



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

National Catholic School of Social Service

Washington, DC 20064

SSS 101

Introduction to Social Work

3 Credits

Fall 2009

Instructor: Laura G. Daughtery, Ph.D., LICSW

Daughtery@cua.edu/ 202-391-5782

Shahan Hall 110

Office Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday

© This course outline is the property of NCSSS and the instructor and may be distributed with written permission.

I. COURSE PURPOSE

This course is open to all undergraduate students who wish to include a service component as part of their CUA experience. Students are expected to engage in **24 hours** of volunteer service during the course of the semester. For many students, this course introduces the history and concepts of what was once called “profession philanthropy.” For social work majors, it is the first of a fourteen-course curriculum. The Social Work program is accredited by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) and prepares students for entry-level positions in social work or for graduate education. The Baccalaureate of Social Work (BSW) credential is considered the entry-level professional degree. The Master of Social Work (MSW) credential is considered the terminal practice degree of the profession. Students interested in learning more about Social Work as a major should contact: Dr. Lynn Mayer, Chair of the undergraduate social work program by phone at 202-319-5479, or email: Mayer@cua.edu.

This course addresses the historical development of the profession including the work of Jane Addams, Mary Richmond and others and introduces students to the knowledge base, skills and values of the social work profession. The course is informed by the profession’s unique emphasis on the person-in-environment perspective. As part of Generalist Social Work theory and practice, students are given an overview of social work history, field of practice, settings, and methods. This course utilizes audio-visual aids, guest speakers, skill exercises, discussion of volunteer experience, assigned readings and lectures.

A major component of the course is a volunteer experience in community service which connects the mission of social justice at The Catholic University of America with the roots of the social work profession.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand Social Work as a helping profession, with a unique history, values, knowledge and skill base.
2. To understand Generalist Social work practice, which assesses and intervenes with systems at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels selectively utilizing multiple methods and theories in a variety of settings with a variety of problems.
3. To understand the value base of the profession, including its Code of Ethics and its commitment to social and economic justice.
4. To recognize the major social issues addressed by the profession including poverty, discrimination, oppression, and historical and current responses to social and economic injustice.
5. To become familiar with the historical development of social welfare policy and to develop an understanding of current social, political, and economic forces and the impact of those forces on populations at-risk and specific individual clients.
6. To begin to develop critical thinking skills by questioning the information used to justify existing policies, programs and clinical protocols.
7. To understand the role of diversity in interactions among social workers and clients.
8. To begin to understand the complexity of human behavior and the important role this understanding plays in a helping profession.
9. To initiate students to the art and skill base of the profession by providing an overview of the basic theoretical social work problem solving processes including interviewing skills and or demonstration of selected techniques.
10. To begin to understand the challenges and opportunities which accompany a career in social work including the professional use of self.

III COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts:

Brill, N. I. & Levine, J. (2005). *Working with People: The Helping Process* (8th Edition) Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Popple, P. R. & Leighninger, L. (2007).. *Social Work, Social Welfare and American Society*. (7th Editon). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

B. Writing Format:

All written assignments must be typed in the style of the American Psychological Association as referenced below:

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. (6th Edition). Washington, D.C.: Author.

C. Course Assignments:

Volunteer Community Service Component

Spend a total of 24 hours at the site of your choice (with approval of Professor). Suggestions for your volunteer experience will be made available. An eight to ten page paper describing your experience is final assignment for this course. A letter signed by your volunteer supervisor on the agency's letterhead indicating the number of hours completed must be attached to assignment five.

Assignment One: Personal Experience and Beliefs. Due: September 10, 2009

Based on **your personal experience and beliefs**, write a brief paper answering the following questions:

- (1) In America today, what are the causes of poverty?
- (2) In what way can social workers intervene to effect positive change?

Assignment Two: Newspaper Article. Due: October 1, 2009

From the Editorial section of a newspaper (*The Washington Post* or *Washington Times* or *The New York Times*) choose a letter that presents a view **opposite from your own** about a social policy or social welfare issue. Mount it on a sheet of paper. On another sheet of paper, clarify your ideas about the **topic** by identifying the issue presented and the group to whom it applies. Identify the evidence cited in the article and describe the author's recommended action.

State how this issue relates to social work. On a third sheet of paper, prepare your own letter to the editor in which you respond to the letter you have mounted.

