



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

National Catholic School of Social Service

Washington, DC 20064

202-319-5458

Fax 202-319-5093

SSS 940

History and Philosophy of Social Work: Knowledge Development for a Profession
(3 credits)

Instructor: Barbara P. Early, MSW, PhD, LCSW

Fall 2009

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I. COURSE PURPOSE

This seminar course sets the stage for the transformation of the master's level practitioner into a doctoral level scholar, a critical thinker who is poised to contribute to future knowledge building for social work. It traces the historical roots of knowledge for the profession of social work. Then, it challenges the student to critically consider how that knowledge may be furthered through various conceptual lenses. Students will be asked to address the questions: What is the nature of the known? What is the relationship between the knower and the known? How do we know? Course content provides the foundation for the application of theoretical and empirical knowledge to the understanding of problems in the interface of the person in the environment.

Each week, the class will examine knowledge in the abstract, but also will apply that knowledge to address contemporary social work questions and issues. From the first week to the last, students will consider and build their own knowledge of one social work or social welfare problem or issue that is of particular interest to them.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the nature of professions in general and social work as a professional discipline
2. To master knowledge of the history of social work and social work education
3. To appreciate the value of critical thinking to a scholar
4. To trace the evolution of thought, specifically thought related to inquiry

5. To distinguish between varied paradigms of inquiry and understand their relation to theory and research.
6. To demonstrate mastery of lecture material, class discussion and required reading material.
7. To demonstrate competence in scholarly writing including the crafting of a problem statement, a review of relevant, scholarly, theoretical, and empirical literature, and synthesis of ideas into a coherent exposition.
8. To establish a foundation for the building of knowledge in a chosen area of interest throughout the curriculum of the PhD program

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts

- Blackburn, S. (1999). *Think*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ehrenreich, J. (1985). *The altruistic imagination: A history of social work and social policy in the United States*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Kuhn, T. (1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions, 3rd ed.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Orcutt, B. (1990). *Science and inquiry in social work*. New York: Columbia Press.
- Reamer, F. (1993). *The philosophical foundations of social work*. New York: Columbia Press

B. Recommended Texts

- Guba, E. (1990). *The Paradigm Dialogue*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Reisch, M. & Andrews, A (2002). *The road not taken: A history of radical social work in the United States*. New York: Routledge
- Scruton, R. (2006). *A Short History of Modern Philosophy*. New York: Routledge Classics.
- Stevenson, L. & Haberman, D. (2004). *Ten Theories of Human Nature*. New York: Oxford University Press.

C. Some Social Work Classics That May Be of Interest

- Addams, Jane. (orig. 1910; reprinted 1961). *Twenty Years at Hull House*. New York: McMillan Company.
- Bartlett, Harriet. (1970). *The Common Base of Social Work Practice*. Washington, D.C.: National Association of Social Workers.
- Biestek, Felix. (1957). *The Casework Relationship*. Chicago, Ill: Loyola University Press.
- Cabot, Robert. (orig. 1915; reprinted 1988). *Social Service and the Art of Healing*. New York: Moffat, Yard, & Co.
- Reynolds, Bertha. (orig 1951; reprinted 1987). *Social Work and Social Living: Explorations in Philosophy and Practice*. Silver Spring, MD: Natinal Association of Social Workers.

Specht, Harry. & Courtney, M. (1994). *Unfaithful Angels*. New York: The Free Press

Towle, Charlotte. (orig. 1945; revised 1965). *Common Human Needs*. New York: National Association of Social Workers.

Towle, Charlotte (1954). *The Learner in Education for the Professions*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

C. Course Assignments and Grading Policy Grades for the course are based on the University grading system. Please refer to separate Assignment Handout

Assignment I	Problem Statement	Due Class 5 Sept 29, 2009	15%
Assignment II	Historical Perspective	Due Class 9 Oct 27, 2009	25%
Assignment III	State of Knowledge	Due class 14 Dec 1, 2009	40%
Class Participation	Class participation: students are expected to attend all classes, have read in advance of class, contribute written questions and comments on the reading, and contribute regularly to meaningful discussion.		20%

D. Course and Instructor Evaluation
 The NCSSS doctoral program requires evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, an evaluation form will be distributed in class. Results will not be given to the instructor until grades are submitted. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. Scholastic Expectations
 Please refer to *NCSSS Announcements* or appropriate Program Handbook (available on the NCSSS web page) for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and should be carefully proof read by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

Additional Behavioral Requirements:

Students are expected to maintain accepted standards of professional conduct and personal integrity in the classroom. Students should:

- Attend all classes and contribute constructively to the classroom culture
- Recognize and avoid behavior that jeopardizes the learning/teaching environment of other students or the instructor
- Demonstrate competence in planning academic activities and in following through on those plans
- Reasonably respond to and respect others' reactions to one's comments or actions in the classroom
- Use an appropriate level of class time and instructor's time and attention in and out of class
- Behave in a manner that is consistent with the ethical principles of the social work profession.

