Social Work Practice with Communities & Organizations

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Office Hours: Mondays 11:30-1:00pm
Or by appointment

Course Description: In this course, participants explore frameworks, values, and skills to meet individual and family needs through interventions with work groups, organizations, and communities.

Course Objectives:
1. Articulate and define social work roles and basic practice skills in work groups, organizations and communities.
2. Understand and explain the basic knowledge frameworks that guide social intervention with work groups, organizations and communities, and processes of organizational and community change.
3. Assess strengths and analyze barriers in organizational and community functioning, and recommend interventions to build on strengths and diminish barriers.
4. Identify the operation of institutionalized discrimination within organizations and with consumer populations and analyze service access issues and barriers to just and equitable service system functioning.
5. Understand basic theory and approaches to organizational and community change including: organizational development; service planning; system reform; community development and community organization.
6. Understand and apply key practice principles in formulating appropriate, ethically-based intervention plans for helping communities and organizations become more culturally competent and effective in strengthening families.
7. Understand approaches to documenting the strengths and needs of particular populations—communities of color, women, ethnic minorities, the aged, children, youth, gay, lesbian, bisexual people, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees—or other groups who have experienced civic and social exclusion, and the use of advocacy, empowerment and other strategies to improve service access and provision.

8. Understand and explain macro practice approaches to developing and targeting services for vulnerable and oppressed populations and communities.

9. Analyze and describe professional use of self in ethical dilemmas related to macro practice applying principles from the NASW Code of Ethics, and understand how individual practice is shaped by policy, and the organizational and community context.

10. Understand the basic principles of service monitoring and program evaluation and their utility in documenting consumer outcomes and testing and demonstrating best practices.

11. Use macro practice skills to enhance an organizational or community system’s capacity to meet individual and family needs especially in advancing social and economic justice.

**Expanded Description:**
Regardless of future plans for either direct or community practice, students need to understand the social work role in larger systems (schools, organizations, communities) within which clients and their families live—knowledge and skills that will ultimately result in positive outcomes and services for client populations. Students are exposed to theoretical constructs that explain the work of larger systems; beginning social work skills to develop successful, effective change strategies within organizations; and, methods that support engagement with marginalized populations and communities using participatory change processes.

**Required Texts:**


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Supplemental reading materials will be listed with some classes, and can be found ONLINE:

1) At the URL stated in the reading list
   OR
2) Through an electronic academic journal accessible through UNC Libraries (http://www.lib.unc.edu/) marked as “UL” (for “UNC Libraries”) OR
3) Via Blackboard (http://blackboard.unc.edu/) “BB” (login and find SOWO 570 – Section 001 or 004, choose “Assignments” and “Course Readings” folder)

CLASS ATTENDANCE:
It is expected that students will attend all classes or notify the instructor in advance and make arrangements to obtain class notes from other students if there is a compelling (illness, family emergency) reason to miss a class. The instructor will not place notes in student boxes or leave messages concerning what was covered or what is due. The Class Participation and Contribution grade is explained below.

TEACHING METHODS
This course utilizes several methodologies, lecture, discussion, small group, experiential, and individual research and synthesis (through papers). The class will be most successful if we are able to generate broad discussions. Listening to the ideas and views of others, developing an awareness of your point of view, being able to understand and appreciate perspectives different from your own, and linking experience to readings and assignments make a class rich in learning. I will appreciate your contributions to making this a safe and respectful class for learning and growth.

COURSE THEMES AND CENTRAL QUESTIONS:
Readings, discussions, and papers will visit these themes throughout the semester. In larger systems these themes are especially important.

Vision for Change: What is our vision for change? Who defines and shares this vision? What are the quality of life improvements we seek for the individuals, families and communities we care about?

Power: Who has power in organizations and communities? How can we get power? How can residents and consumers get power? How can power be used in our change efforts?
Community: What are communities? What assumptions do we bring to our understanding of functional or effective communities? How can community be built and influenced to help make our desired change possible? How are organizations best structured and led to facilitate change?

Strengths: What are the strengths of individuals, families, organizations and communities and how can they be mobilized to facilitate positive change? How do we recognize and mobilize the strengths of disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups of people? How can we help make organizations stronger - better able to facilitate positive change efforts?