Remember that you are advocating **an alternative** to the issue or problem. Provide evidence to support your viewpoint by referring to information **you learned** from reading a relevant scholarly social work journal article. **Attach a copy** of the **journal article** you have cited. **Highlight** the part(s) to which you refer in your article. Find and identify a blog that discusses the issue.

The **final product** should include:

- the mounted letter to the editor from the newspaper
- your ideas about the meaning of the letter and the evidence the writer used to support his/her opinion
- your own letter to the editor with a citation from the scholarly social work journal article you read to support your opinion

- a copy of the scholarly social work journal article you read with your citation highlighted
- a copy of the blog that discusses the issue

Assignment Three: Book Review. Due: November 5, 2009

Select **one** of the recommended books below or one of your choosing to be approved by the Instructor. Describe the central issue discussed in the book. Share what you learned about the issue. Describe how it deepened your knowledge of the people described. Articulate how this understanding may influence your practice as a social worker.

- Addams, Jane. (1910). *Twenty years at Hull-House: with autobiographical notes / by Jane Addams; with illustrations by Norah Hamilton*. New York: Macmillan.
- Dash, L. (2003). *When Children Want Children: The Urban Crisis of Teenage Childbearing*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- DuBois, W. E. B. (1987). *The Philadelphia Negro; a Social Study*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Fraiberg, S.H. (1996). *The Magic Years: Understanding and Handling the Problems of Early Childhood*. New York: Scribner.
- Kotlowitz, A. (1992). *There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America*. New York: Doubleday.
- Kozol, J. (1988). *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America*. New York: Ballentine Books.
- McCall, N. (1995). *Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America*. New York: Vintage.
- Richards, K. (1992). *Tender Mercies: Inside the World of a Child Abuse Investigator*. Chicago: The Noble Press/Child Welfare League of America, 1992.
- Richmond, Mary Ellen. (1917). *Social Diagnosis*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Assignment Four: Reflection Paper on Volunteer Service. Due December 14, 2009

The final paper, which represents 25% of the grade, should include the following:

- An introduction which describes the setting or agency
- A brief history of the agency or setting i.e. why was it created and what needs was it designed to serve?
- Describe the encounter with the first person you helped.
- What activities did you perform?
- What problems or difficulties did you encounter?
- What were your feelings about the role of volunteer?
- How different would things be if you were employed at the site?
- What qualifications would you need for the position you would like?
- What would you change if you were the administrator?

- Which client was the most memorable and why?
- How does the information you learned in SW 101 help you understand the clients?

D. Blackboard Assignments:

Each week, short reading assignments or discussion questions will be posted on the Blackboard for this course. Attention to the Blackboard requirements counts as part of participation grade.

E. Class Participation:

A high level of class participation is expected from students in this class. Students are expected to attend classes, to participate in class discussion, to complete volunteer experience and to complete written and oral assignments.

F. Accommodations:

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability to the instructor. It is the responsibility of the student to begin the process. More information can be obtained at <http://disabilitysupport.cua.edu/policiesandprocedures.cfm> .

G. Academic Honesty:

As members of the community of scholars at The Catholic University of America, students are expected to act in accordance with the “Academic Graduate and Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty” policy available at <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrity.cfm> .

H. Course and Instructor Evaluation.

NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at <http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations> using your CUA username and password.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One: 09/01/2009. No class on 09/03/09

The Profession of Social Work: the profession of social work is relatively new although its origins arise in ancient traditions. In this class a review of the profession's growth during the twentieth century will be presented.

Required Readings: Popple & Leichninger: Chapters 3 and 4.

Week Two: 09/08/2009 and 09/10/09.

Competing Perspectives: Social Welfare Concepts: The richness of ideas generated to solve social problems is divided into three concepts by the authors. In this class the conservative, liberal and radical perspectives to the solution to social problems are the main focus.

Required Readings: Popple & Leichninger: Chapters 1 and 2.

Assignment One Due: September 10, 2009

Week Three: 09/15/09 and 09/17/09.

Economic Welfare as a Field of Practice: What are fields of practice for social workers? How does a profession that focuses on the person-in-environment perspective see macro economics in the context of working with one person at a time?

Required Readings: Popple & Leichninger: Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Week Four: 09/22/09 and 09/24/09.

Fields of practice. Child Welfare and Criminal Justice: Child welfare is one of the social work profession's historical areas of expertise. Petitioning for alternative ways of adjudicating cases against children was an early mission for one of the profession's founders, Jane Addams. What is meant by child welfare and how is it practiced in contemporary society?

