The University of Kansas  
School of Social Welfare  
Prerequisites: SW 220, SW 530, SW 540, SW 555  

SW 510 Fundamentals of Social Work Practice  
Master Syllabus  

Instructor  
Twente Hall  

Classes:  
Office Hours:  

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION-RATIONALE  

Fundamentals of Social Work Practice (SW 510) is designed to begin the preparation of students for service delivery within the model of practice. It builds upon the foundation created by SW 220 Professional Socialization, which is the preparatory course for entry into the Social Work BSW program. This course provides students with a beginning understanding of the social work frame of reference and clarifies the unique focus of social work intervention. Students are introduced to the strengths perspective as a lens through which to guide their work toward social justice with vulnerable people.  

The primary focus is on understanding the nature of social work practice; professional knowledge and value components, specific skill development such as interviewing, assessment, critical thinking, problem-solving, and the professional use of the self with individuals, families, groups and communities  

II. EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES  

1. Critically analyze client situations demonstrating the ability to identify internal and external strengths of the client system (individual, family, organization, community and/or society). (BSW Program Objectives 1 and 2)  

2. Critically analyze client situations with attention to individual system interactions (biopsychosocial) and interactions among the systems in the environment of the “client.” (BSW Program Objectives 1 and 7)  

3. Demonstrate the ability to identify a range of possible strengths-based interventions for client systems spanning the micro to macro continuum with particular attention to the strategies for mobilizing strengths. (BSW Program Objectives 2 and 6)  

4. Critically analyze and articulate social work values relating them to social work practice. (BSW Program Objective 2)
5. Identify personal biases and prejudices as well as strategies for dismantling them in favor of social justice thinking and social work values. (BSW Program Objective 3 and 4)

6. Articulate an understanding of reflective practice and critical thinking through self-reflective writing, responding to critical feedback, and demonstration of critical thinking in class assignments. (BSW Program Objectives 2, 9, 10, and 11)

7. Demonstrate through written class assignments as well as in class participation an understanding of oppression and discrimination in addition to the identification of strategies to counter both such that social and economic justice are sought. (BSW Program Objectives 4)

8. Demonstrate initial development of professional level communication in speaking and writing appropriate for communication with multiple system members as well as across disciplines. (BSW Program Objective 10)

III. INTERWEAVING CURRICULUM THEMES

1. Strengths
   The strengths perspective is central to our work as social workers. It provides a lens through which to see consumers’ difficulties as well as their inherent strengths – those resources that build resilience. Strengths are evident in all types of client systems and their environments. This class will focus on not only the identification of strengths, but it will pay particular attention to learning to build the capacity of natural supports and strengths of client systems. The strengths perspective leads naturally to empowerment work. Students will gain an understanding of the process by which client systems empower themselves to reach client centered goals.

2. Critical Perspective
   A critical perspective is necessary to understand the interwoven nature of power and systems. Vulnerable and disenfranchised individuals and groups experience oppression in our society. By understanding the interplay of systems (i.e. people, policies, and power) social workers emerge as change agents working toward social and economic justice. This course will operationalize the critical perspective by conducting an ongoing investigation of system interactions that includes an analysis of power and development of justice interventions.

3. Social Justice
   Understanding social justice is fundamental to social work. It involves a critical perspective and social work values. At the heart of this foundation is the belief that privilege experienced when oppression exists must be spent in action to bring about justice. This class will heighten students’ awareness of power, privilege, and justice. Students will gain greater understanding of society’s forces upon
vulnerable groups. Resilience of individuals and groups will be explored along with a critique of the role social institutions play with vulnerable groups. Students will identify ways to shift society toward social and economic justice creating access and equity for marginalized citizens within out social structure.

4. Diversity
The theme of diversity calls for understanding of diverse peoples and differences. In gaining a better understanding of society and social justice, attention must be paid to the specific groups of people who experience disenfranchisement. This class will promote understanding of difference and strategies to work in a culturally sensitive manner with client systems, colleagues, and other persons. Furthermore, appreciation for difference will be cultivated. Students will gain greater understanding of people based on their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, physical and mental abilities, spiritual traditions, and size.

5. Practice Centeredness
The overarching themes that guide the total curriculum of the School of Social Welfare are integrated throughout the practice-oriented curriculum. This practice course provides a venue for students learn, apply and demonstrate a competency in social work practice settings.

