



**Boston College Graduate School of Social Work, Fall, 2007**  
**SC 378, PS 600 SW 600**  
**Introduction to Social Work**

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**Course Description:** The purpose of this course is to give students an overview of the field of Social Work. Starting with a discussion of the history of the profession, the course will explore social issues which influence people in need. Grounded in an empowerment approach to social work, the course will consider various methods of intervention in a range of practice settings with people across the life span. The course will also introduce students to social policies that influence service delivery in the many fields in which social workers practice.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course students will:

Knowledge

1. Be familiar with the history of social work in the United States
2. Understand many of the various roles of social workers and the settings in which we practice
3. Understand the person-in-environment or contextual nature of the social work approach
4. Appreciate the ethics and values that guide social work practice

Skills

1. Be able to identify the significance of values in viewing social issues
2. Develop capabilities in observation and analysis of social phenomenon
3. Be familiar with empowerment practice approaches
4. Identify and critique social policies as they influence social problems and service delivery

Values

1. Gain an appreciation for the humanistic values inherent in the profession
2. Understand and recognize the significance of values and ethics such as self-determination

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Comment: Social Work and social work (no caps) are used without specific distinction. Please make caps consistent.

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Comment: Why is this capitalized?

3. Recognize social injustices
4. Become familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics and its' influence on practice and policy

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**Comment:** Is this in the back of the Kirst-Ashman book?

### Required Texts

Kirst-Ashman, K. (2007). Introduction to social work and social welfare: Critical thinking perspectives, second edition. Belmont, CA: Thomson- Brooks-Cole. ISBN 0-495-00244-5. (Required readings listed as Kirst-Ashman (2007) are from this text)

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**Comment:** This should be indented five spaces—APA is very inconsistent throughout the syllabus

Ehrenreich, Barbara (2000). Nickel and dimed: On not getting by in America. New York: Holt.

Knapp, C. (1997). Drinking: A love story. New York: Delta.

Additional required readings available through the course web-ct site.

Administrator 8/28/07 1:42 PM  
**Comment:** Sometimes web-ct appears in all lower case, sometimes it is partially uppercase—be consistent.

### Recommended Text

Kirst-Ashman, K (2007). Careers in Social Work: Real Social Workers Share Their Thoughts. Belmont, CA: Thomson- Brooks-Cole. ISBN-10: 0-495-17192-1

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**Comment:** Incomplete, where is the publisher information (and USE CORRECT APA STYLE!!!!)

This supplementary text is a compendium of interviews with social workers in a range of practice settings. Students are encouraged to access this supplemental text to gain a richer understanding of what professional social workers do. Chapters in this text correspond with required readings in the Kirst-Ashman text listed above. While not required, this book provides real-life social work examples.

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### Locating Course Readings

Books, journal articles and other readings are placed on reserve by the Social Work Library staff. To locate the readings, use the Course/Online Reserves catalog, which can be viewed from the link in your course web-ct site or from the BC Libraries Quest catalog. The Social Work Library homepage <http://www.bc.edu/swlib> has links to web-ct (which has been renamed Blackboard) and Quest. Recommended readings are not available through web-ct (Blackboard).

### Books

Whenever possible, all books mentioned in GSSW course syllabi are placed on reserve for 2-hour use in the Social Work Library. Most required books are also on reserve at the off-site campus libraries. If no more than two chapters of a particular book are assigned as required reading for the course, those chapters may also be available as PDF files in the Course/Online Reserves catalog.

### Journal articles

All journal articles listed as required readings in GSSW course syllabi can be accessed online in full text in the Course/Online Reserves catalog. Articles which are designated as supplemental or recommended readings are usually not available in the Course/Online Reserves catalog. Contact the library staff at [swlib@bc.edu](mailto:swlib@bc.edu) for assistance in locating those articles.

### **HIPPA Guidelines**

All social workers are required to adhere to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Public Law 104-191) regulations regarding the privacy of client information outside of the agency setting. Unless you have the client's written permission, confidentiality must be strictly maintained when discussing or writing about clients in the classroom and in assignments.