Us: Who are we, both personally and in our role as social workers? How does our life experience shape our understanding of people and communities who have been historically disenfranchised? What skills, gifts, and talents do we bring to the change process? What assumptions, inexperience, and challenges do we bring to the change process? How do we negotiate our own learning and power throughout the change process?

Class Assignments

Class Participation and Contribution (15% of grade)
While students will get some credit for simply being present, this requirement will also be graded based on the degree to which students contribute to and benefit from the learning environment.

This course requirement will be comprised of the following elements:

1. Class attendance
2. Participation in class discussion and small group activities
3. Willingness to connect learning in the classroom with experiences and learning outside the classroom

Electronic Discussion
Recognizing that some students are quiet learners, credit will be given toward this requirement for students who wish to augment their participation in the classroom by using the Discussion Group feature on Blackboard. The instructor will review posts weekly for the degree to which they extend and contribute to classroom discussions and course content.
Assignment #1; Organization or Community Assessment  (20% of Grade)

Due Date: February 6, 2009—for either option

Option #1: Organization Assessment

Product: Completion of five page paper reviewing the organizational structure and cultural aspects of the student’s field placement agency or organization. Results will be shared in class on the due date.

Instructions: To complete this assignment, students will observe and record field notes and respond to the following areas:

- the level of hierarchy in their field agency or organization (an organizational chart may be helpful in the discussion)
  - don’t forget the Board of advisors, or volunteers, if applicable
- how power is distributed and exercised (formal and “understood”)
  - how are evaluations at all levels carried out?
- Agency mission and/or vision statement
- prevailing organizational culture
  - what behaviors are highly regarded and rewarded?
  - how does the organization carry out its mission?
  - are consumers involved in the day to day operations of the organization?
- contributing factors
  - effect of funding sources on agency work
  - legal constraints on agency work
- how would a new person enter this organization?
- How would a new macro level change/program be launched successfully in the student’s opinion
- Students will compare and contrast their observations in class and relate them to the change and quality of life issues for target client populations and/or staff in the organization.

Option #2: Community Observation

Product: Five page paper concerning observations of a geographic or intentional community and implications for macro social work practice.
Instructions: Students completing this assignment will conduct a simple ethnographic study* to observe community life in a setting of their choice, provided that the following requirements are met:

* An Ethnographic study “a genre of writing that uses fieldwork to provide a descriptive study of human societies. Ethnography presents the results of a holistic research method founded on the idea that a system's properties cannot necessarily be accurately understood independently of each other.”

- Setting accurately represents a particular community, which can be a neighborhood or a group of people with shared identity, beliefs and/or concerns, including grassroots and social change organizations (but not professional human service organizations).
- Observations of the community are sufficient to meet the paper requirements yet are passive, i.e. no direct interactions – surveys, interviews or focus groups and are completely anonymous. The community is described, yet its members are not identified by name or in such a way as to make identify obvious.
  - Is it clear how decisions are made within this community?
  - What seems to be the culture of this community?
  - How might a newcomer become part of this community? Are there special requirements
- Student obtains the permission of community members to observe the setting when it is private, i.e. such as a planned meeting or gathering that is not open to the public. Permission is not required when the setting is public, but students are still expected to be respectful of people and space (i.e. be non-intrusive, don’t walk around with a clipboard, etc.)
- The setting can be formal, such as neighborhood association meetings, or informal such as street festivals and other social gatherings. The observed community can be one with which the student is a member and/or is affiliated.
- How would a new initiative be launched within this community? What preparations might be necessary?
Assignments 2-3 represent phases of an overall change effort that the student will propose – identification of the change opportunity, preparation and implementation. The overall goal of these assignments is to develop skill in conceptualizing and planning change efforts that result in meaningful quality of life improvements for a group of people that can only be facilitated through macro social work practice. Discussion of steps in these efforts will be described in greater complexity in class and through class readings.

Assignment 2: Identifying the Change Opportunity (30% of grade)

Purpose: Identify a macro level change opportunity for a real life organization, community, or group of people that would result of an improvement of quality of life, and is consistent with social work ethics.

