



Course title:	Introduction to Social Work Practice	
Course #/term:	SW 590, Section 008, Fall 2021	
Time/Location:	Wednesdays, 9-11 AM, Room # 3629 SSWB	
Dates:	8/26 (Zoom); In-person: 9/8, 9/22, 10/6, 10/20, 11/3, 11/17	
Credit hours:	1	
Prerequisites:	N/A	
Instructor:	Lauren Davis, LMSW - Macro and Clinical	
Pronouns:	She / Her / Hers	
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	You may expect a response within 48 hours	
Office:	2622 SSWB	
Office hours:	By appointment	

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

- Develop a sense of belonging to the UM MSW program by interacting with fellow students and faculty.
- Describe ethical decision-making processes as applied to social work practice settings in a manner that reflects the laws, regulations, and code of ethics of social work (Essential 36, 44; EPAS 1).
- Identify how social workers ethically engage with technology practice (Essential 26; EPAS 1).

- Recognize how social work practice connects to the “Grand Challenges” (Essential 31; EPAS 2).
- Identify ways social workers can engage in social justice and anti-racism work (Essential 30, 45; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 5).
- Develop a self-care plan that includes elements across different domains (Essential 40, 43; EPAS 1, 6).

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 August 26 12:45 - 3:45 PM SEED Week - (Virtual)	Session 1: Welcome, Introductions and Course Overview	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: None
Week 2 September 8 9 - 11 AM	Session 2: Core Values of Social Work	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion prompt: Grounding in the MSW Program ● Master Assignment: Milestone 1
Week 3 September 22 9 - 11 AM	Session 3: Centering Justice	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master Assignment: Milestone 2
Week 4 October 6 9 - 11 AM	Session 4: Anti-Racism and Social Work Practice	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion prompt: Centering Justice
Week 5 October 20 9 - 11 AM	Session 5: Preparing to Practice Social Work, Part 1	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master Assignment: Milestone 3
Week 6 November 3 9 - 11 AM	Session 6: Preparing to Practice Social Work, Part 2	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nothing due
Week 7 November 17 9 - 11 AM	Session 3: Your Professional Portfolio	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Letter to yourself ● Master Assignment: Milestone 4

Post Week 7	Portfolio Due	Readings: None Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Portfolio ● Course evaluations ● Extra credit (optional)
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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 September 5, 2021 11:59 PM (ET)

Upload the supplementary statement you submitted when you applied to the social work program. As a reminder, this statement asked you to accomplish a couple of things. Including:

- Discuss a social justice issue you would like to address in your career. What skills and knowledge would you like to obtain in the MSW program to support your career objectives?
- Describe how your personal and intellectual qualifications, past human service experience, and/or future goals are relevant to furthering social justice. Please use specific examples.

b) Milestone 2: *What*

Due September 20, 2021 11:59 PM (ET)

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 (hint: this is why we had you dig out & post your application essay). Write a reflective essay about your values and ethics. Specifically, consider:

- What social work values and ethics apply to your decision to become a social worker?

- Which apply to the decision about the area of social work in which you would like to practice?
- If you have a BSW, which apply to your decision to practice at a graduate level?

Rely heavily on course content (especially our Code of Ethics), 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 October 18, 2021 11:59 PM (ET)

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 field (if you are in field)? 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 November 15, 2021 11:59 PM (ET)

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, consider:

- 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, ½ - 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. Following some class sessions, these will take the form of a discussion prompt through Canvas. Near the end of the course, you will write a letter to your future self. Details for each of these assignments/discussions can be found on Canvas.

Future Me Letter

Due November 15, 2021 11:59 PM (ET)

In this brief assignment, you will write a letter to yourself in the future. Think about where (and who!) you will be at the end of the social work program. Give yourself advice and encouragement like you would give a good friend. Here are the steps:

- Outline some ideas of how you want things to be at the end of this program.
- Write out specific, actionable, and time-based statements.
- Be realistic and give yourself sound advice and encouragement about how great it is that you reached your goals.
- Type your letter and upload it to Canvas, or, handwrite it and upload a photo.
- You will revisit this letter in your capstone course, so really think about writing something meaningful to yourself.

