



**SW 796 Legal Issues of Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities
Course Syllabus – Spring/Summer 2016**

Instructor: Roxanne J. Chang, JD, MS LLP

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Meeting Times: June 23 and June 30, 2015 from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Credit: 1.0

Meeting Location: School of Social Work, Rm 3752

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course helps students increase their understanding of the legal issues frequently encountered by older adults and persons with disability, including estate planning, planning for incapacity, guardianship, elder abuse and exploitation, advocacy for quality long-term care and other services, eligibility for long-term care benefits and services, and elder abuse and exploitation. Students will discuss readings and case studies in small groups with other students and write short reflective pieces, as well as having the option to observe court proceedings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate the importance of promoting self-determination and person-centered care for older adults and persons with disabilities.
- Identify ways to plan for incapacity and understand alternatives such as substituted decision-making, estate planning, guardianship, and conservatorship.
- Understand the ethical issues regarding substituted decision-making, including end-of-life treatment decisions.
- Describe long-term care options and services, how it is paid for, eligibility for government benefits, and ways to advocate for quality of life and care in various long-term care settings.
- Identify types of elder abuse and exploitation and how to address suspected abuse and exploitation.

SIGNIFICANCE

This course will enable social workers to effectively navigate issues related to health and financial decision-making, capacity and incapacity, quality of life and care in long-term care settings, and vulnerable adult abuse and exploitation and other legal issues related to older adults and individuals with disabilities. Social workers will learn to effectively advocate for these individuals and their families while addressing the tensions between promoting self-determination and person-centered care versus safety, protection and the best interests of the individual. This course will use multiple teaching modalities, including mini-lectures, small group discussions and self-reflection in order to help students not only understand and identify the legal issues, but to develop empathy and understanding of how these legal issues can significantly impact the well-being of the older adult and person with disabilities.

POLICIES

Turning In Assignments – Students are responsible for turning in their assignments on the date that they are due.

Late Penalty – If accepted, late homework assignments will be penalized 10% of the possible points for each day that the assignment is late. Be sure to turn your work in on time. If you anticipate problems in completing assignments, contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss how to turn in your work.

Student Learning Responsibilities – Please complete all readings and be prepared to discuss or complete the assignments. If you are having difficulty mastering the course material, please contact the instructor.

Syllabus Changes – *The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus at any point during the semester.*

REQUIRED READING

The following articles are to be read **before** the first class on June 23, 2016:

Acierno, R., Hernandez, M. A., Amstadter, A. B., Resnick, H. S., Steve, K., Muzzy, W., & Kilpatrick, D. G. (2010). Prevalence and Correlates of Emotional, Physical, Sexual, and Financial Abuse and Potential Neglect in the United States: The National Elder Mistreatment Study. *American Journal of Public Health, 100*(2), 292–297.

Barriga, S. R. (2012, January). *From Paternalism to Dignity: Respecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2012/country-chapters/global-1>

Behuniak, Susan M. Toward a Political Model of Dementia: Power as Compassionate Care. *Journal of Aging Studies* 24 (2010) 231–240.

Sabatino, C. P. (2010). The Evolution of Health Care Advance Planning Law and Policy. *The Milbank Quarterly*, 88(2), 211–239.

Silveira, M. J., Kim, S. Y. H., & Langa, K. M. (2010). Advance directives and outcomes of surrogate decision making before death. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 362(13), 1211-1218.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Assigned readings must be read in preparation for each day of class
- Class attendance for all 2 days. Class participation during discussions is required.
- A short essay/paper will be due July 25, 2016 on the following:
 - A 4-5 page paper on various subject matters which will be provided to the students.

OR,

- Students may observe a probate court guardianship proceeding and submit a 2-3 page paper of their observations and reflections.

GRADES

Grading and Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to actively participate in all course activities and discussions. Class participation is an integral part of the grade. Students should discuss issues with participate and assignments with the instructor.

Assignment and Grading:

Class participation/discussion – **70%**

Short paper – **30%**

Grading Policy:

This class will be graded as “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory”

- A grade of **less than 70%** will be considered “**Unsatisfactory**”
- A grade of **70% or better** will be considered “**Satisfactory**”