



Syllabus for SWHS-1: B Yard

Intro to Social Work and Human Services

Course Information

Professor: Nathalie Dierkx, MSW, MPP

Spring 2024

In-person classes 1x/week, Tues 5:00-8:10pm

3 units

Course Information

Required Materials

Textbook: Introduction to Social Work (2 Edition) – An Advocacy Based Profession

Authors: Lisa Cox, Carolyn Tice & Dennis Log (ISBN: 9781506394527)

Additional Reading Booklet- you will receive paper copies and it is all on canvas

Course Description

Social Work is a practice-based profession that promotes social change, development, cohesion, and the empowerment of people and communities. Social Work practice involves the understanding of human behavior and the social, economic, and cultural institutions and interactions that we experience. As Social Work practitioners we are required to take a wholistic view of those we work with and to understand how our own lived experiences impact the way that we approach our work. This course is designed to allow students with various opportunities to explore the roots of social work practice, while acquiring generalist practice assessment skills that are needed to be a competent and successful in this line of work. The material presented will provide students with chances to examine human behavior in a social context, while coming to understand the role that power and privilege play in our daily lives. Throughout the semester, this course will pay attention to the diversity of experience and the influence of our individual and social backgrounds. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to analyze how differences in ethnicity, lifestyle, sexual preference, gender, gender identity, culture, race, ability, mental health and class influence the experience of both the client *and* the social worker. Classes will include a mixture of lecture, student engagement and individual self-reflection. Students are strongly encouraged to ask questions of the instructor, as well as other students, to learn and grow in your understanding of ourselves and of this career

path. Each of us comes to this course and this career path with different lived experiences. Rather than expecting others to accept one viewpoint, students will be encouraged to allow space for the experiences of others from differing backgrounds to exist simultaneously. Through this understanding of ourselves and those around us, students will begin to develop an ecological approach to their understanding of Social Work and Human Service.

Course Student Learning Outcomes *(from course outline of record)*

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

1. Discuss the historical evolution of social welfare and human services in the United States.
2. Understand historical and contemporary influences of social work practice through the application of multidisciplinary approaches and current academic research.
3. Be able to evaluate human behavior, diversity and socio-political influences using current theoretical perspectives that maintain ethical principles states in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of intervention approaches to address issues to mental health, education, differing abilities, class, gender, gender identity, race and social justice.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the core competencies required of social workers by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).
6. Demonstrate the ability to define generalist social work practice as it relates to individuals, groups, communities and policies.
7. Assess human behaviors in the social context with attention to the diversity of experience and the influence of social background.
8. Demonstrate critical thinking in envisioning ways of collaborating, negotiating, and advocating in working with and within social welfare and human services agencies and institutions.
9. Identify and be able to uphold the legal, ethical, and professional practice responsibilities of working with social work and human service organizations, with attention to cultural humility and oppressed groups.
10. Explain the current service delivery system in which social work and human services clients' needs are addressed.
11. Explain the services provided by a local social welfare agency.

Before Asking for Help From Your Instructor... ☺

Be sure to check your syllabus for the information that you are seeking. In the field of Social Work, professionals are often asked to find answers to complex laws, policies, and regulations. Often, we are working in agencies that are fast paced and require us to be on the move. This can mean that we are on our own to find the answers that our clients need. Your ability to find and interpret those answers on your own is key to your success. This course is a great opportunity to hone your skills.

Course Structure

Schedule of Topics

The following is a general layout of topics to be covered in this course. The instructor reserves the right to adjust the material and topics as the semester unfolds. This will be done to encourage a deeper and more thorough discussion of the material.

Week 1: Welcome and Getting to Know Each Other: What is Social Work and Who Are Social Workers?

