Introduction to Social Work  
SOCWRK 1000  
3 Credits

Description: This course provides an overview of professional social work. It examines the historical development of the profession of social work; introduces the profession’s values, ethics, and practice principles; examines the major interventive methods of social work practice; identifies the generalist base of social work practice; and explores the social service delivery networks which comprise the social welfare system in urban environments. Social work’s historic commitment to social justice and to the elimination of poverty is integrated throughout the course. Ecological social systems framework is also introduced and integrated as diversity and global impacts are introduced. The course format includes lecture presentations, discussion, guest presentations, reading assignments, examinations, student volunteer service, and visits to social agencies.

Prerequisite: There are no prerequisites.

Grading: The final grade is based on classroom participation, a community service volunteer activity with reflection papers, a paper on a novel of social protest, a midterm examination, and a final group presentation. More details on these assignments are below.

Textbook: The following texts are required for SOCWORK 1000:

- Readings from various web-sites and other published sources are also required (See Appendix D)

The following course objectives are to be achieved upon completion of SOCWRK 1000:

Knowledge
1. Describe the historical evolution of professional social work, including the social forces and values that shape systems of social welfare. This objective contributes to the following practice behaviors:
   - Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination (2.1.5)

2. Describe and discuss generalist social work practice. This objective contributes to the following practice behaviors:
   - Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities (2.1.10A)
Values
3. Appreciate social and economic justice and human diversity. This objective contributes to the following practice behaviors:
   - Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power (2.1.4)
   - Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination (2.1.5)

4. Identify personal values and examine them in relation to societal and professional values. This objective contributes to the following practice behaviors:
   - Practice personal reflection & self-correction to assure continual professional development (2.1.1)
   - Attend to professional roles and boundaries (2.1.1)
   - Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate or create or enhance privilege or power (2.1.4)
   - Make ethical decisions by applying the NASW code of ethics and, as applicable of the IFSW/IASSW Ethics in social work statement of principles (2.1.2)

Skills
5. Evaluate and analyze structures and functions of various social service delivery systems and the effectiveness of those systems as related to the following social welfare areas: Maternal and Child Health, Mental Health, Education, Urban Neighborhood Revitalization, Criminal Justice, Income Maintenance, Child Welfare, Health, Housing, and Older Adult Services. This objective contributes to the following practice behaviors:
   - Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research based knowledge and practice wisdom (2.1.3)

6. Be aware of and discuss interpersonal skills to effectively intervene with populations at risk. This objective contributes to the following practice behaviors:
   - Recognize and communicate understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences (2.1.4)
   - Assess client strengths and limitations (2.2.10B)

SOCWRK 1000 assignments and grading:

1. Class Participation (On-going, 10% of grade): Students are expected to participate actively in each class session, to come to class prepared to demonstrate and to discuss content of required course assignments. See grading rubric at end of this syllabus or in CourseWeb.

2. Midterm Exam (Distributed October 9 – Due October 16, 15% of grade): There will be a midterm examination covering material from readings, lectures, class discussion, and audio and video media through the date of the exam.
3. **Novel of Social Protest Paper (November 6, 20% of grade):** Students will choose a novel/memoir listed below which explores some facet of cultural diversity. Students who wish to choose a novel that is not listed must obtain prior permission of the instructor.

   - Read the novel and write a 5 page paper, which includes:
     1) A brief description of a major character in terms of age, personality, race, class, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, religious preference, and gender (discuss what is known about the character).
     2) A description of the cultural identity of the character in terms of values, norms and beliefs, including power determinants.
     3) A description of the similarities and differences between you and the chosen character in terms of human development, privileges, values, customs, educational and vocational opportunity.
     4) A discussion of the challenges that you would face in confronting your own biases, assumptions and values, if this character were a client assigned to you.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubyfruit Jungle by Rita Mae Brown</th>
<th>Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver</td>
<td>The Color Of Water: A Black Man’s Tribute To His White Mother by James McBride</td>
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<td>The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd</td>
<td>The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison</td>
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<td>Cry the Beloved Country by Alan Paton</td>
<td>The Jungle by Upton Sinclair</td>
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<td>The Help by Katherine Stockett</td>
<td>The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls</td>
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4. **Community Service Volunteer Activity / Reflection Papers / Verification Letter (25% of grade):** 45 clock hours of community service must be completed over the course of the year at a human services organization.

