

**University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
Department of Social Work  
451 Graham Building**

**SWK 411 Social Work Methods I**

**Master Syllabus**

**I. Rationale**

Social Work Methods I, the second course taken in the practice sequence, is designed to further assist students in their identification with and socialization to the profession of social work. Students are taught to be generalist social work practitioners. Students continue to confront their own values in relation to seeking and giving help. Personal and professional values are examined as they impact on practice. Students explore the values underlying practice theories, the impact of values in establishing relationships with diverse client groups, and the role of values in promoting client self-determination. The NASW *Code of Ethics* is explored with specific focus directed at assisting students in their understanding and resolution of ethical dilemmas that arise in practice. In this first methods course, emphasis is placed on interventions effective in working with individuals and families. The specific intervention approaches taught in this course include crisis intervention and task-centered practice. Practice is taught from a strengths perspective. Students are also taught culturally sensitive practice that includes and understanding of and appreciation for differences in the race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender, physical or mental disabilities, or religious preference of clients.

**II. Liberal Arts Perspective**

Course content is linked to the student's liberal arts background in several ways. Through courses in anthropology, sociology, and nonwestern studies, students develop an understanding of different cultures' traditions that guide the acquisition to knowledge and skills when interacting with varied client systems. Students learn to think critically and communicate clearly through courses in reasoning and discourse. The liberal arts perspective provides students with the opportunity to enhance and strengthen written and oral communication skills needed to effectively write and record in agency records, prepare case presentations and develop initial client assessments.

### **III. Linkage of this course to other courses**

This course, taken in the first semester of student's senior year, is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed for undergraduate level generalist social work practice with individuals and families. Social Work Methods I continues to build on the rudimentary helping skills, problem-solving process, and professional behaviors introduced to students in SWK 351, Professional Skills. Students concurrently take SWK 413, Field Instruction I, and SWK 415, Field Instruction Seminar I. In field instruction, students are expected to integrate various aspects of social work knowledge, values, and skills into the dimensions of practice. Field seminar is the integration of methods, field, as well as, information and knowledge gained in seminar that support students' understanding of field instruction components (i.e., agency communication, knowledge and use of agency setting, case presentations, field instruction/student relationship, etc.).

### **IV. Professional Values and Ethics**

Students are required to study and are encouraged to embrace the principles contained in the *NASW Code of Ethics*. These principles are used as a guide to students in assessing their personal and professional values and beliefs, as they relate to social work practice. Students also study vignettes of ethical dilemmas that confront social work. Students are expected to examine how and when their personal values are consistent or inconsistent with those of the profession. Students learn to apply values and ethics of the profession to their practice with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations.

### **V. Diversity**

Students are taught how to assess, interview, and interact with client systems from a culturally sensitive perspective. Specific strengths-based and culturally-sensitive strategies and techniques are introduced to students for their application in practice. Students are encouraged to take on the role of learner, rather than expert, of those from diverse cultures, backgrounds and orientations. Specific emphasis is placed on practice with clients from diverse cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientations, disabilities, age cohorts, and gender.

### **VI. Populations at Risk and Social and Economic Justice**

Within the context of learning techniques and approaches for working with individuals and families, students will learn how to take into account issues of oppression and vulnerability. Students will learn how to conduct assessments and develop intervention strategies that take into account risk factors of diverse population groups.

This course will challenge students to recognize ways in which the absence of social and economic justice in our society can affect individuals and families and social work with these client groups. Through learning a psychosocial, ecological approach to assessment, students will be able to identify environmental and social constraints that limit opportunities for clients. Students will also be taught how to recognize, emphasize, and build upon client strengths and resources in the face of such constraints. Within this context, students learn how to help clients develop realistic goals and workable strategies for change that acknowledge both individual and societal responsibility for human welfare.