Week 2: Introductions to the Field of Social Work

Week 3: History of Social Work in the United States, Understanding Our Own Lens

Week 4: Capitalism, Poverty, and Economic Inequality

Week 5: Human Rights and Social and Economic Justice

Week 6: Dimensions of Diversity, Identity, Positionality, and Intersectionality

Week 7: Generalist Social Work Practice, What Social Workers DO

Week 8: Child Welfare, Working with Children and Families, Indian Child Welfare Act

Week 9: Living Long and Aging Well- Social Work with Older Adults

Week 10: Health Care Services and Medical Social Work

Week 11: Mental Health Services, Learning Disabilities, Disability Justice

Week 12: School Social Work and Issues of Housing Insecurity, Gentrification, and Neighborhoods

Week 13: Substance Abuse and Harm Reduction

Week 14: Social Work and the Criminal Injustice System: Policing, Prisons, and Abolition

Week 15: Crisis, Trauma, Disasters: Social Work in a Globalized Landscape, Migration, Exclusion/Inclusion, and Mutual Aid

Note: We will have a written final and will NOT meet week 16 (finals week)

Typical Class Agenda

Though this is always subject to change, most classes will generally follow the structure:

- Check-In Question
- Breathing and Mindfulness Exercise
- Burning Questions
- Review and Reminder of Last Week
- Content Check: Did we understand the readings? Were there questions? Words or concepts we didn't understand?
- Group activity to apply concepts to the field of Social Work: These will be different each time, some might include individual, partner, group or class work on different topics that relate to that week
- Closing Thoughts, Next Week, General Class Notes, and Upcoming Assignments

Use of Canvas and Computers

The use of Canvas this semester is going to require patience and humility from all of us. We are going to start from the assumption that our computers have limited WI-FI and storage capacity and that they will be used mostly for students to practice typing and formatting in Microsoft Word and to get an introductory understanding of Canvas. If after a few weeks, it seems like students are able to access more than we anticipated on Canvas, we can explore additional computer tools we can utilize in this course!

****An important note about computers:** Computers are extremely distracting in class. We are not going to have computers out in class unless an activity explicitly calls for it. This means that you should always bring both your computer AND paper/pencil to take handwritten notes in class. I will build in multiple opportunities throughout the course to use our computers in class for things like taking notes, reading comprehension, and troubleshooting both Microsoft Word and Canvas. **This means that at the time of class starting, computers should be put away****

Class Readiness/Start of Class

We have limited class time together, so you should arrive to class at least 10 minutes early so that you can get set up. At the start of class you should have:

1. Already turned in your homework for that week
2. Computer should be put away, other writing materials out
3. Communicated with the instructor about any personal questions, concerns etc.

We will get started on time and I will also be flexible about unforeseen circumstances such as a medical emergency. I may also need your flexibility if there is a class time during the semester that unforeseen circumstances mean I am late for class or class is cancelled. The key to our success together is clear and timely communication!

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Format

Most of the assignments for this course will involve written materials. When submitting a paper for this course, be sure to demonstrate that you have read/watched/listened to the presented materials, while also providing a digestion of that material in your own words. Papers should be dominated with your interpretation, thoughts and understanding of the material, as well as brief quotations and summaries of the course materials. When referencing the text, whether through quotations or summaries, be sure to cite them using APA format. Information on APA format available on the library website.

I will accept submissions via canvas or in person. ALL submissions should have a title (what the assignment is), your name, your yard, and your course name (SWHS-1 Fall 2023), and date, along with page numbers

If you are submitting on Canvas:

- Please do that prior to class or come to the classroom a few minutes early to get that completed before the start of class
- Your submissions should be double-spaced, using Times New Roman in a font of 12. All assignments must be submitted in MS Word or PDF format.

If you are submitting to me in person:

- You must submit your work at the beginning of class
- You can have it typed and printed out double-spaced, using Times New Roman in a font of 12 OR
- You can handwrite your assignments on standard 8.5" by 11" paper, double or single spaced, in easily legible handwriting

Reading

The Course Textbook

You will be assigned about one chapter from the textbook a week. You must read this chapter PRIOR to coming to class and you will need to read it in order to complete your reflection for that week. We will review how to read textbooks most effectively but mostly you should be taking note of important themes, key words, and the questions and cases throughout that encourage you to think about how this information applies to the Social Work profession.

