



**Boston College Graduate School of Social Work,
Spring 2008
SC 378, PS 600 SW 600
Introduction to Social Work**

I. 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.

II. 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/collaborative 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 practical implications of social work values and ethics
3. Related to the above, become familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics and its' influence on practice and policy
4. Recognize the implications of social injustice

III. Required Texts

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

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).

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

Additional required readings available through the course Blackboard Vista site

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

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.

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 Blackboard Vista site or from the BC Libraries Quest catalog. The Social Work Library homepage at <http://www.bc.edu/swlib> has links to Blackboard Vista and Quest.

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 for assistance in locating those articles.

IV. Assignments

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 five points per day after the due date, weekend days inclusive.

Mid-Term Examination

The mid-term exam is scheduled for February, 28. 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.

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.

V. 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 4/2 & 4/16
Mid-term Examination	20% of final grade (2/27/08)
Final Examination	30% of final grade (TBA)
Attendance and Participation	10% of final grade

VI. Teaching Methodology

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.

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.

VII. Course Outline

SESSION 1 (1/16/08)

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

SESSION 2 (1/23/08) 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 Readings:

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. 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 Readings:

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

* see Blackboard Vista for assignment due next week re: Ehrenreich book.

SESSION 3 (1/30/08) 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

Required Readings:

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

SESSION 4 (2/6/08) 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

Required Readings:

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

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.
Chapters 7 & 8 (pp. 205-263).

Recommended Readings:

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

SESSION 5 (2/13/08) Social Work with Children and Their Families

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

Required Readings:

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.
Chapter 9 (pp 268-314).

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.

Recommended Readings:

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

SESSION 6 (2/20/08) 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

Required Readings:

Angus, J. & Reeve, P. (2006). Ageism: A threat to “ageing well” in the 21st Century. *Journal of Applied Gerontology, 25*(2), 127-148.

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

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.
Chapter 10 (pp. 315-342).

Recommended Readings:

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.

SESSION 7 (2/27/08) Mid-term Examination

3/5/08 Spring Break

SESSION 8 (3/12/08) Social Work in Healthcare

Overview of health-related social work concerns
Social work roles in health care – collaborative treatment planning
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

Required Readings:

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. 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.

3/19/08 Easter Break

SESSION 9 (3/26/08) Social Work and Mental Health

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

Required Readings:

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. Chapter 13 (pp. 400-435).

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.

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

Recommended Readings:

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.

**SESSION 10 (4/2/08) Substance Abuse and Social Work
ATOD Paper Due**

Substance use/abuse in daily life – Discussion of Knapp book
Overview of interventions in substance use/abuse/dependence
Diagnostic criteria for abuse/dependence (DSM-IV-TR)
Innovative strategies for repeat drug offenders – drug courts

Required Readings:

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.

**SESSION 11 (4/9/08) 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 Readings:

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, K. (2007). *Introduction to social work and social welfare: Critical thinking perspectives, second edition*. Belmont, CA: Thomson- Brooks-Cole. ISBN 0-495-00244-5. Chapter 14 (pp. 436-465).

Recommended Readings:

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

SESSION 12 (4/16/08)

Forensic Social Work

Interview with a Social Worker Paper Due

Definitions and types of crime
Social justice, racism and the criminal justice system
Crime statistics – is crime on the increase?
Practice settings in forensic social work
Social policies and criminal justice

Required Readings:

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. 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), 472-499.

SESSION 13 (4/23/08)

Review and Wrap up

No additional reading

Written Assignment One
DUE 4/2/08
ATOD DIARY

Up to five 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/partc_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?

Written Assignment Two
Due 4/16/08
Interview with a Social Worker

Up to five pages

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

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.

