I. COURSE RATIONALE

Social Welfare 220 is, essentially, an introduction to the profession of social work and the institution within which it operates: the social welfare system. This course is not a skills-based course; rather, its purpose is to make clear the influences and constraints that shape the profession—historical, social, cultural, political, and legal—and give it its uniqueness. This knowledge is essential to the education of the generalist social work practitioner, which is the central mission of the School.

All social workers take as their primary obligation the enhancement of individual, family, group, organization, and community well-being, by applying a combination of knowledge, values, and skills in a variety of settings, and with a variety of client populations. Thus, we will spend a considerable amount of time on those three aspects of the profession, and the features subsumed therein which make it unique: our emphasis on the strengths, talents, and resources of individuals (as opposed to their deficits, pathologies, and weaknesses); our commitment to the empowerment of individuals to make their own choices and control their own lives; our respect for individual difference, whether that difference is racial, ethnic, class-based, age-based, disability-based, or based upon sexual orientation and, relatedly, our obligation to work for a more socially and economically just, humane society.

This course provides the first building block in the social work education process at KU and, as such, is the first step in the professional socialization process (SW 623: Seminar in Professional Issues, is offered in the last semester, and is the terminus in the professional socialization process). Many of the themes and ideas introduced in this course will be subsequently expanded upon in SW 530 (which focuses upon the interaction of individuals and families with each other, and the impact of other systems of influence with them, with particular attention paid to those individuals and families which fall into social work’s traditional sphere of concern); and SW 532 (which covers small, groups, organizations, and communities, with special attention paid to the knowledge, values, and skills needed to assess these systems and engage in a process of planned change). Additionally this course links to the practice component (SW 510; SW 610, 611, 612) by providing a beginning knowledge of the values and skills of practice; the social policy component (SW 620 and 621), by covering social policy history, as well as contemporary issues in social policy (e.g. welfare reform; the privatization of child welfare services; health care policy; mental health policy; etc.); and practicum (through the requirement that students perform community service with a population at risk).
II. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

The educational outcomes are explicitly linked to the program objectives as follows:

1. Define and describe social work—what it is, what it does, and with whom, in what areas of human functioning, in what context, and with what focus (Relates to Program Objectives 1, 2, 4, 9).
2. Identify and critically describe the philosophical and historical roots of social work and the contributions of individuals associated with those roots (Relates to Program Objective 1, 5).
3. Identify and describe major issues and events leading to the current status of the social welfare system (Relates to Program Objective 5).
4. Describe the philosophical frameworks that inform the system, as well as those which are antithetical to the system (Relates to Program Objectives 1, 4, 7).
5. Differentiate social work from other helping professions (e.g. psychology, applied sociology, psychiatry, etc.); professional social work from volunteer helping; profession from occupation; and social service organizations from other organizations.
6. Identify the various fields of and settings for social work practice, particularly at the baccalaureate level.
7. Describe levels of social work intervention (e.g. individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities) (Relates to Objectives 1, 4, 6, 8, 9).
8. Understand the centrality of ethical behavior to the professional social worker, and be thoroughly familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics (Relates to Program Objectives 1, 2).
9. Describe social work concerns related to sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia, and classism (Relates to Program Objectives 3, 4).

III. CURRICULUM THEMES

The following themes interweave through the curriculum and are addressed in SW 220:

a. Strengths perspective: in discussion of the various models of social work practice, the strengths perspective is explicitly raised. Elements of the model are discussed, an application of the strengths perspective is briefly modeled, and students conduct strengths assessments on each other, under instructor supervision.

b. Critical perspectives: students are encouraged to adopt the subject position of persons of different backgrounds, classes, sexual orientations, genders, and/or disabilities through an examination of various literary texts. Students are then given critical thinking questions to address.

c. Social and economic justice: students are required to learn about poverty policy as an exemplar of a dynamic social policy issue from several
perspectives. For example, students are given data-based information on how poverty is measured, the difference between income and wealth, and how and why the welfare system was reformed in 1996, as well as its impacts thus far. They are also asked, however, to read personal narratives of persons in poverty, and to construct a budget which would cover, in a barely adequate way, the expenses of a family of four.

Students are also exposed to other issues of social justice through guest speakers (clients, social workers, advocacy group representatives, etc.), readings, and exercises.

- **Diversity:** Respect and appreciation for diverse populations and lifestyles is emphasized through a thorough examination of the value base of the profession, the Code of Ethics, and through readings that emphasize the value of diversity to our society.

**IV. THE LIBERAL ARTS PERSPECTIVE**

Students are required to have a background in the liberal arts, including sociology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, history, political science, and economics. Course work across these disciplines is necessary for students to understand the interrelationships between people and across contexts, time, and culture. Students must be well-educated in grammar and composition, necessitating the completion of English courses, and must be able to articulate and defend the interests of social work’s traditional clients (as well as to assist clients in same), requiring coursework in communications.

**V. PROFESSIONAL PURPOSE AND VALUES**

Socialization to the profession begins with an understanding of social work’s purposes and values, and preparing students for the inevitable moment when the values and purposes of the profession conflict with either personal values, or two values exist in counterposition to each other. Also, understanding the purposes of the profession allows students to distinguish the unique niche that this profession occupies.