Additional Readings

In addition to the textbook, there are additional readings in your booklet that must be read prior to class. There will be both required readings as well as optional readings to enhance your learning.

Schedule of Assignments

Reading Questions

You have reading reflections due each week. I recommend that you read the chapter once through then go back and answer the questions. These questions are all in your additional readings booklet and the submission link is up on the "assignments" tab of canvas. They are due before class- either in person or on canvas (see details above under "assignment format").

Other Assignments

1. Introduction Assignment: My path to social work (due week 3)

2. Content Checks (syllabus then 4 unannounced, lowest score dropped)

calendar of assignments and due dates posted on canvas

Assignments

1. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN CLASS (15 classes/30 total points)

This accounts for both your attendance in our in-person sessions as well as your participation in them. Participation can look many different ways: your focused attention during discussions, your participation in check-in questions, individual, partner, and group work and your contributions in class discussions. If you are an extroverted student who enjoys talking in class, pay attention to how much space you are taking up and make sure you create space for other students to speak. If you are an introverted student and public speaking is your worst fear, I encourage you to push yourself a bit to contribute in class AND good eye contact and body language also communicates your participation to me and your classmates. I will be asking questions about the materials to confirm you have read them before class. You are not being “quizzed” but it should be clear to me that you have completed the readings.

Due: Each week Tuesday 5-8:10pm

2. WEEKLY READING REFLECTIONS (12 reflections-10 are for 1 chapter (3.5 pts) 2 are for 2 chapters (5 pts)/52 total points)

Each week, there will be a set of about three reading questions. These will include

1. A question about reading comprehension: this question will show me you UNDERSTOOD the reading you did
2. A question about your opinion on something: This will show me you THOUGHT ABOUT and CONSIDERED the reading you did
3. A question applying these concepts to a real-world Social Work scenario: This will show me you can APPLY what you learn to your life and work as a Social Worker and beyond

Due: Each week Tuesday by 5pm before class

3. MY PATH TO SOCIAL WORK (6 points)

This assignment is an opportunity for me to get to know you a little better: your understanding of, experience with, and interest in Social Work, as well as your own life goals and past experiences that relate to this work.

Due: Tuesday February 6th before class

4. SYLLABUS QUIZ AND CONTENT CHECKS (3 points each/12 total points)

There will be a few quizzes throughout the semester. The first will be about the syllabus and course information (this one will be take-home), the following 3 will be course content-related. I will do my best to prepare you- they will always be on things that are themes throughout the course and are not meant to stump you. If you have read, you should get 100%. They will not be about specific details you need to memorize!

Due: Syllabus Quiz due January 23rd before class, 4 more unannounced (lowest score dropped)

TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE THIS SEMESTER.....100

Grading Policy

My priority in grading is student learning. Please reach out if there is something getting in the way of your successful completion of this course. I am happy to give students the opportunity to re-submit an assignment including my feedback in order to obtain a higher grade. The purpose of this is not because you need perfect grades but so that you can integrate feedback and get the most out of your courses and your education.

Late Assignments

With all assignments known in advance, students must work to create a schedule of completion on their own that meets the timeline for this course. Each student is expected to create a buffer for yourself, accounting for any unexpected events (personal and academic) that may occur near the due dates. When submitting assignments to Canvas, technical issues can arise. If you know ahead of time of challenges with the schedule of assignments, please set a time for us to meet and we can work on a schedule together. If an emergency arises, please email me to let me know as soon as you can and we can come up with a plan from there. Any assignments submitted late will not be able to be resubmitted for additional points.

In the Case of a Cancelled Class

If class is cancelled for whatever reason, please proceed with the syllabus as scheduled. Submit anything you can via Canvas or if that is impossible for whatever reason, hold on to your work until we see each other next or you hear otherwise from me (via mail). Still complete your textbook reading, additional reading, and all required assignments. There is a chance that Canvas works better than anticipated and I can send messages or makeup work through Canvas but that is yet to be seen.

