

**SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SW110: Foundations of Social Work Practice**  
(Course Code: 41370; Section 2)

Fall 2009

INSTRUCTOR: Ruth Jacobsen, MSW, LCSW

Class Meeting Time: Thurs., 9am-11:45am

Classroom Location: Boccardo Business Center Rm 126

Office Location: WSQ 217F

Office Hours: Thurs. 8am-9am  
or by appointment

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**Catalog Description**

Introduction to the history, mission, values, skills and knowledge base of generalist social work practice within a transcultural perspective. Focus on social work practice with emphasis on those populations at-risk who are disenfranchised and marginalized. (Three units).

**Co- or Pre-requisite: ScWk 110 is a prerequisite or co-requisite for ScWk 140**

**Course Description**

This course provides a conceptual framework for generalist social work practice and an overview of the BASW curriculum. The primary focus of this course is to introduce foundation knowledge necessary for effective interventions. This course is geared to raise the student's self-awareness, assertiveness, understanding of social work values and ethics, promotion of social and economic justice, and appreciation for diversity. The course will emphasize a strengths perspective to the problem-solving process of empowering the most vulnerable persons, groups and communities to address their concerns. The experience of diverse populations and populations at risk, including women, gays, lesbians, the transgendered, the disenfranchised, oppressed and marginalized groups and the poor will be emphasized.

**Learning Objectives**

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

1. Understand social work values and ethics by identifying core values central to the profession and how these are manifested in practice.  
Program Objectives: B1.3 (Values/Ethics)
2. Have knowledge of social work history and traditional social work methods and describe how these interact in generalist social work practice.  
Program Objectives: B3.3 (History)

3. Have the ability to understand the generalist approach within a problem-solving and transcultural perspective and describe the various roles assumed by social workers as change agents at the micro, mezzo and macro levels.  
Program Objectives: B1.1 (Transcultural model) B2.4 (Practice knowledge & skills)
4. Understand the use of self in relationship with others and foster use of self as an intervention method by being able to identify personal background, values, tendencies and skills that may or may not be helpful in social work practice.  
Program Objectives: B2.2 (Self-evaluation)
5. Have beginning cultural competence with diverse populations and populations at risk by understanding and defining the issues faced by these populations.  
Program Objectives: B1.2 (Diversity); B2.4 (Practice Knowledge & Skills)
6. Have knowledge of community and organizational systems that have historically shaped and defined the field of social welfare and the profession of social work.  
Program Objectives: B3.3 (History); B3.4 (Organizations/Agency)
7. Use critical thinking as a means to understand social work practice.  
Program Objectives: B4.1 (Critical Thinking)
8. Have knowledge of the need to promote social and economic justice by understanding the effect of oppressive conditions and discriminatory practices as they relate to ethnicity, gender, disabilities, and sexual orientation.  
Program Objectives: B1.2 (Diversity); B3.1 (Power, Privilege, Oppression)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Learning Experiences:**

Lectures, small group discussion, videotapes and student presentations are the primary teaching methods utilized to present an overview of generalist social work practice at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. Course assignments include 1) personal perspectives, 2) social history, 3) fields of practice group assignment and oral presentation, and 4) a final exam. The experiential nature of this course will provide students with an opportunity to participate directly in the learning process by acting as both a contributor to and recipient of knowledge.

### **Grading and Evaluation:**

Class Participation	10%
Assignment 1: Personal Perspectives	15%
Assignment 2: Social History	20%
Assignment 3: Fields of Practice Group Assignment and Oral Presentation	30%
Final Exam	25%
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Total	100%

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

98–100	A+	87–89	B+	77–79	C+	67–69	D+	0–59	F
93–97	A	83–86	B	73–76	C	63–66	D		
90–92	A-	80–82	B-	70–72	C-	60–62	D-		

### **Late Assignments:**

It is your responsibility to submit assignments on time. If you are unable to submit an assignment by the date and time indicated on this syllabus (or announced in class), you must discuss your situation with me at least 48 hours prior to the time the assignment is due. If you submit an assignment after the due date and time without discussing with me, 10% of the total assignment point value will be deducted automatically. For example, if an assignment is worth 25 points, 2.5 points will be deducted prior to grading. Another 10% of the total grade will be deducted for each additional week, or fraction thereof, that the assignment is late. You can avoid the late deduction(s) by planning ahead and contacting me to make alternative arrangements.

