STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
MSW PROGRAM
F 4:00 pm – 6:30 pm (Woodlands/Lone Star College)

SWK 5301
Introduction to the Social Work Profession
Fall 2020
Instructor: Barbara V. Rivas, LCSW-S
Office location: Livestream/Online
Email Address: rivashv@sfasu.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment Only
Prerequisite: Graduate Standing
Co-requisite: None

COURSE SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to introduce graduate students to the profession of social work. Students will be able to use cognitive and affective processes to reflect on all aspects of the social work profession. They will learn the knowledge, values and skills of the social work profession. Students will develop a holistic view and will be able to demonstrate competence of knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes. This includes the application of critical thinking, identification of affective reactions and ability to exercise judgement.

This course will provide students with an overview of the social work profession including the definition of social work, characteristics of the profession, and the historical context for the development of professional social work, as well as social work professional associations and organizations. Emphasis is placed on learning, understanding, and applying social work values and ethics with diverse populations at risk including individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations.

The course will also provide students with an introduction to the social work knowledge base. The topics that will be included are critical thinking, scientific reasoning, and the knowledge base for strengths-based Generalist and Advanced Generalist social work practice.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


The MSW program of SFASU features a generalist practice and a single specialization/specialized practice: Advanced Generalist Practice in a Rural Context. Both are 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 grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.

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.

Advanced generalist practice builds on the generalist practice, 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 engage and differentially assess complex problems with systems of all sizes, with a variety of advanced assessment skills.
- Specialized evidence-based interventions with systems of all sizes.
- Differential evaluation techniques with systems of all sizes.
- Strategies to advocate for clients and constituencies influenced by rural lifestyles.
- 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 interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary practice settings; professional development.

The specialized practice for the MSW program is advanced generalist practice for rural contexts. Theories that describe and predict rural ecological systems and rural strengths, including the incredibly rich interactions, simple and complex, formal and informal, wholesome and debilitating are emphasized. On this basis, the curriculum of the MSW Program emphasizes the ecological
systems approach, the strengths perspective, and the social capital and social exchange theories.

**Rural context** refers to social work practice with people with rural lifestyles and systems of all sizes within and outside of rural communities. There is no single accepted definition of rural. In fact, just as generalist practice in social work draws on multiple theories, generalist practice in rural contexts recognizes the many definitions currently in use and their advantages and disadvantages for research, practice, and advocacy. The School of Social Work at SFA utilizes several of these definitions within the United States and globally including:

*The United States Census Bureau* (urbanized areas, urban clusters, and rural populations); *Office of Management and Budget* (metropolitan, micropolitan, and non-core), *Economic Research Service* (rural urban continuum codes); and *the United Nations* that defines urban and rural according to the census definition for each nation, but suggests a definition of rural areas as having a population of less than 2,000 for international comparisons.

### III. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (CSWE CORE COMPETENCIES)

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

### IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: SLO)

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

1. Describe the profession’s history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. (Competency 1)
2. Identify the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. (Competency 1)
3. Describe the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. (Competency 1)
4. Discuss emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. (Competency 1)

5. Describe the value base of the social work profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. (Competency 1)

6. Understand the dimensions of diversity as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability, and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spiritually, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. (Competency 2)

7. Understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations. (Competency 3)

8. Understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. (Competency 4)

9. Recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values.

10. Describe how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. (Competency 1)

11. Apply the knowledge related to social, economic, and environmental justice in advocating for human rights at the individual and system levels. (Competency 3)

12. Understand the social worker role in policy development and implementation within practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. (Competency 5)

13. Understand the difference between generalist and specialized practice. (Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

14. Understand inter-professional and collaborative practice. (Competencies 1 & 8)

V. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This is a face to face or hybrid class that will involve instructional supported learning. Content will be delivered both face to face (F2F) and via D2L. Methods of instruction will be based on active learning theories that will involve lecture by instructor, guest lecture, student discussion and presentations, small group activities and audio-visual presentations. Class discussions will add to and supplement the reading assignments and be based on the topics presented in the course materials. To be successful in the class, it is important that students take responsibility for their own academic performance, be active learners, read the assigned material, complete all assignments and respond to feedback. The course is organized into weekly learning sessions where students will be able to find the information to read and learn each week from assigned readings,
class lecture and group exercises. PDF files and links to articles will be provided when available. Some content will be enhanced with online material and some examination may also take place online.

VI. COVID-19 MASK POLICY
Masks (cloth face coverings) must be worn over the nose and mouth at all times in this class and appropriate physical distancing must be observed. Students not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be asked to leave the class. All incidents of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students who are reported for multiple infractions of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing may be subject to disciplinary actions.

[Links to CDC guidelines]


VII. COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS (per SFA Office of Instructional Technology)

This course will utilize the SFA online product D2L (Desire to Learn) to support the delivery of course content – see the Center for Teaching and Learning for support when necessary. 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://www.sfasu.edu/sfaonline/consider.asp). Computers are available to you through a number of labs across campus (see www.sfasu.edu or the instructor for details).

