WIDENER UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION
SYLLABUS
Spring 2008

SW 535: Generalist Social Work Practice with Communities and Organizations

Wednesday 3:30 - 6:15 p.m.

Section: Dr. Marina Barnett
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Office Hours: Wed. 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.; 2:00 – 2:30 p.m.
Thurs. 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.; 2:00 – 2:30 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will focus on the development of macro practice skills. Since much professional effort both in direct service organizations and in policy-planning agencies is directed towards work with local communities, this course will focus on identifying the context for macro practice and community social problems and assets, organizing and building relationships with communities and planning for community and organizational change. Activities associated with this field of practice include organizing and mobilizing communities, coalitions and task forces, planning and implementing needs assessments, developing programs and policy strategies and managing organizations. The course contains a "Designated Assignment" for the evaluation of Curriculum Objective **F6.**

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
Although each section of the class will focus on a different area of community practice, there are course objectives that all students are expected to meet. These are listed here.

By the end of the semester, the student should be able to:

1   Demonstrate understanding of the value base, code of ethics, and history of social work practice with human service organizations and communities.
           Curriculum Objective F1, F2, F6

2   Demonstrate ability to identify ethical issues that arise in working with human service organizations and communities.
           Curriculum Objective F1, F8

3   Demonstrate understanding of the influence of community processes on human behavior and development.
           Curriculum Objective F4

4   Demonstrate understanding of an ability to integrate macro and micro interventions within the generalist social work and ecosystems perspectives.
        Curriculum Objective F7B, F9

5   Demonstrate knowledge of and ability to apply a generalist social work perspective in their work with communities and organizations.
        Curriculum Objective F7B, F11

6   Demonstrate skills in assessing human service organizations and communities.
        Curriculum Objectives F6, F8

7   Demonstrate ability to work with diverse and special populations in the context of social work practice with human service organizations and communities.
        Curriculum Objectives F11, F12

8   Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which social work interventions with human service organizations and communities can be utilized to advocate for oppressed and disadvantaged populations and in service to the promotion of social justice.
        Curriculum Objectives F3, F5, F6, F7B

9   Demonstrate knowledge of the historical and current impacts of social policies upon communities, community members and the delivery of services by human service organizations.
        Curriculum Objectives F2, F5

10   Demonstrate a willingness to engage in social change activities.
        Curriculum Objectives F1, F3

11   Demonstrate knowledge of the range of social work research methods for evaluation of social work practice with human service organizations and communities.
        Curriculum Objective F8, F9

12   Demonstrate ability to make use of the professional literature related to social work practice with human service organizations and communities.
        Curriculum Objective F8, F9

REQUIRED TEXTS

Hardcastle, D., Wencur, S., and Powers, P (2004) Community Practice: Theories and Skills for Social Workers. NY: Oxford University Press 2nd Edition

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This course is taught through a combination of didactic instruction, discussion and experiential components. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to be an active participant in the class discussions. Active participation includes demonstration that you have done the assigned readings for the class and can make reference to same as part of your discussion. If you have to miss class, please call the instructor in advance. More than two unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your course grade. More than five unexcused absences will result in an automatic failure of the course.

The Service Learning Assignment

Using the framework introduced by McKnight and Kretzman (http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/papers/mcc.pdf) . Students will engage in a semester-long process of identifying resources in the City of Chester. An asset map is an inventory of the strengths and gifts of the people who make up a community. Asset mapping reveals the assets of the entire community and highlights the interconnections among them, which in turn reveals how to access those assets. This is in contrast to the deficit approach often utilized by community researchers. Historically, a needs assessment has been conducted to determine the gaps in services that exist in a defined area. An assets based approach assumes that resources exist in every community.

This exciting project allows us to combine students from two disciplines to collaborate to design and implement the mapping process. Students from the Center for Social Work Education will conduct the asset mapping, collect the data and create the datasets. Students from Environmental Studies will plot the data and create the GIS maps (please see below for a description of GIS and the GIS Lab at Widener). Social Work students will receive 2- 3 weeks of training in GIS software and conceptual mapping. (Training in GIS software typically costs $600 for a one day session). In the end, we expect to create an interactive mapping of civic engagement resources for the Chester. There are a myriad of opportunities that will result from a project such as this:

- Students learn the importance of identifying community strengths and seeing the community from a position of opportunity rather than need.

