

Humboldt State University
Department of Social Work

Introduction to Social Work Methods

SW 340

Fall 2007
Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00pm-3:20pm
Library 55
Lab: Tuesdays *or* Thursdays, 3:30pm-4:50pm
Siemens Hall 117

Instructor: Ronnie Swartz
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Office Hours:
Mondays, 11:00am-1:00pm
Tuesdays, 11:30am-1:30pm

Course Description

This first course in the social work methods sequence introduces the student to the application of generalist social work practice. Processes and strategies for relationship building, assuming a collaborative partnership, describing problems, assessing resources, developing plans, and evaluating progress with people are emphasized. A strengths perspective is stressed with a focus on work with individuals, families, and groups. There is considerable opportunity for self-reflection in relation to the development of one's practice.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and utilize strength-based perspectives for beginning social work practice.
2. Reflect on personal and cultural values, assumptions, attitudes, skills and strengths in order to develop a professional use of self for beginning practice purposes.
3. Apply the values, ethics, and legal responsibilities required of professional social workers to their beginning practice.
4. Demonstrate beginning competence in generalist practice processes related to relationship building, assuming a collaborative partnership, describing problems, assessing resources, developing plans, and evaluating progress, with particular emphasis on work with individuals, families, and groups.
5. Evaluate their own practice skill development and offer supportive consultation to others at a beginning level.
6. Utilize current research regarding effective practice methodology at a beginning level.
7. Appreciate diverse conceptions of health, wellness, and methods of change.
8. Demonstrate beginning mindfulness regarding practice challenges related to differences in privilege and power.

Required Texts

Saleebey, D. (Ed.). (2005). *The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice, Fourth Edition*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Other readings may be assigned throughout the course.

Activities

Your grade for the course will be based on three activities and your class engagement for a total of 100 “units”.

Personal History Paper (25 “units”)

Write a “personal history” paper exploring the past, present, and future of your life story. While you may feel compelled to spend most of your time reflecting on the first question, you really ought to be reflecting and writing on *all of* the following questions:

- Who are some people that have played major roles in helping you to develop the worldview you have used to understand your self, the world, and your place in the world? How did they do this?
- Which of these people’s qualities do you carry with you and what have you chosen to leave behind?
- How has your worldview shifted over time, or how do you think it may shift in the future?
- What experiences have played major roles in constituting your worldview?
- What challenges have you overcome, are you overcoming, and do you see yourself overcoming?
- How do your unique life experiences influence your judgments about other people’s life experiences?
- How will your experiences in life influence the way you engage in social work practice?
- In what ways have this class, other classes you are taking, and other experiences you are currently involved in, contributed to the direction of your life?

This paper should be *about 4 pages*. Due September 27.

Dialogue on Race (20 “units”)

Lab time will be made during the Campus Dialogue on Race for you to attend events. You will then prepare a reflection related to social work practice based on the activities you attend. Due November 13.

Comprehensive Assessment and Initial Service Plan (40 “units”)

In the last week of class I will show a video about a young person and her family. After watching and listening to the story you will get together with other members of the class to talk about what you saw and heard in relation to the social work methods covered in this course. You will then write a paper on your own that addresses general and specific comprehensive assessment and initial service plan questions related to hypothetical work with this young woman.

You will need to cite specific pages/passages of the texts you read for this class to support your ideas. The paper should be around 7 pages, not including a genogram and an ecogram. Due December 11.

Engagement (15 “units”)

This beginning practice course is constructed to provide conceptual and interactive skill development through the consistent presence and participation of each student. The nature of developing social work practice skills in the class and the laboratory settings will require your consciousness to be thoughtful of others as well as yourself. You are valued as an important part of your classmates’ learning experiences. Relationship building deepens with consistent presence and the opportunities for honest exchange. Peer feedback is a critical component of evaluating and reflecting on one’s development.

The goal of a laboratory setting is to create a safe and supportive environment to take risks and cultivate an authentic presence in the learning process of beginning social work practice skills. Each lab group has an opportunity to support one another’s growth in unique and diverse ways that can mirror the same processes one experiences with others in the social work field.

“Engagement” refers to how present you are during the time we spend together. It relates to attendance and punctuality, certainly, but even more it requires your critical reflection on the material, mindfulness of your own life experiences in relation to the life experiences of your comrades, your willingness to speak when it might be uncomfortable to do so, and the presence of mind to remain silent when it might allow for the creation of new possibilities for someone else.

Much more importantly than relating to a grade, poor attendance in both class and lab may provide insufficient preparation for the spring methods course. Because of this, *you will not be able to pass the class if you miss more than 5 lectures or 3 labs.*

Final grades for the course will be determined by the total number of “units” according to the following table:

94 – 100	= A	73 – 76	= C
90 – 93	= A-	70 – 72	= C-
87 - 89	= B+	67 – 69	= D+
83 – 86	= B	63 – 66	= D
80 – 82	= B-	<63	= F
77 – 79	= C+		

While undergraduate credit can be awarded for a grade of “D” or better, the BSW program requires students to get a grade of “C” or better in required courses. A student receiving a grade below “C” in a required course will be required to retake that course. Because courses are not offered every semester this may result in a student not being able to move forward in his/her academic plan. This may result in a delay of up to a year in moving forward.

