

**NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM  
SWK 200-18: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL WORK  
Spring 2010**

**Instructor:** Rafael Leon, ACSW,MSW,CADC Phone: 773-251-0121  
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Chicago, IL 60625

Social Work Dept. Secretary: 773-442-4760

**Course time:** Thursdays 6:10 pm-8:45 pm section (18) **El Centro Office Hours 5-6 Th**

**Prerequisites:** None

**TEXTS:** Marla Berg-Weger, *Social Work & Social Welfare: An Invitation*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2005. ISBN: 0-07-284594-5. (REQUIRED)

Lenore T. Szuchman and Barbara Thomlinson, *Writing With Style: APA Style for Social Work*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole-Thomson Learning, 2004. ISBN: 0-534-62182-1. (Recommended for this and all other courses)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

*Introduction to Social Work* is for students who are majoring or minoring in social work, are thinking about becoming a social worker, or want to learn more about the social work profession. This course will provide students with an overview of the social work profession – a history of social work, social work values and ethics, the perspectives of empowerment and social justice, the many and varied fields of social work practice, and how social workers help individuals, families, groups, and society. As a survey course, the Instructor will use an array of methods (lectures, field trips, guest social workers, and student exercises) so that students will be able to determine their fit with the social work profession and be enriched to pursue whatever occupation the student chooses.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

At the completion of this course, students will:

**Gain an introduction to the knowledge underpinning the:**

1. development of social work as a profession and its relationship to major public social welfare policies
2. fields of social work practice and the areas for employment ;
3. characteristics of the helping relationship;
4. structure and characteristics of social welfare agencies;
5. social work perspectives and methods;
6. foundations of generalist social work practice
7. values and ethics of the profession;
8. importance of social work research in professional social work behavior;
9. processes that foster/or impinge upon human rights and social justice;
10. interconnection of international and global concerns and social work's response to the world at risk particularly those who are vulnerable, oppressed and marginalized;
11. process of developing culturally competency skills
12. process of developing social work advocacy skills
13. process of ethical decision making

**Be supported in developing the life long learning skills of:**

14. how to access information form a variety of sources;
15. how to assess the validity and reliability of sources

16. locating and citing, per *American Psychological Association, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, (APA)*, professional journal articles, books, and internet sources
17. expository writing
18. critical thinking
19. the use of technology systems of CMS, PowerPoint, and email.
20. becoming a world citizen

## CONTENT AND METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

See the *Course Documents* section of the *Introduction to Social Work* Blackboard site.

### Introduction to the course, fellow students, and the Instructor

On the first day of class, the Instructor will provide students with a brief overview of the course content, the assignments, grading policy, and the responsibilities of the students and the instructor. The instructor and students will introduce themselves to each other.

### BLACKBOARD SITE:

Northeastern Illinois University and its Social Work Department have given a useful tool for the *Introduction to Social Work* course – the Blackboard site. The Instructor and students will use this Blackboard site to convey and receive information. For example, students may download this document from the *Course Information* section of the *Introduction to Social Work* Blackboard site. Your Instructor will ensure that you will know how to access and use the *Introduction to Social Work* Blackboard site.

### CLASS CALENDAR:

The *Introduction to Social Work* Blackboard site contains the class calendar for the course in the *My Calendar* section. Exact dates of lectures, trips, assignments, and tests may change throughout the semester. The Instructor will advise students about changes to the class calendar.

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### Unit 1: An Overview of Social Work: A Helping and Advocating Profession

This unit focuses on the boundaries of the social work field of practice. Content includes the scope and characteristics of the profession: What is social work? What is social justice? What do social workers do? Where do social workers work?

*Methods:* Instructor lectures, a guest lecture, student exercises, and a visit to Jane Addams' Hull House Museum.

