COURSE: Social Work in Educational Settings, SWPS 642
SEMESTER: Spring/Summer 2009
DAY/TIME: Monday 6pm-10pm
PROFESSOR: Beth Sherman, LMSW
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Email: shermanb@umich.edu
Office Hours: Monday 5-6pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will present knowledge and critical skills for analyzing educational programs and policies for preschool, elementary, and secondary schools functioning under public and private auspices. The five topical areas will include: 1) an overview of educational programs and policies in the United States for individuals of all ages and their families; 2) the structure and policies for educational institutions at the elementary, secondary, technical, and vocational levels; 3) issues and needs arising from economic and social discrimination that can be addressed in educational settings; 4) issues about the right to education of oppressed and special populations (including children and youth with mental, physical, and emotional disabilities, economic and geographic disadvantages, and diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds); and 5) the roles of social work and social workers in enhancing educational opportunity and performance. Noteworthy social work programs in various educational institutions and settings will be analyzed, and proposals for change will be formulated to enhance educational achievement and well-being.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
Upon completion of this course, students should have a comprehensive understanding and knowledge in five broad areas. Those five translate in the following goals: (a) knowledge of the history and role of social work in schools, (b) critical policy issues currently impacting education, (c) special education law and procedures, (d) theoretical frameworks for school social work practice, (e) prevention and intervention approaches in schools. These five areas are defined in more detail in the following course objectives.

1. Describe the social, economic, and demographic changes that influence the development and educational performance and needs of infants, children, youth, and young adults at various learning levels.
2. Describe the processes of educational policy formulation, especially those related to needs and problems experienced by populations at risk.
3. Analyze at least one major issue or policy in contemporary education in the U.S. and develop implications for social work intervention.
4. Explain the various roles and functions of social workers working in educational settings; these may include: conflict mediation, advocacy on behalf of students and their families, treatment and interdisciplinary treatment planning, referral, outreach, cultural adjustment, and leadership in the enhancement of educational policies and programs.

5. Describe federal and state programs that offer possibilities for enhancement of local school programs.

6. Work effectively with professionals and lay persons in other social agencies, such as juvenile courts, health and mental health, child welfare, and public social services.

7. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to social work in educational settings.

**RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES**

- **Multiculturalism and Diversity.** This course will review the recent national, regional, and local demographic shifts that have increased the ethnic and cultural diversity of children and families in educational institutions. A culturally sensitive, developmental perspective will be presented ranging from infancy through secondary education and culminating in the transition from school to the world of work. In addition, the particular policies and services regarding children and youth with illnesses and disabilities, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons will be reviewed.

- **Social Justice and Social Change.** Social workers in educational settings strive to maximize educational opportunities for individuals, groups, neighborhoods, and regions, and promote progressive local, state, and national policy. Relevant legislation and policies that seek to meet these goals will be reviewed, as well as the social justice implications of private and public schools.

- **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation.** These approaches are incorporated at all levels of practice in educational settings. This includes programs for the student and family, the organization and positive organizational culture in schools, and educational climates overall that promote children’s development to their maximum potential. Additionally, characteristics of at-risk children and youth and their particular vulnerabilities will be highlighted. These risks will include school failure, suspension, and expulsion, “dropping out,” unplanned pregnancy, insufficient preparation for the work force, family roles, and group and individual violence. Related concerns will include prevention of substance abuse, prevention of the transmission of disease (especially sexually transmitted diseases), and promotion of healthy lifestyles and development. Characteristics that buffer children from these stressors and research on resilience will also be examined.

- **Behavioral and Social Science Research.** The role of the social worker as a consumer of research will be emphasized. Relevant sources will include not only those in social work, but also the theories and empirical studies in interdisciplinary fields, such as human development and education. In addition, relevant theories and findings regarding accountability for service, empirical validation of interventions, and overall evaluation of practice in educational settings will be covered.

**RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO SOCIAL WORK ETHICS AND VALUES**

Professional social work ethics will be reviewed focusing on their application to educational settings. Particular issues may include confidentiality of and access to records and services provided, especially to minors, access to independent services by children and youth without
parental consent, appropriateness of service delivery with regard to the age and developmental stage of the target group, parental permission and knowledge regarding sex education, mandated reporting of child abuse, neglect, and truancy, and policies regarding expulsion and suspension from school.