B. Academic Honesty

Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and appropriate Program Handbooks.

C. Accommodations

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) <http://disabilityservices.cua.edu/> or 202-310-5211, and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

Class Schedule

UNIT I: THE ROOTS OF KNOWLEDGE FOR A PROFESSION

Class 1 **Introduction to Knowledge for a Profession:** What is a profession? Is social work a profession? What makes social work unique?

Required Readings

**** Please read the course outline, it's purpose, objectives, units of study, and assignments**

Austin, D. (1983). The Flexner myth and the history of social work. *Social Service Review*. 357-377.

Blackburn, S. (1999). Introduction. In *Think* (pp. 1-114). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Early, Barbara P., Smith, Elizabeth, & Zabora, James (2006). The person and the environment: Social workers' mission to actualize the common good. *Current Issues in Catholic Higher Education* 25 (1) Special Issue on Professions and the Common Good, 95-108.

Flexner, A. (2001). Is social work a profession? *Research on Social Work Practice* 11 (2), 151-165. (originally published in 1915).

Recommended Readings

Bartlett, H. (1958). Working definition of social work practice. *Social Work* 3 (2), 5-8. Reprinted (2003) in *Research on Social Work Practice* 13 (3), 267-270.

Greenwood, E. (1957). Attributes of a profession. *Social Work*, 45-55.

Class 2 **Social Work's Historical Heritage:** Knowledge for the profession; early 20th Century social work. Cause v. Case

Required Readings

Ehrenreich, J. (1985). Preface, The origins of American social policy, and Casework and the emergence of social work as a profession. In *The altruistic imagination: A history of social work and social policy in the United States* (pp.9-77). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

Kuhn, T. (1996). Preface and Introduction: A role for history. In *The structure of scientific revolutions, 3rd ed.* (pp. vii-9). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Orcutt, B. (1990). Diversity in philosophical and scientific thought: Implications for inquiry. In *Science and Inquiry in Social Work* (23-48). New York: Columbia Press.

Recommended Readings

- Austin, D. (1997). The institutional development of social work education: The first 100 years – and beyond. *Journal of Social Work Education* 33 (3). 599-612.
- Kendall, K. (2000). Octavia Hill: The first start at training; The settlement movement: Advances in training; Enter the Charity Organization Society; The search for a scientific base; and The upward path to the academy. In *Social Work Education: Its Origins in Europe* (pp. 1-60). Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education.
- Toikko, T. (1999). Sociological and psychological discourses in social casework during the 1920's. *Families in Society*, 351-358.

Class 3

Is Social Work a Science? What constitutes science? The construction of the welfare state and social work's role

Required Readings

- Ehrenreich, J. (1985). The construction of the welfare state, and the crisis in social work, 1929-1945. In *The altruistic imagination: A history of social work and social policy in the United States* (pp.78-138). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press
- Kuhn, T. (1996). The route to normal science, the nature of normal science, and normal science as puzzle-solving. In *The structure of scientific revolutions, 3rd ed.* (pp. 10-42). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Orcutt, B. (1990). Scientific roots in social work practice. In *Science and Inquiry in Social Work* (pp. 123-152). New York: Columbia Press.

Recommended Readings

- Kirk, S. & Reid, W. (2002). Knowledge, science, and the profession of social work and Science and Social Work: A historical perspective. In *Science and Social Work: A Critical Appraisal*, (pp. 1-50). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Paley, J. (1987). Social work and the sociology of knowledge. *British Journal of Social Work* 17. 169-186.

Class 4

Broadening of Knowledge: Introduction of paradigm; the mid-20th century in social work

Required Readings

- Ehrenreich, J. (1985). Social policy in the affluent society, 1945-1960; Kennedy, Johnson, and the Great Society; In *The altruistic imagination: A history of social work and social policy in the United States* (pp.139-186). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press
- Guba, E. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialog. In *The Paradigm Dialogue* (pp.17-30). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kuhn, T. (1996). The priority of Paradigms, Anomaly and the emergence of scientific discoveries, Crisis and the emergence of scientific theories,

Postscript-1969. In *The structure of scientific revolutions*, 3rd ed. (pp. 43-76, and 174-210). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Recommended Readings

- Dobbert, M. (1990). Discussion on methodology. In Guba, E. *The Paradigm Dialogue* (286-289). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Heshusius, L. (1990). Discussion on criteria. In Guba, E. *The Paradigm Dialogue* (198-201). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hudson, W. (1982). Scientific imperatives in social work research and practice. *Social Service Review*. 246-258.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (2003). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (2nd ed) (pp. 163-185).
- Marshall, C (1990). Goodness criteria: Are they objective or judgment calls?. In Guba, E. *The Paradigm Dialogue* (188-197). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Class 5