Learning Objectives:
- To be able to identify specific changes/outcomes that would improve the life situation of a group/organization/community (NOT an individual or specific family).
- To involve consumers/stakeholders/activists in the identification and description of needed changes to determine how their viewpoints might differ regarding the issue you have identified.
- Ability to actively utilize the strengths perspective in planning social changes
- Demonstrate the utility of a literature search, to identify and apply evidence based research when planning a social change

Product: A paper 8-12 double spaced typed pages in length, using APA format, with at least six scholarly sources (in addition to class readings and texts which may be used but will not count toward the required number of sources).

The student will choose an issue that affects the quality of life of a target population with which the student has direct contact. (field placement, place of employment, membership) The issue and target population should be chosen carefully, since major assignments for the semester will focus on this community/group/population.

Specific Directions:
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- Identify the issue you have interest in
- Conduct a literature search regarding the issue. What has been written about the need for change, attempts to change in the past? What have consumers said about this issue
- Go over the themes listed at the beginning of the syllabus. It is not necessary to list each of the themes [vision for change; power; community; strengths; us] but attention to the themes should be apparent when completing this assignment.
- Find at least three individuals (one MUST be a consumer, two would be even better) who have experience/knowledge in this area. Interview them to determine their perspective and ideas. Does their perspective agree or diverge from what has been written in the literature? Why do you think that is the case?
- What principles of social work ethics are involved in this issue? [self determination; informed consent; confidentiality; nondiscrimination; justice; do no harm; keeping promises]
- What would the macro social work role be in the focus on this issue?

Rubric for this assignment is found on Blackboard under Assignments. Attention to the rubric is important when completing this assignment.

Due Date: March 06, 2009

Assignment #3 Intervention Plan for affecting change on the identified issue

(30% of grade)

Purpose:
To give the student experience in planning a specific intervention to improve the life situation of a group/organization/group.

Product: completion of an 8-12 page double spaced paper, using APA format, with at least six scholarly sources (in addition to required readings and text).

Learning Objectives:
- To describe in detail the processes involved in planning a change effort
- To detail how consumers from the target population would be actively involved in a significant way in the change process.
- To utilize social work literature and research to develop and support a theory of change
- To use planning tools, such as a force field analysis/logic model, when developing the change effort
To produce a simple budget of the resources needed to produce the necessary changes

**Specific Instructions:**

- Complete a literature search to gather data about interventions utilized in the past to affect the change identified. What evidence is there for the intervention ideas you have decided upon?
- Complete a detailed force field analysis **OR** logic model analysis. Don’t forget statutory, policy, supports or barriers; agency culture; etc.
- Identify the cultural, organization issues specifically involved in this process.
- Involve residents/ consumers/ stakeholders in your process [share force field analysis; engage in a group discussion;] in a significant way and detail how they were involved, and outcomes of the involvement.
- Complete a basic budget of the resources (human, technological, financial) that would be needed for this effort. Use your stakeholders, consumers, to assist with this process.

**Due Date: April 17, 2009**

**Assignment #4: Student Self-Assessment (5% of grade)**

At the beginning of the semester, students will write learning goals for the course - the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they want to develop. For the last class session, students will bring in a written self-assessment that indicates the extent to which they achieved their learning goals and/or how these goals changed over the course of the semester. Completion of this assignment should be 2 typed pages maximum. Citations are only necessary if the student directly uses outside sources to explain what has been learned.

**Due Date: April 24, 2009**

**Grading System**

- H = 94-100
- P = 80-93
- L = 70-79
- F = 69 and below

A grade of P is considered entirely satisfactory. The grade of Honors ("H") — which a limited number of students attain—signifies that the work is clearly excellent in all respects. If it is your goal to earn an “H”, you are strongly advised...
to do the optional extra credit assignment – facilitation of a classroom learning activity (see below).

**Policy on Incompletes and Late Assignments**

A paper is considered late if it is handed in any later than the start of class on the day it is due. Late papers will lose 2 points per day, including weekends. If a student has extenuating circumstances regarding either a late assignment, or possible consideration of an Incomplete for the course **it is the student's responsibility to initiate a conversation with the instructor** prior to the due date of the paper. The student should initiate a request for an Incomplete before the end of the course—instructors have no responsibility to give an Incomplete without such a request.