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1  Introduction to the course
          The Social Work Profession
          Definitions of Social Work
          Definitions of Social Welfare
          Generalist and Specialized Practice (Overview)
          The Professional Social Worker
          Becoming a Social Worker
          Membership Associations for Social Workers
          Purpose and Values of the Social Work Profession
          Ethics in Social Work Practice
          Technology and Social Work Practice
          Inter-professional Collaboration in Social Work
          Theories and Practice Frameworks (Overview)
          Review of Course Syllabus, Requirements, and Assignments.
          Grand Challenges of Social Work
          Rural Contexts
          Global Perspectives
          Readings:
          Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 1
Week 2  **Social Welfare: A System’s Responses to Personal Issues and Public Problems**
- Respect and Dignity in Social Work
- Social, Economic and Environmental Justice
- Social Welfare
- Residual Social Welfare
- Institutional Social Welfare
- Public Social Welfare (Federal, State and Local Welfare)
- Social Work in the Social Welfare System

*Readings:*
*Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 2*

Week 3  **History and Professionalization of Social Work**
- The Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601
- Colonial America
- Nineteenth Century Reform Efforts
- Charity Organization Societies
- Settlement House Movement
- Freedmen’s Bureau
- Social Reform in the 1960’s
- 1980s & 1990s: A Return to the Work Ethic
- Compassionate Conservatism: The New Millennium
- International Social Work History

*Readings:*
*Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 3*

Week 4  **Generalist Practice**
- Definition of Generalist Practice
- Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive and Affective Processes
- Systems: Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities
- Impact of Rural Lifestyles on Systems
- Planned Change
- Engagement, Assessment, Intervention, Evaluation
- The Generalist Intervention Model
- Social Work Roles
- Social work Functions
- Evidence-based Practice
- Difference between Generalist and Specialized Practice
- Social Work Careers and Practice Settings
- Social Work Licensure
- Importance of Continued Education and Professional Development

*Readings:*
*Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 4, 5 and 6*
*Kirst-Ashman, K.K., and Hull, Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7*
Week 5 **Generalist Practice**

Definition of Generalist Practice  
Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive and Affective Processes  
Systems: Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities  
Impact of Rural Lifestyles on Systems  
Planned Change  
Engagement, Assessment, Intervention, Evaluation  
The Generalist Intervention Model  
Social Work Roles  
Social Work Functions  
Evidence-based Practice  
Difference between Generalist and Specialized Practice  
Social Work Careers and Practice Settings  
Social Work Licensure  
Importance of Continued Education  
**Readings:**  
*Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 4, 5 and 6*  
*Kirst-Ashman, K.K., and Hull, Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7*  

Week 6 **Generalist Practice**

Definition of generalist practice  
Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive and Affective Processes  
Systems: Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities  
Impact of Rural Lifestyles on Systems  
Planned Change  
Engagement, Assessment, Intervention, Evaluation  
The Generalist Intervention Model  
Social Work Roles  
Social Work Functions  
Evidence-based Practice  
Difference between Generalist and Specialized Practice  
Social Work Careers and Practice Settings  
Social Work Licensure  
Importance of Continued Education  
**Readings:**  
*Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 4, 5 and 6*  
*Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2017) - Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7*  

Week 7 **Overview of Theories and Practice Frameworks in Social Work**

Understanding Theories and Practice Frameworks in Social Work  
Critical Thinking  
Theory Integration  
Systems Theory  
Person-in-the-Environment  
Community Practice Theories
Empowerment Theories
Ecological Perspective
Psychodynamic Theories
Organization Theories
Theories of Life Span Development
Behaviorisms, Social Learning and Cognitive Theories

Readings:
Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda. (2006) – Chapters 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 14

Week 9 Diversity and Difference in Practice
Diversity in the United States
Historic and Current Discrimination
Diversity – Age, Class, Color, Culture, Disability and Ability, Ethnicity, Gender
Identity and Expression, Sexual Orientation, Immigration Status, Marital Status
Oppression
Marginalization and Alienation
Privilege
Power
Acclaim
Diversity in a Global Context
Cognitive and Affective Processes Specific to Life Experiences
Knowledge, Values and Skills Specific to Diversity and Difference in Practice

Readings:
Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 6
Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2017) – Chapter 12

Week 10 Diversity and Difference in Practice
Diversity in the United States
Historic and Current discrimination
Diversity – Age, Class, Color, Culture, Disability and Ability, Ethnicity, Gender
Identity and Expression, Sexual Orientation, Immigration Status, Marital Status
Oppression
Marginalization and Alienation
Privilege
Power
Acclaim
Diversity in a Global Context
Cognitive and Affective Processes Specific to Life Experiences
Knowledge, Values and Skills Specific to Diversity and Difference in Practice

Readings:
Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 6
Kirst-Ashman and Hull (2017) – Chapter 12
Week 11  Settings for Social Work Practice
Poverty and Income Maintenance
Child Welfare Services
Older Adults
Readings:
Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13

Week 12  Settings for Social Work Practice (PART III of Colby)
Health Care
Mental health
Domestic Violence
Veterans
Readings:
Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13

