

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
The David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics
School of Social Work

SWK 115 Introduction to Social Work
Section M001
Spring 2024

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Office Hours	Virtual via zoom and by appointment	Time/Day:	Tu/Thu 2:00-3:20

Prerequisite / Co-requisite

No pre/co-requisites

Catalog Description: Roles social workers assume in professional practice; social context within which practice occurs; major fields of practice; Local agency presentations/field trips.

Course Overview: Students will be introduced to social work and social welfare in contemporary society. Attention will be given to understanding the profession of social work, as well as the methods, functions and arenas through which services are provided to individuals, families, groups and communities. Students will be introduced to the history, values, ethics, ethical dilemmas, and practices that constitute social work's response to diverse personal and societal needs today.

Credit Hours:

Three (3)

Audience:

This course is open to all students

Course Fee:

\$50.00

Course Learning Objectives:

In SWK 115 students will be able to:

1. Gain skills to apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice: Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions. (Competency #1)
2. Increase their ability to apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments: Use an analytical approach for effective decision-making. (Competencies #1 and #4)
3. Increase their ability to engage diversity and difference in practice: Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences. (Competencies #2 and #6)
4. Increase their ability to advance human rights and social and economic justice. Recognize and articulate how systematic oppression and discrimination may affect clients. (Competency #3)
5. Gain skills to respond to contexts that shape practice. Articulate how current mezzo and macro issues impact client systems. (Competency #3)

Social Work Competencies

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights & Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, & Communities

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations & Communities

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations & Communities

Course Goals and Shared Competencies

Course tags highlight the connection between our university-wide learning goals and course learning experiences.

SWK 115 fosters two [Shared Competencies](#), Syracuse University's university-wide learning goals for undergraduate students:

Ethics, Integrity, and Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion and Critical and Creative Thinking

Ethics, Integrity, and Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion	
Framing Language	Learning Outcomes
Reflection on the dynamic relationships among power, inequality, identities, and social structures. Thoughtful engagement with one's values, intersectional identities, experiences, and diverse perspectives and people. Application of ethical and inclusive decision-making in the context of personal, academic, professional, and collaborative pursuits.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Examine how one's own values, identities, cultures, histories, and communities can inform one's own actions.2. Evaluate cases of systemic social injustice that explain inequities and inequalities today.3. Examine and apply values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in different contexts.4. Evaluate real-world situations in the context of ethical frameworks that work to promote integrity in action
Critical and Creative Thinking	
Framing Language	Learning Outcomes
Exploration and synthesis of ideas, artifacts, issues, and events to inform and evaluate arguments, develop new insights, and produce creative work. Reflection on, and application of divergent modes of inquiry, analysis, and innovation to research, knowledge, and artistic creation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Describe a potential focus (idea, artifact, issue, event) for analysis.2. Question the origin in which the idea, artifact, issue, or event was produced and the context in which it has since existed.3. Analyze, interpret, synthesize the idea, artifact, issue, or event's component parts and/or attributes.4. Reflect on the ways in which the relevance of the idea, artifact, issue, or event can contribute to the critical thinking and creative processes.5. Develop creative work (idea, artifact, issue, or event) through a process of iteration6. Disseminate a revised version of the creative work for an audience to evaluate reactions to it and reflect upon the creative process.

Course Expectations:

Cell phones and other communication devices, as well as computers may NOT be used in the classroom. It is expected these devices will be turned off while in class. All course material may be found on Blackboard, which will eliminate the need for taking notes on a laptop.

Students are expected to display tolerance and respect toward their fellow students' diverse opinions, thoughts, and feelings and to maintain confidentiality on what students share in the classroom.

Grading

An A grade cannot be earned for the course unless all written assignments are submitted on the due date. Missing the deadline date for papers will result in a lower grade. **No paper will be accepted seven (7) days after the due date.**

Unless it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the normal limits of the course, an incomplete is not granted. In addition, an incomplete grade is not granted unless the student formally requests an incomplete, the instructor agrees, and the form mandated by the University (“Request for Incomplete Form”) is completed before the last class. **The course requirements must be met within six (6) weeks and the grade will be lowered as appropriate.**

Required Textbook:

Cox, L. E., Tice, C. J., & Long, D. D. (2022). *Introduction to Social Work- An Advocacy-Based Profession* (Third ed). Sage Publications. **(Text available via Orange Inclusive/Sage)**

