



**COURSE:** SW 642 School Social Worker Policy and Services

**SEMESTER:** Fall 2015

**DAY/TIME:** Thursday 9:10-noon

**PROFESSOR:** Beth Sherman, Assistant Clinical Professor

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### **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, assessment,

and intervention approaches in schools. These five areas are defined in more detail in the following course objectives.

1. Describe and analyze 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 theoretical foundations and history of the school social work profession and service delivery.
4. Apply legal and ethical standards necessary for social work practice in school settings.
5. Describe federal and state special education laws and other legal aspects of the role of school social worker.
6. Analyze organization components and structural dynamic of public school agencies at local, state, and national levels, as well as methods that are useful to analyze and influence these in order to maximize student success.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of various professional educational roles that promote successful collaboration in school settings.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of a broad range of experiences, personal characteristics, and background variables that influence student learning and development, including reciprocal and diverse influences of home, school, and community.
9. Describe and practice skills for identifying factors that enhance strengths, resilience, and protection from adversity, and that diminish education and developmental risks.

10. Describe and practice skills in comprehensive and systemic assessment and evaluation.

11. Describe and practice effective written communication of the assessment and evaluation results that include educationally relevant recommendations and measurable goals and anticipated outcomes from service delivery.

12. Describe normative expectations for infant, child, adolescent, and young adult emotional, behavioral, social, cultural, communicative, cognitive, learning, and physical development.

13. Analyze the similarities and differences between clinically-based definitions of psychiatric disorders and educational disabilities.

14. Practice written and verbal skills that enhance communication with students, parents, school staff, and agencies

15. Develop awareness of curriculum, teaching theories, and methodologies.

#### **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, available at Ulrich's bookstore and also available as a Social Work Library Reserve. All other course readings will be 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.

Allen-Meares, P. (2010). *Social Work Services in Schools* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon. ISBN: 978-0-205-91727-3 and 0-205-91727-5

### **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. There is some helpful information related to APA citation guidelines on the Main UM Library website at: <http://guides.lib.umich.edu/citationhelp>

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. The exception to this is for our take home final at the end of the term. The short answer and essay portions of the exam are based on our text and other required readings there is no need to cite sources on the exam.

### **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. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability may let me know so we can work out ways to address. Please contact the Services for Students with Disability office at 734-763-3000 in room G-664 Haven Hall to coordinate accommodations for students with disabilities.

### **Individual issues and needs in the course/Any special circumstances**

I am very concerned that this course is accessible and relevant for everyone. I will be asking you about your preferences in terms of learning, and we will work to negotiate these among us. Please let me know (either in person in class or in office hours, or via email) if you have some particular goals or needs for the class. These may be related to your past experience or your interests, or to special agendas you have or challenges you face as a learner, in the classroom, or in relation to your health or family circumstances. I am happy to work with you on ways to manage the classroom, learning and assignments to accommodate different learning styles, learning or other disabilities, or family or other responsibilities, and there are resources elsewhere on campus that we can access.

There are also a number of religious observances that occur during the fall that will be relevant for some of you. We should discuss how we can allow you to practice your faith and meet course obligations.

### **POLICY ON INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

A grade of “Incomplete” will be given in extenuating circumstances and in accordance with SSW and University policy. Please use c-tools drop box for assignments #1 and #2. The final exam is due in hard copy in class. Whether using your c-tools drop box or bringing a hard copy to class, all assignments are due by class time on the due date assigned. Late assignments, i.e., those not gotten to me on the day due, will be reduced one half letter grade for each class session they are late. 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:

Paper 1	20% (Due October 8)
Paper 2	30% (November 5)

Group Presentation	20% (Sign up 2 <sup>nd</sup> week of class)
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>30% (Due December 10)</u>
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 one class will result in your grade being lowered one half letter grade.

During class time, electronics use is permitted for note taking, accessing powerpoints and other course materials only. During the past few years, our classes have struggled with the use of electronics for non-class related activities such as browsing the web, social media, emailing, etc. While teaching I have found these activities very distracting and also disrespectful to peers. I expect that each student be fully present during class time. As social workers, teachers, and learners, we need to find ways to remain engaged even during times that may seem challenging, boring, or difficult. If you are not experiencing class as engaging, please take steps to take responsibility for your learning, by finding ways to engage and give feedback. I greatly value class dialogue, so feel free to step forward in a respectful manner if your learning needs are not being met. On this basis, if a student is using media for non-class related activities during class time, their final course grade will be lowered by ½ 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 December 3 and due in class on December 10. 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. Use 12 foot, double spaced, with one inch margins. Use APA style for references; please see the section on APA style above and citations above. The Office of Career Services has excellent writing assistance. I encourage you to use their services as the need

arises. Grading will be based on mastery of assignment content, organization, and scholarly presentation.

**Paper #1: Due October 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 custodian, 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 related to practice behaviors and social work ethics. Please remember to include introductory and concluding paragraphs.