*Required Readings:* Berg-Weger. chapters, 1, 2,3,4,5,6,7 and 12

### Chapter: 1: A Glimpse into the World of Social Work:

This chapter will introduce students to the idea of social work's commitment to fighting injustices. Students develop an appreciation for the interrelationship among the development of the social work's commitment to justice, the history of "need" in society, the issue of power and position, and the development of social welfare policy. The content will cover a general overview of the development of social welfare and social work's role in it.

*Methods:* Instructor lectures, a guest lecture, and student exercises.

*Required Readings:* Chapter 1

### Chapter 2: History of Social Work and Social Welfare:

This unit examines the values that underpin the social work profession and how these values guide the ethics of the profession. The content will cover the values of the profession, the NASW Code of Ethics, the process of ethical decision-making, and how ethics guide social work practice.

*Methods:* Instructor lectures, guest lectures, and student exercises.  
*Required Readings:* Berg-Weger, Chapter 2

### **Chapter 3: U.S. Poverty and The implications for Social Work:**

This chapter will cover the relationship with social welfare and the social work profession. It highlights the issues related to poverty, what is poverty, who are the poor, what causes poverty and what are the barriers to moving out of poverty. It also provides information on the history of the social welfare system in the context of the role that social workers played.

*Methods:* Instructor lectures, guest lectures, and student exercises.  
*Required Readings:* Berg-Weger, Chapter 3

### **Chapter 4: The social Work Environment: Quiz in class**

This chapter introduces the students to the importance to understand the social forces and changes that influence our society and the people with whom social workers work, in particular. It also provides understanding of the diversity of the U.S. Population and then examine the challenges that confront social worker in the contemporary United States. Students get introduced to the Ecological Perspective, micro, mezzo, exo, and macro level systems and how they impact. This chapter will also help the student to develop the skills, activities, and issues involved in the first phase of doing social work – engagement. This chapter will challenge the student to think about macro level issues.

*Methods:* Instructor lectures, guest lectures, and student exercises.  
*Required Readings:* Berg-Weger, Chapter 4

### **Chapter 5: Diversity in Social Work Practice:**

This chapter will assist the student to develop an understanding on diversity. Also, understand how discrimination and oppression affect individuals. Hence, will challenge the student to think about what is self-awareness and exploration. Nonetheless, the chapter will emphasize that the social work process is collaborative in nature. The social worker and the individual, family, group, or organization learns from each other. The social worker works with the individual, family, group, or organization to effect positive change.

*Methods:* Instructor lectures, guest lectures, and student exercises.  
*Required Readings:* Berg-Weger Chapter 5.

### **Chapter 6: Values and Ethics in Social Work**

This chapter will introduce social worker's commitment to values and ethics of the social work profession. It will discuss why values and ethics are important in the social work arena, why we have a code of ethics, how to apply values and ethics at work. This chapter will also discuss ethical dilemmas. Also, explores action activities of planning, decision-making, mobilizing resources, motivating participants, and following through to create change.

*Methods:* Instructor lectures, guest lectures, and student exercises.  
*Required Readings:* Finn and Jacobson, Chapter 6  
 Berg-Weger

### **Chapter 7: Social Work Perspectives and methods**

This chapter will provide skills and roles of the levels of generalist social work practice. Hence, will discuss theory in the generalist social work practice, evidence base and theory. The chapter will introduce the student to person-in-environment and ecological perspective and social work theoretical frameworks. It will illustrate the importance of human behavior, system theory, strengths-based and empowerment perspectives, solution focus perspective and integration of social work theory. Examines the fourth phase of doing social work – evaluation and celebration. This unit explores different approaches to evaluation, especially participatory evaluation, and characteristics of reflective thinking. This unit also emphasizes the importance of celebrating successes of creating positive change.

*Methods:* Instructor lectures, guest lectures, and student exercises.  
*Required Readings:* Berg-Weger, Chapter 7

### **Unit 12: The Social Work Profession**

This unit examines issues involving the future of the social work profession – globalization, the “businessing” of social services, and the principles of social justice work.