## **VII. Course Objectives**

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

### *Experiential Objectives*

1. Demonstrate ability to understand and measure practice outcomes. (PO #6, 9)
2. Demonstrate ability to understand and apply a strength-based perspective in working with client systems. (PO #6)
3. Recognize one's own strengths and limitations as a generalist social work practitioner and identify areas for growth and development. (PO #1, 2)
4. Demonstrate relationship-building skills with diverse groups and populations, including clients, supervisors, co-workers, and members of the community. (PO #3, 4, 6, 10)
5. Describe the specific steps involved in an ecosystem's approach to a social work assessment; and, demonstrate skills involved in conducting an ecosystem assessment of a client's presenting problems. (PO #7)
6. Demonstrate skills in selecting interventions of choice for presenting problems. (PO #1, 6)
7. Demonstrate how one's intervention approaches enhance clients' motivational and coping skills; and, are sensitive to gender role, age, race, creed, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and various special needs situations. (PO #1, 4, 9)
8. Demonstrate writing skills in developing comprehensive assessment and intervention plans. (PO #7)
9. Demonstrate ability to lead, observe, and participate in groups. (PO #6)

10. Demonstrate skills in determining the timing and process termination of client treatment. (PO #1)
11. Show how the experiences in one's field placement relate to the knowledge and skill areas of this course. (PO #1, 6)

#### *Cognitive Objectives*

1. Identify and explain the core theories and skills involved in the generalist model of social work practice. (PO #7)
2. Understand the role of human development, gender, culture, sexual orientation, and special needs in client assessment. (PO #3, 7)
3. Explain and understand methods for engaging and motivating clients in planning and interventions. (PO #1, 6, 7, 10)
4. Understand and explain the purpose of interventions and demonstrate ability to measure outcomes. (PO# 9)
5. Demonstrate knowledge and skills in facilitating client empowerment in all aspects of social work practice with individuals, families and groups. (PO #7)
6. Understand how the issues of social and economic justice affect individuals and families and take these factors into account when assessing and intervening with systems of all levels. (PO #4)

#### *Affective Objectives*

1. Understand and apply the values and ethics outlined in the National Association of Social Workers' *Code of Ethics*. (PO # 2)

### **VIII. Course Content**

1. Purpose and goals of social work including the review of the profession's core principles.
2. Professional values and ethics; NASW *Code of Ethics*
3. Generalist approach to social work practice

4. The strength-based perspective
5. The professional helper; establishing the helping relationship, characteristics, skills
6. Collaboration and networking
7. Individual and family assessment
8. Small group assessment
9. Assessment of organizations and communities
10. Intervention and evaluation plan; developing goals and objectives
11. Strength-based interventions
12. Generalist practice with special populations
13. Evaluation, termination, and follow-up

## **IX. Sample Assignments**

### Blackboard Assignments

Students will work in groups of 3-4. A facilitator and a reporter should be chosen for each assignment. This will give each student a chance to serve as both facilitator and recorder. Instructor will provide a description of the discussion forum available on Blackboard one week prior to the date that it is due to be discussed in class.

Each group member is expected to participate in each Blackboard discussion. Points will be based upon the quality of input. Once a discussion is closed, students may not participate. Once a discussion forum has taken place on-line, the facilitators of each group will take lead in the class discussion about the assignment.

### Quizzes

Students will have pop quizzes during the semester. Students who are absent cannot make up the quizzes. Quizzes may cover information from class lecture, readings, discussions, and/or handouts.

### Case Documentation

Students are to write a 1-page, typewritten and double-spaced summary documenting a client interview. Students are graded on their ability to document descriptively, factually, clearly and user friendly. Students are to follow the format provided by instructor.

### Skills Videotape and Self-Assessment Assignment

Students engage in a process of self-evaluation of their assessment skills. Each student is to make a 15-minute videotape of a mock assessment interview with a client from their agency, then submit a rated and written evaluation of the videotape, detailing their strengths and needs for improvement. The instructor will provide students with an outline detailing this assignment.

In addition to the videotape and written self-assessment, students will write a comprehensive ecosystem assessment of a client in the field with whom they are working. Information on areas to be covered in this assignment will be distributed and discussed in class.

Students who are not in a direct-practice setting will be instructed as to how to transfer this assignment to their setting. Students who fit this category are responsible for notifying instructor if help is needed in this area.

### Intervention Plan/Group Project

Instructor will integrate an overview of group interventions and dynamics as part of class lecture on client interventions. To demonstrate proficiency in these areas the instructor will assign students to groups of 5-6 members. Each group will demonstrate a client intervention, and a group process/intervention in class. Each group will have an hour to present their two interventions. All members of groups are expected to participate in an active role. Instructor will provide students with a handout detailing this assignment.

### **X. Text**

Poulin, John, et. al. (2000). *Collaborative Social Work*

### **XI. Recommended and Additional Readings**

Instructor will recommend and provide additional reading for class.