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

B. Recommended Texts

C. Some Social Work Classics That May Be of Interest


D. **Website**


---

**Course Assignments and Grading Policy**

Grades for the course are based on the University grading system. Please refer to separate Assignment Handout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment I</th>
<th>Statement of Problem in Context</th>
<th>Due Class 5 Sept 25, 2012</th>
<th>15%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment II</td>
<td>Historical Perspective on the Problem Review</td>
<td>Due Class 7 Oct 16, 2012</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment III</td>
<td>Comprehensive Literature Review</td>
<td>Due class 13 Nov.27, 2012</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Written questions and/or comments on reading submitted by 10:00AM day of class.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

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**

**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.

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.

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: HISTORY OF KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORK

Class 1 What is a profession? Is social work a profession? What is unique to the discipline of social work?

Required Readings

Recommended Readings

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

Required Readings

Recommended Readings
Class 3

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

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


Class 4

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

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**Class #5**

**The second crisis in social work;** From the Milford Conference to the Working Definition and into the 1980’s

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**UNIT II: CATEGORIES OF KNOWLEDGE**

**Class #6**

**Knowledge through logic and reason**

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**Class 7**

**The Objective Knowledge of Empiricism**: knowing of the senses. Logical positivism

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**Class 8**

**Theoretical Knowledge**: Is it necessary in an empirical world?

**Required Reading**


Recommended Readings
Brekke, J (1986). Scientific imperatives in social work research: Pluralism is not skepticism. *Social Service Review* 538-554

**Class 9**

**Aesthetics and values:** The softer side of social work

**Required Readings**

**Recommended Readings**

**Class 10**

**The Subjective Knowledge of Constructivism:** The shift from Modern to Post-Modern, the art of interpretation.

**Required Readings**

**Recommended Readings**


Class 11 Critical Theory: Celebrating ideology

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


UNIT III: THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL WORK

Class 12 Critical thinking in social work: Preparing Stewards of the Discipline; Doctoral education in social work

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Class 13

New Trends in Social Work  What is the state of the profession?

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Class 14  

**Is Social Work One Profession?** Coming full circle – should we be one profession?

**Required Readings**

**Recommended Readings**