### **Request for Disability Accommodations for Exams**

If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Kathy Duggan, [kathleen.duggan@bc.edu] Associate Director, Academic Support Services, The Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities and ADHD) or Suzy Conway [suzy.conway.1@bc.edu] Assistant Dean for Students with Disabilities (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

Forms for extended exam time and/or alternative location of exam are available in McGuinn 134 and must be completed one week prior to the exam.

### **Grading**

#### **Performance Criteria**

Students will be evaluated on the following bases:

Quizzes	20% of final grade
Written Assignments	20% of final grade (10% each) (due 11/7 and 11/28)
Mid-term Examination	20% of final grade (given 10/17)
Final Examination	30% of final grade (tba)
Attendance and Participation	10% of final grade

#### **Quizzes**

Quizzes will be given periodically on various readings, class discussion and presentations. Quizzes will always be announced the week prior. The content of all quizzes is derived from required readings and/or class discussion. For this reason, among others, attendance in all class sessions is required.

#### **Written Assignments**

The written assignments are presented in detail at the end of this syllabus. Written work is to be type-written and follow the APA format in regards to spacing, font, cover page and references. For additional information regarding APA formatting students may reference the web-site <http://www.apastyle.org/electref.html>. Papers not in compliance with APA will be returned, unread, for revision. Any late paper will be reduced two points per day after the due date, weekend days inclusive.

#### **Mid-Term Examination**

The mid-term exam is scheduled for **October 17, 2007**. This is an in-class test with a multiple-choice and short-answer format. No make-up exams can be given.

### **Final Examination**

The scheduled time and place for the final examination can be located on AGORA (this information is unavailable as of the creation of the syllabus). The final examination will be multiple choice, short answer and short essay.

### **Instructional Methods**

This course uses a highly interactive format to discuss complex social issues and the social work response to them. Brief, didactic lecture, web-ct readings and assignments, as well as video presentations will be used to facilitate learning.

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### **Course Policies**

#### *Attendance*

Students are encouraged to attend every class session. If you expect to miss a class, please advise the instructor in advance and make arrangements with another student to get notes. Because this course meets only once weekly, each absence is the equivalent of three class sessions. Each absence will result in a five point reduction in the final grade.

#### *Civility*

A course that addresses complex social issues can challenge many of our strongly held beliefs. The free expression of ideas is crucial to learning, yet can be difficult for many to hear. It is expected that students who may disagree with ideas refrain from creating a hostile classroom environment. Ideas and opinions can be and shall be expressed and received with respect.

#### *Make-up exams*

There are no make ups for the final or mid-term examination. One quiz missed prior to the mid-term can be made up during the mid-term class session. Similarly, one quiz missed between the mid-term and final examination can be made up at the final exam period. Please advise the instructor via email two days prior to the exam period if you need to make up a quiz. Failure to alert the instructor 48 hours in advance of a make-up quiz will result in a grade of zero for the missed quiz. There are NO exceptions to this policy.

#### *Make-up work/late papers*

All papers are due on the date indicated in this syllabus. All late papers shall be reduced two points per day late, weekend days inclusive.

**Course Outline**

**(1) September 5, 2007**

**Introduction to the course and the profession**

- Overview of the profession
- Knowledge, skills, values, and ethics
- Similarities and differences with helping professions
- History of Social Work profession
- NASW Code of Ethics

Note: Readings are listed on the date for which they must be completed.  
There are no required readings for the first class

**(2) September 12, 2007**

**Introduction to social work practice**

- History of the profession/micro and macro focus
- Person-in-environment approach to practice
- The Strengths Perspective
- Evidence-based social work practice
- Ethics in action

Required Reading:

Kirst-Ashman, *Introduction to Social Work*, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 4-54.

Luthar, S.S., Cicchetti, Luthar, S.S., Cicchetti, D. & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development*, 71, 543-562.

Recommended

Ungar, M. (2002). A deeper more ecological social work practice. *Social Service Review*, 76 (1), 481

\* see web-ct for assignment due next week re: Ehrenreich book.