**COURSE DESIGN AND TEACHING METHODS**

This course will use a variety of teaching and learning methods, including lectures, PowerPoint presentations, group exercises, case material, role plays, videos, guest presenters, and seminar techniques. The class format is based on the understanding that you are a prepared and active learner. Reading the assigned materials prior to the class session is a prerequisite to getting the most out of each class and successfully meeting the course objectives.

The development of a supportive learning environment, reflecting the values of the social work profession, is essential for the success of this class. A supportive learning environment is fostered by listening to the ideas and views of others, being able to understand and appreciate a point of view which is different from your own, articulating clearly your point of view, and linking your experiences to the readings and assignments. We will appreciate your contributions to making this a safe and respectful learning experience.

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND COURSE READINGS**

There is one required text book for this course, it has been ordered at the Ulrichs Book Store. It is also available as a Social Work Library Reserve. All other course readings will posted on the CTools site for this course. Required readings on c-tools are marked with an (*) and labeled “required”. Other readings are supplementary and optional. CTools readings can be downloaded, read electronically, or printed.


**APA FORMAT AND ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Please refer to the *American Psychological Association Publication Manual* (often called the APA Style Manual) in the preparation of your writing assignments. The current edition is the fifth, but using an earlier edition is acceptable. You can find out more at: [http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html](http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html)

There are brief APA style and format guides on the Main UM Library website at: [http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/research/citationguide/APA5thed.pdf](http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/research/citationguide/APA5thed.pdf) and the SSW Library website: [http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/apastyle.html](http://www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/apastyle.html).

It is critical to reference all sources of information or ideas you use in your writing, to do otherwise is academic dishonesty. Direct quotes in particular must be identified as such. Situations of apparent plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be reported and handled according to University policy.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

I invite any class member who has a disability that may affect his or her participation in this course to let me know. We can discuss possible modifications or accommodations in instructional format, assignments, etc.

**POLICY ON INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS**
A grade of “Incomplete” will be given in extenuating circumstances and in accordance with SSW and University policy. Hard copies of assignments are due in class on the day as noted in the course outline. I do not accept assignment via email. Late assignments, i.e., those not handed in to me in class on the day due, will be reduced ½ letter grade for each class session they are late. (For example an “A” grade will be reduced to an “A-“. Please plan your work to have things completed on time and keep me informed if any problems arise.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Several methods will be utilized to assess your learning and progress toward the class objectives. You will have some choice as to what combination of assignments you complete. These methods will include 2 papers, a group presentation, and a final exam. The relative weight of each assignment will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>20% (Due June 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>30% (Due July 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>20% (Sign up)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30% (Due July 27)</td>
</tr>
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Total 100%

**CLASS ATTENDANCE, READING, AND PARTICIPATION**

All are expected. Required readings are to be completed prior to class session. In the unlikely event that you must miss class, please call or email to inform me about your absence. Missing more than two classes will result in your grade being lowered one letter grade.

**FINAL EXAM**

The final exam will be used to assess your learning in the areas of the history of school social work, school law, special education processes and procedures, and current policy issues. The exam will be given out in class on July 20 and due in class on July 27. It will constitute 30% of your final grade.

**PAPERS**

Two papers will account for 50% of your grade in this course. These papers are described below. Please type or word process your papers, with one inch margins, double spaced, and use 12 font. Use APA style for references, please see the section on APA style above. Grading will be based on mastery of assignment content, organization, and scholarly presentation. For each of the papers, please remember to include introductory and concluding sections to your paper.

**Paper #1: Due June 8, 3-5 pages, 20% of course grade**

*My School Experience* - This paper is a personal exploration of your experience as a student K-12. Divide that experience into three categories: Peers, Teachers, and Other Activities. Then describe the best and worst of your experience with respect to each category. For Other Activities, think of clubs, sports, specialists (such as: school social workers, art or music teachers, band, sports, principals, school psychologists, counselors, the janitor, etc.).
You may also include information related to work or volunteer experiences. Finally, reflect on how your school experience may inform your school social work practice. Please remember to include introductory and concluding paragraphs.

