I. COURSE PURPOSE:

Senior Comprehensive Assessment: Program and Graduation Requirement: The product of a Liberal Arts education is an individual who can engage in critical thinking. In the discipline of social work, our focus is on evidence-based practice or a “process of using information that includes the clinician’s expertise, the client’s wishes and circumstances, and the best available empirical research, while considering the contextual factors” (Drisko & Grady, 2012). Evidence-based social work practice requires that the social worker be able to engage in critical thinking.

The purpose of this seminar is to prepare senior social work majors to fulfill the graduation requirement of a comprehensive assessment of knowledge. In the undergraduate social work program, this requirement takes the form of a scholarly paper. Students practice critical thinking and its application to social work by addressing a social work issue through the paper. The course and the paper are graded independently. Consistent with University policy, the students earn a letter grade for the course. The comprehensive assessment is graded Pass/Pass with Honors/Fail. A Student who fails to pass the Senior Comprehensive Assessment must repeat the Assessment no earlier than 60 days following the most recent failure, until it is passed. No student may receive an undergraduate degree from The National Catholic School of Social Service until the Senior Comprehensive Assessment is satisfactorily completed with a grade of Pass or Pass with Honors.

Course: Students will write draft sections of their scholarly paper to demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking and competency in the practice behaviors mandated by the Council on Social Work Education. Students are encouraged to pick a topic that relates to the field education placement in order to incorporate that curriculum area, field education, into the course. During the seminar, students will work with a number of subject matter experts including the University Writing Center and the Mullen Library social work librarian. Students will be guided, through content reviews as well as through handouts and exercises, in the application of critical thinking skills to their own literature search, its analysis in the content areas, and to their own section.
drafts. Students will also gain the skill of peer review and feedback by reviewing and evaluating each other’s work.

Rationale: Liberal Arts and Social Work: Because of their Liberal Arts education (distribution courses), students possess a breadth of content specific knowledge as well as scientific and philosophical reasoning skills which are essential to critical thinking. The profession of Social Work requires its practitioners to solve problems and make sound practice decisions by choosing wisely among options. Practitioners must select those options that, compared to others, are most likely to result in specific outcomes. The inability to think critically places clients at-risk of ineffective intervention and helper-induced harm which is in direct contradiction to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (2008).

II. COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has published a list of 10 core competencies for social work education (CSWE, 2008). Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following practice behaviors within the competencies appropriate for this course. The following is a list of the competencies and the practice behaviors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Practice Behavior</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.</td>
<td>1.5 Engage in career long learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice</td>
<td>2.2 Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW 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</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgements</td>
<td>3.1 Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3.2 Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation.</td>
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<td>3.3 Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Engage diversity and difference in practice</td>
<td>4.1 Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate or create or enhance privilege and power</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research</td>
<td>6.1 Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.2 Use research evidence to inform practice</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Competency | Practice Behavior
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7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment | 7.1 Use conceptual frameworks to guide the process of assessment, intervention, and evaluation and
7.2 Critique and apply knowledge to understand person in environment
8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services | 8.1 Analyze, formulate, and advocate for social policies that advance social well-being
9. Respond to contexts that shape practice | 9.1 Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services

### III. ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To demonstrate understanding of the components of an argument: claims, premises and conclusions, warrants and skill in reflecting these components in one’s problem statement.

2. To demonstrate knowledge of the criteria for evaluating arguments: relevance, acceptability, sufficient grounds and rebuttal and skill in utilizing these criteria when writing the paper.

3. To demonstrate beginning expertise in a specific area of social work practice based on the student’s choice of topic for the scholarly paper.

4. To demonstrate the ability to analyze articles according to the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) curriculum areas that constitute the foundation for Generalist Social work practice:
   - **Values & Ethics:** Apply knowledge of the Code of Ethics and social work values to enhance understanding of the issue under consideration
   - **Populations-at-risk & Social and Economic Justice:** Apply knowledge of populations-at-risk and theories of social and economic justice to understanding of the issue
   - **Diversity:** Apply knowledge of diversity to understanding of the issue
   - **Human Behavior:** Apply knowledge of bio-psycho-social-spiritual development and theoretical frameworks of human behavior to analyze the issue
   - **Social Welfare Policy & Services:** Apply knowledge of social welfare policy to analyze an existing social policy (either a federal, state, local, and agency policy) and a program, in the context of American social welfare history and contemporary society
• Social Work Practice: Apply knowledge of generalist practice to recommending a course of action to be utilized for addressing this issue; course of action should be a theoretical approach supported by empirical evidence
• Research: Apply knowledge of research to evaluate research studies in the literature and to formulate a bivariate research proposal.