**(3) September 19, 2007**

**Poverty and the working poor**

- History of the social construction of poverty – micro/macro approaches
- The “working poor”
- Exercise: On (not) getting by: A social experiment at the local level

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**Comment:** Which of the Kirst-Ashman books, required or recommended—need to distinguish.

Administrator 8/15/07 10:49 AM  
**Comment:** Does the Kirst-Ashman assignment have the information on the Strengths Perspective??

Administrator 8/15/07 10:48 AM  
**Comment:** Not APA—the volume number of the journal needs to be in italics as well—please make consistent throughout the syllabus.

Required Reading

Ehrenreich, Barbara (2000). Nickel and dimed: On not getting by in America. Holt, New York. Entire book.

(4) September 26, 2007

Social policy in social work

- Definition and examples of social policies
- Function and role of social policies
  - Agency policies
  - Social Welfare-related policies
- Public opinion and social policy
- Social policy and social welfare
- Value and ethical perspectives on social responsibility and social welfare program development

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**Comment:** Inconsistent caps. It would also help to have what topics in social policy you will cover listed here.

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Required Reading

Bok, M. & Simmons, L. (2004). Pathways out of poverty: The challenge of welfare policy. *The Social Policy Journal*, 3(1) 3-23.

Kirst-Ashman (2007). Chapters Seven and Eight pp. 205-263

Recommended

Scott, D. (2005). Warrantless arrest in domestic violence: Is it effective? *The Social Policy Journal*, 4(2) 3-22.

(5) October 3, 2007

Social work with children and their families

- Definition of child welfare, abuse, and neglect
- Prevalence – implications of social inequality
- History of social policy – Child protection/family preservation
- Causes, prevention and interventions in child maltreatment

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**Comment:** Check APA style

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Required Reading

McPhatter, A.R. & Ganaway, T.L., (2003). Beyond the rhetoric: Strategies for implementing culturally effective practice with children, families, and communities. *Child Welfare*, (2)82, pp 103-124.

Bolen, R.N. (2003). Child sexual abuse: prevention or promotion? *Social Work*, 48(2) 174-86.

Kirst-Ashman (2007). Chapter 9, pp 268-314

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**Comment:** What general topics will you be discussing or covering?

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**Comment:** Because you are requiring one Kirst-Ashman book and you are recommending another, you (once again) need to distinguish between them in assignments to students—also would help to see when you are using what book.

(6) October 10, 2007

Social work with older adults and their families

Demographics of ageing: Overview and variation by race, class, and gender  
Issues in ageing: Ageism  
Social Policy concerns: Social Security and Medicare  
Social work practice settings with older adults  
Communication skills with families and older adults  
Empowerment practices with older adults

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Required Reading

Angus, J. & Reeve, P. (2006). Ageism: A threat to “ageing well” in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 25( ) 127-

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Comment: This is not APA

Kane, R.L., Boston, K., & Chilvers, M. (2007). Helping people make better long-term-care decisions. *The Gerontologist*, 47(2) 244-247.

Kirst-Ashman (2007) Chapter 10 pp. 315-342

Recommended Reading

Castle, N.G., & Sonon, K.E. (2006). Internet resources and searching for a residential care setting: What information is available for consumers? *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 25: 214-233.

(7) October 17

Mid-term examination

(8) October 24, 2007

Social work in health care

Overview of health-related social work concerns  
Social work roles in health care  
Social policy influencing health care: unequal access and social justice  
Managed care, social work values and ethics  
Cultural issues in health care/communication skills  
HIV/AIDS – issues for clients, social policy and the strengths perspective

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Required Reading

Kirst-Ashman (2007). Chapter 12, pp. 372-399.

Zimmerman, J., & Dabelko, H. (2007). Collaborative models of patient care: New opportunities for hospital social workers. *Social Work in Health Care*, 44(4), 33-48.

