I. COURSE RATIONALE

The overall aim of this course is to have students understand the unique challenges and strengths of social work in an urban setting. Students will gain knowledge about the historical and current relationships between the definition of social problems, the development of social welfare policies, and the delivery of social services in urban areas. Since this course will be offered in Kansas City, students will learn to assess current policies and practices as they impact the local communities in the Kansas City area.

This course is an elective co-requisite for students entering the 2+2 Completion program. It is intended as a bridge course to help students become familiar with the field of social work, the urban history of social work practice, the unique issues that arise for social workers in urban settings, and innovative interventions and practice models for the urban community.

II. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

a) discuss the development of social welfare systems in American urban settings (BSW Objective #5);

b) identify the social problems associated with urban settings and the individual and community strengths that mitigate the effects of these problems (BSW Objective #1 and 2);

c) critically evaluate different intervention strategies used to address social problems in urban communities (BSW Objective 1 and 6);

d) articulate the impact of oppression and discrimination on urban populations and on social service interventions in urban settings (BSW Objective #4);

e) evaluate ethical issues in urban social work practice (BSW Objective #2);

f) identify the social service systems in the Kansas City area and how they work individually and together to meet residents’ needs (BSW Objective #12).
III. RELATION TO CURRICULUM MISSION AND THEMES

The mission and themes of the school are infused throughout course outcomes and content areas.

1. Practice-centered mission. This course sets a foundation of social work practice in urban settings. Each section of the course is focused on practice at different levels.

2. Strengths perspective. Writings on historical and current urban social work practice are critiqued regarding the extent to which they are excessively problem and pathology focused. Students are encouraged to identify individual, family, organizational, and community strengths in urban settings.

3. Diversity. Students are challenged throughout the course to consider the differential effects of social problems and social service interventions on diverse populations.

4. Social Justice. Theories, analyses, and proposed interventions are critiqued for the extent to which they perpetuate patterns of personal and collective oppression and discrimination. Approaches that emphasize empowerment and social justice are selected for detailed presentation.

5. Critical Perspective. Theories, analyses, and proposed interventions are compared and contrasted in terms of their advantages and limitations regarding empirical support; methodological, philosophical, and conceptual clarity; and relevance to the profession.

IV. LIBERAL ARTS PERSPECTIVE

Students in this course are expected to have a liberal arts background, especially in the behavioral, social, and biological sciences as well as history. In classroom discussion, students are encouraged to draw upon their liberal arts perspective as well as their life experience.

The course intends to open students and educators' minds to new ideas and possibilities for understanding urban settings. It attempts to preserve and develop knowledge that liberates people in urban settings and to examine critically theories and practices that oppress or marginalize.

V. PROFESSIONAL PURPOSE AND VALUES

All theories and social work practices contain implicit or explicit values and goals for behavior. This course critically examines these inherent values and goals, and helps the student to reflect on their congruence with both personal commitments and professional ethics and values. Possible value conflicts and ethical dilemmas that may emerge in the application of theories and research findings to practice are discussed.
The four curricular themes and practice-focused mission of the school help to orient the examination of personal and professional value issues. For example, the strengths perspective highlights individual and family qualities of resilience, creativity, self-determination, and empowerment. The political and value implications of urban practice models are considered for their contribution to the relief of oppression and the promotion of social justice. The variety of theories and practice models are subjected to critical reflection through comparison and analysis, including consideration of their congruence with professional mission, values, and ethics. Theories and practice approaches are examined for their applicability to diverse peoples. Finally, theories and concepts are examined for their relevance to social work practice in various settings in accordance with the school's mission.

VI. SPECIAL POPULATIONS

As discussed under course content area number 4 above, issues of human diversity are integral to understanding social work practice in urban communities. For example, diversity based on social class, gender, ethnicity and culture, age, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, and religious and spiritual perspective is crucial to consider both in terms of individual and family experiences and in terms of constraints and challenges imposed by societal discrimination and oppression. Such issues include racist, sexist, and other oppressive behaviors as well as effective strategies for empowering people and working toward social justice.

However, the negative aspects of discrimination and oppression are not considered alone. Diversity is considered a positive personal and collective resource in a multicultural society and world. Similarly, discussion of dysfunctional behavior and psychopathology need to consider the types of stress and oppression encountered by various populations and the differing concepts of dysfunction, creativity, and well being in different cultures and social groups.

VII. TOPICS

- Definitions of urban
  - Historical development of urban social systems
  - Intervention planning in urban environments
  - Systems theory
- Person-in environment perspective
  - Strengths and empowerment
  - The influence of prejudice, discrimination, and oppression on human functioning
  - Social work values and ethics in the context of urban practice
- Urban issues in Kansas City social welfare services
VIII. RECOMMENDED READINGS

Texts:


Additional readings will include reports and Articles:

Reports:


Articles:


IX. RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENTS

- Informational Interview: Interview a social worker from an urban agency; identify social issues and social structures that are unique to the urban setting; write a report or present your findings in class.
- Observation Paper: Conduct naturalistic research by observing people in an urban setting. Write a report relating it to the readings in class.
- Current Events Reporting: Students may be asked to follow an urban social policy issue in the newspapers, or to simply look for and bring to class articles from the newspaper that ought to be of importance to serious students of social welfare. Discussion of articles may be accompanied by written reflections to a predetermined set of questions.
- Book Review: Write a book review on book related to life in the inner city (from a selected list)
Evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on the written assignments and class participation. The instructor will provide grading criteria for each assignment on the first day of class.

Instructors will be evaluated by students at two points during the semester (middle and end).

X. GRADING

BSW GRADING SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<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>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
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</tbody>
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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.

The Master syllabi should specify:

B. 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 be 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