Paper #2: Due July 6, 7-8 pages, 30% of course grade, three options

Option 1: Assessment and School Social Work Service Plan Assignment

Choose a student and family you are working with in your field placement if you are in a school. First, write a brief BioPsychoSocial assessment describing the student, the student's social environment, and the presenting problem. Then present a plan/strategy for providing services to that student(s) with respect to the presenting situation. Research and describe evidence based practices relevant to intervening with the student and/or presenting problem. Articulate at least 2 goals with objectives for that student, which might be included in the student’s IEP. Discuss specifically how these goals and objectives are individualized to the specific needs of the student. Describe how parents/caregivers will be included. Additionally, discuss the individuals, agencies, and referrals you would consult or collaborate with in the implementation of the plan. In order to document your research of evidence based practices, reference at minimum two relevant, peer reviewed journal articles or book chapters. Please remember to include introductory and concluding sections to your paper. To protect confidentiality, remember to change or omit, identifying information.

Option 2: Write a School Social Work Policy

Choose a potential school crisis or problem. Research approaches and strategies for responding to such a crisis or problem in a school. For example, search the literature, inquire with schools about policies that may exist, review local, state, or federal related policy, and/or identify a situation/crisis reported in the media and use that for as an example of what to do and what not to do. Describe the important aspects and concerns in such a situation. Finish with a draft of a comprehensive policy focused on the school social work aspect of an effective response in such a situation that outlines a step-by-step response at the school and/or individual student level. School problems/crises that would be appropriate include: student suicide or suicide risk, suspected abuse or neglect, staff suicide, pervasive teasing/bullying, school shooting, school refusal/phobia, drug use/dealing, aggressive/violent student behavior, etc. In order to document your research, please reference at minimum two relevant peer reviewed journal articles or book chapters. Please remember to include introductory and concluding sections to your paper.

Option 3:

Attend a school board meeting. In preparation for your attendance, research current "hot topics" on the school board's agenda. You may use local and community sources such as newspaper articles, conversations with parents, students, school board members etc. After attending the meeting, choose one of the agenda items as a foundation for a policy brief. The policy brief should include a title page, executive summary (1-2 paragraphs), context and relevance of the problem, critique of policy option(s), policy recommendations, sources consulted or recommended. Policy briefs often include appendices but for the purpose of this assignment, appendices are not required. (Source: Young and Quinn, LGI training). For additional details see: http://www.policy.hu/ipf/fel-pubs/samples/PolicyBrief-described.pdf. Please specify what school board meeting you attended including the date. Please remember to include introductory and concluding sections to your paper.
Group Project: 20% of Course Grade, Two Options

Option 1: Presentation - Vulnerable Student Population

Prepare and present to the class on a population of school students that are vulnerable to poor school outcomes, and are therefore the focus of social work services in schools. For example, such student populations include: immigrant, refugee, or ESL students, LGBTQ students, students from low income families, students who are members of discriminated race/ethnicity groups, or students with learning, cognitive, physical or psychological/emotional/behavioral struggles. This list is by no means exhaustive, if you have a vulnerable population of students in mind please get with me to discuss whether it is an appropriate group topic. These groups may include 3-5 students. You may be given class time to work on this project during the semester, but will be expected to meet outside of class to prepare. Below is a list of the group project expectations, which will also serve as the grading criteria:

1. Class presentation – The presentation should be five minutes in length per group member, followed by 10-15 minutes of class questions/discussion. The presentation may take on varied formats, PowerPoint, Role Play, Talk Show, School Meeting, etc. The presentation should define and describe the central concepts and issues related to the specific population of vulnerable students (25%), and then present either a more in-depth analysis of the issues or intervention/prevention strategies or practice principals for school social workers (25%). Provide the class with an original handout related to your presentation (25%). Please provide me with materials from the preparation of your presentation such as: slides, speaker notes, handouts, etc.

2. Two journal articles or chapters per group member – The content of the presentation should draw from a minimum of two references per group member (25%). Please provide me with a reference list.

Option 2 - Policy Presentation

Choose and research an important policy issue impacting education in America today. Within your small group, discuss possible positions related to the policy. From your research and small group discussions, present information about the policy in class. Prepare a brief-one page or so - handout to include basic information about the issue and making a case for the group’s position on the issue. If group members arrive at different positions, include, in an organized fashion, the various positions in your presentation and handout. Lead a class discussion related to the policy issue and possible positions related to the topic.