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(9) October 31, 2007

Social work and mental health

Mental health, mental illness and social work roles  
Social work practice settings and mental health  
The medical model – DSM-IV-TR  
The strengths-perspective in mental health service delivery  
Overview of communication skills in mental health  
The strengths-perspective in mental health

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Comment: (topics??) This is a huge area of interest for students and I think you need to be very specific—even these articles are 2007, they are not good representatives of what social workers in mental health do—isn't there something of more interest.

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Required Reading

Kirst-Ashman (2007). Chapter 13 pp. 400-435.

Scheyett, A. (2005). The mark of madness: Stigma, serious mental illnesses, and social work. *Social Work in Mental Health*. 3(4) 79-98.

Shield, M (2002). "Is this how I'll be for the rest of my life?" The human experience of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and the implications for mental health social work practice. *Social Work in Mental Health* 1(1) 85-99.

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Recommended Reading

Adams, R.E. & Bukowski, W.M. (2007). Relationships with mothers and peers moderate the association between childhood sexual abuse and anxiety disorders. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*. 36(3), 367-77.

Hill, N.E., Tyson, D.F., & Flint, R. (2007). Developmental commentary: Ecological perspectives on parental influences during adolescence. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 36(3), 367-77.

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Comment: Not APA

(10) November 7, 2007

Substance abuse and social work  
ATOD paper due

Required Reading:

Bryan, V., Hiller, M., Leukefeld, C. (2006). A qualitative examination of the juvenile drug court treatment process. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*, 6(4), 91-114.

Knapp, C. (1997). *Drinking: A love story*. New York: Delta. Entire book.

Overview of Drug Courts: National Association of Drug Court Professionals go to the web site at <http://www.nadcp.org/whatis/> to view definition, philosophy, research, and publications related to drug courts.

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Comment: So you aren't going to even talk about alcohol until the paper is actually due—is the book required reading for this day? This may be dangerous to keep it until the end of the course. It feels like it was "stuffed" in at the end. I don't understand its placement.

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Comment: Not APA, needs indent.

(11) November 14, 2007

Substance abuse (continued)  
Social work in schools

Roles of social workers in school settings  
Populations at risk – race, ethnicity and sexual orientation in schools  
School violence and prevention  
Adolescent pregnancy and parenting

Required Reading

Anderson-Butcher, A. & Ashton, D. (2004). Innovative models of collaboration to serve children, youth, families and communities. *Children & Schools*, 26 (1), 39-53.

Jonson-Reid, M., Jiyoung, K., Barolak, M., Citerman, B., Laugesl, C., Essma, A., Fezzi, N., Green, D., Kontak, D., Mueller, N., & Thomas, C. (2007). Maltreated children in schools: The interface of school social work and child welfare, *Children & Schools*, 29(3), 182-191.

Kirst-Ashman (2007). Chapter 14 pp. 436-465.

Recommended Reading

Shaffer, G.L. (2006). Promising school social work practices of the 1920's: Reflections for today. *Children and Schools*, 28(4), 243-251.

(12) November 21, 2007

No class Thanksgiving recess

(13) November 28, 2007

Forensic social work  
Interview with a social worker paper due

Required Reading

Kirst-Ashman (2007). Chapter 15, pp. 466-485.

Rose, W. (2007). Crimes of Color: Risk, profiling, and the contemporary racialization of social control. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*. 16(2) -499.

(14) December 5, 2007

Review and Wrap up

No additional reading

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Comment: What topics? This might be more effectively placed closer to the session on children and families.

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Comment: Capitalization does not follow APA— you need to find a different article on forensic— recent doesn't mean it is necessarily relevant to the process.

Written Assignment One  
Due November 28, 2007  
Interview with a Social Worker

5 typed pages

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The purpose of this assignment is to familiarize you with a particular area of social work and the tasks, feelings, values, and responsibilities of a social worker. You must interview a social worker **at an agency or institution**. Do not complete this interview over the phone. The person you interview must have either an undergraduate (BSW) degree or a graduate (MSW) degree in Social Work.

Please begin to look for a social worker to interview ASAP. Based on previous student's experience, it is possible to find social workers to interview, but scheduling last-minute interviews, finding the agency, etc. can be time consuming. This assignment will not be accepted late. It is best to find a social worker and interview this person during October in order to work around last-minute cancellations.

