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
To trace the evolution of thought, specifically thought related to inquiry
To distinguish between varied paradigms of inquiry and understand their relation to
text and research.
To demonstrate mastery of lecture material, class discussion and required reading
material.
To demonstrate competence in scholarly writing including the drafting of a problem
statement, a review of relevant, scholarly, theoretical, and empirical literature, and
synthesis of ideas into a coherent exposition.
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
and social policy in the United States*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell
University Press.
The University of Chicago Press.
York: Columbia Press.

B. Recommended Texts
Publications.
Columbia Press.
radical social work in the United States*. New York: Routledge
Routledge Classics.
New York: Oxford University Press.

C. Some Social Work Classics That May Be of Interest
University Press.
Cabot, Robert. (orig. 1915; reprinted 1988). *Social Service and the Art of
Reynolds, Bertha. (orig 1951; reprinted 1987). *Social Work and Social
Living: Explorations in Philosophy and Practice*. Silver Spring,
MD: Natinal Association of Social Workers.


D. **Website**

E. **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 24, 2013</th>
<th>15%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment II</td>
<td>Historical Perspective on the Problem Review</td>
<td>Due Class 8 Oct 22, 2013</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment III</td>
<td>Comprehensive Literature Review</td>
<td>Due class 13 Nov.26, 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 proofread 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.
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**

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.


Recommended Readings

Class 7  
**The Objective Knowledge of Empiricism:** knowing of the senses. Logical positivism

Required Readings


Thyer, B. (2013). Evidence-Based Practice or Evidence-Guided Practice: A Rose by Any Other Name Would Smell as Sweet. Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services, 94(2), 79-84.


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**


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**Class 14**

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

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**

