

**Introduction and Instructions**  
**School of Social Work Writing Assessment for Incoming Students – Fall 2009**

The ability to communicate clearly through writing is a professional skill that is essential to nearly every aspect of social work. Consequently, the social work program has a relatively demanding writing load. The goal of the writing assessment is to help students become stronger writers and thereby enhance their success in the MSW program. The assessment is a diagnostic tool; it is not a graded exercise and will not affect class standing in any way.

**Evaluation:** Your writing sample will be evaluated by a faculty member, using a standard rubric focused on writing mechanics and your ability to communicate clearly, synthesize information, and demonstrate critical thinking skills. The reviewer will provide an evaluation of your writing strengths as well as areas that need improvement. The rubric will direct you to resources for self-study.

**Strategy:** The goal of this assessment is to obtain a *spontaneous* writing sample. Compared with a polished admission essay, a spontaneous sample provides a better “snapshot” of actual writing abilities, which allows reviewers to tailor their suggestions to address core issues and increase practical benefits to your writing.

**Overview:** Essays are to be based on the article by Iris Carlton-LaNey (1999) *African American Social Work Pioneers’ Response to Need*, a required reading from Module 6 of the **History of Oppression** (SOWO999\_ALLSUII09) course. The writing assessment is conducted via the Internet using time-limited access to the Sakai Web site. When you log on to Sakai, you will be given three writing prompts related to the Carlton-LaNey article.

You are expected to write a *single, unified essay* that briefly, but adequately, addresses all prompts (i.e., address all prompts in one essay; **do not submit three separate answers**). You will have a **4-hour** time window to access the prompts, write, and submit your essay. Are you expected to produce a Pulitzer Prize winning essay in 4 hours? If you can, please do so; however, we expect most students will submit an essay that is typical of a first or second draft. By evaluating your writing at this early stage, reviewers hope to be able to help you become a more efficient and effective writer.

- ❖ **Time and Sakai Restrictions:** The **4-hour** time clock starts from your first log-in to the assessment site. You may log-off and log-in a second time to submit your essay. Note that Sakai allows you to access the **assessment no more than two times**. In addition, if you log off, be sure to close out that session completely. If you have two log-ins to Sakai open simultaneously, the site will not allow you to upload your essay.
- **Instructions: You may complete the writing assessment anytime between July 10 and August 7, 2009.**
  - Accessing the SOSW On-Line Writing Assessment**
  - 1. Log on to the Internet and go to <https://sakaipilot.unc.edu/xsl-portal>
  - 2. Log in to Sakai using your UNC Onyen and password
  - 3. Once you are logged in, the **My Workspace** page will open.
  - 4. From the tabs at the top of the page, select **My Sites**
  - 5. Under the **Fall 2009** heading, select **SOWO\_Writing\_001\_F09**
  - 6. Read the **Welcome** message and **format requirements** for the writing assessment.
  - 7. To access the writing prompts, go to the **Course Tools** box on the left sidebar of the page, select **Tests & Quizzes**. **Time clock** (4 hours) starts from initial log-in to the Test & Quizzes page.
  - 8. The Test and Quizzes page repeats the basic instructions and gives the three writing prompts.
- **Prepare and save your essay as a Word document.** Open a new document in Word and create a file name (i.e., “Save as...”) for your essay using the following format: **YourLastName-Firstname-F09WritingSample**. (Example: Suzy Brown would label her essay as **Brown-Suzy-F09Writing Sample**)

- **Uploading your essay:** Directions for uploading your essay are given on the assessment page.
- ❖ **Technical Problems? Telephone support is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by calling 919-962-HELP.** Contact UNC's Information Technology division on the Web at <https://www.unc.edu/ar-bin/websub/index.pl>
- ❖ **If You Need Special Provisions or Considerations:** Please contact Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Anna Scheyett at [amscheye@email.unc.edu](mailto:amscheye@email.unc.edu) or (919) 962-4372.
- **Obtaining Your Evaluation Results:** Sakai will automatically generate an e-mail notice alerting you that your evaluated essay and annotated rubric have been placed in your personal folder on Sakai. Follow steps 1 –5 in the above instructions for accessing Sakai. Locate the **Course Tools** box on the left sidebar, and select **Drop Box**. Click on the essay and rubric file names and save the documents to your computer.
  - Reviewers will use the Track Changes feature of Word to make comments, suggestions, or corrections to the essays. In addition, the rubric will include your reviewer's recommendations for self-study resources to assist you in improving your writing. You are strongly encouraged to pursue these self-study resources *before* the start of fall classes.

If you have questions about your evaluation or would like further recommendations or help with improving your writing, please contact either Diane Wyant ([dwyant@email.unc.edu](mailto:dwyant@email.unc.edu)) or Susan White ([sewhite@email.unc.edu](mailto:sewhite@email.unc.edu)). Susan and Diane are academic editors at the School who provide writing support to faculty and students.