*Methods:* Instructor lectures, guest lectures, and student exercises.  
*Required Readings:* Berg Weger, Chapter 12

**ASSIGNMENTS:** (See the *Assignments* section of the *Introduction to Social Work* Blackboard site)

### 1. Blackboard Assignment (TBA)

The student must obtain a Blackboard student account to use the *Introduction to Social Work* class Blackboard site. Students can access the course Blackboard site on [www.neiu.edu](http://www.neiu.edu) by clicking on Information Resources, Blackboard, and Login. Students will then access the *Introduction to Social Work* course under My Courses. To complete this assignment, students must use our *Introduction to Social Work* Blackboard site to download and print lecture notes and materials, link to social work web sites, and email the Instructor and classmates.

### 2. Reports

Students will complete two written reports. Each report should be no more than two pages, typed, double-spaced with 1" margins and 12-point Times Roman text. NO FOLDERS please. The Instructor will provide students with a set format for each report.

1. **Journal Report** February 2010. Because research is important to social work, students will prepare a report of an article about a topic of interest in the *Journal of Social Work*. Students will find this journal in NEIU's library.
2. **Report** due March 2010. Because advocacy is one of the primary missions of the social work profession, students will prepare a report on their visit to their Illinois legislators to lobby about issues suggested by the National Association of Social Workers – Illinois Chapter. Students will visit their Illinois legislators locally.

### 3. Oral / Written Presentation

**Interview Presentation** TBA. Because learning about what social workers do is the primary aim of this course, students will give one 3-5 minute presentation to the class to report on their person-to-person interview with a social worker at a social work setting. Students will provide the Instructor with a written copy of the presentation within the week before the presentation. The Instructor can assist each student in finding a social worker to interview at a social work setting and will provide a calendar for students to choose the date of their presentation

4. **Mid-Term:** March 2010. As you think about our contemporary world, what are the primary issues and challenges that face social workers today?
5. **Final Paper** May 2010. The final paper will consist of writing a three-page paper on a social issue that you are passionate about. In this final paper you should demonstrate an understanding of the ecological perspective framework as well the role of the social work when advocating for the welfare of individuals and/or communities. For example, funding for programs, reacting to social injustice, or participating in the political arena.

## CRITERIA FOR EARNING THE FINAL GRADE

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The Instructor will base the student's final grade for the course upon the total points that the student accumulates for the Blackboard assignment (up to 10 points), reports (up to 40 points), presentation (up to 20 points), tests (up to 30 points for each test), level of engagement (up to 40 points), and optional extra credit assignments (up to 20 points). If missed more than three days of class, one letter grade will be drop.

Grade Scale:	A= 180 - 200	(Note: To achieve a final grade of A for the course,
	B= 160 - 179	you must earn at least 180 total points; for a final
	C= 140 - 159	grade of B at least 160 points, for a final grade of C
	D= 120 - 139	at least 140 points, and for a final grade of D at least
	F= 0 - 119	120 points.)

### CRITERIA FOR GRADING INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

The Instructor will use the following criteria for grading each individual assignment, report, test, and level of engagement:

Criteria for grading Web assignment (10 points):

- Login to Blackboard..... 4 points
- Submitting a copy of the Lecture Notes ..... 4 points
- Send email ..... 2 points

Criteria for grading Reports (20 points):

- English composition ..... 7 points
- Inclusion of citation ..... 2 points
- Summary ..... 8 points
- Discussion ..... 3 points

Criteria for grading Mid-term and Final (30 points):

- Correct answers ..... 30 points

Criteria for grading Level of Engagement (40 points):

- Respectful attendance<sup>1</sup> ..... 20 points
- Completion of assignments ..... 7 points
- Class involvement<sup>2</sup> ..... 13 points

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

- Students are expected to adhere to the University Student Conduct Code ([http://www.neiu.edu/policy\\_2.htm](http://www.neiu.edu/policy_2.htm))
- Be careful and be sure to cite fully all sources.
- Ask for help and consult a style manual if you are not sure how, when, or whether to include a citation.
- All papers must be written in your own words.
- Read online: What is plagiarism and how to avoid it (<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html>)
- Papers that fail to address the specific topics and questions assigned for this class risk an F.