The Past as Prelude: Evolution and revolution in thought

Required Readings

- Ehrenreich, J. (1985). A house divided: the second crisis in social work, 1960-1980 and the next phase. In *The altruistic imagination: A history of social work and social policy in the United States* (pp.187-233). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press
- Glaser, George (2001). Reflections of a social work practitioner: Bridging the 19th and 21st centuries. *Research on Social Work Practice* 11 (2), 190-200.
- Kuhn, T. (1996). The response to crisis, the nature and necessity of scientific revolutions, and revolutions as changes of world view. In *The structure of scientific revolutions*, 3rd ed. (pp. 77-135). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Recommended Readings

- Cowger, C. (2003). The values of the research university should be maximized to strengthen social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education* 39 (1), 43-48.
- Dinerman, M. The 1959 curriculum study: Contributions of Werner W. Boehm. In Dinerman, M. & Geismar, L.(Eds.) *A quarter-century of social work education* (pp. 3-23). Washington: NASW.
- Peebles-Wilkins & Shank. (2003). A response to Charles Cowger: Shaping the future of social work as an institutional response to standards. *Journal of Social Work Education* 39 (1), 49-56.

UNIT II: SYSTEMATIC THOUGHT

Class 6 Epistemology

Required Readings

Blackburn, S. (1999). Knowledge, and Mind. In *Think* (pp. 15-80). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reamer, F. (1993). Epistemology. In *The Philosophical Foundations of Social Work* (pp. 119-154). New York: Columbia Press

Kuhn, T. (1996). The invisibility of revolutions, The resolution of revolutions, and Progress through revolutions. In *The structure of scientific revolutions, 3rd ed.* (pp. 136-173). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Recommended Readings

Gambrill, E. (2005). Different Views of Knowledge and how to get it: Exploring your personal epistemology. Ch. 4 in *Critical thinking in clinical practice: Improving the quality of judgments and decisions*. 2nd Ed. Wiley & Sons: Hoboken, NJ.

Reamer, F. (1993). Political philosophy. Chapter 1 in *The Philosophical Foundations of Social Work*. New York: Columbia Press, pp 1-38.

Class 7 Reason and Logic

Required Readings

Blackburn, S. (1999). Free will, The self, and Reasoning. In *Think* (pp. 81-148, 193-232). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reamer, F. (1993). Logic. In *The Philosophical Foundations of Social Work* (pp. 83-118). New York: Columbia Press

Recommended Readings

Heineman, M. (1981). The obsolete scientific imperative in social work research. *Social Service Review*, 371-397.

Class 8 Aesthetics

Required Readings

Damianakis, T (2007). Social work's dialogue with the arts: Epistemological and practice intersections. *Families in Society* 88 (4). 525-533.

Graybeal, C. (2007). Evidence for the art of social work. *Families in Society* 88 (4). 513-524.

Reamer, F. (1993). Aesthetics. In *The Philosophical Foundations of Social Work* (155-194). New York: Columbia Press

Recommended Readings

Powell, W. (2007). "Till death do us part": Evidence of the rocky marriage of artistry and science. *Families in Society* 88 (4). 505-507

Class 9

Moral Philosophy

Required Readings

- Blackburn, S. (1999). God, and What to do. In *Think* (pp. 149-192 and 270-298). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brill, C. (2001) Looking at the social work profession through the eye of the NASW Code of Ethics. *Research on Social Work Practice* 11(2), 223-234.
- Reamer, F. (1993). Moral philosophy. In *The Philosophical Foundations of Social Work*. New York: Columbia Press, pp 39-82.

Recommended Readings

- Gordon, W. (1965). Knowledge and value: Their distinction and relationship in clarifying social work practice. *Social Work*, 32-39.
- Reamer, F (1998). The evolution of social work ethics. *Social Work* 43 (6), 488-500.

Class 10

Applying Thought to Practice and Research

Required Reading

- Cnaan, R. & Dichter, M. (2008). Thoughts on the use of knowledge in social work practice. *Research on Social Work Practice* 18(4). 278-284.
- Gomory, T. (2001). A fallibilistic response to Thyer's theory of theory-free empirical research in social work practice, *Journal of Social Work Education* 37 (1), 26-50.
- Orcutt, B. (1990). Reflective Inquiry: Orthodox heuristic research, & An alternative paradigm in heuristic inquiry. In *Science and Inquiry in Social Work* (66-101). New York: Columbia Press.
- Thyer, B. (2001). What is the role of theory in research on social work practice? *Journal of Social Work Education* 37 (1), 9-25.

