



**Course Syllabus: Introduction to Social Work**  
**College of Health Sciences and Human Services**  
**SOWK 2423**  
**Spring 2021**

**Contact Information**

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**Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to the social work profession, its history, values, ethics, concepts, skills and activities, and the contemporary context of social work practice. It will investigate the relationship between social welfare and American society from the historical development and the contemporary perspective of the social work profession. The role of social work in meeting common human needs are examined in various agency settings with the diverse client groups served by the social work profession. This course is designed to assist students in clarification and selection of social work as a major. It is required of all applicants to the social work program but it is not limited to them.

**Course Goals and Objectives**

The knowledge, values and skills expected of a student who completes SOWK 2423 are:

Knowledge learned will be:

- Students will become familiar with the social work mission, practice settings, and client populations

Skills learned will be:

- Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development

Values learned will be:

- Identify with the social work profession and conduct themselves accordingly
- Learn to apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice
- Attend to professional roles and boundaries
- Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice

- Make ethical decisions by applying the NASW code of ethics

### **Textbook & Instructional Materials**

**Required:** Kirst- Ashman, K. (2015). Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare: Critical Thinking Perspectives (5th Ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Cengage Learning.

**Required:** Grobman, Linda May. (2019). Days in the Lives of Social Workers (5th Ed.). Harrisburg, PA: The New Social Worker Press.

### **Writing Assistance**

Begin drafting assignments as early as possible and take advantage of the [MSU Writing Center](#). The MSU Writing Center is committed to serving the university's academic mission. It provides trained writing tutors and facilitates writing workshops. Students are invited to bring any kind of writing to the Writing Center. They do not provide an editing service; instead, they offer feedback and support to help writers develop into more effective communicators.

### **Student Handbook**

**Refer to:** [Student Handbook 2020-2021](#)

### **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

Academic Dishonesty includes cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

## **MSU Counseling Resources**

The MSU Counseling Center recognizes that during this time of change, many may feel uncertainty and fear along with a host of other emotions. We are committed to helping our campus community through this difficult time.

The Counseling Center has counselors working remotely to help students. Therapy sessions are conducted through the Therapy Assist Online (TAO) video conferencing platform. Students at home or on-campus can have a telephone or video conference session using this platform. Appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Call to schedule 940-397-4618. We are not scheduling in-person sessions in the center in order to keep everyone safe and healthy. [Click here to access additional counseling resources.](#)

## **College Policies**

### **Campus Carry Rules/Policies**

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#).

### **Smoking/Tobacco Policy**

Midwestern State University seeks to provide a safe, healthy, pleasant environment for its faculty, staff, and students. To this end, the use of tobacco products, including smoke and smokeless tobacco, and the advertising, sale, free distribution, and discarding of tobacco products shall be prohibited in all indoor and outdoor facilities and in all university vehicles. The policy extends to faculty, staff, students, vendors, guests, and visitors.

### **Alcohol and Drug Policy**

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

## **Professional Expectations of Student Behavior**

Midwestern State University Department of Social Work is mandated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to foster and evaluate professional behavioral development for all students in social work courses. The Department of Social Work also bears a responsibility to the community at large to produce fully trained professional social workers who consciously exhibit the knowledge, values, and skills of the profession of social work. The values of the profession are codified in the [NASW Code of Ethics](#). Given this context, all students taking classes in the social work program will be expected to exhibit the following ethical standards of behavior.

1. **Accountability:** Complete reading assignments, participate in class discussions, and submit assignments on time.
  - a. *Participate in group activities and assignments at a comparable level to peers.*
  - b. *Complete work in a timely fashion and according to directions provided.*
2. **Respect:** Treat all your peers, your instructors and all those you come in contact with, with dignity and respect at all times.
  - a. *Give feedback to peers in a constructive manner.*
  - b. *Approach conflict with peers or instructors in a cooperative manner.*
  - c. *Use positive and nonjudgmental language.*
3. **Confidentiality:** Treat any personal information that you hear about a peer or an instructor as strictly confidential.
  - a. *Maintain any information shared in class, dyads, or smaller groups within that unit.*
  - b. *Use judgment in self-disclosing information of a very personal nature in the class. (Class time should not be used as therapy or treatment. If students feel the need to talk about issues they are struggling with, they may consult with their instructor to receive a referral for counseling.)*
  - c. *Never use names of clients or disclose other identifying information in the classroom.*
4. **Competence:** Apply yourself to all your academic pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness, meeting all deadlines as given by your instructors. Constantly strive to improve your abilities.
  - a. *Seek out appropriate support when having difficulties to ensure success in completing course requirements.*
  - b. *Take responsibility for the quality of completed tests and assignments.*
  - c. *Strive to work toward greater awareness of personal issues that may impede your effectiveness with clients.*
5. **Integrity:** Practice honesty with yourself, your peers, and your instructors. Constantly strive to improve your abilities.
  - a. *Academic: Commit yourself to learning the rules of citing others work properly.*