   - **Agency/Organization Selection & Approval:** This will be included in your first reflection paper. Class time will be utilized in prior sessions to outline appropriate volunteer settings.

   - **Reflection Paper #1:** By this time you have decided where you would like to volunteer and which population you will be serving. Write a 2 page paper. Answer the following questions in your paper:
     1) What are your expectations for your community service experience (you will want to discuss what society thinks of this population as well as discuss what you think of this population)?
     2) What do you believe a generalist social worker does with this population?

   - **Reflection Paper #2:** You will be coming close to the completion of your community service volunteering. Write a 2 to 3 page paper answering the following questions:
     1) How have your experiences to date compared to your expectations, summarizing what you have learned?
2) How has this experience challenged your personal beliefs in regard to this population and your appreciation of social justice and diversity?
3) What does a generalist social worker need to know about this at-risk population based on your experience?
   - **Verification Letter:** Your volunteer supervisor in the organization must submit a letter of verification (on the organization’s letterhead/stationery) of the total hours volunteered.

5. **Final Group Project (30% of grade):**
The purpose of the final group project is to allow you to share what has been learned through diligent research about a particular at-risk population.
   - Each presentation must be 20 – 30 minutes in length.
   - A copy of the PowerPoint presentation and annotated bibliography must be provided to the instructor at least 48 hours in advance of your presentation.
   - Presentations are expected to be of professional quality (as if you were presenting at a conference).
   - Each person in the group needs to be present for the final group presentation.
   - Creative expression is encouraged (including, but not limited to, dress, food, music, etc.) to enhance the presentations.
   - The presentations **MUST** include the following information:
     - 1) How your group selected the population (2 point).
     - 2) A brief description of the group you researched, including size and diversity features (3 points).
     - 3) A report on the historical experience of this population, as a whole, and the historical relationship of this group to the Greater Pittsburgh community. Discuss the historical experiences of this group as relevant to social work practice (3 points).
     - 4) What steps have members of the majority culture taken to address overt or covert discrimination against this group? What approaches has the group taken to address oppression? In what ways have the group’s members advocated for themselves? (4 points)
     - 5) Based on the review of the literature, discuss the unmet needs of this population. What are the major issues that present barriers to serving this group? (4 points)
     - 6) What does the literature suggest about macro, mezzo, and micro interventions that best serve this population? (4 points)
     - 7) A role play, video, or other audio/visual to show how to utilize one or more of the discussion points listed above (3 points).
     - 8) Provide an annotated bibliography of five (5) articles from peer reviewed journals (these are also to be given to the instructor with the power point presentations AT LEAST 48 hours prior to the group presentation). (5 points)
     - 9) Quality of PowerPoint (1 point)
     - 10) Quality of Presentation (1 point)
   - The group's final task is to decide whether members will receive individual grades or one group grade. Individual grades will be given based on individual contributions to the project as identified by the group (i.e. the group will have to determine the value of each member's contribution). Group grades will be based on the entire presentation and written work. This decision must be documented and all group members must sign the document to receive credit for the assignment (0 points for
this, but it is mandatory). If you choose the individual grade option, each student in the group must submit a statement indicating his or her part in the project and perceptions of all group members’ contributions.

**Academic Integrity:** All College in High School teachers, students, and their parents/guardians are required to review and be familiar with the University of Pittsburgh’s Academic Integrity Policy located online at www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity.

**Grades:** Grade criteria in the high school course may differ slightly from University of Pittsburgh standards. A CHS student could receive two course grades: one for high school and one for the University transcript. In most cases the grades are the same. These grading standards are explained at the beginning of each course.

**Transfer Credit:** University of Pittsburgh grades earned in CHS courses appear on an official University of Pittsburgh transcript, and the course credits are likely to be eligible for transfer to other colleges and universities. Students are encouraged to contact potential colleges and universities in advance to ensure their CHS credits would be accepted. If students decide to attend any University of Pittsburgh campuses, the University of Pittsburgh grade earned in the course will count toward the student grade point average at the University. At the University of Pittsburgh, the CHS course supersedes any equivalent AP credit.

**Drops and Withdrawals:** Students should monitor progress in a course. CHS teacher can obtain a Course Drop/Withdrawal Request form from the CHS office or Aspire. The form must be completed by the student, teacher and parent/guardian and returned to teacher by deadlines listed. Dropping and withdrawing from the CHS course has no effect on enrollment in the high school credits for the course.