Recommended Readings

- Brekke, J (1986). Scientific imperatives in social work research: Pluralism is not skepticism. *Social Service Review* 538-554
- Gambrill, E. (2006). Evidence-Based practice and policy: Choices ahead. *Research on Social Work Practice* 16 (3), 338-357.
- Reid, W. (2002). Knowledge for direct social work practice: An analysis of trends. *Social Service Review* 76 (1), 6-33
- Robbins, S., Chatterjee, P., & Canda, E. (1999). Ideology, scientific theory, and social work practice. *Families in Society* 80 (4), 374-384.

**UNIT III: TOWARDS THE FUTURE OF THOUGHT IN SOCIAL WORK;
SHIFTING PARADIGMS OF INQUIRY**

Class 11 **Paradigms of Inquiry: Positivism and Post-Positivism; Quantitative
Methods of Research**

Required Readings

- Blackburn, S. (1999). The world. In *Think* (pp. 233-269). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Otto, H. & Ziegler, H. (2008). The notion of causal impact in evidence based social work: An introduction to the special issue on what works. *Research on Social Work Practice* 18(4). 273-277.
- Thyer, B. (2008). The quest for evidence-based practice?: We are all positivists! *Research on Social Work Practice* 18(4). 339-345.

Recommended Readings

- McNeill, T. (2006). Evidence-Based practice in an age of relativism; Toward a model for practice. *Social Work* 51 (2), 146-156.

Class 12 **Paradigms of Inquiry: Constructivism, Critical Theory; Qualitative
Methods of Research**

Required Readings

- Atherton, C.R. (1993). Empiricists versus social constructionists: Time for a cease fire. *Families in society* 74 (10), 617-624.
- Swigonski, M (1993). Feminist standpoint theory and the questions of social work research. *Affilia* 8 (2), 171-183.
- Orcutt, B. (1990). Hermeneutics: Philosophy and perspectives in inquiry and Phenomenological considerations in philosophy of science and clinical research. In *Science and Inquiry in Social Work* (pp. 102-111 and 112-118). New York: Columbia Press.

Recommended Readings

- Franklin, C. (1995). Expanding the vision of the social constructionist debates: creating relevance for practitioners. *Families in Society*,395-407.
- Freud, S. (1999). The social construction of normality. *Families in Society* 80 (4), 333-339.
- Meinert, R. (1998). Consequences for professional social work under conditions of postmodernity. *Social Thought* 18 (3), 41-54.
- Popkewitz, T. (1990). Whose future? Whose past Notes on critical theory and methodology. In Guba, E. *The Paradigm Dialogue* (46-66). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schwandt, T. (1990). Paths to inquiry in the social disciplines: scientific, constructivist, and critical theory methodologies. In Guba, E. *The Paradigm Dialogue* (258-276). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Class 13

Critical Thinking in Social Work

Required Readings

- Wong, J. (2001). The state of the profession. *Research on Social Work Practice* 11(2). 217-222.
- Rullo, D. (2001). The profession of clinical social work. *Research on Social Work Practice* 11(2), 210-216.
- Heineman Pieper, M. (1990). The heuristic paradigm: A unifying and comprehensive approach to social work research. *Smith College Studies in Social Work* 60 (3), 8-34.

Recommended Readings

- Reamer, F. (1993). Afterword: The place of philosophy in social work. In *The Philosophical Foundations of Social Work* (pp. 195-200). New York: Columbia Press
- Gordon, W. (1983). Social work revolution or evolution? *Social Work* 181-185.
- Gambrill, E. (2000). The role of critical thinking in evidenced based social work. In P.Allen-Meares & C. Garvin (Eds.), *The handbook of social work direct practice*, (pp. 43-64). Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications
- Paul, R and Elder, L. (2001). *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts & Tools*. The Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Class 14

Critical Thinking for Doctoral Education in Social Work

Required Readings

- Orcutt, B. (1990). Doctoral education: Influence for research and scientific development, and Educational preparation for the scholar-scientist in social work practice. In *Science and Inquiry in Social Work* (pp.179-200). New York: Columbia Press.
- Martinez-Brawley, E & Zorita, P (2007). Tacit and codified knowledge in social work: A critique of standardization in education and practice. *Families in Society* 88 (4). 534-542.

Recommended Readings

- Reamer, F. (1993). Afterword: The place of philosophy in social work. In *The Philosophical Foundations of Social Work* (pp. 195-200). New York: Columbia Press
- Gambrill, E. (2005). Different Views of Knowledge and how to get it: Exploring your personal epistemology. Ch. 4 in *Critical thinking in clinical practice: Improving the quality of judgments and decisions*. 2nd Ed. Wiley & Sons: Hoboken, NJ.
- Fischer, J. (1993). Empirically-based practice: The end of ideology. *Journal of Social Service Research`* 18 (1/2), 19-64.
- Dinerman, M. The 1959 curriculum study: Contributions of Werner W. Boehm. In Dinerman, M. & Geismar, L.(Eds.) *A quarter-century of social work education* (pp. 3-23). Washington: NASW.