- b. *Do your own work and take credit only for your own work.*
- c. *Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed.*
- d. *Accept and benefit from constructive feedback*

*Submission of Papers: Students will submit their written assignments on paper and electronically. Electronic copies will be subject to plagiarism analysis and will be kept in an electronic file for future reference. A student may not submit the same paper, or essentially the same, paper, project, assignment, or finished project to an instructor, which has been submitted to another instructor, unless specifically authorized by both instructors to do so.*

6. **Diversity:** Strive to become more open to people, ideas, and creeds that you are not familiar with. Embrace diversity.
  - a. *Maintain speech free of racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, or stereotyping.*
  - b. *Exhibit a willingness to serve diverse groups of persons.*
  - c. *Demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact.*
7. **Communication:** Strive to improve both verbal and written communication skills as these skills are used heavily in interactions with clients and peers and also with creating client records.
  - a. *Demonstrate assertive communication with peers and instructors.*
  - b. *Practice positive, constructive, respectful, and professional communication skills with peers and instructor: (body language, empathy, listening)*
8. **Social Justice:** Strive to deepen your commitment to social justice for all populations at risk.
  - a. *Demonstrate an understanding of how institutional and personal oppression impede the experience of social justice for individuals and groups.*
  - b. *Strive to learn about methods of empowering populations and enhancing social justice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.*

### **Consequences of Unacceptable Behavior**

The Department of Social Work may terminate a student's participation in the program on the basis of professional non-suitability if the Department's faculty members determine that a student's behavior has constituted a significant violation or pattern of violations of the NASW Code of Ethics, the MSU of Social Work Student Manual, or the MSU Academic Policies and Regulations. Examples of violations that may lead to termination include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Failure to meet or maintain academic grade point requirements as established by the University and the Social Work program.
2. Academic cheating, lying, or plagiarism (turnitin.com will be used to check the originality of the text).
3. Behavior judged to be in violation of the NASW Code of Ethics.

4. Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity, or emotional stability requisite for professional practice.
5. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff (at the department or in the field placement).
6. Consistent failure to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills necessary for forming professional relationships (for example, unable to demonstrate nonjudgmental attitude or unable to allow client self-determination).
7. Documented evidence of criminal activity occurring during the course of study.

### **Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

### **Attendance Policy:**

Students are allowed **three** excused absences as defined by the MSU absence policy. For an absence to be excused, the student must inform the professor of the reason for the absence and provide documentation supporting the need for the class absence. After the fifth absence, the student will be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students.

**\*You must have attended class (face to face or zoom) in order to be eligible to take the weekly quizzes\***

If the student misses a scheduled quiz/examination, documentation must be submitted in order to reschedule the quiz/examination.

**\*Good attendance may be rewarded with extra points on your final grade. It could make the difference between an A and B!\***

**\*\*Students are expected to attend class in person. Zoom attendance is allowed only with correspondence from the Dean's office or permission prior to class has been obtained from the instructor via email\*\***

## **Grading**

**Table 1:** Student achievement will be evaluated on the basis of written assignments, class exams, class participation, and class presentation.

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>GRADING</b>
Weekly Quizzes	Weekly - Fridays @ 10pm	25%
Papers: two & Agency Presentation	February 9th; March 26th; last two weeks of semester	25%
Final Exam	April 23rd	25%
Discussion Posts - three	Feb. 26th, March 26th & April 2nd	10%
Attendance		15%

**Table 2:** Weighted average will be used to calculate final grade.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
A	90-100
B	80 to 89
C	70 to 79
D	60 to 69
F	Less than 60

**\*Please note: A course grade less than C in social work classes is considered failing and the course will have to be repeated.**

### **Weekly Quizzes**

There will be weekly quizzes over the chapters we covered during class in D2L. You will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz in D2L. If a quiz is missed due to an unexcused absence, the student will receive a score of zero (0) for that quiz. If the quiz is missed due to an officially excused absence (documentation must be provided), a make-up will be arranged. These will appear on the Course Schedule in more detail.

