Course title: Essentials of Community and Organizational Practice

Course #/term: SW 509 003 / Fall 2022

Time and place: Tuesdays, 2-5pm; SSW B684

Credit hours: 3

Instructor: Jamie Kynn

Pronouns: They/them/theirs

Contact info: Email: jkynn@umich.edu  Phone: 904-654-9534 [after 9am, before 10pm]

You may expect a response within approximately 48 hours

Office: Virtual (via Zoom)

Office hours: By appointment, use www.calendly.com/jmkynn or email to schedule

Course Statement

Course description
This course is partly survey in nature, touching on a range of methods, strategies, and skills in macro practice, specifically community organization, management, and advocacy. It provides an appreciation of the historical and contemporary importance of these social work methods as well as opportunities for students to develop practical skills. With opportunities for hands-on experience and training using tangible tools that are critical for success in macro practice, the course places special emphasis on approaches that strengthen socially just and culturally sensitive practice.

Students focus on: (1) understanding the context of macro practice; (2) identifying community and organizational interventions to address social needs and problems; (3) organizing and building relationships within communities and organizations; and (4) organization-based and community-based policymaking, planning, and program development. Course content addresses concepts and practice skills involving assessment, engagement, and intervention planning at the macro level, and strategies to work effectively with communities, organizations and groups. Content also includes reflective practice and utilizing interpersonal skills in macro practice. The course will offer skill-building in some tasks that are important to beginning social work practice, such as understanding and developing spreadsheets, meeting facilitation, teamwork, collecting and presenting basic data, and communicating effectively.
Course objectives and competencies

- Use anti-oppressive and anti-racist frameworks to describe examples of systemic and structural root causes of contemporary social welfare issues (Essential 22, 33, 39, 45; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9).
- Apply inclusive engagement strategies based on an intersectional analysis of systems of power, privilege, and oppression both within and outside organizational and community contexts (Essential 1, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 45; EPAS 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8).
- Articulate social work values and ethics in all organizational and community strategies to address contemporary social work and social welfare problems (Essential 26, 44; EPAS 1, 5).
- Practice engaging with teams, partnerships, collaborations, coalitions, and other alliances to build intraorganizational and interorganizational power and influence (Essential 8, 10, 40; EPAS 1, 6).
- Assess community needs and issues and identify community assets, indigenous solutions, capacities, and allies in partnership with organizational and/or community stakeholders (Essential 3, 7, 15, 20, 24; EPAS 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9).
- Develop intervention plans (goals and objectives) toward addressing community and/or organizational needs and issues (Essential 18, 19, 21, 27; EPAS 4, 7, 8).
- Investigate how to engage with community partners to build community capacity to mobilize on issues and needs, develop services and strategies that enhance community well-being, and dismantle oppressive structures and systems (Essential 25, 29, 34, 45; EPAS 2, 3, 4, 5, 9).

Course design

This course will use multiple methods including but not limited to: lectures, demonstrations, case studies, readings, guest speakers, discussions, written assignments, and individual and group exercises. The primary pedagogy will be experiential, involving problem-solving, project planning and implementation, in-person and online simulations and hands-on applications of real-world situations that arise in the field.

Intensive focus on PODS

This course integrates PODS 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 PODS learning.

Consistent with social work core values, the primary goals of Community and Organizational Practice are to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people. This course will devote resources and attention to the needs and empowerment of people and
groups who traditionally have experienced oppression and marginalization. Course content and processes are designed to help students gain understanding of intersectional diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religious/spiritual practice, immigration status, and cognitive, mental or physical disability. In addition, students will be exposed to strategies for increasing social and racial equity and inclusion across settings.