**VI. PREPARATION FOR PRACTICE WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS**

Commitment to diverse populations is an overarching theme of the School. Thus, this course covers issues social issues considered important to and by a variety of populations which differ by race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and age. This is done through readings (see: VIII: Recommended Readings), including our required text, as well as supplemental readings; assignments; quizzes; and community service work.
VII. **TOPICS**

Topics that Must be Covered:

- a. Generalist practice (a definition)
- b. Definitions of social welfare
- c. Philosophies that have influenced the development of social welfare (including political, social, and religious ideologies)
- d. The history of social work/social welfare
- e. Social work values and ethics
- f. Selected issues of importance to persons of various races, ages, cultures, ethnic groups, religions, classes, and sexual orientations (must include social stigma)
- g. Analysis of selected policy issue(s)
- h. Fields of practice
- i. Knowledge needed for practice
- j. Skills needed for practice

**Recommended Topics**

- Instructors must develop the idea that a variety of policies are, by definition, social welfare policies; however, not all must be covered in depth. The instructor may make a choice from the following policy areas: poverty, health care, mental health, child welfare, disability, aging, refugee/immigration, and criminal justice.
- Selected issues of importance to persons of various ages, races, cultures, ethnic groups, religions, classes, and sexual orientation may include (but need not be restricted to, nor must all be included): reparations to African-Americans, the use of Native American mascots in professional sports, equity in prescription drug coverage between men and women, asylum rights for emigrants, cultural and religious practices which may be immoral or even illegal in this country, comparative definitions of the term “self-sufficient; etc.

VIII. **RECOMMENDED READINGS**

One of the following is recommended as a primary text:


Some combination of the following are recommended as supplemental reading(s):


IX. RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENTS

A variety of assignments are used for this course:

- Each student must volunteer for a minimum in a service setting with a high risk population. The activity must include direct contact with service recipients. This assignment addresses course objectives 1,5,6,7,8,9.
- Another assignment allows student to apply the Social Work Code of Ethics to a series of vignettes. The vignettes are complicated case examples and the student determines the applicability of the Code and makes a recommendation based on the same. This assignment addresses course objectives 8.
- Students work in groups to develop an itemized budget for a family of four that falls within the federal guidelines of a poverty income. This assignment addresses course objectives 3,8.
- Additionally, the student completes a personal cultural assessment where they do some basic description of their racial and ethnic background. Additionally, they write about their own attitudes about ethnic and cultural difference as well as the origin of their beliefs and values. This assignment addresses course objectives 8,9.

X. GRADING

BSW GRADING SCALE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
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</tbody>
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A. Incomplete grades. A temporary grade of Incomplete may be assigned to a student who, for a reason beyond the student’s control, has been unable to complete the required work in a course on time. It is the student’s responsibility to request an Incomplete from the instructor. A request signed by the student and the faculty member must be on file when grades are submitted. A student may not enroll in a course sequential to one in which he or she has an I or F letter grade. An incomplete not removed by the end of the next semester will be changed to an F.

B. The Master syllabi should specify:

Attendance policies for BSW courses. For example: Class attendance is very important. More than two absences could result in the loss of all your attendance points. More than four absences will result in failure in this class. If you have missed two classes, please arrange an appointment with me to
discuss the reasons for the absence and to arrange for make-up work that will count toward your class participation points. Points are deducted for missing class and coming to class late (3 pts. for each absence/lateness).

**Individual instructors’ syllabi should specify the following:**

C. The weighting of each assignment in the course and the dates by which they are done.

D. For every assignment, explain the standards used for grading.

E. If class participation is part of the grade, indicate what this means. For example, if 10 points are awarded for class participation, one point will be deducted for every class missed.

F. Indicate the policy on late assignments, e.g., they are not accepted and treated as an “F” grade or the grade is reduced by ___ for each day, week, etc.

G. Indicate how final grades will be determined.

**XI. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Students who have special educational needs of any kind, including those related to learning disabilities, other disabilities, English as a second language should discuss necessary accommodations with the instructor within the first two sessions of the course. The university and School of Social Welfare are committed to provide supportive programs and accommodations to assist students who have special learning needs to successfully meet course expectations. In particular, students who feel that they have a disability that may require accommodation should advise the instructor of such disability and desired accommodation as soon as one obtains written documentation of the disability. The instructor will work with the student and the office of Services for Students with Disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations.

Please notify the instructor if your religious observances conflict with class or due dates for class assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.

**XII. RECORDING AND SHARING RECORDINGS OF LECTURES**

Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. On request, the instructor will usually grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.
XIII. HIPAA REGULATIONS

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that any personal information that may identify a person must be removed to protect confidentiality. Confidentiality applies to both classroom discussions and to written work. Please follow these simple, yet essential guidelines:

- Always disguise the name and other personal identifying information when you speak and write about a person, following the guidelines established by HIPAA.
- If writing in great detail about a client, ask permission from the client.
- Share nothing about specific clients, agencies or other students outside of the classroom.

Any information shared with the class/instructor will be confidential, within the limits defined by the Code of Ethics and state guidelines.

**Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.**

XIV. INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY

Provide students with information on how to see and/or reach you.

XV. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

In the event of inclement weather students should call

- Lawrence: the University (785) 864-SNOW, or if hearing impaired and have TTY/TDD equipment, (800) 766-3777
- Edwards Campus: (913) 897-8499
- KCKCC Campus: (913) 334-1100

to determine if classes have been cancelled. Class will be held if classes have not been cancelled, and students should contact the instructor if weather or driving conditions make it impossible for them to get to class.