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

Most frequently, incidents of academic dishonesty derive from a misunderstanding, or a disregard for rules governing presentation of another's words as one's own. When completing written assignments, please refer to the APA Style Guide, The SSW Manual, and the SSW Writing Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. All written assignments should contain a signed pledge from you stating that, "I have not given or received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work".

In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, the student will be notified of this concern, and a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

**APA Format**

The School of Social Work faculty has adopted APA style as the preferred format for papers and publications. A summary was distributed at orientation. The reference Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2001) is very important for this course as well as your other courses. The following web sites provide additional information:

- [http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html](http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html) (APA Style for material in electronic formats)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html) (general information about documentation using APA style)
- [http://www.bartleby.com/141/](http://www.bartleby.com/141/) (electronic version of Strunk's *The Elements of Style* which was originally published in 1918)
POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course and who wish to have special accommodations should contact the University’s Disabilities Services and provide documentation of their disability. Disabilities Services will notify the instructor that the student has a documented disability and may require accommodations. Students should discuss the specific accommodations they require (e.g. changes in instructional format, examination format) directly with the instructor.

POLICIES ON THE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM

Use of any electronic devises is restricted to activities directly related to coursework in progress: note taking, following a power point presentation, or using the devise as an accommodation for a disability. Use of laptops, cell phones, etc. for email, texting, surfing the net during class is prohibited. Students who habitually utilize phones or laptops for other functions during class time will be restricted from their use at anytime during class. Use of electronic equipment during exams is not allowed, unless specific permission is given by the instructor or is a verified accommodation for the student.

OTHER POLICIES/GENERAL INFORMATION

Papers can be handed in, or emailed to the professor prior to the start of class the assignment is due.

BlackBoard will be used for discussion of material not mentioned in class (voluntary) or to post information. The professor will utilize BlackBoard to communicate with students in the class. It is the student’s responsibility to have a forwarding mechanism in place, if the student regularly uses a different email address than the School’s usual assigned email.

Grades will be posted on BlackBoard after all papers are complete.

READINGS AND COURSE OUTLINE

Class 1
January 16, 2009
Introduction to Management & Community Practice
  • Introductions
  • What is macro practice?
• History in social work
• What macro social work roles are in greatest demand today?
• What is useful about learning about larger systems even if your plans are to practice with individuals and families?
• Some say that, as a profession, we favor social work roles that emphasize work with individuals and families. How would you support or oppose that statement?

Adult learning:
What do you want to get out of this class?
What are your learning goals for this course?


In Class Activity:
• Course Overview & Expectations
• Student Learning Goals

Class 2
January 23, 2009
Theories, Models & Perspectives
Explanatory theory/ model/ intervention strategy
Theories in macro work:
  • Conflict theories
  • Ecological systems theory
  • Structural-Functional theory
• How might you think differently about entering a community depending on the model you emphasized?
• What models of community practice do you see in your field agencies? Does the model utilized seem to make the most sense for the function and population served? Would you suggest something different?

Readings:
LTM, Chapter 3: Considerations for the practitioner. pp 50-73
LTM, Chapter 10-Promoting a Just Society. pp.206-225.

Class 3
Spring 2009
January 30, 2009

Theories, Models, & Interventions continued...
- Risk & resilience in macro practice
- Identifying and utilizing the strengths of vulnerable communities
- What does Saleebey consider to be an empowered neighborhood and what role does he think we should play to make this happen?

Readings:
LTM: Chapter 4. Calling on consumer and citizen strengths. 74-93.

In Class Activity
- Strengths of communities in which we live
- Examples of empowered neighborhoods

Class 4
February 6, 2009

Organization/ Community Assessment DUE

Focus on Social Work in Communities
- Social work roles at the community level
- How does the community culture affect social work?
- Social capital
- Does a strengths perspective matter or is it only spin?

Readings:
LTM. Chapter 6 Developing community resources and capacities. 117-143.

Week 5

Spring 2009 13
February 13, 2009
Community Assessment
- Community Practice-history
  - Changes in perspective over time
- Steps in community assessment
- How do we help disenfranchised people find and use their voice to help create positive social change?
- What do you think makes it so difficult for human services agencies to release power to the communities being served? Should they?

