COURSE SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the course is to provide the student with foundation knowledge in rurality. The course builds upon the liberal arts base and provides the professional foundation in content related to rural communities, rural lifestyles, and rural social work. Within this context the course addresses rural individuals and families, groups, organizations and communities, and social work practice related to these systems. Introduction to rurality also covers content related to social research, social work values and ethics, cultural and ethnic diversity, and social and economic justice related to rural populations and communities.

All graduate level social work courses build upon the liberal arts base. This content includes sociology, psychology, political science, economics, human biology, cultural and ethnic diversity, and social research. The Introduction to Rurality provides the professional foundation content in rurality. This content is a significant part of the MSW program at SFASU. Since rural content is discussed in each profession foundation course, it is required that students take Introduction to Rurality in their first semester in the program. The foundation content in rurality provides the basis for the advanced concentration of Advanced Rural Generalist practice. In this concentration rural content is a critical component.

II. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. The student will apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments as it relates to all client levels. (EPAS 2.1.3)
2. The student will engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services, in a rural context. (EPAS 2.1.8)

3. The student will engage diversity and difference in practice as it relates to all client levels and contexts. (EPAS 2.1.4, 2.1.9)

4. The student will identify as a professional Social Worker and conduct one self accordingly. (EPAS 2.1.1)

5. The student will apply Social Work ethical values and principles to guide professional practice. (EPAS 2.1.2)

6. The student will apply generalist practice to engage, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. (EPAS 2.1.10)

7. The student will apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment as it relates to all service levels. Apply theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the lifespan and the interactions amongst practice levels. (EPAS 2.1.7)

8. The student will engage in research-informed practice and practice informed research. (EPAS 2.1.6)

9. The student will advance human rights and social and economic justice. (EPAS 2.1.5)

10. The student will respond to context that shapes practice. (EPAS 2.1.9)

REQUIRED TEXTS:


RECOMMENDED TEXTS:


PURCHASING TEXTS: Both the Ginsberg and Scales & Streeter texts should be available in the bookstore or by purchase online from the bookstore. However, both books were also available 2/15/07 from Amazon.com and other sellers.

The special edition of Child Welfare is available for purchase through the Child Welfare League of America for $25 at the following site: [http://www.cwla.org/pubs/pubdetails.asp?PUBID=8777](http://www.cwla.org/pubs/pubdetails.asp?PUBID=8777) However, all of the articles are available through the Steen Library, by clicking Journals at Steen, Child Welfare, and finding Vol 81, issue 5. All articles will be listed, along with page numbers.

**COURSE DVD'S:**


Belanger, K. (2008). *Panel Discussion with Charles Fluharty, M.Div., Kathleen Miller, Ph.D., Chris Fulcher, Ph.D. and Kathleen Belanger, Ph.D.*

ACQUIRING THE DVD'S: The DVD's may be acquired from Dr. Kathleen Belanger during orientation or Janet Ivy, School of Social Work at 936-468-4020. While they do not need to be purchased, they must be returned at the end of the semester.

**III. CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION**

The MSW program of SFASU features a generalist foundation and a single concentration: Advanced Generalist Practice in a Rural Context both defined below.

It is important to note here that the BSW program and the MSW program have developed a shared definition of generalist practice, given below.

**Generalist practice** is a practice perspective that serves diverse client systems utilizing an ecological systems approach focusing on persons, families, groups, organizations and communities within the context of the rural social environment. It is not confined by a narrow cadre of theories; rather; it is versatile enough to allow problems and situations as well as strengths, capacities and resources to determine the practice approach. Generalist practice employs a problem solving framework and a broad knowledge, value and skill base which demands ethical practice and on-going self-assessment. Briefly, generalist social work practice:

- Is multi-level to include individuals, families, groups, organizations and
communities.
- Is multi-theory, allowing for the free selection of theories as appropriate.
- Utilizes problem identification and solving focus that follows a problem-solving framework.
- Addresses the complexity of individual, family, group, organizational and community system interactions.
- Requires and integration of awareness, competence, and professional response to issues of values, ethics, diversity, culture, social justice and populations-at-risk.

(This is a shared definition by both the BSW and MSW programs.)