<sup>1</sup> *Respectful attendance* means that the students show respect for themselves, classmates, and the Instructor by bringing their presence (intelligence, experience, personality, and spirit) to class. However, students are adults who have the freedom to determine when they attend classes. In those situations when students cannot, or choose not to, attend class, they show professional respect by **notifying the Instructor through email or phone call** of their absence. If the student does not attend and does not notify the Instructor, the Instructor will **deduct ten points for each absence** from the Respectful Attendance total of 20 points. Especially that participation in the class is part of the foundation of learning and understanding social work, values, skills, and knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> *Class involvement* means that the students show respect for themselves, classmates, and the Instructor by sharing their intelligence, experience, personality, and spirit in class and participating and working cooperatively with their classmates and the Instructor.

**OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS:**

In addition to the maximum of 200 points the student can earn for the assignment, reports, presentation, journal, final exam, and level of engagement, the student has the option to earn up to 20 points for completing extra credit assignments. Thus, if the student does not score at least 180 points for the assignment, reports, presentation, final paper, and level of engagement for a final grade of A, the student can earn extra credit points that might earn them a higher final grade. *For example, if a student achieves 179 total points for the assignment, reports, presentation, tests, and level of engagement, the student would receive a final grade of B. If, however, that same student also completed an extra credit assignment for at least one point, then the student would earn 180 points and would receive a final grade of A.*

Here are possibilities for optional extra credit points for this course:

- Join NASW as a Student Member at discounted rate - 10 points. The student will give the Instructor a copy of the NASW Membership Card.
- Attend NEIU Social Work Club meetings – 2 points for each meeting
- Attend NEIU Special Program - 3 points for each program. The Instructor may suggest programs relevant to social work throughout the course or the student can talk to the Instructor about programs of interest. The student will give the Instructor a signed *Proof of Attendance* form.
- Presentations to class – 4 points
- Extra Journal Report - 4 points
- Do an Eco Map of yourself, using, micro, mezzo, exo, and macro level systems and present to class –20 points
- Complete an extra credit assignment suggested by the student with the approval of the Instructor

The Instructor gives extra credit points to encourage the student's professional social work behavior – attending social work events outside of class for “continuing education” and advocating in favor of positions on issues of concern to the social work profession and to vulnerable and oppressed members of society, as identified by NASW. The Instructor will suggest only those extra credit advocacy activities supported by NASW. However, because the Instructor respects an individual's right to disagree with NASW positions, the Instructor will consider advocacy on issues opposed by NASW on a case-by-case basis.

**MISSED ASSIGNMENTS:**

Students **CANNOT** make up missed assignments, unless the student made prior arrangements with the instructor. The Instructor, however, may grant an exception in rare emergency cases, and arrange with the student to make up a missed assignment or test. To be granted an exception, the student MUST notify the Instructor prior to, or on the day of, a missed assignment or test.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:**

Students **must** submit assignments on time. The Instructor, however, may grant an exception in rare cases and accept the student's assignment up to one week after the due date. The Instructor will deduct one point for each day past the due date. The Instructor will give a grade of 0 points for assignments that students attempt to submit after one week from the due date.

# A Message of Appreciation

*Virginia Satir 1985*

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Close your eyes and be centered. Listen to your breathing normal, comfortable. Release the tensions within you. Just let them escape on the outgoing breath.

Feel your support and give yourself a message of appreciation. You are a manifestation of life-force growing, struggling, sorting, adding. You can taste everything but accept only what fits. Tune in, focus and be ready.

