



<b>Course title:</b>	Introduction to Social Work Practice
<b>Course #/term:</b>	SW 590 - Sec. 013 Fall 2021
<b>Time and place:</b>	Th 6:00PM - 8:00PM Room 2629 SSWB
<b>Credit hours:</b>	1
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	N/A
<b>Instructor:</b>	Alethia J. Battles, JD, LMSW
<b>Pronouns:</b>	<i>She, her</i>
<b>Contact info:</b>	<b>Email:</b> abattles@med.umich.edu <b>Phone:</b> 734-707-3147 You may expect a response within 24 hours
<b>Office:</b>	TBD
<b>Office hours:</b>	By appointment

## 1. Course Statement

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### 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**

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### **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.

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments Due</b>
Week 1 8/26/2021	Session 1: Welcome, Introductions and Course Overview	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: None
Week 2 9/2/2021	Session 2: Core Values of Social Work	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discussion prompt: Grounding in the MSW Program</li> <li>● Master Assignment, Milestone 1</li> </ul>
Week 3 9/16/2021	Session 3: Centering Justice	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Master Assignment, Milestone 2</li> </ul>
Week 4 9/30/2021	Session 4: Anti-Racism and Social Work Practice	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discussion prompt: Centering Justice</li> </ul>
Week 5 10/14/2021	Session 5: Preparing to Practice Social Work, Part 1	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Master Assignment, Milestone 3</li> </ul>
Week 6 10/28/2021	Session 6: Preparing to Practice Social Work, Part 2	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nothing due</li> </ul>
Week 7 11/11/2021	Session 3: Your Professional Portfolio	Readings: Noted on Canvas Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Letter to yourself</li> <li>● Master Assignment,</li> </ul>

		Milestone 4
Post Week 7	Portfolio Due	Readings: None Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Portfolio</li> <li>● Course evaluations</li> <li>● Extra credit (optional)</li> </ul>

### 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

Master 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 a reflective practice widely used in education and in clinical settings, known as "*what, so what, now what.*" The assignment will span the semester, with milestones throughout the semester.

- a) Milestone 1  
Due: 9/1/2021

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: 9/15/2021

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: 9/29/2021

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?
- Reflect on ethical decision making. Why and when does this matter?

Suggested length, 1-2 pages single-spaced.

d) Milestone 4: *Now what*  
Due: 11/10/2021

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, 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, 1/2 - 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.

## 4. Attendance and class participation:

Attendance is a requirement. Students who miss two or more classes will receive an unsatisfactory/non-passing grade in the course. Students who will miss more than two classes due to religious holidays, or other approved exceptions, must make arrangements with the instructor before the second class to avoid a grade penalization. **Please note that the student is responsible for all of the content missed during your absences.** A copy of the [Policy on Class Attendance](#) is found in the MSW Student Guide.

### Participation:

Class participation is more than mere attendance. It is also arriving on time, reading assigned material, preparing for class, contributing appropriately to class discussions, doing assignments, and participating in class activities and group activities. Participation does not mean you need to talk a lot in class. It is more about bringing a positive learning attitude to the class and being present for each session. Each of us participates differently, and I will strive to honor that diversity among us.

Students are expected to engage in an open and respectful dialogue, use the classroom environment as practice for professional interactions with clients and colleagues, and maintain respect and civility in-class, online, via e-mail, video, and all other forms of communication with both the instructor and class colleagues. Inappropriate behaviors with regard to any of the aforementioned contexts could impact final grading. **\*NOTE:** Students who do not adhere to the stated course policies may be asked to leave class and be marked absent for the session.

## 5. Grading

Grading will be *pass/fail*. Due to the brief length of time in which a one-credit course meets, multiple absences will likely result in a fail/unsatisfactory grade.

Successful, timely completion and submission of class assignments, engaging and participating in class exercises, and completion of the final project will result in a passing grade. For reference, please see resources below:

- [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#)
- [Student Grievance procedures](#)
- [Policy for grading in special circumstances.](#)
- [Testing and grading from CRLT.](#)

## 6. Class Recording and Course Materials

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.

## 7. 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 [Wolverine Access](#). 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](#).

## 8. 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.

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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*