The letter will be graded as complete/incomplete.

3. Portfolio

Due November 29, 2021 11:59 PM (ET)

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 the following 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. While this is not required in this assignment, you will need to do it in your Capstone course, so feel free to get it started now.
- **Step #3:** Combine Milestones 2 through 4 (no need to include Milestone #1) of your master assignment into a single document with headers to represent the various

sections. Upload your master assignment as a “project” in your Portfolium portfolio in the Portfolio tab.

- **Step #4:** Once your portfolio is complete, be sure your settings are set to public or it has been shared with me. Then submit your portfolio URL in Canvas.

See rubric for the Portfolio assignment in Canvas.

Extra Credit: Licensure Prep Test **Due November 22, 2021 11:59 PM (ET)**

This assignment is extra credit and is optional for students to participate in.

Arrange to take the practice licensure exam through the [School of Social Work Career Services Office](#). Once the practice exam has been taken, write a brief paper answering the following questions:

- Based on my results, what gaps exist currently in my readiness for the licensure exam?
- What will I do over my time in the social work program to prepare for my licensure exam? This might include things like classes to take, skills to improve, supervision or mentoring to secure, or educational relationships to establish.

Suggested length, 1 page single-spaced.

Many states require social workers to obtain a license in order to practice social work. While this assignment is optional, taking the practice exam now can help to identify where gaps may exist for you and to consider some of the opportunities to utilize while in the MSW program to help prepare you for licensure.

d. Attendance and Class Participation

Because this course is only seven sessions, students are expected to attend all classes on time and to actively participate, which includes engagement in class discussions, providing collegial support, the use of active listening skills, initiating and participating in dialogue within group discussions. Please refer to the [Policy on Class Attendance](#) for further clarification.

Please notify me by email as soon as practical if you have any concerns about missing a class so that I can make accommodations. Accommodations should be made in advance, whenever possible. See attendance and participation rubric in Canvas.

e. Grading

This course is graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. Assignments and attendance are weighted by group as outlined below:

Master assignment: 50%
Ongoing assignments: 20%
Portfolio: 20%
Attendance/Participation: 10%
Total: 100%

Please review these policies in regard to grades: [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#) as well as [Student Grievance procedures](#) and the [policy for grading in special circumstances](#).

All assignments must be submitted online via Canvas at or before the time it is due. If you are unable to submit online for any reason, email me your assignment directly. Any late assignment will lose 1 point for each day it is late unless arrangements have been made with me for an extension prior to the due date.

Occasionally, unforeseen circumstances arise (e.g., illness, mental health, personal, or family related) which may make it difficult for you to complete an assignment by its designated due date time. Should this happen, please notify me to discuss options. Your request for an extension should take place MORE than 24 hours before an assignment is due.

f. COVID-19 Statement

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. Your participation in this course is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including [properly wearing a face covering in class](#) and compliance with the [University COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#). Other applicable and additional safety measures may be described in the [Campus Maize & Blueprint](#). Your ability to participate in this course may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#) and those seeking an exemption related to the vaccination requirement should submit an exemption request through [WolverineAccess](#). I also encourage you to review the [Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the [COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

g. Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor's note) for medical excuses is *not* required.

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*

Commitment to Anti-Racism and DEI in Teaching

Keeping the School of Social Work's Anti-Racism Statement at the forefront, as an instructor, I hope to create an environment where everyone feels welcome, that they are a valued contributor, and can bring their authentic selves to fully thrive in the classroom. Recognizing that all students learn differently, I try to utilize a range of ways to participate and engage.

Applying principles of [anti-racist pedagogy](#), I see the work that we do in the class to not only for our individual benefit, but to be applied beyond the classroom and into the community, considering the impact on the individuals, families, communities, and organizations that we serve.

I am always working to improve my own teaching, and see the classroom environment as a space where we hold each other accountable, while also being supportive of each other's growth. Knowing that we will all make mistakes, I hope that we all approach the space with empathy as this is an ongoing journey for us all.