**Advanced generalist practice** builds on the generalist foundation, incorporating the elements listed above, but characterized by a greater depth, breadth, and autonomy as demonstrated through specialized knowledge across problem areas, populations-at-risk and practice settings, with a greater selection of diverse interactions across practice levels.

Briefly, advanced generalist practice requires:
- The ability to differentially assess complex problems with systems of all sizes, with a variety of advanced assessment skills.
- Specialized interventions with systems of all sizes.
- Differential evaluation techniques with systems of all sizes.
- Readiness for leadership in a variety of areas including: program development, coordination and administration; clinical and organizational supervision; policy creation, reform and implementation; leadership in research development and utilization, particularly in practice settings; professional development.

The concentration for the MSW program is advanced generalist practice for rural contexts.

**Rural practice** is social work both in and with rural communities, and it is also social work with rural people. Rural communities in a limited geographic sense are non-metropolitan, in that they have populations of less than 50,000 and are not adjacent to a metropolitan area. Social work with rural people is characterized by social exchange between people and systems that is less formal and more personal than that of urban environments. Social exchange theory and Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft are appropriate theoretical basis for understanding these exchanges.

Social problems such as high poverty rates, inadequate housing, inadequate health care, scarcity of resources and professional, socio-economic underdevelopment, and physical distance from services and transportation are frequently identified as important problems and issues for rural communities. Development of resources, use of natural helping networks, and community development are often proposes as appropriate interventions in these communities. Important opportunities and strengths such as “sense of community”, intimacy among community residents, orientations toward self-sufficiency, and an abundance of personal space, often go unnoticed by outsiders.
IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES (Student Learning Outcomes)

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

1. Discuss, compare, and contrast differing definitions of rurality, including rurality as defined by lifestyle.
2. Identify characteristics of individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations specific to rural environments.
3. Utilize clear and professional oral and written communication skills to discuss knowledge of research and relevant literature related to rurality and rural social work practice.
4. Discuss and critically evaluate special issues related to social work values and ethics involved in working with rural people and rural communities.
5. Explain the nature of generalist and advanced generalist rural social work practice as a method for service delivery for systems of all sizes.
6. Demonstrate understanding of the interconnections among human rights and social and economic justice in terms of rural customs, traditions, heritage, and culture and the impact on systems of all sizes.
7. Demonstrate understanding of how cultural diversity and difference shape the human experience and are critical in the formation of identity.

V. INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD

This course will utilize several methods of instruction, including lectures, class discussion, exercises, guest lecturers, audio/visual media, and the use of technology, including assignments and testing using myCourses. In order to complete some of the class assignments, students will need to use the Internet and myCourses.

Section 501 (online delivery) of this course will deliver all materials through MyCourses, including lectures.

In order to be successful in this class, it is important that students attend regularly, read the assigned material, and come to class prepared to discuss what they have read. Students are expected to be active learners, to not expect that each reading will be summarized in class, and to ask for clarification when they have questions.

Section 501 (online delivery) of this course also requires that the students participate regularly. While quizzes and assignments are available online and do not required on-site participation, they require participation in discussions, chats, assignments and assessments.
VI. COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS (per SFA Office of Instructional Technology)

This course will utilize Blackboard (myCourses) to support the delivery of course content (for help with Blackboard go to http://www.oit.sfasu.edu/webct/index.html). You will need basic skills regarding the use of a word processor and web browser. You must have access to a computer that meets the university’s minimum computer system requirements (for specific details go to http://sfaonline.sfasu.edu/gettingstarted.html). Computers are available to you through a number of labs across campus (see www.sfasu.edu or the instructor for details).