Accessibility and inclusivity
You have a right to inclusive and accessible education. I want to foster the academic success of all students. Let us work together to make sure that happens. This course is intended for all U-M students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other such condition that tends to affect one’s equal access to education negatively. If you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course at any point in the term, you are welcome (and not required) to contact me by email, phone, or during office hours to discuss your specific needs. I also encourage you to contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office (734-763-3000; http://ssd.umich.edu). If you have a diagnosis, SSD can help you document your needs and create an accommodation plan. By making a plan through SSD, you can ensure appropriate accommodations without disclosing your condition or diagnosis to course instructors. SSD typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Note: I am committed to moving towards universal design for learning (UDL). If you have suggestions for how I can improve our classroom space, activities, and/or assignments to be more accessible now or in the future, please do not hesitate to let me know! This also means that you are welcome to eat/drink in our class, take breaks/move your body as needed, stim, choose where to sit, etc. I will also be asking everyone to share about their access needs (if your access needs have already been met, you can simply say that) to help normalize this in social work spaces.

Dependent Care Resources
For students with child or parenting/elder care responsibilities, feel free to consult the Students with Children website (http://www.studentswithchildren.umich.edu). This site is dedicated to the needs of students at UM who juggle parenting/elder care, study, and work. Resources include child care, financial assistance, social support, housing, and health care information. The website was created by the former Committee on Student Parent Issues (COSPI). For additional information on work/life support please also visit the Work/Life Resource Center site (http://www.hr.umich.edu/worklife/) and the UM Child Care gateway (http://www.hr.umich.edu/childcare/).

You are welcome to bring your children to class as needed; I just ask that you do your best to help keep them settled and from disturbing other students’ learning processes. Social justice means including families.
Inclusive Language (adapted from Katie Doyle):
The words we use can make the difference between forging positive connections or creating
distance in our personal and professional lives. Impact is more important than intent, especially
when it comes to engaging interpersonally. This course provides an opportunity to discuss
concepts that span a variety of disciplines, experiences, cultural communities, and learning
styles in education. Increasing the inclusiveness of our language means striving to understand
the ways that language often unconsciously makes assumptions about people and
unintentionally reinforces dominant norms. I invite you to reflect on issues of privilege and
injustice, and to acknowledge issues of ethical engagement when speaking on cultural
communities that you do not identify with. As such, I ask that students consider:

• Recognizing and using correct individual gender pronouns;
• Respecting and using contemporary and relevant language around social identities;
• Using language that recognizes varying abilities and is not ableist;
• Using language inclusive of diverse global contexts;
• Providing developmental and educational support of attendees who may be unfamiliar with
inclusive language practices.

Student wellbeing
Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their
personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with
relationships, mental health, alcohol or other drugs, identities, finances, etc.
If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help is a courageous thing to do for yourself and
those who care about you. If the source of your stressors is academic or if you feel comfortable
sharing what you are experiencing, please contact me so that we can find solutions together.

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

Ongoing pandemics (COVID, Monkeypox [MPXV], and others) masking and
coming to class
Though university policy states that we are “mask optional” (barring medical settings on campus), we cannot provide an equitable and just atmosphere for learning if we are not protecting one another from COVID, MPXV, and other evolving health concerns by masking. *I encourage you all to practice community care by continuing to mask in indoor spaces* to protect those with compromised immune systems, those of us with family members unable to get vaccinated, those of us who do not want to transmit the virus to others, and those of us who want to avoid re/infection. The school does provide free N95/KN95 masks to students if you need any.

Are you sick? Or caring for a sick family member? **PLEASE STAY HOME.** Class will be available online, and also, it’s ok to miss a week or two if you need to take care of yourself. We know that not resting when in the midst of an active COVID infection is more likely to lead to long COVID, and we all want you to take care of yourself! Ditto on if you are experiencing sores, scabs, or other symptoms of MPXV.

**Class Requirements**

**Class materials**
This course utilizes *Canvas* as a resource for course readings, as well as for the submission of assignments. Assignment descriptions, lecture notes/slides and readings for each class can be found on those sites. Please review the sites carefully. Login to the Canvas portal at: https://canvas.umich.edu to find the course materials.

There is no required text for this course. Readings for each topic are listed on Canvas. To fully engage in the course topic and become a competent and skilled instructor, it is expected that students will complete all required readings/watchings. You are also graduate students and adults; I will not be quizzing you or penalizing you based on this; you will get out of this course what you put in, and I trust you to make these decisions.