- Students learn to utilize an exciting new tool that can be used in their professional careers (grant writing, conducting assessments, etc.).

- Students work collaboratively as a team with peers from another academic discipline and with community members.

- Community partners will be able to create resource handbooks to publish the information, and

- Data can be uploaded to the Internet to create interactive maps as a resource for local residents.

EVALUATION

The grade for the course will be based on 2 written assignments, oral class presentations, and class participation in the following proportion:

Attendance & Class Participation	25%
Organizational analysis	25%
Final Assignment/Class Presentation	50%

Social Work Program Evaluation: Designated Assignment Notice

As a part of the ongoing process of evaluating and improving our BSW/MSW programs at Widener, the faculty has selected certain course assignments for special attention. These "designated assignments" are intended to highlight the level of attainment of one or more of our Social Work program objectives. Specifically, your score on this assignment will be aggregated and averaged across all students who complete this assignment. This average score will serve as one (of several) ways that we know how well we are doing in meeting our program objectives. This course contains one of these "designated assignments"- the Organizational Analysis .

Please approach this assignment as you would any other – to be a fair reflection of objective attainment requires that you treat the assignment as "nothing special". Indeed, the only difference from any other project you will see is a second measurement score besides the assignment grade. This score will range from 1 – 5. The score indicates your level of objective attainment as reflected in this project. The ratings indicate whether the level of objective attainment is

> 1 Unacceptable
> 2 Acceptable
> 3 Very good
> 4 Excellent
> 5 Outstanding.

Please be assured that your score is confidential. It will be used for statistical analysis only, and will NEVER be linked with your name anywhere other than on your returned assignment   Still, if you have any questions about the process, feel free to ask your instructor or call Stephen Kauffman, Ph.D at (610) 499-1284.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

There are two written class assignments

Assignment 1: ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS - Each student is required to do an analysis of the agency at which you are placed or where you are currently working if not currently in field placement. This assignment is due at mid-term. The full description is found at the end of the syllabus. This assignment is the "Designated assignment" for the evaluation of Curriculum Objective **F6.**

Assignment 2: COMMUNITY PROJECT - Building on the ideas addressed in the course, throughout this semester, students will experience first hand the research and community practice issues in examining services to the elderly and disabled. Students will reflect on this experience throughout the semester as well as produce one final group project, although several written elements will be turned in prior to the end of the semester to assist the student in shaping the best possible product. The learning objectives that must be addressed in this assignment include:

1. The development of ethically sound relationships **(Curriculum Objective F1).**
2. Identification of personal, economic, social, and organizational barriers to normative human development (**Curriculum Objective F4, F6, F7B, F8, F9, F11).**
3. The application of social work practice that is sensitive to the diverse and special populations encountered in the project (**Curriculum Objectives F11, F12).**
4. Identify the historical and current impacts of social policies upon communities, community members and the delivery of services by human service organizations, and to offer suggestions for remediation based in part upon professional best practices identified in the social work literature **(Curriculum Objectives F2, F5).**

Grading Criteria

Grading: This class is Pass/Fail. Grades on each written assignment will range from Outstanding to Unacceptable. Incompletes may be granted for all assignments, but only with advance permission of the instructor. Grading criteria for all assignments are as follows:

"*Outstanding*". This grade is given when 1) all questions are answered, 2) no grammatical or organizational problems are found, 3) evidence of class readings is demonstrated, and 4) integration of the class material with the student's problem area of choice is demonstrated. Any minor deficiency with these criteria will result in an "*Excellent*".

"*Very good*". This grade is given when at least three of the four above criteria are met. Any minor deficiency with these criteria will result in an "*Acceptable*".

"*Unacceptable*". This grade is given when at least two of the four above criteria are met.

