

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course/Unique Number: SW 381T / U# 94005	Office Number: SSW 3.130K
Semester: Summer 2009	Office Phone: 471-6266
Meeting Time/Place: M/W 5:30-8 pm / SSW 2.112	Office Hours: Mon/Wed 4:30-5:30 (TA) By appointment (Prof)
Instructor: Professor Yolanda C. Padilla, PhD, LMSW-AP, ypadilla@austin.utexas.edu	
Teaching Assistant: Carlos Barrera, carlosbarrera@mail.utexas.edu	

DYNAMICS OF ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES (MSSW)

I. 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. It emphasizes the interlocking and complex nature of culture and personal identity with content on populations-at-risk, examining the factors that contribute to and constitute being at risk. It introduces the student to the obligation that social services meet the needs of groups served and be culturally relevant. This includes equipping students with skills to recognize diversity within and between groups that may influence assessment, planning, intervention, and research. Students learn how to define, design, and implement strategies for effective practice with persons from diverse backgrounds. This course examines the impact of social structure and other societal factor 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. This course can count towards the *Portfolio Program in Nonprofit Studies* (<http://rgkcenter.utexas.edu/portfolio>).

II. Standardized Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

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 evidence-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.

III. Teaching Methods

This class is conducted using a seminar format. The primary teaching approach will be collaborative learning. Collaborative learning involves small group discussions, in which students have the opportunity to apply concepts from the readings. Students should come prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Class attendance and participation is required. Students will prepare a group project on an in-depth case study.

IV. Required Readings

Hardcastle, D.G., and Powers, P.R. 2004 (2nd Edition). *Community Practice: Theories and Skills for Social Workers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schwarz, R. 2002. *The Skilled Facilitator*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. [Electronic Resource on UT Libra]. Selected Chapters

V. Course Requirements and Grading Policies

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| 1. Class Participation/Attendance (Required) | 5% |
| 2. Two Exams | 60% |
| 3. Needs Assessment Group Project (Group grade) | 35% |

*(Grade takes into account timely submission of interim section reports.
Individual contribution: 5-15 points will be deducted from the group grade for individuals who do not make an adequate contribution to the group project.)*

100%

NOTE: Submit all assignments in hard copy (unless electronic copies are requested).

Needs Assessment Group Project

Detailed instructions available on Blackboard. Part of the class will be dedicated to learning the process of conducting needs assessments, including hands-on applications.

Grading Policy

School of Social Work grading policy is as follows:

100 - 94 = A	89 - 87 = B+	79 - 77 = C+	69 - 67 = D+	59 and below = F
93 - 90 = A-	86 - 84 = B	<u>76 - 74 = C</u>	66 - 64 = D	
	83 - 80 = B-	73 - 70 = C-	63 - 60 = D-	

The School policy is that a grade of at least C (2.00) is required for a course to count toward a graduate student's program of study (i.e., for courses taken on a credit/no credit basis, a grade of C or above is considered "credit" while a grade of C- or below is considered "no credit").

VI. Class Expectations and University Policies

- 1. Observe classroom etiquette.** Turn off laptops (except when used with instructor's permission) and iPods and silence cell phones. Refrain from side conversations while the instructor or others are speaking.
- 2. Grades.** The grading criteria used in this class are as follows.

<p>EXCELLENT (A): Significantly <u>exceeds</u> requirements and demonstrates in-depth critical thinking/analysis.</p> <p>GOOD (B): Meets <u>all</u> the requirements & demonstrates in-depth critical thinking/analysis.</p> <p>AVERAGE (C): Meets the requirements or has <u>minor</u> gaps but fails to demonstrate in-depth critical thinking /analysis.</p> <p>BELOW AVERAGE (≤D): Has important gaps: does not meet the requirements or fails to demonstrate in-depth critical thinking/analysis.</p>
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- 3. Attend class regularly and turn in assignments on the due dates.** Class attendance is required. Student presentations can only be given on the allotted dates. Major written assignments will be penalized 5 points for each calendar day late.
- 4. Electronic communication.** Blackboard (including email postings) will be used for course management. Blackboard is available at <http://courses.utexas.edu>. Changes to the syllabus will be posted on Blackboard and/or announced in class. Blackboard support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 on week days. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address.
- 5. Follow the rules of scholastic honesty.** Assignments which 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. Scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will result in recommendation for dismissal from the University according to University guidelines.
- 6. Request and offer feedback.** I will work with you throughout the semester and provide you with feedback for revisions on assignments. Student feedback about the course is welcome, as the course will be viewed as a joint effort between students and the instructor.