**Class schedule**
Changes in the course schedule due to weather/illness/etc. will be given as far in advance as possible; alerts will come over email and changes will be posted to canvas; etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Work BEFORE Class</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Overview of Class</td>
<td>Read: Syllabus</td>
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<td>– Co-creation of space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date/Time</td>
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| Week 2 September 6<sup>th</sup> | – Intersectionality  
| Week 3 September 13<sup>th</sup> | – Understanding and engaging with communities | Read: Gutierrez et al. (2013) *Principles, skills, and practice strategies for promoting multicultural communication and collaboration.*  
Brown et al. (2022). Ch. 6, “Lessons from conducting an equity-focused, participatory needs
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Solid Ground (2014). Community Needs Assessment 2014. [<em>Only read page 20-22, we are going to talk about the rest in class!</em>]</td>
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<td>[<em>skim- just to get an idea of what SD is</em>] Hovmand (2014) Introduction to Community-Based System Dynamics</td>
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<td>October 4th</td>
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<td>Watch: Planning for change video</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Explore: KU Community Toolkits [<a href="https://ctb.ku.edu/en/toolkits">https://ctb.ku.edu/en/toolkits</a>]</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 11th</td>
<td>– Mutual aid</td>
<td>Guilloud &amp; Cordery (2007) Fundraising is not a dirty word: Community-based economic strategies</td>
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<td><strong>− FALL STUDY BREAK - NO CLASS (10/18)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Program development, implementation, and monitoring with communities</td>
<td>Readings to come!</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 25th</td>
<td>– Guest lecture: Dr. Larry Gant</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1st</td>
<td>organizations</td>
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<td>November 8th</td>
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<td>Date/Time</td>
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<td><strong>THANKSGIVING BREAK- NO CLASS (11/22)</strong></td>
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<td>November 29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td><strong>Week 13</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Group presentations</td>
<td>Group presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td><strong>Assignments</strong></td>
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### Assignments

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching for improved performance simulation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and organizational issue essay</td>
<td>Week 6 October 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 11:59pm</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of change plan for an identified issue</td>
<td>Overview paper Week 10 November 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;, 11:59pm</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Due date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group presentation</td>
<td>Week 12 Week 12, November 29th, 11:59pm</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter of Intent</td>
<td>Week 13 December 6th, 11:59pm</td>
<td>30</td>
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**Participation – 20 points**

Participation is broadly defined. Participation refers showing up to class online, asking questions of both me and your peers, applying course concepts to questions about your own experiences, contributing to the learning of others, participating in online discussions on Canvas, providing accurate and respectful feedback to others, sharing resources with classmates, identifying any unique learning needs or problems to the me, and utilizing office hours/email communication when necessary to ask for clarification or assistance in fulfilling course expectations and assignments. The success of this course depends upon our ability to have an informed discussion. By informed I mean that your responses, opinions, and answers can be explicitly connected to the readings, your practice/community experiences, and can reflect your knowledge and understanding of the subject area. Come to class with questions and ideas for discussions. Class contributions should focus on relevant course concepts and professional practice experiences. Participation can and should be done both in the virtual classroom and on the discussion boards online, as is relevant.

**Coaching for improved performance simulation – 5 points**

Some essential courses now include simulations. These simulations provide students a chance to practice social work skills in an online environment. In this class, we will be practicing the coaching skill. The format and process of coaching has great value in diverse social work practice contexts. To access the simulation, go to: [https://training.simmersion.com/](https://training.simmersion.com/), and register with the access code that you received.

For this assignment, you will review the lesson about coaching (within the simulation), and complete the simulation 5 times (or reach 80% proficiency, whichever comes first) by 12/6/2021. After completing each simulation, please submit your transcripts to me via email (jkynn@umich.edu). You can generate a PDF file of your transcript by clicking the “Transcript” tab at the top of the window > clicking “Print” button at the upper-right corner > changing “Destination” to “Save as PDF”. While this assignment can be done at any point throughout the semester (hard due date is 12/6/2021), I encourage you do it rather soon, before your semester heats up. This coaching simulation assignment is worth 5% of your grade.
Community and organizational issue essay – 15 points
This assignment is designed to identify and understand a problem or opportunity within a community or an organization. To identify and analyze one specific issue of a community or an organization, you may have the easiest time looking at the issues related to your field placement, or an organization for which you have worked or volunteered. The following are some examples of issues you might consider. There are, of course, numerous other issues not listed that you could pursue.