STANDARDS FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students must adhere to the Widener University policy on Academic Integrity as written in the *Graduate Student Handbook* (2005-2006). The standard clearly outlines the fact that cheating, plagiarism, and all other forms of academic fraud are serious and unacceptable violations of university policy and gives the penalties for any such violations. Students are advised to utilize the *Publication Manual of the A. P. A. 5th edition* (2005). *Washington, D.C: American Psychological Association* as a resource for correct citation. In addition, it is a violation of the standards of academic integrity to either use or submit the paper of another student in order to complete the writing assignment(s) in a course. It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with the Standards for Academic Integrity as outlined in the *Graduate Student Handbook* (2005-2006).

WIDENER UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION
ASSIGNMENT NUMBER I
Organizational Analysis

Each student is required to do an analysis of the agency at which you are placed or where you are currently working if not currently in field placement. This analysis must include but is not limited to the following information.

I. Agency: Name and address of agency/group.

      A.Briefly, what is the agency's history?
      B.Under what auspices does it operate county, federal, private)?
      C.What are its funding sources?
      D.What is the mission? What are its specific functions or services?
      E.Does the agency have an appointed/elected board of directors? If so, how is it constituted (for example, what constituencies do members represent)?. How active is the board in governing agency activities?
      G.Does the agency undergo any accreditation review? If so, by whom and how often?

II.   Staff:

      A.Briefly describe the demographic characteristics of the staff and or volunteers (gender, age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic level, etc.).

      B.Briefly describe the administrative structure of the agency both formal and informal (If an organizational chart exists, please include it). Is there discrepancy between the formal and informal structures?

      C.How many professional and non-professional support staff members are employed at the agency?   Is there a volunteer component? How many of the professional staff are social workers?

      D.What are the racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic tensions among staff/volunteers and or clients if any? Please describe.

III.   Clients/Consumers

   A.What populations are served? (for example, gender, age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.).

   B.What services do consumers receive?

   C.What are some gaps in services to consumers? What changes might you suggest to fill these gaps?

   D.What are the racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic tensions between workers and client/consumer groups?

   E.Overall, is the agency/group achieving its mission in terms of the services it provides to its constituency?

IV.   Evaluation of Service Effectiveness:
   A.Is there a formal mechanism in place to monitor and evaluate the efforts of the organization or community group? If so, please describe.

   B.Identify an aspect of the agency service that you would like to see monitored or evaluated and briefly describe why.

This assignment is a Dedicated Assignment to evaluate the attainment of Objective **F6.**

The Community Project

Methodology

Implementing a service-learning pedagogy, this project seeks to analyze the realities of the growing fifty-five years old and older community, its participation in civic engagement activities, and the growing needs of the communities in which its members reside. This two-year project will commence in Chester, Pennsylvania, the location of Widener University's main campus.

The participants are students enrolled in a social work community organizing course and community volunteers. Students will be divided into groups, and each group will consist of three students and a community volunteer. Volunteers will be identified in each community through partnering with the Delaware County Community Foundation. The project will involve three components: training, data collection and analysis, and mapping.

Training:

Sessions and Modules	Length of Session
Session 1: Introduction and Overview of the Project *Module 1: Overview of asset mapping* *Module 2: Identification of assets*	**3 hours**
Session 2: Feedback Session *Module 3: What do we already know? Using census data and existing resources to understand our population and our community*	**3 hours**
Session 3: Field Work – Needs Assessment *Module 4: Tour of Chester and field data collection with block maps*	**3 hours**
Session 4: Field Work – Assets Assessment *Module 4: Tour of Chester and field data collection with block maps*	**3 hours**
***Session 5:* Conducting the Interviews** *Module 5: Interviewing techniques*	**3 hours**
Session 6: Data Management *Module 6: Database entry and management training*	**3 hours**
Session 7: Mapping What We Have Learned *Module 7: Data analysis and geocoding; demonstration of how we map collected data*	**6 hours**

Data Collection and Analysis: The data collection involves two phases. In phase one, groups will walk each of the streets in the community to identify resources. This approach allows the students to uncover existing resources that might not be found in resource guides or phonebooks. In collaboration with the Environmental Studies Department at Widener, census block maps will be developed as a template for data collection. Each of the maps represents a four-block area. Student/volunteer groups will walk the streets of the neighborhoods and plot the resources on the maps. The template includes information regarding the nature of the resource, such as the population it serves, its opportunities for civic engagement its location, and its phone number. After the group has completed its map, it will then enter the data into an excel spreadsheet. Once the data has been entered, the census blocks are highlighted on the master map of the analysis area to signal the completion of the data collection phase in that area. The groups are then given another map to proceed to the next census block.