Grobman, L. M. (2019). *Days in the Lives of Social Workers: 62 Professionals Tell “Real- Life” Stories from Social Work Practice*, (5th ed.). Harrisburg: White Hat Communications

Final grades in SWK 115 are based on the following:

SWK 115 Grading		Links to Course Objective	EDIC Learning Outcomes	CCT Learning Outcomes
Attendance/Participation	20%	1,3		
Weekly Readings/Quizzes/Knowledge Checks	20%	1,3		
Poverty Simulation/Critical Reflection Paper	20%	2,3,4,5	2,3,4	1, 3, 4
Agency Presentation and reaction paper	15%	1,3,4	3,4	1, 4, 5
Agency Presentation and reaction paper	15%	1,3,4	3,4	1, 4, 5
Roots of Social Work Presentation and Response Paper	10%	3,4	2,3,4	1, 3, 4
Total	100%			

Class Attendance and Participation:

20%

Attendance is required and will be taken in each class. Absences will be deducted from the final grade assigned for the course. Classes begin at the time specified. **Lateness to class will also affect the final grade: every 3 late arrivals (more than 10 minutes late) will equal 1 absence.** To reach the course learning goals, regular attendance and participation are essential.

Class participation in discussions and activities are essential in this course. My hope is that our class time will be filled with discussions and questions regarding the profession of social work and the variety of topics we will be covering. It is expected that you will ask questions of the speakers that present in the class, and the agency personnel who engage you during the agency visits. Discussion of required weekly readings and case studies is also expected and required. All students are expected to initiate conversation and participate actively in class discussions about weekly readings. (See participation rubric in blackboard)

Weekly Readings/Quizzes/Knowledge Checks/Discussion

20%

Students are expected to complete readings on dates indicated content will be discussed in depth in class. Students are expected to participate fully in these discussions. Additional readings assigned for relevance to agency trips and class discussions. Knowledge Checks /Quizzes will include questions on basic concepts, terminology, and application of social work concepts. They will be given throughout the course within the textbook platform.

Written Assignments:

All written assignments are to be completed in a 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, single-sided format and meet the page number requirement listed for the assignment. Please be sure to include a cover/title page which includes the following: your name, title of assignment, due date, and SWK 115.

Assignments are to be submitted by the beginning of class in which they are due.

- Poverty Simulation and Critical Reflection 20%
- Agency Presentation 1 and 3- page reaction paper 15%
- Agency Presentation 2 and 3-page reaction paper. 15%
- Roots of Social Work Presentation and response paper 10%

Points awarded for each assignment will be totaled and converted to a letter grade. For the most part, the letter grades will correspond to the percentage of the assignment's total points (see table below).

Assignments can receive a grade of D+, D, or D-.

Grading Table*

Grades*	Grade points / credit*	Percentage Range
A	4	100- 95
A-	3.66	94-90
B+	3.33	89-86
B	3	85-82
B-	2.66	81-79
C+	2.33	78-76
C	2	75-72
C-	1.66	71-69
D+	1.33	68-66
D ¹	1	65-62
D ⁻¹	0.66	61-59
F	0	Below 59

* Source: <http://www.syr.edu/registrar/students/grades/faq.html>

****Further assignment details and rubrics can be found after the course schedule****

Teaching Methods:

This course is a combination of lectures, videos, case study articles with questions, instructor facilitated in depth discussions, guest speakers, and (virtual) agency visits. The purpose of the variety of teaching methods is to emphasize experiential learning to enhance the students’ ability to understand the profession of social work and the U. S. social welfare system while demonstrating the ability to think critically regarding complex issues and differentiating between the objective and the subjective.