I prefer to have all written activities be *single-spaced*, with standard 12 point Times New Roman font, and standard margins (1" top and bottom, 1¼" left and right). This format saves paper and is easy for me to read. If you can do this, great. If not, so be it, but *account for this when you write your paper*. In the end, please concern yourself more with content than length... a little bit shorter or a little bit longer is just fine if that's what it takes to convey your thoughts. Written activities can be emailed to me as attachments at swartz@humboldt.edu if you'd like. Unless you make alternate arrangements with me I will consider the lateness of your activity in generating the number of "units" you will receive for the activity. Late activities make things difficult for me as I have budgeted my time to address student work according to a specific schedule. I cannot, therefore, guarantee that a late paper will be reviewed with enough time for you to make revisions.

When you make reference in written documents to any ideas or "facts" that are not your own or "common knowledge" you've got to—I mean really got to—cite your sources. If you are not familiar with generally accepted approaches to citing sources, you can find some guidelines by searching the internet for "APA Guidelines."

Please contact me as soon as you can to let me know if there are disability-related issues that may come up in the course of this class that I can accommodate. The HSU Student Disability Resource Center can be reached at (707)826-4678 to assist with documented disabilities.

HSU Policies

You are expected to adhere to all of Humboldt State University's Policies, especially:

- Academic Honesty
- Nondiscrimination Policy
- Rights and Responsibilities for a Campus Community

These can be located at the beginning of your course catalog.

Note: Unless otherwise noted, all labs will focus on conversations in relation to the week's issue(s) and/or practice skills development.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Reading for the day</u>
August 21	Introductions	
August 23	Narratives vs. cases	SW340: Introduction to Social Work Methods Syllabus White, M. & Epston, D., (1990). A Storied Therapy. From Chapter 3 in Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends. New York: Norton. 77-84.
August 28	Talking, listening and hearing	Chapter 1 (pp. 1-24), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
August 30		Chapter 2 (pp. 25-45), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
September 4	Resistance	Chapter 12 (pp. 221-240), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
September 6		
September 11	Graphing/Gramming	Armstrong, M. (2006). Techniques for Assessing Social Support. <i>Focal Point</i> 20(1). 19-22.
September 13	Codes & laws	National Association of Social Workers. (1999). <i>Code of Ethics</i> . Washington, D.C.: NASW Press. Available at www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/code.asp
September 18	Professionalism	Grealish, M. & Davis, S. (2004). Ethics & Professional Conduct: A Story About Perceptions and Boundaries. <i>The Wraparound Newsletter</i> , 2(2). Available at www.wraparoundsolutions.com/contact/news-vol2-iss2/newsletterpg1.htm Author unknown. (2004). Where are the Boundaries?: Issues for Facilitators and Other Staff to Resolve. <i>The Wraparound Newsletter</i> , 2(2). Available at www.wraparoundsolutions.com/contact/news-vol2-iss2/newsletterpg2.htm McGlone, M. (2004). It Depends.... <i>The Wraparound Newsletter</i> , 2(2). Available at www.wraparoundsolutions.com/contact/news-vol2-iss2/newsletterpg5.htm Hafters, D. & Smith, J. (2005). Ethics Column #2. <i>The Wraparound Newsletter</i> , 3(2).

September 20	De-centering	Chapter 10 (pp. 171-196), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
September 25	Power	Chapter 3 (pp. 46-60), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
September 27		**Personal History Paper due**
October 2		Chapter 9 (pp. 148-170), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
October 4	Possibilities	
October 9		Chapter 5 (pp. 77-92), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
October 11	Relationships	Chapter 4, <i>Strength-Based Generalist Practice</i>
October 16		Chapter 5, <i>Strength-Based Generalist Practice</i>
October 18	Assessments and discoveries	Chapter 6, <i>Strength-Based Generalist Practice</i>
October 23		Chapter 6 (pp. 93-115), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
October 25	Planning	Chapter 7 (pp. 116-127), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
October 30		Swartz, R. (2002). The Essence of Wraparound. Swartz, R. (2004). Narrative Work in Public Social Services through Wraparound Planning. <i>Journal of Systemic Therapies</i> , 23(2), 51-67.
November 1	Coordinating	Dalder, G. (2006). Wraparound and Natural Supports: Common Practice Challenges and Promising Coaching Solutions. <i>Focal Point</i> 20(1). 26-28. Chapter 8 (pp. 128-147), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
November 6	Doing the work	Chapter 7, <i>Strength-Based Generalist Practice</i>
November 8		Chapter 11 (pp. 197-220), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
November 13		**Dialogue on Race activity due**
November 15		

November 20, 22	NO CLASS	
November 27	Putting it all together	Chapter 14 (pp. 261-278), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
November 29		Chapter 15 (pp. 279-303), <i>The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice</i>
December 4	End of the semester activity	
December 6	End of the semester activity continued	

****December 11 – Comprehensive Assessment and Initial Service Plan due by 12:00pm (noon)****