Please respond to each of the following questions in your paper.

Regarding the social worker:

- 1) Education (undergraduate or graduate degree?) \*
- 2) Current position in social work?
- 3) Past social work position(s)?
- 4) Why did your interviewee choose social work as a profession?
- 5) What advice would s/he give to others considering a career in the profession of social work?
- 6) Describe the function/purpose of the agency s/he works for
- 7) Describe the social workers' role(s) in the agency
- 8) Describe a typical work day for your interviewee
- 9) Describe what your interviewee finds the most rewarding and frustrating part(s) of the job

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Regarding areas of practice:

- 1) What is/are the social problem(s) in this area of practice (fully explain i.e. child welfare, financial assistance, domestic violence, etc.)
- 2) How do the interventions offered by the social worker and agency address the social problems at the individual, family, community, and/or social policy level?
- 3) What are the gaps in services?

Regarding the Process

- a. What was your experience in making contact with the social worker?

- b. Were there any challenges in finding the agency? If so, describe them
- c. What were your impressions of the waiting area, reception, etc.
- d. Consider what it would be like to be a client in this agency and describe your reaction.

Regarding yourself

- 1) What aspects of this work are of interest to you?
- 2) What aspects of this work do you find incompatible?
- 3) What have you learned about yourself from the experience?  
(Describe)

If you have difficulty finding a social worker, consider using the list of Field Instructors and Field Placements for the Boston College, GSSW, which can be located through the GSSW web-site. Click "Outreach" then "Field Education" there is a hot link to "Field Placement Options". This feature enables you to search for an agency by population served, geographic area, and type of agency. Do not use a faculty or staff member at the GSSW or Boston College. This assignment is a unique opportunity for students to go through the process of making an appointment with a social worker, finding the agency, and seeing the agency setting.

Please attach the social workers' business card and/or agency brochure to the paper as an Appendix.

All papers should follow APA format. This entails double spacing, a cover page and appropriately cited references if used. Please note that papers longer or shorter than the paper length identified will be returned, unread, for revision.

**Written Assignment Two**  
**DUE Wednesday, November 7, 2007**  
**ATOD DIARY**

**3-5 typed pages (plus diary as addendum)**

The purpose of this assignment is to critically evaluate the role of substances, both licit and illicit in daily life. Begin on a Thursday and continue through Monday (5 days) to keep a diary noting all references heard or observed about the use of alcohol or other licit or illicit drugs. Observations should include those that occur during social interactions, with family or friends, on television or other media such as music and film. Submit your diary as an appendix to the paper. Appendices do not count toward paper length. Answer ALL of the questions below as succinctly and completely as possible.

1. Did you note gender differences in drinking behavior or references? Drug, alcohol, cigarette or Over-the-Counter (OTC) drug use?
2. How would you characterize the alcohol and other drug consumption pattern that you observed (light, moderate, or heavy)? Define these terms and discuss why you view the pattern as you do.
3. To what extent are drugs (OTC, alcohol, prescription, etc.) a presence in your daily life? Please be cognizant of prescription drug use as this is often overlooked.
4. To what extent is the presence of these substances a positive, negative, or ambiguous influence?
5. At [http://international.drugabuse.gov/methadone/methadone\\_web\\_guide/part\\_c/part\\_c\\_question1.html](http://international.drugabuse.gov/methadone/methadone_web_guide/part_c/part_c_question1.html) review the DSM-IV-TR diagnostic criteria for substance abuse and dependence. How would you compare the patterns of substance use you observed to these criteria? The point of this exercise is not to diagnose yourself or others, but to consider the extent to which signs and symptoms of abuse and dependence are present in daily life.
6. Using the Knapp book, describe similarities and differences between the author's description of her justification and denial of substance abuse/dependence and what you observed in those around you.
7. Are there people you have observed whom you were concerned may be at risk of alcohol or other substance abuse? If so, why? What are the similarities and differences to the diagnostic criteria and/or Knapp's description of her experience?

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