**Paper #2: Due November 5, 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. If you are not placed in a school setting, but would like to write about one of the youth you are serving in your field placement, you may do so. However, please keep the focus of this assessment and planning paper on the student's school performance. First, write a brief assessment describing the student, the student's circumstances, social environment, and the presenting school related problem. Include a discussion of a broad range of experiences, personal characteristics, and background variable that influence the student's learning and development including reciprocal and diverse influences of home, school, and community.

Using assessment and intervention planning skills, including practice skills for identifying factors that enhance strengths, resilience, and protection from adversity, and that diminish education and developmental risks. 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 two 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. Demonstrate knowledge of various professional educational roles that promote successful collaboration in school setting by discussing individuals, agencies, and referrals you would consult or collaborate with in the development and 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, change or omit, identifying information such as name of student, school, specific community etc.

### ***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, increasing academic achievement for at-risk students, decreasing school dropout rates, school policy related to GSA's (gay-straight alliances), pervasive teasing/bullying, school disciplinary policies, 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.

### **Small Group Project: 20% of Course Grade, Two Options (Sign up in class)**

#### **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. Groups include 2 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 approximately 20 minutes in length, 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: presentation

outline, 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:

Race to the Top Policies:

Race to the Top can be Good for Students, It Should Be Improved, and Here's Why and How

Race to the Top 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

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 - September 17 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 - September 24 Current Educational Context/ Social Work Roles**

- Topic A - History and Roles of School Social Workers
- Topic B - School context including building collaborative relationships with teachers
- Topic C - Cultural Self-Assessment

Reading 1 - Chapters 1 & 2 – Allen-Meares

Reading 2 - NASW (2002). *Standards for social work services in the schools*. Washington, DC: NASW (C-tools)

Reading 3- Chapters 1-2 Pamela Hays “Addressing Cultural Complexities in Practice (C-tools)

**Class 3 - October 1 School Law, Special Education Law/Social Emotional Learning/Curriculum**

- Topic A - School Law and Special Education Law
- Topic B - Social Emotional Learning
- Topic C - Curriculum

Reading 1 -Chapters 5, 7, 10 – Allen-Meares

Reading 2- (Curriculum)

**Class 4- October 8 Students with Special Needs (Paper 1 due)**

Reading 1 -Chapter 8 and 9- Allen-Meares

Reading 2 - (Chapter 6) Fischer, L. & Sorenson, G. P. *Students with Special Needs. School Law for Counselors, Psychologists, and Social Workers*.

Reading 3 - A Guide to the Individualized Education Program.  
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS>

Reading 4 -(Useful) Smith, S. W. (2000). *Creating Useful Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)*.

<http://www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/iepguide.pdf>

### **Class 5 - October 15 Early Intervention**

Topic - Early Intervention Law, Policy, Evaluation, Service Delivery

Reading 1 –Chapter 3 and 4 - Allen-Meares

Reading 2 -“Do You Hear What I Hear?” Janice Fialka

### **Class 6 - October 22 Securing Equal Educational Opportunity**

Topic A - Educational Opportunity

Topic B - GLBTQ youth and families

Reading 1 - Chapter 5, 6, 7- Allen-Meares

Reading 2- Antbullying Meta-analysis, Tfofi 2011

Reading 4 - (GLSEN School Climate Report Summary, 2007)

### **Class 7- October 29 Students with Special Needs: Autism Spectrum Disorders**

Topic a - Definitions, Evaluation, Intervention

Topic B - Parent Perspectives

Readings - Autism Readings on c-tools

### **Class 8 - November 5 Students with Special Needs: Emotional Impairment: Mandates, Service Delivery (2nd Paper Due)**

Topic A - Assessment

Topic B - Service Delivery to Emotionally Impaired Students

Reading 1 -(Michigan Rules) Revised Administrative Rules for Special Education

Reading 2 -(Externalizing) Dupper, D. (2003) Chapter 3: Externalizing Behavior Problems in School Social Work.

Reading 3- Allen-Meares, Chapter 11

### **Class 9 - November 12 The Impact of Substances**

Topic - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Readings - UM FASD Presentation Packet on c-tools

**Class 10- November 19 Writing Effective Evaluations and IEPs**

Topic- Writing effective evaluation reports and IEP

Reading 1- Allen-Meares- Chapter 7 Review

Reading 2 -MET and IEP sample documents on c-tools

**Class 11 - Dec. 3 RTI and Discipline Under IDEA (Final Exam Distributed)**

Topic A - Evaluating and Building Positive School Climate

Topic B- Implementing and Evaluating Response to Intervention

Topic C- Discipline/Codes of Conduct/Discipline Under IDEA

Topic D- Understanding differences between 504 plans and IEPs

Reading: Paula Allen-Meares, Chapter 9

**Class 12 – December 10 Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Consultation, Evaluating Social Work Practice, Termination**

Topic A -Strengths-based and solution-focused consultation

Reading 1 -Chapter 12 – Allen-Meares