If you Miss a Class

Though I hope no one misses any class sessions, emergencies can arise. If you have an emergency and need to miss a class, send your homework with a trusted friend or submit to me the next time we see each other. If you know ahead of time that you need to miss a

class for something like an appointment with a lawyer or a medical procedure, please let me know as soon as you do. I will likely have additional materials to give you so you can catch up for the time missed in class. If you would like me to send these materials with a classmate, just write a small note to send with them saying you would like me to give your returned homework, additional materials etc. with them.

SWHS Department Grading Standards

The following grading standards are for course assignments and course grades. Some grading categories are not used by the college for course grades – but may be used for assignments. The department has worked to establish this grading scale for all courses based on academic and practice standards of excellence. These standards may be different from other courses at CR; however you will find the same standard used for all social work courses. This standard is used to help you achieve your own level of mastery of the material and demonstrate competency in the practice behaviors that are the hallmark of professional social work.

- **A+ (98-100%)** - Superior work which meets a level of professional competence and expertise worthy of publication and/or public presentation. (The college does not award an A+ for end of the semester grades, however you may receive this grade on assignments.)
- **A (95-97%)** - Excellent work which meets a level of professional competence and expertise that is worthy of publication and/or public presentation.
- **A-(90-94%)** – Admirable work which meets a level of professional competence that with minimal changes would be worthy of publication and/or presentation.
- **B+ (87-89%)** – Great work which meets a level of professional competence that with some changes could be worthy of publication and/or presentation.
- **B (84-86%)** – Very Good work which meets a level of professional competence that with additional changes could be worthy of publication and/or presentation.
- **B- (80-83%)** - Good work which meets a level of professional competence that with considerable changes could be worthy of publication and/or presentation.
- **C+ (77-79%)** - Above Average work which minimally meets professional standards of competence, that through addressing the challenges may at some point be worthy of publication and/or presentation.
- **C (74-76%)** – Average work which minimally meets professional standards of competence and with considerable revision, may be worthy of publication or presentation.
- **C- (70-73%)** – Below Average work which barely meets professional standards of competence and is unlikely to be published or presented without tremendous amounts of work.
- **D+ (67-69%)** – Barely adequate work that does not meet minimum professional standards of competence and is not worthy of publication and/or presentation.
- **D (64-68%)** – Inadequate work which does not meet professional standards of competence and is not worthy of publication and/or presentation.
- **F (63% or below)** – Unacceptable work that does not meet minimum course expectations.

Classroom Expectations

Inclusion and Open-Mindedness

College of the Redwoods aspires to create a learning environment in which all people feel comfortable in contributing their perspectives to classroom discussions. It therefore encourages instructors and students to use language that is inclusive and respectful. Students in this class are encouraged to speak up and participate in class. Each of us must show respect for each other because our class represents a diversity of beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. I believe that this is what will enrich all of our experiences together. I recognize that our individual differences can deepen our understanding of one another and the world around us, rather than divide us. In this class, people of all ethnicities, genders and gender identities, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities are strongly encouraged to share their rich array of perspectives and experiences. You will have the opportunity to let our classroom community know your name and gender pronoun and anything else you would like to share. If you feel our classroom community isolates you in any because of your differences or if you have a specific need, please speak with me early in the semester so that we can work together to help you feel welcome to be an active and engaged member of our class and community.

Expectations of the Professor

- I will *come to class prepared*, with course materials that are current
- I will prepare *course materials which are as current* and accurate as possible.
- will be *available to answer questions or issues that may arise for you*
- I will *prepare you* for the assessments in this course to the best of my ability.
- I will utilize *fair and honest evaluation* techniques for each assignment required
- To the best of my ability, make this a *valid and worthwhile learning experience*.
- I will do my best to *address the needs of a diverse range of learning styles*
- I will *only* share your student information per FERPA guidelines.
- I will *remain flexible regarding unexpected events impacting all of us* over the semester.