Here are three suggested topics and positions:

NCLB Policies:
NCLB can be Good for Students, It Should Be Improved, Here’s Why and How
NCLB is Bad for Students, It Should Be Ended, Here’s Why

School Choice Policies:
School Choice is Good for Students, Should be Expanded, Here’s Why
School Choice is Bad for Students, Should be Ended, Here’s Why

An Inclusion Discussion:
Inclusion Should be Implemented for all Students

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Inclusion Should be Limited and Special Classrooms and Programs Expanded

Grading for this assignment will include the following areas. Preparation will account for 40%, which should include drawing from a minimum of two references per group member. Please provide me with a reference list. The coherence and presentation of the policy issue will be 20%. How your group engages and leads the class discussion will be 20%. Finally, your original handout will account for 20% of your group’s grade.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Class 1 - May 11 - Course Introduction**
- Topic A - The plan – syllabus and assignments
- Topic B - Overviews of course and school social work
- Topic C - Social Work in Educational Settings (ppt slides)

**Class 2 - May 18 – Current Educational Context/ Social Work Roles**
- Topic A - History and Roles of School Social Workers
- Topic B - School Reform, Testing, Accountability, No Child Left Behind

Reading 1 - Chapters 1 & 2 – Allen-Meares
Reading 2 - NASW (2002). *Standards for social work services in the schools*. Washington, DC: NASW.
http://www.socialworkers.org/sections/credentials/school_social.asp

Additional School Reform Resources

Politics and Education

Additional Choice Resources: Charter and Magnets

Vouchers
(Vouchers M&F) (2002). Myths and Facts about School Vouchers...

Additional resources-NCLB: Politics and School Reform

NCLB: Accountability


NCLB: Against


Class 3 - June 1 - Theory of Social Work Practice
Topic A- Theory Informing School Social Work Practice

Reading 1 - Chapters 3 & 4, Allen-Meares

Class 4: June 8 School Law and Special Education Law (Paper 1 Due)

Topic A - FREAP, 504, EHA, IDEA
Topic B - Confidentiality and Inclusion
Topic C -Guest Presenter: Jenni Lane (Sexual Education in Public Schools)

Reading 1 - Chapters 5 & 7 – Allen-Meares

Class 5 - June 15- Early Intervention/ Students with Special Needs
Topic A - Early Intervention: Law, Policy, Evaluation, Service Delivery
Topic B - IEP, FUBA, BIP
Reading 1 - Chapter 7 (review) and 8- Allen-Meares
Reading 4 - (Useful) Smith, S. W. (2000). *Creating Useful Individualized Education Programs* (IEPs).

**Class 6- June 22 – Securing Equal Educational Opportunity/Social Work Service Design**

**Topic A - Educational Opportunity**
**Topic B - GLBTQ youth and families (Group Presentation)**
**Topic C - Performing a School Social Work Assessment**
**Topic D - Multiple Methods of School Assessment**

**Reading 1** - Chapter 8 (review) ,9, 10- Allen-Meares

**Class 7- June 29 – Students with Special Needs: Autism Spectrum Disorders**
**Topic A - Definitions, Evaluation, Intervention**
**Topic B - Parent Perspectives**

Readings - Class Handouts

**Class 8- July 6 – Students with Special Needs: Emotional Impairment: Mandates, Service Delivery (Paper 2 Due)**
**Topic A - Assessment**
**Topic B - Service Delivery to Emotionally Impaired Students (Group Presentation)**

**Reading 1** - (Michigan Rules) Revised Administrative Rules for Special Education
**Reading 2** - (Special Education Packet)
Class 9 - July 13– The Impact of Substances
   Topic A - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
   Topic B - Homeless Youth

   Readings - UM FASD Presentation Packet

Class 10 - July 20- School Meetings, Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Consultation/Practice and Program Evaluation (Final Exam Handed Out)
   Topic A - Strengths-based and solution-focused consultation
   Topic B - Achievement Gap (Group Presentation)
   Topic C - Safe Schools/Bullying (Group Presentation)
   Topic D - Assessing social work practice and programs

   Reading 1 - Chapter 11 and 12 – Allen-Meares

Class 11 July 27 – Course Wrap-up and Termination (Final Exam Due)
   Topic A - Group Presentations
   Topic B - Termination