Course Schedule

Weeks	Topic	Dates	Required Reading and Assignment	Assignments Due
Week 1	Introduction to SWK 115 Welcome to SWK 115, Introductions, and Expectations Course Overview	1/16	None	
		1/18	Weinstein, G. (2008) <i>Could Never Do What You Do</i> . The New Social Worker, pp. 22-25	
Week 2	Social Work Values and Ethics and Social Justice	1/23	Read: NASW Code of Ethics	
		1/25	Guest Speaker: Rachel Johnson	
Week 3	Social Work as a Profession History of Social Work	1/30	Cox (2022) Chapter 1	
		2/1	Cox (2022) Chapter 2	
Week 4	Generalist social work practice Micro, mezzo, and group practice	2/6	Cox (2022) Chapter 3	Presentation Reaction Paper #1 Due 2/8
		2/8	No readings for this class	
Week 5	Advocacy in Social Work	2/13	Cox (2022) Chapter 4	
		2/15	Grobman, Part 1- Health Care: Ch. 1, “Social Work in the ER,” Ch.3, “Social Work in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit	
Week 6	Health Care Health and Mental Health Challenges	2/20	Cox (2022) Chapter 7	
		2/22	Guest Speaker: Michele Domachowske - Crouse Hospital	
Week 7	Recognizing Poverty and Inequality	2/27	Cox (2022) Chapter 5	
		2/29	Paycheck to Paycheck – Documentary and Discussion	
Week 8	Family and Child Welfare	3/5	Cox (2022) Chapters 6	Poverty Simulation Assignment Due 3/8
		3/7	Continue to work on poverty Simulation Assignment	
Week 9	Spring Break – No Class: Sunday, March 10 – Sunday March 17			
Week 10	Communities at Risk	3/19	Cox (2022) Chapter 13	
		3/21	Grobman, Part 15 – Working in Communities: Chapter 61. “Community Organizing for Social	

			Change” Roots of Social Work Presentation	
Week 11	Social work with Special Populations	3/26	Cox (2022) Chapter 8 - Physical, Cognitive, and Developmental Challenges	
		3/28	Cox (2022) Chapter 12 – Criminal Justice	
Week 12	Social work with Special Populations	4/2	Guest Speaker: Genevieve Dubois	
		4/4	Grobman: Part 7- Criminal Justice: Ch. 33, “Social Work in a Police Department; Ch. 35, A “Day’s Night: Working with Assaultive Men in Prison,”	
Week 13	Social work with Special Populations	4/9	Cox (2022) Chapter 10 – Substance Use & Addictions	Roots of Social Work Assignment Due 4/9
		4/11	Grobman: Part 5 – Substance Use Ch. 27, “Social work and the Opioid Crisis”	
Week 14	Social work with Special Populations	4/16	Cox (2022) Chapter 15 – Military Populations Part 12 –Veterans and the Military: Ch.49, “Family Advocacy in the Military,”	
		4/18	Guest Speaker: Ken Marfilus	
Week 15	Social work with Special Populations	4/23	Cox (2022) Chapter 11 – Older Adults	
	Global Social Work Advancing Human Rights Final Thoughts	4/25	Cox (2022) Chapter 17 Experiential Activities	Presentation Reaction Paper #2 Due 4/25

On- Line Resources

1. American Factfinder: http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en
Provides access to tons of demographic data access; has the ability to drill down to zip code.
2. Center for Disease Control: Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities
<http://www.cdc.gov/omh/AboutUs/disparities.htm>
3. New York Times: How Class Works (a very cool interactive graphic about class and mobility)
http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/national/20050515_CLASS_GRAPHIC/index_01.html
4. LA Times: Psychiatry's Sick Compulsion: Turning Weaknesses into Diseases
<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/sunday/editorials/la-op-psych1jan01,0,1868753.story?track=hpmostemailedlink>
5. *100 Words that Every High School Graduate Should Know
http://channels.netscape.com/wrap/linker.jsp?url=http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/booksellers/pre_ss_release/100words/

Various Assignment Details

Assignment

Weekly reading assignments/classroom discussions

Due dates: Weekly

Percentage of grade: Part of the 40% is dedicated to discussions on assigned readings.

Purpose: 1) To help students understand the variety in the social work profession, what social workers do and what a day in their social work positions looks like. 2) To help students understand and gain further understanding of the social work profession and the skills required to practice social work. Use your critical thinking skills to identify the social work issues and the way in which they are responded to.

Elements of the assignment: Please be sure to complete the selected readings ahead of time each week. Prepare questions you might have, as well as any thoughts reading the articles that will contribute to the classroom discussions.

Reflection Papers

Reflection offers you the opportunity to consider how your personal experiences and observations shape your thinking and your acceptance of new ideas. The expectation is that you explore your own values, beliefs, judgements, and ideas. You will then express your thoughts, feelings, and expectations regarding the experience. As a part of your reflection explore how your thoughts may have been shaped by your assumptions and preconceived ideas; in doing so, you can appreciate the ideas of others, notice how their assumptions and preconceived ideas may have shaped their thoughts, and perhaps recognize, how your ideas support or oppose what you experienced.