Expectations of Students

- Come to class prepared with *readings and assignments completed by the first class each week*.
- Expect to spend about 4 hours per week working on this course.
- *Prepare to the best of your ability* for every aspect of this course.
- Take the opportunity to learn how to write your own thoughts; *don't plagiarize*. Be sure to give credit where credit is due and cite your sources or use footnotes or endnotes. Balancing this with a digestion of *your own thoughts/interpretation* on the subject is critical.

- Find ways to ***engage in class*** (by speaking, asking questions, sharing observations, ...) so that you can demonstrate and expand on your awareness of subject material. This will also help you to ensure that you get participation points for this course.
- Work to ***maintain a sense of flexibility and humor*** as we work our way through this semester. With the ever shifting sands of life during a global pandemic, there will be situations that we cannot anticipate. In those moments, a sense of humor will be helpful.
- ***Engage in timely communication with the instructor*** if unexpected events occur which require your attention and make it difficult to complete assignments on time.
- ***Create the opportunities for self-care*** that you need in order to maintain your mental health and overall success in this course.

Academic Honesty

In the academic community, the high value placed on truth implies a corresponding intolerance of scholastic dishonesty. In cases involving academic dishonesty, determination of the grade and of the student's status in the course is left primarily to the discretion of the faculty member. In such cases, where the instructor determines that a student has demonstrated academic dishonesty, the student may receive a failing grade for the assignment and/or exam and may be reported to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee. The Student Code of Conduct ([AP 5500](#)) is available on the College of the Redwoods website. Additional information about the rights and responsibilities of students, Board policies, and administrative procedures is located in the [College Catalog](#) and on the [College of the Redwoods website](#).

Professional Standards

Student behavior or speech that disrupts the instructional setting will not be tolerated. Disruptive conduct may include, but is not limited to: unwarranted interruptions; failure to adhere to instructor's directions; vulgar or obscene language; slurs or other forms of intimidation; and physically or verbally abusive behavior. In such cases where the instructor determines that a student has disrupted the educational process, a disruptive student may be temporarily removed from class. In addition, the student may be reported to the Chief Student Services Officer or designee. The Student Code of Conduct ([AP 5500](#)) is available on the College of the Redwoods website. Additional information about the rights and responsibilities of students, Board policies, and administrative procedures is located in the [College Catalog](#) and on the [College of the Redwoods website](#).

Student Support and Resources

Good information and clear communication about your needs will help you be successful. Please let your instructor know about any specific challenges or technology limitations

that might affect your participation in class. College of the Redwoods wants every student to be successful.

Accessibility

College of the Redwoods is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability or believe you might benefit from disability related services and accommodations, please contact your instructor, Ms. Eagles, or [Disability Services and Programs for Students](#) (DSPS). Students may make requests for alternative media by contacting DSPS based on their campus location:

- Eureka: 707-476-4280, student services building, 1st floor
- Del Norte: 707-465-2324, main building near library
- Klamath-Trinity: 530-625-4821 Ext 103
- Pelican Bay: Contact Ms. Tory Eagles, our Scholars Program Coordinator, via a formal written letter or an Ask CR Sheet. Please send your formal letter or Ask CR Sheet to the Pelican Bay Education Department (ATTN: CR Scholars), so that your request can be routed through out correspondence mailing system.

In the case of face-to-face instruction, please present your written accommodation request to your instructor at least one week before the needed accommodation so that necessary arrangements can be made. Last minute arrangements or post-test adjustments usually cannot be accommodated. If you are taking correspondence classes, DSPS will also email approved accommodations for distance education classes to your instructor.

Student Support Services

Please let me know if there is any other support you need that you think I might be able to support you on.

Emergency Procedures

Follow standard protocol inside Pelican Bay.