- Community Issues: High crime in a specific area, lack of certain human services, high cost of living, limited access to fresh produce.
- Organizational Issues: High staff turnover, lack of diversity within a board of directors, funding issues, program expansion.

If you have a difficulty in identifying a community or an organizational issue, feel free to browse an idea from the Connect2Community website (https://connect2community.umich.edu/) managed by the Ginsberg Center at the University of Michigan. The website host dozens of the local volunteer opportunities (or projects) that you can engage in right away. In other words, the Ginsberg Center can provide extra supports (e.g., connections with local stakeholders) – a very helpful feature for anyone with limited community or organizational practice experiences.

Write a brief essay (up to 2 pages in length, single-spaced) on an issue you believe to be addressed. Students submitting the essay on time will receive full grade. Students will be asked to share their essay ideas in small groups. This informal “presentation” will not be graded.

Development of a change effort for the identified issue – 30 points total
A change effort should be designed and implemented in a clear and thoughtful way. Change plans focus on changing behavior by intervening in the environment. This can vary greatly. A change plan may be a new policy, a modification in programming, an introduction of new practices, or a combination. Students will write a short paper (an overview of the change plan), and groups will then deliver presentations together on their change plan.

In the change plan, the groups need to (1) identify the audience, (2) clearly define and describe the issue, (3) analyze possible causes, (4) propose an intervention plan, and (5) identify potential resources and anticipated obstacles to execute the plan. Please make sure that your plan matches or connects clearly to assessment findings, demonstrates an understanding of the problem and how the problem is situated within the specific organization or community. Your plan also should demonstrate that the needs and voices of those most impacted have been considered/integrated in the plan.

Overview of change plan, due week 10 [10 points]
Assume your reader is a busy professional (e.g., community and organizational leaders). Because the task is to write a professional plan—not an academic paper, letter, or editorial—the plan should be firmly grounded in practical concerns. It should be to-the-point and assume
a formal (professional) tone rather than an overly familiar one in terms of writing. Your overview of your change plan should be 3-5 pages and clearly outline the (1) issue at hand, (2) analyze possible causes, (4) propose an intervention, and (5) identify potential resources and obstacles.

**Group presentation, due week 12 [20 points]**
The 15-minute presentation should describe the issue as well as the intervention plan or proposed solution. Each group will decide who the audience will be. Groups should deliver a presentation that can educate your audience about an issue. Therefore, it should be engaging and easy to understand. Groups may (or may not) use whatever visual aids you think will enhance your presentation. Please be prepared for questions from the audience. Small group discussions will follow question and answer time to recap the group’s issue analysis and solution formulation processes and identify missing/under-discussed dimensions.

**Letter of Intent– 30 points**

This assignment is the culmination of the work done throughout the semester. This assignment involves the development of a Letter of Intent (LOI, or proposal) that can be submitted to a foundation or funding organization to support the change plan that your group come up with.

The LOI may not exceed 6 pages (all single-spaced). The page limit excludes budget, budget narrative, and timeline. Groups should write the LOI as though they were senior managers or development team members of a community-based agency. Groups should their organization a name and provide a brief description of the agency. You may use a real agency or create your own. A proposed effort should be 1-2 years in length and have a budget of $100,000 or less. The assignment’s central goal is to learn skills associated with proposal development. Thus, you should identify a real foundation or funding organization that provides grants in group’s core issue area. Groups will conceptualize and draft a LOI addressing all of the essential elements required by the funder. Here is a general description of a typical LOI elements with suggested lengths:

- **COVER LETTER** (i.e., a transmittal letter; a full 1-page): This letter should highlight the main points of the proposal and indicate to the potential funding source why this project is important for them to fund. You will need to explain why the proposal may be of interest to the funder. Letter head is optional.