Assignment

Poverty Simulation and Critical Reflection Paper (See Blackboard for full details on assignment)

Due date: Week 8

Text length: 3 – 4 pages

Percentage of grade: 20%

Purpose of the assignment: The purpose of this assignment is to gain an understanding of the poverty cycle and build social empathy. **It is important to keep in mind that it is a simulation and not a game!** These are real scenarios faced by many low-income persons. The main objective of the simulation is to sensitize the participants to the realities that low-income people face. As a part of this experience, you will encounter some of the challenges and roadblocks that can create barriers for low-income persons and how these factors shape beliefs and behavior.

FIRST COMPLETE THE THIS [POVERTY SIMULATION](#)

After you have completed the simulation, do the following:

- Complete an online search of where to go locally for an income-based government assistance program such as TANF, Section 8 housing, or food stamps.
- Once you identify the government program you will try to access, go through the application process so you can understand how a client feels. You need not submit the application to the agency unless you want to.
- Submit a copy or photo image of the application with your paper. Black out any sensitive or identifying information.
- Write a 3 – 4-page reflection paper to share what you learned the process. Include your thoughts and feeling regarding the experience.

Assignment

Roots of Social Work Response Paper

Due date: See blackboard for assignment due dates Text

length: 2 – 3 pages

Percentage of grade: 10%

Purpose: The assignment is designed to have you begin to think critically and in depth about the local historical context of the social work profession and its implications for social work practice

Elements of assignments: Attend Roots of Social Work Presentation. Write a 2-page reflection paper to share what you learned the local context of the City of Syracuse. Include your thoughts and feelings regarding the experience.

Assignment

Agency Reflection Papers (2)

Due date: See blackboard for assignment due dates

Text length: 2 – 3 pages

Percentage of grade: 15% each

Purpose: To gain an understanding of social work services provided to vulnerable populations

Guidelines for Writing the Agency Presentation Reflection Paper

Please be sure to address the following.

- Papers should be a minimum of **2 – 3 double-spaced, typewritten pages.**
- Please complete assignments in APA format with **title page included**
- Use any relevant information from the course readings if applicable.
- Contextualize your reflection: What are your learning goals? What are the objectives of the organization? How do these goals fit with the themes or concepts from the course?
- Provide important information: What is the name of the host organization? What is their mission? Who do they serve? What was the role of the presenter?
- Analytical Reflection: What did you learn from this experience? About yourself? About working in the field? About society?
- Lessons from reflection: Did your experience fit with the goals or concepts of the course? Why or why not? What are your lessons for the future?
- What were your expectations about the Presentation? Were they met/not met?
- Identify and discuss one thing that you learned about the agency that surprised you and/or was of particular interest to you?
- What did you find interesting about this program?
- What skills do you think a social work would most need to work with this population/program?
- Discuss any other general thoughts/reactions/feelings you had regarding the agency, the speaker, services provided, etc.

Academic Integrity Policy

“Syracuse University’s Academic Integrity Policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. Under the policy, students found in violation are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered as described in the Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric. SU students are required to read an online summary of the University’s academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice. For more information about the policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

The Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric establishes recommended guidelines for the determination of grade penalties by faculty and instructors, while also giving them discretion to select the grade penalty they believe most suitable, including course failure, regardless of violation level. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.”

Disability-Related Accommodations

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498, TDD: (315) 443-1371 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Religious Observances Notification and Policy

SU religious observances notification and policy, found at <http://hendricks.syr.edu/spiritual-life/index.html>, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes and by the submission deadline for flexibly formatted classes.

For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available for students in **My Slice / Student Services / Enrollment / MyReligiousObservances / Add a Notification**. Instructors may access a list of their students who have submitted a notification in My Slice Faculty Center.

Student Mental Health

Mental health and overall well-being are significant predictors of academic success. As such it is essential that during your college experience you develop the skills and resources to effectively deal with stress, anxiety, depression, and any other mental health concerns. The Barnes Center provides an array of resources including support for mental health concerns. Counseling services are available 24/7, 365 days, at 315.443.8000. I encourage you to explore the resources available through the [Wellness Leadership Institute](#).

Trigger Warning

Because of the nature of the topics covered in this class, the course readings or class discussions may generate intellectual and emotional discomfort. These responses are natural parts of intellectual growth. If, however, your emotional response becomes acute psychological distress (triggering), please communicate with me. I invite you to contact me if you have concerns in this regard.