



Course title:	Introduction to Social Work Practice
Course #/term:	590-009, Fall, 2020
Time and place:	Wednesdays 5pm-8pm on-line
Credit hours:	3
Prerequisites:	N/A
Instructor:	James Svensson, LMSW
Pronouns:	He/him/his
Contact info:	Email: jsven@umich.edu You may expect a response: Varies by day. I work at the Ann Arbor VA on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays thus I may not be available.
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1. Course Statement

a. Course description

Introduction to Social Work Practice will prepare students to successfully approach both social work education and social work practice. The course will introduce social work students to key social work ideas, values, concepts, and skills, including the code of ethics, social work's grand challenges and P.O.D.S. (privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice). Students will be oriented to social work education at the University of Michigan, including how professional graduate education may differ from past educational experiences, specialization options available, and the role of lifelong learning. Students will be introduced to a professional portfolio that they will use throughout their time in the program.

b. Course objectives and competencies

- Understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice (Essential 26, EPAS 1)
- Know the grand challenges of social work (Essential 31; EPAS 2)
- Understand the importance of ethical practice including the role of the NASW Code of Ethics and others, and relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice (Essential 36; EPAS 1)
- Recognize, set and maintain appropriate boundaries (Essential 40; EPAS 1, 6)

- Learn how to collaborate professionally and interprofessionally (teamwork), including the appropriate use of multi-directional communication (Essential 41; EPAS 1, 6, 8)
- Enhance emotional intelligence (Essential 42; EPAS 1)
- Develop skills for professional resiliency (Essential 43; EPAS 1)
- Understand frameworks of ethical decision making and how to apply critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research and policy arena (Essential 44; EPAS 1)

c. Course design

This course will use multiple methods including but not limited to: lectures, demonstrations, case studies, readings, guest speakers, discussions, written assignments, individual and group exercises.

d. Course Relationship to P.O.D.S.

This course will introduce students to P.O.D.S. (privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice) as the framework through which social work education and practice can be viewed. Students will explore how these concepts manifest in social work practice, including in such places as the grand challenges or the code of ethics.

This course integrates P.O.D.S. content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate P.O.D.S. learning.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

There is no textbook for this class. All readings for this course will be copied or linked, and made available on Canvas – the University online course management system. Information and instruction on how to use Canvas is already provided by the university; therefore, no class time will be devoted to instruction on how to use this system.

Students are expected to have completed all assigned readings prior to class, as these will serve as the basis for class discussion, activities, assignments, quizzes and examinations.

b. Class schedule

Topics may be modified throughout the course, but ample notice will be provided. Refer to

Canvas for the most updated class schedule.

Date/Time	Topic	Readings and Assignments Due
Week 1 9-2-20	Lesson 1: Course Welcome and Overview	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: None
Week 2 9-16-20	Lesson 2: Core Values of Social Work	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion prompt ● Master Assignment, Milestone 1
Week 3 10-07-20	Lesson 3: Centering Justice	Readings: Noted on Canvas, but includes readings from <u>Sapiens</u> by Harari and videos by Harari and Sapolsky Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion prompt ● Master Assignment, Milestone 2
Week 4 10-28-20	Lesson 3: Preparing to Practice Social Work	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion prompt ● Master Assignment, Milestone 3
Week 5 11-18-20	Lesson 3: Professional Portfolios	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Letter to yourself ● Master Assignment, Milestone 4
Post Week 5	Portfolio Due	Readings: None Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Portfolio

c. Assignments

There are three categories of assignments for this class. The major assignment is a “What, So What, Now What” reflection assignment with a series of milestones. The second are regular,

brief assignments, usually (but not always) taking the form of online discussions through Canvas. The third is the initiation of your portfolio. Each of these three are described below.

1. Master Assignment: Social Work Ethical and Professional Behavior

Assignment Summary: The master assignment for the Introduction to Social Work course is a set of cumulative, reflective responses that will result in a final paper related to social work ethical and professional behavior. It will use the *what, so what, now what* format. The assignment will span the semester, with milestones throughout the semester.

- a) Milestone 1
Due 9-15-20

Describe why you selected social work as a profession. To help you, consider:

- Why social work rather than a different helping profession
- What it was about the profession of social work that differentiated it and influenced your selection.

Suggested length, 1 page single-spaced.

- b) Milestone 2: *What*
Due 10-6-20

The purpose of this milestone is to think about the values and ethics that drew you to social work or the type of social work you want to practice. Write a reflective essay about your values and ethics. Specifically, what social work values and ethics apply to your decision to become a social worker, and/or the decision about the area of social work in which you would like to practice. Rely heavily on course content, including a thoughtful integration of lectures and readings, to identify these values and ethics and how they might be relevant to this area of practice. Move beyond simply listing them, but rather, dig in, describe, and provide a context for the anticipated application of these values in practice.

Suggested length, 1 page single-spaced.

- c) Milestone 3: *So what*
Due 10-27-20

The purpose of this milestone is to think about why values and ethics matter and how they are put into practice around us. Use the following questions as a guide:

- Now that you have spent some weeks in the social work program, how have the values and ethics you identified in Milestone 2 further emerged as important/relevant?
- How have you seen them play out in class? In relationships with others in the School? At work? In social situations? In the news?
- Why and when do they matter?

Suggested length, 1-2 pages single-spaced.

- d) Milestone 4: *Now what*
Due 11-17-20

The purpose of this milestone is to take your reflections on your values to the next level and start thinking about future growth. The Code of Ethics discusses our ethical obligations to our clients, our colleagues, our profession and our employers. As you reflect on your responses to the questions above:

- What are some next steps for you in your learning to further understand and implement your social work values and ethics in each of these areas?
- Where are your growth areas and how might you stretch yourself to further understand and practice ethically?
- How might this shape your future path, including entering a field placement?

Suggested length, 1 page single-spaced.

2. Regular, Brief Assignments

After each class session, you will be asked to do a brief assignment related to the content from the class. For weeks 1-3, these take the form of a discussion prompt through Canvas. In week 4, you will write a letter to your future self. Details for each of these assignments/discussions can be found on Canvas.

3. Portfolio

In this assignment, you will initiate the development of a web-based portfolio using Portfolium. Portfolios are a collection of your accomplishments, skills, and experiences that can be shared digitally to promote your abilities. Even when students do not share their portfolios with others, the act of collecting products and reflecting on them helps students build a narrative that aids students in conversations with future employers.

This assignment has three steps:

- **Step #1:** Complete [the training module](#), which teaches you about building an ePortfolio in Portfolium.
- **Step #2:** Begin setting up your profile on the Profile tab by completing the *introduction* as described in the training module. You are welcome to add your resume, education and other information to your portfolio, but this is not required in this assignment.
- **Step #3:** Upload your master assignment as a “project” in your Portfolium portfolio in the Portfolio tab.

- d. Attendance and class participation: 10%

I expect students to attend class, with your video on. I will remain flexible on this if there are reasons you can not attend class on a specific date, or you miss a class at the last minute.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources>. They include:

- *Safety and emergency preparedness*
- *Mental health and well-being*
- *Teaching evaluations*
- *Proper use of names and pronouns*
- *Accommodations for students with disabilities*
- *Religious/spiritual observances*
- *Military deployment*
- *Writing skills and expectations*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*