Required Readings: Popple & Leichninger: Chapters 10 and 11.

Week Five: 09/29/09 and 10/01/09.

Fields of practice. Health Care and Gerontology: The growth of the older population represents a major challenge to American society. According to most experts, the population of those over 65 could increase to more than 70 million in twenty years. What is meant by the term "sandwich generation"?

Required Readings: Popple & Leichninger: Chapters 12 and 15.

Assignment Two Editorial Due: October 1, 2009.

Week Six: 10/06/09 and 10/08/09.

Field of Practice: Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities: According to the Office of the Surgeon General, the science of studying mental health and adolescence is complicated by “normal” developmental changes. What that means for the average young adult is that most with a diagnosable problem do not receive any help at all. How does the profession of social work fit into the mental health issue?

Required Reading: Popple & Leichninger Chapter 13.

Week Seven: 10/13/09 and 10/15/09.

Housing and Homelessness. All year, discussions about the housing crisis have been all over the media. Predictions about higher rates of foreclosure often do not include what may happen to people who lose their homes. And they ignore a substantial population that has experienced a housing crisis for a very long time—the homeless. Who are the homeless and why is solving that problem so difficult?

Discussion: Understanding Housing and Service Delivery to the Homeless.

Required Reading: Popple & Leichninger Chapter 14.

Midterm Exam October 15, 2009

Week Eight: 10/20/09 and 10/22/09.

Working with Diversity: Social Work Skills: The Code of Ethics states that the primacy mission of the social work profession is to “enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty” (NASW, 1999). What does that mean when working with people from other cultures?

Required Readings: Popple & Leichninger: Chapter 5. Brill & Levine: Chapter 4.

Week Nine: 10/27/09 and 10/29/09.

History of Human Services and Theory: There are many, many ways to help human beings and not all people interested in helping should become social workers. Human Service work is a related form of endeavor. How does it work? And what do you need to know?

Required Readings: Brill & Levin: Chapters 1 and 8.

Week Ten: 11/03/09 and 11/05/09.

Understanding the Human Condition and Understanding Ourselves. What is it about ourselves we need to know in order to help other human beings? Aren't good intentions enough?

Required Readings: Brill & Levine: Chapters 2 and 3.

Assignment Three Book Review Due: November 05, 2009

Week Eleven: 11/10/09 and 11/12/09.

Direct Practice Skills: Communication and Relationship: The helping professions use a variety of skills to communicate with people they are helping. For social workers, the most helpful tool is the relationship between the social worker and the client. Is it possible to learn how to establish a relationship?

Required Readings: Brill & Levine: Chapters 5 and 6.

Week Twelve: 11/17/09 and 11/19/09.

Direct Practice Skills—The Problem-Solving Process: Application of the problem-solving method is a skill central to the practice of generalist social work at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. In this section, the atheoretical problem solving process will be the focus.

Required Readings: Brill & Levine: Chapters 7 and 9.

Reading Examination: November 19, 2009.

Week Thirteen: 11/24/09. No class 11/26—Thanksgiving Holiday.

Direct Practice Skills – Group Work: The settlement house movement is what social work historians point to as an example of how the profession got involved in using groups to get work done. Clubs who were concerned with recreation or travel or hobbies composed of specific populations like young adults, women, and children began to be the province of the settlement houses that spread across the country. When the need came to do specific things like teach English, teach sewing, teach employment skills, the group models was the one of choice.

Required Reading: Brill & Levine Chapters 11 and 12.

Week Fourteen: 12/01/09 and 12/03/09

Direct Practice Skill--Utilizing Skills and Techniques: One of the dictums social workers learn states “termination begins at the beginning.” We will begin the process of terminating our relationship as a class by focusing on techniques used by social workers to terminate with a client.

Week Fifteen: No class 12/08/09. 12/10/09.

During our last week of class together, discussion will be focused on how this class fits into your educational future, what can be done to make it better and how does knowledge about this particular profession help you become a more informed member of society.

Reflection Paper Due December 14, 2009.

***Note:** Modifications to the schedule may be made and will be discussed in class.

GRADING POLICY

Grades for this course will be based on the University grading system as described in the catalog. Students will be evaluated through the use of:

Assignments	Percent of Final Grade
Assignment One Poverty Paper	10%
Assignment Two Editorial	10%
Assignment Three Book Review	15%
Assignment Four Reflection Paper	25%
Midterm Examination	15%
Reading Examination	15%
Blackboard Assignments/Participation	10%