        When the maps have been completed, phase two begins. Phase two involves having the groups complete a series of interviews in the analysis area with key decision makers, residents, civic and religious leaders, and members of the professional community to assess the community's strengths. With the help of community organizations, surveys will also be distributed to community members to assess their opinions regarding existing community resources, their current civic involvement, and their individual gifts and talents that might support agencies, associations, or businesses. Data for this bi-modal study will be examined using SPSS software and traditional content analysis. Analysis will be conducted by the professor with the aid of the students and volunteers.

Mapping: Students and volunteers will participate in the mapping of the data from the excel spreadsheets. Students will receive instruction in how to use both Microsoft MapPoint and ArcGIS software. Resource data will be mapped utilizing one of these software packages. The data will be geocoded by the students by assigning an x and y coordinate system for each physical address within the excel spreadsheet program. The coordinate system selected is the latitude and longitude, with longitude as the x value and latitude as the y value. Once the locations are geocoded, they will be added to the basemap as an xy file, which will be accomplished by exporting the excel file into Microsoft Access, a database program. This table

and the file characteristics will be saved as a geodatabase. This database can then be queried and individual maps selected based on the resource type. The individuals' strengths information will be mapped using the Kretzman and McKnight framework.

COURSE TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Session 1: Course Overview; History and values of Macro-Practice; The Integration of Direct Practice and Macro-Practice Skills.

> -Introductions
> -Review of the syllabus, assignments, and introduction to the course.
> -Organization into work groups

*Required Readings***:**
> Chapter 1: Introduction to Community Practice. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F1, F2, F3, F4)** (**HIST; PAR**)

Session 2: Community Practice Theory

*Required Readings***:**
> Chapter 2: Community Practice by Direct Service Practitioners. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press   **(F3,F4)**

Session 3: Defining Community Problems

Required Readings:

> Chapter 3: Community and Social Problems. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F1,F4, F5, F12)**

Tour of Chester: Rev. Jim Ley
Session 4: Defining Community

*Required Readings***:**

> Chapter 4: Community in social work practice. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F4, F8)**

> Chapter 5: Community Intervention and Programs: Let's Extend the Clan. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F4, F8)**

Tour of Chester, Rev. Jim Turner
Session 5-6: Community Needs Assessment

*Required Readings***:**

> Chapter 6: Documenting The Life of a Community. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F8, F9).**

> Chapter 7: Assessment in Community Practice. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F7, F6)**

Session 7: Effective Leadership & Organizational Change

*Required Readings***:**

Chapter 8: Using Self in Community Practice: Assertiveness. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F7, F8, F11).**

AGENCY PAPERS DUE (Week 7) !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Session 8: SPRING BREAK

Sessions 9 - 10: Using Your Agency to Create Social Change

Required Readings:

Chapter 9: Using Your Agency. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F6).**

Chapter 10: Using Work Groups: Committees, Teams, and Boards. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F4, F6).**

Session 11: Developing Coalitions to Affect Change

*Required Readings***:**

Chapter 11: Using Networks and Networking. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F4, F5, F11).**

Session 12: Using Social Marketing

*Required Readings***:**

Chapter 12: Using Social Marketing. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F4, F11).**

Session 13: Using Advocacy to Create Social Change

*Required Readings***:**

Chapter 13: Using the Advocacy Spectrum. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F4, F11).**

Session 14: Using Advocacy to Create Social Change

*Required Readings***:**

 Chapter 14: Using Organizing: Acting in Concert. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F4, F11).**

Session 14: Using Advocacy to Create Social Change

*Required Readings***:**

 Chapter 15: Community Social Casework. Hardcastle, et al (2004) Community Practice, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press **(F8, F9, F11).**

 FINAL GROUP PROJECT PAPERS DUE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Session 16: Course Evaluation and Wrap - Up

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