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VII. COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Material covered</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/28</td>
<td>Orientation 5:00 p.m. Steen Library Infolab 1</td>
<td>What is Rural? rural theories/social capital; rural websites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>1/20-1/29</td>
<td>Rural definitions, (OMB, U.S. Census, ERS);</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Ginsberg: pp. ix-14; web sites for Module I</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>Online orientation due; PowerPoint about you Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>2/1-2/6</td>
<td>Theories related to rural issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>2/8-2/13</td>
<td>Rural Definitions, Continued; applications of definitions and finding rurality of specific locations. Applications to health and mental health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Office of Rural Health Policy: counties eligible for rural health funding
ERS Briefing: What is Rural (also examine continuum codes linked from that page)
The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health: Rural Subcommittee Report
http://www.rupri.org
Rural Policy Research Institute---there are many articles, publications, presentations and resources available through this site
http://www.rupri.org/editorial/
Editorials on rural issues by Thomas Rowley
http://www.raconline.org
Rural Assistance Center--valuable source of information for rural funding, publications, etc.
http://www.ers.usda.gov
The ERS publishes many reports on rural America (search with keyword "rural")

2/13
Chat 1, 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Week 5
2/17
Module I Quiz

Week 6
2/22-2/27
Rural people
Readings

2/26
Scavenger Hunt for extra points

Week 7
3/1-3/6
Rural culture, values ethical considerations in rural communities
2/24
Discussions due
Readings

Week 8
3/10
Module II Quiz

Week 9
3/15-3/27
Rural social work practice (and spring break)
Readings

Week 10
3/29-4/3
Rural social work practice: assessment, intervention and evaluation practices for rural populations and systems of all sizes;
Readings
Scales & Streeter pp. 7-360.

Week 11
4/5-4/10
Application to Child Welfare in Rural Communities
4/5
Discussion 2
Readings
Child Welfare pp. 737 - 772; 791-819; Rural Standards (CWLA—see learning modules)

Week 12
4/14
Assignment I due

Week 13
4/19-4/24
Integration definitions, theory and practice: no readings; web links

Week 14
4/28
Assignment II due

Week 15
5/12
Final Exam
VIII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Class Attendance and Participation: In order for the class to discuss the readings, it is essential for you to read assigned material before coming to class, to attend class (or online classes) regularly, and to participate in class discussions. You are responsible for all material covered in class and assigned in the syllabus, whether or not you have attended class.

Cell Phones/Pagers/Electronic Devices: Because such devices are disruptive to the classroom environment, I ask that you refrain from using them during class. I also ask that you either place such devices on silent mode or turn them off during class. Repeated interruptions may result in a deduction of points from the final average.

B. Readings: The course outline provides a list of required readings for each week (you will receive a detailed schedule the first full week of class that will outline the readings to be covered each class). Since lectures and class discussions are designed to answer questions about the material and expand upon the basic concepts, you are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class. Furthermore, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the information, as evidenced by active participation in class discussion. For example, you should present well formulated questions and comments that demonstrate prior preparation.

C. Exams: There will be one final exam. Students are required to take the exam at the scheduled time. Makeup exams will be scheduled according to university policy with a university-approved excuse.

D. Quizzes/Exercises: There will be unannounced class exercises. Students are required to participate in the exercises at the scheduled time. Makeup exercises will be scheduled according to university policy with a university-approved excuse.

E. Assignments/Presentations: See Assignments for a listing of all assignments for this course. All assignments are due at the beginning of each class, unless the assignment is a class presentation which will be due in class. For all late assignments, one letter grade will be deducted after the beginning of class when the assignment is due, with an additional letter grade deduction for each day for which the assignment is late.
GRADING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 module Quizzes @ 30 pts. each</td>
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<td>60 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Discussions @ 10 pts.(on definitions of rural)</td>
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<td>20 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Chats @ 10 pts. each (to see how things are going);</td>
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<td>30 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment I: Cultural Competence Powerpoint @ 40 pts.</td>
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<td>30 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment II: Paper @ 80 pts.</td>
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<td>80 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Assessment (Final Exam) @ 80 pts.</td>
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<td>70 pts.</td>
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300 pts. Total

GRADING SCALE:

A = 270-300
B = 240-269
C = 210-239
D = 180-209
F = 179 or less

Academic Integrity (SFASU Policy A-9.1)

Honesty and representing one’s knowledge and abilities appropriately are important ethical principles of the social work profession. All violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will be addressed in accordance with SFASU Policy A-9.1 (SFASU Policy A-9.1 can be found at the web address below). All incidents will result in a grade of “0”. Given the limited number of graded assignments in this course, a “0” could have serious consequences for the student’s academic standing.

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**IX. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS AND DISABILITIES**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.
RECOMMENDED READINGS