### **Class Participation:**

Students will be responsible for completing the readings assigned prior to each scheduled class. Students are expected to be actively involved in the role-play experiences that will take place. Your grade will be in response to the following: punctuality; respecting and encouraging the opinions of your peers, even if they do not represent your own; speaking up when you have a point to make, a question, a disagreement; willingness to participate in role play experiences; demonstrated ability to give and accept feedback; being prepared to actively work with your colleagues. Social work is a verbal profession, thus being verbally involved in class discussions, activities, and your ability to share how your personal learning experience is evolving will be evaluated. Please respect the instructor and your colleagues - *turn off* ringers on cell phones, pagers, etc., before class begins.

## **Course Assignments:**

### ***Assignment 1: Personal Perspectives***

Based on the first few weeks of course material, lecture, readings, and a lifetime of living and self-knowledge, students will articulate a personal perspective on social work practice. This perspective should be approximately 1-2 type-written pages and will address the following content areas:

The student should describe:

1. What is one disfunction you struggle with, now or in the past?
2. What do you think is the root or cause of this issue for you?
3. What is the patterned behavior that you use to lower your stress?
4. Do you see this patterned behavior as a weakness or strength?
5. What was it like to address this issue in a paper?

To assist the student in understanding what a client experiences when asked to address issues in his or her family, a section should be devoted to describing what it was like to think about and analyze one's own social functioning.

### ***Assignment 2: Social History\****

The social worker is to prepare a typed 1-2 pages highly factual and detailed social assessment report on a classmate, relative, friend, roommate, acquaintance. You are required to work with the two degrees of separation rule: 1) The person should be of a different race and 2) have one other significant difference from you (language, gender, etc). The information in this report should **justify** your final impressions and inferences. The report should use the following headings:

1. Identifying Information: (birth date, occupation, race, religion, marital status, height, weight, home address, phone) You may change the name and vitals to protect someone's privacy.
2. Family Background and Early History: School performance, Employment history  
Marital/Relationship History
3. Natural Support Network: (significant relationships and nature of involvement).
4. Physical Environment: (housing situation, financial stability, transportation resources, neighborhood).
5. Important Life Events: (situation and client's response to deaths of significant others, serious losses or traumas, significant life achievements, family dysfunctions, other events).
6. Religion and Social Activities: (denominations, church membership, extent of involvement, spiritual perspective, special observances).
7. Prior Contacts with Helping Agencies (all agencies or counseling etc.)

8. Impressions and Assessment: What are the issues, dysfunction or behaviors in this case? Where in the HX are they explained? What is the evidence that support your impressions and assessment of the situation?

**\*Before you conduct an interview, you should obtain an interviewee's permission.**

### ***Assignment 3: Fields of Practice Group Assignment and Oral Presentation***

Each group (3-4 students) will present information on one of the practice fields (Child Welfare, Health, Juvenile Justice, Mental Health, Rehabilitation/Disabilities, Aging, Emergency/Crisis Services, Drug/Alcohol, Education/Schools). Once each group selects one of the practice fields, the group will arrange an interview with a social work professional at a social service agency.

