

Introduction to Social Work (SOCW 2311-001)

This is an online course accessible at <https://elearn.uta.edu>

Office hrs: Available by email and IM; Face to face conferences available upon request

E-mail: Please use the internal Blackboard email system to communicate; if you have an emergency or do not receive a response within 36 hours, you may e-mail me at dianemitschke.uta.edu

Instructor: Diane B. Mitschke, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work

Undergraduate Catalog Description:

An overview of the social work profession, its fields of practice, methods of social intervention, its historical context, and its relationship to the social welfare system.

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to the profession and practice of social work and, for students who elect to major in social work, as preparation for advanced coursework. It also provides students with information on available social services, offers an introduction to social policy issues and citizenship decisions, and provides an introduction to the various fields of social welfare and social work. The course will explore the values, code of ethics, knowledge base, and skills necessary for social work practice.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Describe the development of social work and social welfare.
2. Define and describe the fields of social welfare, social work, and human services.
3. Explain and analyze contemporary social problems in our society.
4. Explain current social services designed to meet these problems.
5. Discuss gaps in current services and controversial issues in each service area.
6. Describe the generalist framework for social work practice with systems of all sizes.
7. Identify and discuss the knowledge, skills, and values needed for practice.
8. Demonstrate awareness of personal values in regard to critical issues of social work practice.
9. Demonstrate awareness of values and ethics of the social work profession.

This course addresses the following Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) requirements for Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors:

Educational Policy 2.1.2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law.

Social workers:

- (a) Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles.
- (b) Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.
- (c) Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

Educational Policy 2.1.3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.

Social workers:

- (a) Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom.
- (b) Educational Policy 2.1.4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.
- (c) Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.
- (d) Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences.

Educational Policy 2.1.5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.

Social workers

- (a) Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice

Educational Policy 2.1.8—Engage in policy practice to advance social and

economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services. Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice.

Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development.

Social workers:

(a) Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being

Required Text:

Marla Berg-Weger (2010). *Social Work and Social Welfare: An Invitation*. New York: Routledge

Dropping the Class:

If you choose to drop this course at any point during the semester, please be attentive to specific University calendar dates established for completing this process. It is the student's responsibility to complete the necessary paperwork according to the University's schedule. Not doing so will result in a failing grade.

Withdrawal:

To avoid receiving a failing grade due to absences, it is the student's responsibility to drop the class according to university guidelines and time frames. The last day to drop a course is listed in the Academic Calendar on the UTA website.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability. Also, you may visit the Office for Students with Disabilities in room 102 of University Hall or call them at (817) 272-3364.

Academic Integrity:

It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be

disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2)

Student Support Services Available:

The University of Texas at Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. These resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals to resources for any reason, students may contact the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107 or visit www.uta.edu/resources for more information.

Librarian to Contact:

John Dillard in our Social Work Electronic Library, room A-111.

e-Culture Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University email address as an official means of communication with students. Through the use of email, UT-Arlington is able to provide students with relevant and timely information, designed to facilitate student success. In particular, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation may be sent to students through email. All students are assigned an email account and information about activating and using it is available at www.uta.edu/email. New students (first semester at UTA) are able to activate their email account 24 hours after registering for courses. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active as long as a student is enrolled at UT-Arlington.

NOTE: Please use the internal email system on Blackboard for communication within this course. Students are responsible for checking their email regularly.

Course Outline:

SESSION	DATES	TOPIC
1	1/18-1/23	Introduction
2	1/24-1/30	History of Social Work and Social Welfare
3	1/31-2/6	US Poverty and Implications for Social Work
4	2/7-2/13	The Social Work Environment
5	2/14-2/20	Diversity
6	2/21-2/27	Values and Ethics
7	2/28-3/6	Perspectives
8	3/7-3/13	Fields of Practice MIDTERM EXAM
9	3/14-3/20	SPRING BREAK!!
10	3/21-3/27	Fields of Practice (cont.); Fields of Practice paper due
11	3/28-4/3	Individuals and Families
12	4/4-4/10	Groups
13	4/11-4/17	Organizations and Communities
14	4/18-4/24	The Social Work Profession FINAL EXAM REVIEW
15	4/25-5/1	FINAL EXAM

NOTE: Please refer to our Blackboard course for session readings, course material, discussion topics, and quiz and assignment dates.

Assignments:

Discussion Board. You must answer at least one of the discussion board questions posted for each session. In addition, you must post responses to at least two postings of your classmates. You may earn up to 10 points each session by participating in the discussion board. There will be 15 Discussion Boards, corresponding with the 15 Course Sessions of the semester.

In order to earn the full 10 points in any given session, you must meet the following criteria:

1. Respond to at least one new discussion board question and comment on two postings from your classmates.
2. Demonstrate thoughtfulness and effort in your response.

Note: Discussions will end on Sundays at 6 pm, and new discussions will begin on Mondays at 6 am. I encourage you to respond to other students' postings and to participate in more than the minimum number of discussions required, as participation will generally enhance your understanding of the material as well as your overall experience in the course.

Quizzes. There will be 10 short timed quizzes administered during the semester.

The quizzes will be open-book, and you may access your notes as well as other resources to complete the quizzes. Each quiz will be worth a total of 10 points.

Fields of Practice Paper. You will select a field of practice (child welfare, schools, workplace, criminal/juvenile justice, elderly, mental health, health, substance abuse, military, social advocacy, community) and submit a paper 8-10 pages, APA style. The paper should include a definition of the field of practice or population, description of the social problems addressed, a discussion of social work roles involved, identification of important trends (is this problem growing, are job opportunities increasing, are there other professions that compete with social work in this field, etc.). Identification of national organizations addressing the field of practice or population, web sites, and other types of data are recommended and encouraged. Please include sub-topics.
(Outcomes 1-8) (40 pts).

GENERAL INFORMATION AND EXPECTATIONS:

All papers must follow APA guidelines. At a minimum this means:

Inclusion of a title page

Margins set at 1 inch,

12 point font in Courier or Times New Roman only

Page number in upper right corner of the page starting with the title page

Running head listing the assignment title

Exams. There will be both a Midterm and a Final Exam in this course. Both will be administered online and will include various types of questions such as multiple choice, true/false, short answer and essay. Each exam will be worth 100 points.

Grading Policy:

You can earn a total of 500 points in this course. The grading for this course is as follows:

15 Discussion Boards	150
10 Quizzes	100
1 Midterm Exam	100
1 Final Exam	100
1 Field of Practice Paper	50
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Total Points	500

450-500	A
400-449	B
350-399	C
300-349	D
Below 300	F

Other policies:

I reserve the right to give a grade of F for the course as whole to any student found guilty of plagiarism of any assignment by the Office of Student Conduct.

Deductions for Late Papers:

10 points will be deducted from the overall score for each day paper is late.

No make-up exams will be given unless you have a university approved and documented excuse for your absence from the exam. Class notes, text book reading and handout material will serve as your study guide for the exams. No additional guide will be provided.