Week 13 Settings for Social Work Practice Social Work Advocacy
Advocacy and Human Rights, Social Justice, Economical and Environmental Justice
Politics and Social Work
Social Work Values and Political Activity
Historical Activity by Social Workers
Readings:
Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 13

Week 14 Global Social Work
Trends in Global Social Work
Definition of International Social Welfare
International Social Welfare Associations
United Nations
U.S Government Agencies
Private Voluntary Bodies
International Professional Social Welfare Organizations
  IFSW
  IASSW
  International Council on Social Welfare
International NASW and CSWE Initiatives
Readings:
Colby and Dziegielewski (2016) – Chapter 14

Week 15 Social Work Accreditation
Definition of Accreditation
Council of Social Work Education (CSWE)
  Accreditation
    Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) 2015
International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)
International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)
Week 16: Final Exam

IX. 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 regularly, and to participate in class discussion. 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 announced and 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:

COURSE GRADES will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance/participation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quizzes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment I: The Profession of Social Work</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment II: Grand Challenges for Social Work</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale:

The earned points will be averaged and a letter grade assigned as follows:

- A = 400-360
- B = 359-320
- C = 319-280
- D = 279-240*
- F = 239 or less*

*Not applicable as credit toward graduate degree

X. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members must promote the components of academic integrity in their instruction, and course syllabi are required to provide information about penalties for cheating and plagiarism, as well as the appeal process. Definition of Academic Dishonesty Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam;
- falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment;
- helping or attempting to help other student(s) in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, resubmission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university. Procedure for Addressing Student Academic Dishonesty a faculty
member who has evidence and/or suspects that academic dishonesty has occurred will gather all pertinent information and initiate the following procedure:

1. The faculty member will discuss all evidence of cheating or plagiarism directly with the student(s) involved.

2. After consideration of the explanation provided by the student(s), the faculty member will determine whether academic dishonesty has occurred. The faculty member may consult with the academic unit head and/or dean in making a decision.

3. After a determination of academic dishonesty, the faculty member will inform the academic unit head and submit a Report of Academic Dishonesty with supporting documentation to the office of the dean of the student’s major. This report will become part of the student's record and will remain on file with the dean's office for at least four years even if the student withdraws prior to receiving a grade.

4. For a serious first offense or subsequent offenses, the dean of the student’s major will determine a course of action, which may include dismissal from the university. The dean may refer the case to the college council for review and recommendations before making this determination.

A student's record of academic dishonesty will not be available to faculty members. The purpose of the record is for the dean to track a pattern of academic dishonesty during a student's academic career at Stephen F. Austin State University. Student Appeals A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Academic Appeals by Students (6.3). http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (SFA Policy 5.5)
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. Please read the complete policy on grades:
http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/5.5_course-grades.pdf

Acceptable Student Behavior
The MSW Student Handbook and Academic and MSW Professional Integrity Code outline acceptable student behavior. Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct of Conduct (SFA Policy 10.4). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, visits to agencies, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate or inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed. Please see the following link for the complete policy:
http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student-code-of-conduct_10.4.pdf
XI. STUDENTS WITH 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, 468-1004 (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/policies/academic-accomodation-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf

Assignment I: The Social Work Profession

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate your understanding of social work as a profession. Reflect on the history of social work, the fact that it is a profession, and the importance of guiding standards (refer to EPAS 2015 as well as NASW and IASSW Codes of Ethics). The assignment focuses on cognitive and affective processes. Make sure you apply reflection and critical thinking skills in your discussions. Make use of class discussions, readings and additional self-study material in you discussion.

The assignment requires you to demonstrate beginning proficiency in professional writing. The paper should be professionally written, include appropriate references (a minimum of 5 peer-reviewed articles). Follow American Psychological Association (APA) reference style. Use the 2nd print of the 6th edition.

Date Due: To Be Determined
Points:
Assignment II:

Select two of the Grand Challenges for Social Work. Explain how the two grand challenges relate to social work in a rural context including how systems are impacted by rural lifestyles.

1) Select 5 articles specific to each of the two grand challenges (10 articles in total). Give a comprehensive description of each of the two grand challenges - using the articles. Your description should include recent statistics and demographics, realities for rural people and communities, availability of resources, and strategies which have worked/not worked in the past

2) Explain how the Grand Challenges are relevant to rural context and systems impacted by a rural lifestyle

3) Explain how the Grand Challenges are related to human rights, social, environmental and economic justice

4) Describe how the social work profession can address the two selected grand challenges. Include issues such as advocacy, inter-professional collaboration and the problem-solving process.

The paper must be 10 pages, one and a half spacing, 10 articles minimum. Your ability to apply critical thinking should be evident in your discussion. Please use APA format.

Date Due:  To Be Determined
Points:
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES


Gray, M., & Gibbons, J. (2007). There are no answers, only choices: Teaching ethical decision making in social work. *Australian Social Work, 60*(2), 222-238.


Murdach, A. (). Does American social work have a progressive tradition? *Social Work, 55*, 1, 82-89.