Each group also will **submit a portfolio**. This is an organized notebook containing: 1) typed minutes of your group's meetings, including who attended, contributions of each member, 2) at least three journal articles as references to support your project (i.e., references to support the historical perspective or current issues), and 3) a brochure of the agency you interviewed. All portfolios will be turned in at the time of the presentation. The following areas should be covered in your portfolio and presentation:

1. Historical perspective (when was the field first defined, has the definition of the problem changed over time?)
2. Differing political perspectives on this problem area (what is the nature of the problem from different perspectives, what is the dominant view in the US at this time?)
3. Current issues and trends (what are the relevant issues in the field, what trends appear likely in the future?)
4. Practice implications for social workers (what are the common roles of the social worker in this field of practice, what are the most common practice settings/agencies, what practice methods are used most by social workers in this field?)

Each group will present their agency interview in class either during Week 11 or Week 12. Approximately 20 minutes will be allotted per group for presentation and questions. Groups are expected to provide handouts and/or materials on the agency's services for fellow students and a one page outline of the presentation for the instructor. Consider this a professional presentation. Remember to speak slowly and clearly.

Each member of the group will submit separately, one page personal reflection on their experience in the group. Answering these three questions: 1) What worked or went well for the group? 2) In what way did the group dynamics or anything not work for you? 3) Give a detailed description of what you would do differently to improve the group? **There should be no mention of scheduling problems, location problems or that there were no problems.**

### ***Final Exam***

The final exam will cover all class material (i.e., from lectures, class discussions and required readings) for the entire semester. The exam may include any or all of the following: multiple choice, matching, true/false, and essay questions. There may be one in class exam.

### **APA Format and Writing Requirements:**

All papers must follow current American Psychological Association (APA) format guidelines (5th edition) with the following exceptions: *the use of running heads is optional*. All papers must use standard, 12-point fonts (e.g., Times Roman) and be free of typographical, formatting, spelling, and content errors, as the quality of the writing will be evaluated as part of the grade for all written assignments. Be sure to carefully review and edit all drafts prior to submission. All ideas, quotes, and information taken or derived from other sources must be appropriately cited and referenced in accordance with APA rules.

## **UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE & DEPARTMENT POLICY INFORMATION**

### **Reasonable Accommodation of Disabilities:**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me, see me during office hours, or contact me by e-mail me as soon as possible. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to establish record of their disability. No matter where students reside, they should contact the SJSU DRC to register. The DRC Web site: <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/>

### **Academic Integrity:**

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San José State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work (except when collaboration is expressly permitted by the course instructor) without the use of any outside resources. Students are not permitted to use old tests, quizzes when preparing for exams, nor may they consult with students who have already taken the exam. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. It also demonstrates a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students and the course instructor and can ruin the university's reputation and the value of the degrees it offers. We all share the obligation to maintain an environment which practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development for disciplinary action which could result in suspension or expulsion from San José State University. Additional information on academic integrity can be found at: [http://sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html)

## **TEXTBOOKS**

DuBois, B. & Miley, K. K. (2005). *Social Work: An Empowering Profession*, (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

All Other Assigned Readings\* are on Reserve in MLK Library. Both hardcopy and electronic copy of each reading material are available.

\* Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 from Samantrai, S. (1996). *Interviewing in Health and Human Services*, Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall.

*Supplemental Readings:*

National Association of Social Workers. (1999). *Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers*. Washington, D.C.: NASW Press.

Szuchman, L. & Thomlinson, B. (2004). *Writing with style: APA style for social work*. Belmont, Ca: Brooks/Cole

## TOPIC OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS\*

\*subject to change with fair notice

### Week 1 – Introduction and Overview of Social Work Practice

Aug.27

- Overview of the Course
- Introduction to Social Work Practice & Generalist Practice Model

### Week 2 – The Context of Generalist Social Work Practice

Sept. 3

- Emergence of social work as a profession
- The issues related to social work's status as a profession
- Introducing generalist social work- multiple levels of intervention
- Social work methods: casework, group work, community organization, and the integrated generalist model

Reading: DuBois & Miley, Chapter 1, 2 & 3

### Week 3 – Values and Ethics in Social Work and Diversity

Sept. 10

- Common values of the social work profession
- Social work Codes of Ethics
- Ethical Principles for social work
- Concepts associated with cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity including sociocultural dissonance, ethnic identity, and cultural pluralism