- **AGENCY DESCRIPTION** (a paragraph): A brief description of the agency, including mission, target population(s), and primary services. You can also include any key collaborators or partners related to the proposed services as well as agency personnel and strengths in relation to the project.

- **BACKGROUND** (1-2 pages): A brief description of the issue/problem you propose to address and why it is significantly important
• GOALS & OBJECTIVES (few sentences): State the project’s goals and major objective (link the goals and the objectives to your description of the project)

• PROJECT NARRATIVE (< 3 pages): Propose an intervention plan in detail and identify potential resources and anticipated obstacles to execute the plan.

• BUDGET and BUDGET NARRATIVE: Estimate how much money will you need to carry out the project based upon its objectives in a table and explain how each budget item relates to the project.

• TIMELINE: Provide a general timeline to give the funding source an idea of the project steps and activities. Gantt chart is optional.

Grading

References; MSW Student Guide policies on Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction as well as Student Grievance procedures and the policy for grading in special circumstances.

In the spirit of a professional development experience that encourages you to stretch and grow, grading will be mainly on a credit/no credit basis for each assignment. If you make a strong and timely effort on each assignment, you will do well in this class in terms of grading. I will give feedback on each assignment that focuses on improving your knowledge and skills. If you complete the assignment at an acceptable graduate level, you will get the points allotted for that assignment. Students can lose points by not doing acceptable work and not participating at an acceptable level. I will give you specific feedback about what needs to be improved to make an assignment acceptable.

1. Points for all assignments total to 95. Remaining 5 points reserved for exceptional performance. I will occasionally award a bonus point for assignments that are exceptionally well-done and for exceptional class participation and contributions.

1. You will lose 1 point for the 1st assignment that I judge as not meeting expectations. You may then resubmit the assignment in acceptable form for credit. If not resubmitted with revisions, you will get no credit for the assignment. You will lose 2 points for the 2nd unacceptable assignment, and 3 points for the 3rd unacceptable assignment, and so on.

2. You will lose 1 point for a late assignment. An additional point reduction will be made when an assignment is more than one week but less than two weeks late. Longer than
that, no credit will be earned for the assignment. NOTE: Final assignments will NOT be accepted as late and you will lose points for the entire assignment if late.

I try to provide clear, thoughtful feedback that helps you to deepen your awareness of professional social work practice as well as your writing and communication skills. If I write or say something that confuses or upsets you, please make an appointment so we can discuss it! If I help you deepen your understanding of something, that is helpful for me to know too.

[Adapted from Dr. Richard Tolman]

Occasionally, unforeseen circumstances arise (e.g., illness, mental health, personal, or family related) which may make it difficult for you to complete the assignment by its designated due date time. Should this happen, PLEASE notify me. At my discretion (which is almost always yes), your request for an extension that takes place MORE than 24 hours before an assignment is due will likely be granted, usually for no longer than one week past the original due date. PLEASE ask for an extension in lieu of not turning in an assignment. One caveat; due to scheduling around turning in grades, NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GIVEN FOR THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT.

Submission of Assignments

All assignments must be submitted online via Canvas at or before the time it is due as indicated on the syllabus. If you are unable to submit online for any reason, email me your assignment directly. If you do not contact me to explain that Canvas is not working, and do not email the assignment, your assignment will be considered late.

Letter grades from A through F are given for class performance. A grades are given for exceptional individual performance and mastery of the material. The use of A+, A, and A- distinguishes the degree of superiority. B grades are given to students who demonstrate mastery of the material. B+ is used for students who perform just above the mastery level but not in an exceptional manner. B- is used for students just below the mastery level. C grades are given when mastery of the material is minimal. A C- is the lowest grade that carries credit. “D” grades indicate deficiency and carry no credit. F grades indicate failure and carry no credit.

Grading Scale:
98-100 =A+
93-97 = A
91-92 = A-
89-90 = B+
87-88 = B
85-86 = B-
83-84 = C+
81-82 = C
80 = C-
Below 80; not passing