### **Papers**

#### **Days in the Lives of Social Workers assignment**

**Due February 19th:** Each student will choose **5 chapters** (career narratives) to read. Answer the questions at the end of the chapter for each of the 5 narratives you have chosen. The paper must be typed (double space) using APA format. Please write each question and then follow the question with the answer. Paper must be submitted in D2L.

## **Agency Report Assignment and Presentation**

**Report due March 26th:** The paper must be typed (double space). Please write each question and then follow the question with the answer. Paper must be submitted in D2L and posted for classmates to read/comment in D2L.

Answer the following in at least two pages:

1. Name of agency and location
2. Mission/Goals of the agency
3. Describe the agency's purpose, including what population it serves
4. Types of services they provide to the community
5. Eligibility of its clients
6. Sources of funding
7. Where do referrals come from?
8. How does (or could) the agency use research?
9. Please take time to reflect on the information you gathered from your and speak to your own career goals.
  - Is this something you would like to do as a social worker?
  - What about the position interests you?
  - What about the position concerns you?

**Presentation -** You will present the information from your agency paper to the class. The purpose is to educate your classmates on a variety of social service agencies. You may choose to utilize any type of media (video, powerpoint/slides, [tiktok](#), [padlet](#), [storyboard](#), [bitmoji scenes](#), [kahoot](#), etc.). Get creative!! The presentations will be conducted during the last two weeks of the semester.

## **Final Exam**

**Due April 23rd:** There will be a cumulative, open book final exam at the end of the semester that will be completed in D2L. You will have 90 minutes to complete the exam. If the exam is missed due to an unexcused absence, the student will receive a score of zero (0). If the exam is missed due to an officially excused absence (documentation must be provided), a make-up will be arranged. These will appear on the Course Schedule in more detail.

## **Discussion Posts - Feb. 26th, March 26th, & April 2nd**

Check the course schedule for weeks when discussion posts are due.



### **Course Schedule:**

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor. There will be guest speakers from local social work agencies throughout the semester.

<b>DATES</b>	<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>ONLINE ASSIGNMENT</b> <i>Due Fridays @ 10:00pm</i>
January 12 January 14	Overview of class and syllabus Introductions	-Review syllabus -Introductions	no online assignment this week
January 19 January 21	Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare	Chapter 1	Chapter 1 Quiz
January 26 January 28	Social Work Values and Ethics	Chapter 2	Chapter 2 Quiz
February 2  February 4	Empowerment and Human Diversity The Process of Generalist Practice	Chapter 3  Chapter 4	Chapter 3/4 Quiz
February 9 February 11	Practice Settings	Chapter 5	Chapter 5 Quiz
February 16  February 18	Social Welfare & Social Work History Policy, Policy Analysis, Policy Practice, and Policy Advocacy	Chapter 6  Chapter 7	Chapter 6/7 Quiz <b>-Days in the Lives of Social Workers assignment due 2/19</b>
February 23 February 25	Policies and Programs to Combat Poverty/Ruby Payne/Donna Beegle	Chapter 8	-Chapter 8 Quiz <b>-Poverty Simulation Discussion</b>
March 2 March 4	Social Work and Services for Children and Families	Chapter 9	Chapter 9 Quiz
March 9 March 11	Social Work and Services for Older Adults	Chapter 10	Chapter 10 Quiz
March 16  March 18	Social Work and Services for People with Disabilities Social Work and Services in Healthcare	Chapter 11  Chapter 12	Chapter 11/12 Quiz
March 23 March 25	Social Work and Services in Mental Health	Chapter 13	-Chapter 13 Quiz <b>-Agency Report Assignment due 3/26 and posted to discussion board</b>
March 30 April 1- <i>No Class</i>	Social Work and Substance Use, Abuse, and Dependence	Chapter 14	-Chapter 14 Quiz <b>-Substance Abuse Quiz Discussion post</b>

April 6 April 8	Social Work and Services for Youths and in the Schools Social Work and Services in the Criminal Justice System	Chapter 15  Chapter 16	Chapter 15/16 Quiz
April 13 April 15	<i>Agency Presentations</i> <i>Agency Presentations</i>		
April 20 April 22 <i>*Last day of class*</i>	<i>Agency Presentations</i> <i>Agency Presentations</i>		
<b>FINAL EXAM - posted online 4/16 - 4/23</b>			