead projection, PowerPoint, graphs, charts, pictures, audio, slides, videos, posters, web pages, and/or class activities, etc. Each team will have 20 minutes to make their presentation so it will need to be focused and well organized. Each presentation will end with the group's overall assessment of the organization. Time for questions and answers will follow.

Grading.

The group project assignment is worth 40% of the final course grade. The group will be graded as a whole on the paper (20%) and on the class presentation (total 15%).

Each individual will receive a score for their contribution to the overall group project as evidenced by self- and other- evaluations of contribution (5%).

Examples: Student A receives the group grade of 18 of 20 possible points on the written portion; the group grade of 13 of 15 possible points for the presentation, and 5 of 5 points on the evaluation. Student A total points received (out of a possible 40) = 36.

Student B receives a group grade of 16 of 20 possible points on the written portion; the group grade of 12 of 15 points for the presentation, and 4 of 5 points on the evaluation Student B total points received (out of a possible 40) = 32.

Sample Work Plan.

Meet with your team and identify your individual strengths, areas of expertise and interests. Clarify any gaps that your team may have that could affect your work on the project.

Familiarize yourself with several organizations by conducting web research, speaking with the instructor, etc. Choose an organization for your project through a consensus approach as a team.

Reach consensus on your distribution of the information gathering tasks and the sections of the paper to be written by group members. Give yourself time as a group to consider how you want to approach the class presentation and divvy up those assignments when you feel ready. Outline a work plan (tasks to accomplish, persons responsible, dates and timelines).

Familiarize yourself with the assessment tools discussed in class and divvy up the interview tasks. Identify the persons you will want to speak to within the organization and set appointments. Begin the information gathering and assessment phase.

Meet periodically as a group to discuss progress, and schedule time with the course instructor when you want to discuss questions or desire consultation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Some additional assigned readings will come from the articles below, and other sources, which will be posted on Blackboard:

Austin, James E. and Hesselbein, Frances. The Collaboration Challenge. Josey Bass Publishers, 2000.

Bridges, William. Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change. Perseus Press, 1991.

The Drucker Foundation Self-Assessment Tool: Participant Workbook, a publication of the Drucker Foundation and Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers. Copyright © 1999 by The Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management.

Effective Capacity Building in Nonprofit Organizations, Prepared by McKinsey & Company, Published for Venture Philanthropy Partners, August 2001.

<http://www.vppartners.org/learning/reports/capacity/capacity.html>

The Effective Facilitator: The Principles and Practices of Effective Facilitators. Leadership Strategies, Inc. Atlanta. 1998.

Fogg, C. Davis. Team-Based Strategic Planning: A Complete Guide to Structuring, Facilitating and Implementing the Process. American Management Association, 1994

Hardcastle, David A., and Powers, Patricia R., Community Practice: Theories and Skills for Social Workers. Oxford University Press, 2004.

Marsh, J.C. 2003. To thine own ethics code be true. Social Work, 4(5), 5-7.

Munro, E. (2002). The role of theory in social work research: A further contribution to the debate. Journal of Social Work Education, 38(3), 461-470.

Napier, Rod; Sanaghan, Patrick; Sidle, Clint; et al. High Impact Tools and Activities for Strategic Planning: Creative Techniques for Facilitating Your Organization's Planning Process. McGraw-Hill Professional Publishing, 1997

NASW Code of Ethics <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

Schwarz, Roger. The Skilled Facilitator. Josey Bass, 2004.

Simon, Judith Sharken with Donovan, Terrence. The Five Life Stages of Non-Profit Organizations. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 2001.