IV. THE LIBERAL ARTS PERSPECTIVE

Because practice requires the creative blending of knowledge, skills and values, students need a broad based focus. The liberal arts perspective call for inclusion of scholarly work across disciplines. This contributes knowledge from social, biological, and behavioral sciences that is integrated into understanding the intra-interpersonal environmental factors undergirding intervention. Furthermore, the liberal arts perspective contributes to knowledge and skills toward thinking, writing, and speaking clearly and effectively. Students must be able to communicate at the various levels in interactions with client systems, supervisors, colleagues, and other community members.

V. PROFESSIONAL PURPOSE AND VALUES

Throughout the BSW program students will develop their professional skills and understanding of social work values. This course focuses on a developing understanding of the ecological systems perspective and the person – environment framework. Social work practice is framed within client centeredness, consumer driven goals and interventions with self-directedness and empowerment at the forefront. Students are exposed to social work values and ethical dilemmas that can occur in practice.

VI. FUNDAMENTALS OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE AND HUMAN DIVERSITY
SW 510 will include readings, assignments, and class discussions that all address human diversity. Social work values call for an understanding of unequal power and the perpetuation of institutionalized oppression.

Vulnerable groups experience oppression on the basis of difference from the dominant group. Social work’s mission is to counter this oppression which takes the form of institutionalized racism, heterosexism and homophobia, ableism, ageism, size bias, ethnocentrism, spiritual tradition prejudice, sexism, classism, and economic injustice. This class will present directed at countering the general disenfranchisement of these vulnerable groups from individual empowerment to structural interventions.

VII. TOPICS

Must be covered

Applying Social Work Values and Ethics, especially confidentiality
Culturally Competent Social Work Practice with Vulnerable Groups
Strengths-Based Practice
Engagement Process
Empowerment Practice

VIII. RECOMMENDED READINGS

Text Books


**Articles and Book Chapters**


McIntosh, P. (1992). White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in Women's Studies. In M. L. Andersen & P. H. Collins (Eds.), *Race, Class, and Gender* (pp. 70-81). Belmont: Wadsworth.


IX. SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflection and Understanding Self
   Genogram, Ecomap and Timeline (Educational Objectives 1 & 3)

Assignment #1 affords students an opportunity to practice seeing individuals within their contexts (of families, resources, communities, and histories).

Using the workbook as a guide (Cournoyer, 2000), students will increase their understanding of self by doing a genogram, ecomap, and timeline. Through each exercise, students will examine the information as it is arranged with each tool.

Students will respond to the following general questions, in addition to those within the activities:
   • How might this type of tool be used by a consumer?
   • What kinds of patterns emerge?
   • How might these patterns emerge in student – consumer interactions?
   • How can the student mobilize support when necessary.

2. Personal Narrative (Educational Objectives 2, 3, 9)

Assignment #2 is a natural extension of the Timeline activity. The purpose of this assignment is to engage the student in the active process of understanding social work values, the experiences of vulnerable people, as well as understanding the use of self in practice. One additional purpose for this assignment is to allow students to demonstrate their writing abilities.

The assignment should contain the following elements:
   • Identification of the important events in the student’s life history which contributed to her/his choice of social work as a profession.
   • The student will describe her/his understanding of social work values.
   • The student will describe specific intersections between her/his life experience, social work values, and her/his interest in working with vulnerable persons.

3. Role Plays – Interviewing Skills (Videotaped) (Educational Objectives 1

Assignment #3 is designed to give students the opportunity to demonstrate learned interviewing skills. This assignment asks students to use reflective listening, reflexive questioning, seek to understand the contexts in which the consumer system lives, societal influences and the strengths from all involved systems.
This assignment involves four role play sessions for each student during which the student will “play” the social worker twice and a member of the client system twice.

The students will write two scenarios to use in the role plays – including a consumer system with vulnerable and a social problem those persons experience. These scenarios will be used by other students for the role-play activity. They will include substantial description to do the assignment.

Students not involved in the role play will provide active feedback after the role play.

Students will do a free-write and sharing of that write after they have done all of the role-plays. This reflection will include a review of the assignment process and experiences of self as social worker and consumer.

X. GRADING

BSW GRADING SCALE

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</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>
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<tr>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
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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 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.