SALEM STATE COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SWK 101: The Profession of Social Work

M, W, F 12:30 -1:20

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the social functions, individual roles and practice settings that constitute the social work profession. Special emphasis is placed on the values and ethics that inform and guide social work. Students examine the relationship between situations involving individuals, families, organizations and communities, and the role of the social worker those situations. The course highlights a variety of community services and specifies how social workers intervene in those settings to address human needs.

GLOBAL GOALS

1. To familiarize students with the range of community services available in the US, along with the roles that social workers play in addressing human needs in those settings.
2. To provide students with beginning knowledge and values necessary for them to function effectively as human service professionals.
3. To provide an opportunity for students to explore social work as a major or minor course of study.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, a student should:

1. Have developed some practical knowledge of US social welfare agencies and services and their roles in response to various social problems.
2. Understand the relationship of the social work profession to the social welfare system.
3. Have some practical knowledge of the nature and purpose of both formal and informal social welfare systems.
4. Have a beginning familiarity with the values and ethics of the social work profession.

5. Have a basic knowledge of the history of the social work profession.

6. Have begun to clarify her/his interest in pursuing a career in social work.

7. Recognize the diversity issues associated with all components of the social welfare system.

8. Appreciate the statistical facts and trends associated with various social issues.

9. Be able, in basic terms, to articulate the definition and meaning of various issues from differing ideological perspectives.

**TEXT & OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES**


**METHODS USED**

The course objectives will be accomplished through the use of readings, class lecture and discussion, role-playing, discussion of case material, group exercises, and use of the Practicing Social Work CD-Rom.

**MISSED WORK**

The only circumstances in which I will accept late or missed work is if the work is accompanied by a doctors note and/or a note from a funeral home stating that a loved one has died.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY & INCOMPLETES**

Students are responsible for completing all course requirements and for keeping up with all that goes on in the course whether or not the students are present. Failure to do this will result in a grade of I (Incomplete) which turns into an F after a given period of time. Incompletes will be considered in the course under the following circumstances: 1) a substantial portion (usually at least 80%) of the course work has been completed; 2) the
student’s record in the course is such that a passing grade can still be earned; 3) the student has made arrangement with the instructor prior to the time that final grades will be assigned; and 4) the instructor is satisfied that circumstances beyond her/his control prevented her or him from completing the required work. I very rarely give incompletes.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Salem State College is committed to providing equal access to the educational experience for all students in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and to providing all reasonable academic accommodations, aid, or adjustments. Any student who has a documented disability requiring an accommodation, aid, or adjustment should speak to the instructor immediately. Students with Disabilities who have not previously done so should provide documentation to and schedule an appointment with the Office for Students with Disabilities and obtain appropriate services.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Salem State College assumes that all students come to the College with serious educational intent and expects them to be mature, responsible individuals who will exhibit high standards of honesty and personal conduct in their academic life. All forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, are considered to be serious offenses against the College Community. Definition of Academic Dishonesty: Submitting another person’s work as one’s own. This includes, for example, copying another person’s work during examinations; purchasing papers; copying papers, reports, journal articles or portions thereof; copying material from a website; copying laboratory or computer results; and presenting material from another course or paper without proper acknowledgment, citations and references. Penalties for Academic Dishonesty: Penalties for plagiarism and academic dishonesty can include an automatic grade of F for the course as well as being reported to the Vice President, Academic Affairs, and can lead to suspension or expulsion from the College. See the current Salem State Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogues for complete descriptions of College policies on academic dishonesty and the appeals procedures.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Discussion Board Questions 15%
2. Practicing Social Work Exercises 10% (Done in Class and turned in)
3. Midterm Examination 15%
4. Interview a Social Worker Paper 15%
5. Group Quizzes 20%
6. Attendance & Participation 10%
7. Final Exam 15%
Discussion Board Questions

In addition to classroom participation, students will be graded on their participation in an online discussion board through WebCT. Students are required to post a response to the discussion questions outlined below and read those posted by your classmates. Discussion questions are posted on Saturday mornings at 7:00 am and turned off the following Friday at 6:00 pm.

Practicing Social Work Exercises

During the semester, students will be asked to complete exercises from the text book. These exercises will be done during class and will be turned in and graded. The purpose of the exercises is to apply theoretical concepts to real world issues.

Midterm Examination

The midterm examination will be multiple choice, fill in the blank and short answer.

Interview a Social Worker Paper

Along with completing an introductory social work course and learning about the social work profession, talking with practicing social workers in an excellent strategy for determining if social work is the right career for you. For this assignment, identify a social work (BSW or MSW) practitioner that you can interview in person at her/his agency. Consider an area of social work that is of interest to you and select a practicing social worker that works in that area. Examples might include:

1. Health/Medical
2. Policy
3. Advocacy
4. Law/Justice System
5. Substance Abuse Treatment
6. Child Welfare
7. Community Organizing
8. Mental Health
9. Children and Families
10. Domestic Violence
11. Gerontology
12. Administration
13. School Social Work
14. Adoption
15. Youth
After you have identified a social worker to interview, contact the person by telephone or email to request the interview. Be certain to discuss a convenient time and duration for the interview. Confirm the interview time and location. You may want to email or mail your questions to the interviewee before the interview. Don’t forget to send a thank you note after the interview.

Upon completion of the interview, reflect on the information that you learned from the social worker. Summarize the information you gained, but also reflect on your thoughts and reactions to what you learned. Note: You may want to consider audio taping the interview to help with your reflection paper. Here are some suggestions to get you started in your interview. Do not feel limited to these suggestions. Be creative and inquisitive:

1. Tell me about your journey into social work. What about social work appealed to you? How did you decide to become a social worker?

2. What is your educational background for being a social worker?

3. What social work experiences have you had, including practical and paid employment.

4. How did you determine the area(s) in which you wanted to work?

5. Tell me about your current social work position. What are your responsibilities? How long have you been employed in this position? What do you like/dislike about your job?

6. What are the positive aspects of being a social worker?

7. What are the negative aspects of being a social worker?

8. What suggestions would you offer to someone who is considering a social work career?

9. Based on what you now know, what suggestions do you have for courses or field experiences that a social work student might seek out during training?

Here are some suggestions for you to consider as you reflect on this experience:

1. Before the interview, how would you describe/define social work?

2. Did the social worker you interviewed confirm or change your perception of the social work profession?
3. What about the social worker’s job appealed or did not appeal to you? Can you see yourself working in the area or job of the social worker you interviewed? Why or why not?

4. What new information did you learn about social work that you did not previously know?

5. Did the social worker discuss how she/he applies the values of the social work profession?

6. Did the social worker discuss any ethical conflicts that she/he has encountered? How would you handle similar situations?

Paper should be 5 pages in length, double spaced.

**Group Quizzes**

There are 9 quizzes throughout the semester. These quizzes are taken in small groups assigned by the instructor. The purpose of the quizzes is to ensure that students are keeping up with the reading.

**Attendance & Participation**

Attendance is required for this course. The nature and substance of the course cannot be gained just from reading the texts. Class discussion, role plays, and group exercises are an integral part of the course material. Attendance and participation are a substantive part of your grade. I will take attendance on a random basis.

**Final Examination**

The final examination will be held according to the campus final examination schedule. It will consist of short answer, multiple choice and fill in the blank questions.
## COURSE OUTLINE

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