



Course Syllabus: **Introduction to Social Work**
College of Health Sciences and Human Services
SOWK 2423
Spring 2023

Contact Information

Instructor: Courtney Cooner, MSSW, LCSW

Office hours: as needed - Social Work department secretary: 940-397-4437

E-mail: courtney.cooner@msutexas.edu

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 Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Become familiar with the social work mission, practice settings, and client populations (knowledge, skills, cognitive & affective processes)
- Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development (knowledge, skills, cognitive & affective processes)
- Identify with the social work profession and conduct themselves accordingly (knowledge, skills, cognitive & affective processes)
- Learn to apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice (knowledge, skills, cognitive & affective processes)
- Attend to professional roles and boundaries (knowledge, skills, cognitive & affective processes)
- Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice (knowledge, skills, cognitive & affective processes)

- Make ethical decisions by applying the NASW code of ethics (knowledge, skills, cognitive & affective processes)

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.

Study Hours and Tutoring 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 2022-2023](#)

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

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [Safety / Emergency Procedures](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "Run. Hide. Fight." which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

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 in order to be eligible to take the weekly quizzes. If you do not attend class, you cannot take the weekly quiz

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!

Grading

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

Assignments	Due	GRADING
Pick agency to volunteer	February 10	---
Weekly Quizzes	Weekly - Fridays @ 12am	25%
Days in the Lives of SW Assignment	February 24	10%
Discussion Posts	Poverty Simulation - 3/10 Substance Abuse Quiz - 4/21 Agency paper post - 4/28	
Agency Hours, Paper	April 28	
Agency Presentation	last week of class	25%
Final Exam	posted April 28-May 5	25%
Attendance	Tuesday/Thursday	15%

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

Grade	Percentages
A	90 to 100
B	80 to 89
C	70 to 79
D	60 to 69
F	Less than 60

Social Work Program Grade Policy

A course grade of below a C or an average of below 70% will be considered a failing grade. ***Students must repeat social work courses in which they receive a grade of D or F.***

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.

Days in the Lives of Social Workers assignment

Due February 24: 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.

Discussion Posts-

There are three required discussion posts. Complete the assignment/reading in D2L and post responses to discussion questions. **NOTE:** If a student asks you a question on your post, you should be courteous and answer the question.

- Poverty Simulation - **due 3/10**
- Substance Abuse Quiz - **due 4/21**
- Agency Paper post - **due 4/28**

Agency Report Hours/Paper/Presentation

Agency Volunteer Hours-20 hours required - due April 28

Each student will volunteer at a social service agency. A list of possible sites is included with this syllabus.

- a. You are to volunteer for 20 hours.
- b. These 20 hours are to be completed no later than the due date on the course outline.
- c. You must select and confirm your agency by **February 10** and complete the Social Work Agency google form in D2L.
- d. Your supervisor must complete and sign the Agency Volunteer Hours Verification form when you have completed your 20 hours and uploaded into D2L.
- e. You will be dropped one letter grade for not completing the agency report assignment and you will be dropped one letter grade if you do not complete the volunteer hours assignment.

Agency report assignment- Due April 28

The paper must be typed in APA format (double spaced). Please write each question and then follow the question with the answer. Question #9 should be very thorough and require some thought. Paper must be submitted in D2L and posted for classmates to read/comment in D2L. **Your paper will not be accepted without verification that you completed the 20 hour volunteer assignment.** Incomplete grades will not be given for late assignments unless there is documented proof of a real emergency, therefore, get your hours completed and your paper finished by the due date.

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 agency 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?

Agency Presentations - Begin May 2

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, [padlet](#), [storyboard](#), [bitmoji scenes](#), [kahoot](#), etc.). Get creative!! The presentations will be conducted during the last week of the semester.

Final Exam

Due May 5: 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.

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.

DATES	TOPICS	CHAPTER	ONLINE ASSIGNMENT <i>Due Fridays @ 12am</i>
January 17 January 19	Overview of class and syllabus Introductions	-Review syllabus -Introductions	-no online assignment this week
January 24 January 26	Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare	Chapter 1	-Chapter 1 Quiz
January 31 February 2	Social Work Values and Ethics	Chapter 2	-Chapter 2 Quiz

February 7 February 9	Empowerment and Human Diversity The Process of Generalist Practice	Chapter 3 Chapter 4	-Complete volunteer agency selection form in D2L by 2/10 -Chapter 3 Quiz -Chapter 4 Quiz
February 14 February 16	Practice Settings	Chapter 5	-Chapter 5 Quiz
February 21 February 23	Social Welfare & Social Work History	Chapter 6	-Days in the Lives of Social Workers assignment due 2/24 -Chapter 6 Quiz
February 28 March 2	Policy, Policy Analysis, Policy Practice, and Policy Advocacy	Chapter 7	-Chapter 7 Quiz
March 7 March 9	Policies and Programs to Combat Poverty/Ruby Payne/Donna Beegle	Chapter 8	-Chapter 8 Quiz -Poverty Simulation Discussion due 3/10
March 14, 16	<i>Spring Break</i>		
March 21 March 23	Social Work and Services for Children and Families	Chapter 9	-Chapter 9 Quiz
March 28 March 30	Social Work and Services for Older Adults	Chapter 10	-Chapter 10 Quiz
April 4 April 6	Social Work and Services for People with Disabilities Social Work and Services in Healthcare	Chapter 11 Chapter 12	-Chapter 11 Quiz -Chapter 12 Quiz
April 11 April 13	Social Work and Services in Mental Health	Chapter 13	-Chapter 13 Quiz
April 18 April 20	Social Work and Substance Use, Abuse, and Dependence <i>No Class - Holiday</i>	Chapter 14	-Chapter 14 Quiz -Substance Abuse Quiz Discussion post due 4/21
April 25 April 27	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 Quiz -Chapter 16 Quiz -Agency hours/paper/post paper/discussion 4/28
May 2 May 4 <i>last day of class</i>	<i>Agency Presentations</i> <i>Agency Presentations</i>		
FINAL EXAM - posted online 4/28 - 5/5			