5. To demonstrate self-knowledge as a key component of critical thinking; to recognize personal values, client values, agency values and competing values.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts


Assigned readings on course Blackboard.

Students are also expected to use texts, lecture notes, assignments, handouts, exams, etc. acquired over the course of their studies as well as experiential learning acquired through their field education placement.

B. Recommended Texts

See your syllabi for texts used in previous courses.

C. Other Recommended Resources and Media

National Catholic School of Social Service http://ncsss.cua.edu/


D. Writing Center Participation

As part of this class, students are expected to use the Writing Center on a regular, on-going basis. The details of this requirement will be outlined in the first class.

E. Course Assignments

Assignment 1: Portfolio of at least 15 articles Week 5
Assignment 2: 10 Section Drafts As assigned
Assignment 3: In Class Presentations and final paper Week 14
F. Grading Policy

Assignment 1: Portfolio of Articles 25%
Assignment 2: 10 Section Drafts (5% each) 50%
Assignment 3: In Class Presentation 5%
Attendance and Participation: 10%
Writing Center Participation 10%

*** In order for the thesis to be considered for Pass with Honors, you must be in good standing at spring break.

G. 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. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

H. Attendance and Participation

Students are required to attend all classes and are expected to participate meaningfully in class discussions. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings, arrive to class on time, and be fully prepared to actively participate in all class exercises and discussions.

The grade for attendance and participation will be lowered by 5 points for each absence. Arriving to class late or leaving early (30 minutes or more) will be considered an absence. Class participation requires the student to have reviewed the readings in advance, and be fully present and engaged in the material for the entire class meeting. When in class, all electronic devices should be turned off or set to silent operation. Computers or tablets should be used in class to further learning only. If they are used for non-academic purposes during class time, the instructor reserves the right to prohibit their use in class.

Participation also includes full participation in the Writing Center and Library sessions, including completion of the literature search assignment. Participation also includes full involvement in buddy writing, peer reviews, and individual rewriting sessions.

V. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. Scholastic Expectations

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements or Program Handbook 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.

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) and submit documentation of a disability. Please see the following website for more information about the process: http://dss.cua.edu/. If you have followed the DSS process, please follow the instructions about meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss accommodations.
## Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topics and Readings</th>
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</table>
| 1     | **Overview of Thesis Assignment – 1/09/17**  
|       | CUA Writing Center  
|       | **Required Reading:**  
|       | APA Style Manual: Chapters 3 & 4: Writing Clearly & Concisely &  
|       | Mechanics of Style  
|       | **Martin Luther King Holiday 1/16/17 No Class** |
| 2     | **Library Session – 1/23/17**  
|       | Ms. Linda Todd, Social Work Librarian  
|       | *How to conduct searches of the scholarly literature*  
|       | **Required Reading:**  
|       | Thyer, B.A. (2005). A note from the editor: A comprehensive listing of  
|       | (on BB)  
|       | Lester & Lester: Chapter 2: Discovering Your Topic (on BB).  
| 3     | **How do I begin? – Writing a Problem Statement - 1/30/17**  
|       | CUA Writing Center  
|       | **Required Reading:**  
|       | Galvin: Writing Literature Reviews (on BB)  
|       | Lester & Lester: Chapter 10: Blending Reference Material Into Your Report  
|       | (on BB)  
| 4     | **Library Research Consultations – 2/06/17**  
|       | Each student should thoroughly read and bring copies of their articles to class  
|       | for review in preparation for portfolio of articles assignment |
CSWE Content Area: Human Behavior & Social Environment – 2/13/16
Dr. Charles

Required Reading:
Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda: Chapter 1. (Your library)

CSWE Content Area: Practice – 2/20/17

Required Reading:
Turner: Chapter 1: Theory and Social Work Treatment (on BB)

CSWE Content Area: Social Welfare Policies & Services – 2/27/17

Required Reading:


Spring Recess Begins March 6th No Class.

CSWE Content Area: Research – 3/13/17

Clearing the Research Cobwebs

Required Reading:

CSWE Content Area: Diversity & Populations at Risk – 3/20/17

Required Reading:
Vargas & Koss-Chioino: Chapter 1. (on BB)
CSWE Content Area: Values & Ethics, Social & Economic Justice, Catholic Social Teachings – 3/27/17

Required Reading:
Reamer: Chapter 1: The Nature of Ethics
   Chapter 2: Fundamental Ethical Issues in Social Work (on BB)

Knowledge Building – 4/03/17
Writing Conclusions and Abstracts
Bring in an article on future directions related to your topic

Individual Consultations– 4/10/17

Easter Monday 4/17/17. No Class.

Presentations – 4/24/17
Final Papers Due