Readings:

In class activity:
- Howe TX exercise

Class 6
February 20, 2009
Community Organizing
Methods of community organizing
- “principle of least contest”
- lobbying, mobilizing and organizing

Video: Holding Ground
1. What were the main forces for change in Roxbury?
2. What were significant barriers?
3. How did the neighborhood get started? How were initial strategies arrived at?
4. What are you most skeptical about, after watching this video, and thinking about your own community/ organization?
Readings:

Class 7
February 27, 2009
Social Justice in Community Practice
- Social Justice
- What does being an ‘expert’ mean in community practice?
- Are we as social workers really committed to promoting a just society or do we only give this principle lip service?
- Advocacy
[Course direction discussion]

Readings:
Long, Tice, Morrison, Chapter 12: Promoting a social justice and ideological outlook. 249-276.
Rans, S. (2005). Hidden treasures: Building community connections by engaging gifts of people on welfare, people with disabilities, people with mental illness, older adults, young people. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, School of Education and Social Policy, Asset Based Community Development Institute. Retrieved August 6, 2007 from: http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd/hiddentreasures.pdf (Read pp. 1-9; 67-76; & 86-92) BB; only the pages written have been scanned in.

Class 8
March 6, 2009
Change Assessment DUE
Organizations
- Structure
- Function
- How do structure and function affect ability to meet objectives and mission?
- Social Work role in organizations

Readings:
Gibelman & Furman, Navigating Human Service Organizations
Spring 2009
Chapter 1 - Getting to Know the Human Service Organization, pp. 1-21
Chapter 2 - Distinguishing Features of Organizations, pp. 22-47
Chapter 4 - Who has the Power? Roles in Human Service Organizations, pp. 74-88
Long, Tice, Morrison: Chapter 5, Enriching Organizational Life, pp 95-116

March 13, 2009---Spring Break -NO class!!

Class 9
March 20, 2009
Organization capacity for change
- Determining focus for change
- Targeting change strategies
- Logic Models
- Force Field Analysis

Readings:
Gibelman & Furman, Chapter 9 The changing Environment of Organizations 166-183.
http://www.theoryofchange.org/html/overview.html
http://www.theoryofchange.org/html/example.html (follow example through all five stages)
http://www.theoryofchange.org/html/glossary.html (refer to this glossary as needed to understand various terms)

(Depicting a theory of change as described by the Aspen Institute is more for planning a community intervention – a set of activities that may include more than one program and may involve more than one organization)

Class 10
March 27, 2009
Developing Interventions
- Participatory change in organizations
- Social Planning
- Engaging, collaborating, creating dialogue within and outside organizations

Readings:
Long, Tice and Morrison, Chapter 7: Social Planning. 144-163
Gibelman & Furman, Chapter 10 Internal Sources of Organizational change, 184-198.
Chapter 11, Coping with Change. 199-214.

Class 11
April 3, 2009
Improving Human Services Delivery
- Discrimination in organizations
- Organization Culture
- What is the risk/ responsibility in promoting cultural competence, strengths perspectives in one’s organization?
- Ethics in everyday work

Readings:
Gibelman & Furman, Chapter 12 Lending a helping hand: Making your organization better. 215-229.

April 10, 2009—Good Friday—No class!!
Class 12
April 17, 2009

Intervention Plan DUE

Managing the work
- Supervision, Management
- Monitoring for Progress
- Evaluating effectiveness of interventions
- Funding, grantwriting, budgets

Readings:
Gibelman & Furman, chapter 5: Supervision within the organizational setting. 89-110.
Long, Tice, and Morrison; Chapter 8. Administration from a strengths perspective. 165-185.
Review the following online program budget samples:
http://www.casanet.org/program-management/planning/pmbud1.htm
http://www.bushfoundation.org/apply/ProgGrantSampleBudget.htm
http://www.clevelandfoundation.org/page1679.cfm (read “Online Project Budget Guide”, “Project Budget Form” and “Project Budget Narrative”)

Class 13
November 25, 2008

Learning Goals Reflection DUE

Leadership in Organizations and Communities
- Leadership from any seat in the room
- Qualities of leaders
- Readiness to take on leadership roles

Evaluation & Check Out

Discussion of Learning Goals
1. Did your definition of community change or stay the same?
2. What did you learn in this course and how do you plan to apply it in practice? What commitments are you willing to make?
3. To what degree did this course help you to meet your learning goals? How did you contribute to our learning community?