Reading: DuBois & Miley, Chapter 5 & 7

### Week 4 – Social Work and the Elements of Empowerment

Sept. 17

- Effects of social injustice, including oppression, discrimination, dehumanization, and victimization (the “isms”)
- Base of social injustice
- A strengths based approach to practice
- Working toward resiliency & empowering
- Understanding of client rights and roles in the intervention process

Reading: DuBois & Miley, Chapter 6

**Assignment 1: Personal Perspectives Due.**

Week 5 – Social Work Functions and Roles

Sept. 24

- Overview of the phases of the social work process
- Various roles of social worker
- Integrate social work practice, policy, and research in the functions of social work

Reading: DuBois & Miley, Chapter 9 & 10

Week 6 – The Phases of the Change Process: Assessment

Oct. 1

- Goals for Intake/Assessment
- Bio-psycho-social-cultural assessment
- Eco-map and geno-gram
- Social history

Reading: Samantrai, Chapter 1(on reserve)

Week 7 – Interviewing: Principles

Oct. 8

- Importance of interviewing skills
- Relationship Building
- Role of culture in interviewing: the dynamics of cross-cultural communication with culturally diverse clients

Reading: Samantrai, Chapter 2 (on reserve)

**Students must be in attendance to be assigned a group for assignment #3**

Week 8 – Interviewing: Essential skills

Oct. 15

- Attentive listening
- Effective questioning
- Reflecting content and feeling
- Developing an individual style
- Summarization and Interpreting
- Putting it all together

**Assignment 2: Social History due at the beginning of class.**

Week 9 – Social Work in the Public Domain

Oct. 22

- Poverty in America
- Clarification of the poor & Types of unemployment
- Impact of poverty on individuals, families, and society
- Social work and homelessness

Reading: DuBois & Miley, Chapter 11

Week 10 Social Work in Health, Rehabilitation & Mental Health

Oct. 29

- Health care- Hospital based services
- Major mental health concerns
- Social work and disabilities
- General features of chemical dependency and the related issues for social work intervention
- Criminal justice

Reading: DuBois & Miley, Chapter 12

Week 11 – Fields of Practice Group Presentation

Nov. 5

Student Presentations in class

**Assignment 3: Group Project Portfolio due at the time of your presentation.**

Week 12 – Fields of Practice Group Presentation

Nov. 12

Student Presentations in class

**Assignment 3: Group Project Portfolio due at the time of your presentation.**

Week 13 – Social Work with Families and Youths

Nov. 19

- Child maltreatment & Child welfare system
- Juvenile justice system and working with adolescents at risk
- Cycle of violence

Reading: DuBois & Miley, Chapter 13

Week 14 -- Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 26

Week 15 – Social Work with Adults and Aging Seniors

Dec. 3

- Intimate partner violence, including contributing factors and programs and services
- Dynamics of and response to elder abuse
- Programs and services for older adults, including the field of gerontological social work (hospice, nursing home, etc)

- Definition of Successful aging
- Bereavement counseling

Reading: DuBois & Miley, Chapter 14  
Class Ending

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Lindhorst, T., Macy, R., & Nurius, P. (2005). Contextualized assessment with battered women: Strategic safety planning to cope with multiple harms. *Journal of Social Work Education, 41*, 331-352.
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- Lukas, S. (1993). *Where to start and what to ask*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Mattaini, M., & Kirk, S. (1991). Assessing assessment in social work. *Social Work, 36*, 260-266.
- Marsh, J.C. 2005. Social justice: Social work's organizing value. *Social Work, 50*, 293-294
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- Velasquez, J., Vigil, M. E., & Benavides, E. (1994). A framework for establishing social work relationships across racial/ethnic lines. In B. R. Compton & B. Galaway, *Social work processes* (pp. 172-176). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
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