7. **Participate in class discussions and other in-class activities.** Share your perspectives. Based on the social work value of self-determination, we will ultimately strive to learn about and respect the perspectives of populations directly affected by issues at question as *they* experience them and define them.
8. **Present written and oral presentations professionally.** Written assignments should be proofread to avoid grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. Paginate all your papers. Use APA Style for referencing (see *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*).
9. **Agency and community 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.
10. **Services for students with disabilities.** The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, see <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/> or contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 or 471-4641 TTY.

VII. Course Schedule

* Schedule of due dates for the Needs Assessment Project provided separately. All chapters are from the textbook, unless otherwise specified.

<i>Monday</i>		<i>Wednesday</i>	
June 8	<p><i>Overview of the course</i></p> <p><i>What are major social problems facing our clients and what strategies can be used to confront them?</i></p> <p><i>Prioritize 3 populations of interest for the Needs Assessment Project.</i></p>	June 10	<p><i>Individual, organizational, and community levels of intervention: overlapping realms</i></p> <p><i>Group assignments for the Needs Assessment Project</i></p> <p>Preface (p. v-viii) Chapter 1. Community Practice: An Introduction</p>
June 15	Chapter 3. The Nature of Social and Community Problems	June 17	Chapter 7. Using Assessment in Community Practice
June 22	Chapter 13. Using the Advocacy Spectrum	June 24	Chapter 14. Using Organizing: Acting in Concert
June 29	Exam 1	July 1	Chapter 9. Using Your Agency
July 6	Chapter 12. Using Social Marketing	July 8	Chapter 15. Community Casework
July 13	<p><i>The Skilled Facilitator,</i> Chapter 1: The Skilled Facilitator Approach</p>	July 15	<p><i>The Skilled Facilitator,</i> Chapter 5: Ground Rules for Effective Group</p>
July 20	<i>Student presentations on Needs Assessment Projects</i>	July 22	<i>Student presentations on Needs Assessment Projects</i>
July 27	Exam 2		

VIII. Bibliography

See also organizational and community practice case studies provided on Blackboard.

Abatena, H. 1997. The Significance of Planned Community Participation in Problem Solving and Developing a Viable Community Capability. *Journal of Community Practice* 4(2):13-34.

Armstrong, K L. 1997. Launching a Family-Centered, Neighborhood-Based Human Services System: Lessons from Working Hallways and Street Corners. *Administration in Social Work* 21(3/4):109-126.

Auslander, G.K. 1996. Outcome Evaluation in Host Organizations: A Research Agenda. *Administration in Social Work* 20(2):15-27.

Bayne Smith, M.A. and M.A. Mason. 1995. Developmental Disability Services to Caribbean Americans in New York City. *Journal of Community Practice* 2(1):87-106.

Cherin, D. and W. Meezan. 1998. Evaluation as a Means of Organizational Learning. *Administration in Social Work* 22(2):1-21.

Durst, D., J. MacDonald, and D. Parsons. 1999. Finding Our Way: A Community Needs Assessment on Violence in Native Families in Canada. *Journal of Community Practice* 6(1):45-59.

Gilson, S. F. 1997. The YWCA Women's Advocacy Program: A Case Study of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services. *Journal of Community Practice* 4(4):1-26.

Greene, R.R., and Knee, R. I. 1996. Shaping the Policy Practice Agenda of Social Work in the Field of Aging. *Social Work* 41(5):553-560.

Gutierrez, L.M. and E.A. Lewis. 1994. Community Organizing with Women of Color: A Feminist Approach. *Journal of Community Practice* 1(2):23-44.

Kline, M., C. Dolgon, and L. Dresser. 2000. The Politics of Knowledge in Theory and Practice: Collective Research and Political Action in a Grassroots Community Organization. *Journal of Community Practice* 8(2):23-38.

Lowe, J.I., Frances K.B. and K. Stephens. 1998. Community Residents as Lay Health Educators in a Neighborhood Cancer Prevention Program. *Journal of Community Practice* 5(4):39-52.

Minicucci, C. 1997. Assessing a Family-Centered Neighborhood Service Agency: The Del Paso Heights Model. *Administration in Social Work* 21(3/4):127-143.

Perlmutter, F.D. and R.A. Cnaan. 1999. Community Development as a Public Sector Agenda. *Journal of Community Practice* 6(4):57-77.

Reviere, R., S. Berkowitz, C.C. Carter, and C.G. Ferguson. 1996. *Needs Assessment: A Creative and Practical Guide for Social Scientists*. Philadelphia, PA: Taylor and Francis.

Rosenthal, S.J. and J.M. Cairns. 1994. Child Abuse Prevention: The Community as Co-Worker. *Journal of Community Practice* 1(4):45-61.