Course Syllabus

Course title: Essentials of Community and Organizational Practice
Course #/term: SW 509 Fall 2022
Time and place: Monday, 9am-Noon, On Campus
Credit hours: 3
Instructor: Sue Ann Savas, MSW
Pronouns: She/her/hers
Contact info: E-mail: ssavas@umich.edu
When you email me, please include SW 509 in the subject line
Cell: Phone: 734-649-6776
Office: School of Social Work Building, Office #3848
Office Hours: Mondays 1-2pm and by appointment (in person or online)

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.

Objectives

- 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 intra-organizational and inter-organizational 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).

### 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 Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (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.

### Class Requirements

a. Textbook & other readings

This course will not use a primary text. The course readings include professional literature, videos, podcasts, and other professional practice resources. All readings are posted to Canvas in modules (available one week before class). In order to fully engage in the course, students are expected to complete all required readings. The information presented in the readings and the online resources will be applied in class through exercises and demonstrated as practice skills through assignments.

b. Class Schedule

An overview of each class session is presented next including the agenda, readings, relevant resources and assignment due dates. In order to be more responsive to student learning needs, some reading and exercise expectations will be revised. These changes in the schedule will be posted on canvas at least one week in
To support student learning and interests, additional on-line videos and podcasts will be posted on pages within modules one week prior to the class session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
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</table>
| 1. Aug 29  | Introduction to course, problem statements  | • NASW Code of Ethics  
• Skid Row Video  
• The Needs Statement: 4 Fundamental Features. 2017. Grants Edge Team  
• NASW Press Guidelines for Describing People |
| Sept 5     | No Class                                    | University Holiday                                                                                                                                 |
| 2. Sept 12 | Problem-solving framework                   | • What is Macro Social Work? Video  
• Scribbr How to write a problem statement.  
• Center for Community Health and Development. University of Kansas. Community Tool Box. Collecting information about the problem. |
• Detroit Future City 139 Square Miles Report.  
• How to conduct a successful key informant interview. 2019. Upstream Consulting.  
https://mgetit.lib.umich.edu/go/1523222 |
| 4. Sept 26 | Power with data and mapping                 | • Gathering Information to Assess a Community.  
http://guides.lib.umich.edu/communityprofile  
• Mapping the Impact of Structural Racism in Philadelphia, Office of Controller  
• Social Explorer Mapping.  
https://www.socialexplorer.com/explore/maps |
| 5. Oct 3   | Root Cause Analysis Techniques and Design Thinking | • About Root Cause Analysis.  
https://asq.org/quality-resources/root-cause-analysis  
• Design Thinking for Social Innovation IDEO. Brown, T. and Wyatt, J. Design_Thinking_for_SocialInnovation2.pdf  
• Liberating Structures.  
http://www.liberatingstructures.com/ |
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<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
• Leap Ambassadors Performance Imperative [https://leapambassadors.org/continuous-improvement/performance-imperative](https://leapambassadors.org/continuous-improvement/performance-imperative)/Sprague Martinez  
• Writing SMART objectives, CDC.gov.                                                                 |
| Oct 17    | No Class                                    | Fall Break                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 7. Oct 24 | Building power and influence                | • Ginsberg Workshop on Community Engagement  
• UN Declaration of Human Rights  
• National Association of Black Social Workers Code of Ethics  
• Infographic Examples: Meals on Wheels Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living, Silence Equals Death [www.nypl.org/blog/2013/11/22/silence-equals-death-poster](https://www.nypl.org/blog/2013/11/22/silence-equals-death-poster) |
• Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations, Dr. A Curry-Stevens, Portland State University                                                                 |
• Good to Great and the Social Sectors: Jim Collins on Leadership. [www.bridgestar.org](http://www.bridgestar.org)  
• Administration for Community Living. Engaging Older Adults RFP. [https://acl.gov/grants/engaging-older-adults](https://acl.gov/grants/engaging-older-adults)  
| 10. Nov 14| Group Presentations, Social Work Ethics     | • Students present projects  
• Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles                                                                                                    |
| 11. Nov 21| Group Presentations, Evaluation Practice    | • Students present projects  
| 12. Nov 28| Letter of Intent, Budgets                   | • What should your fund development plan include? 2012. *Non-profit Quarterly*. Joyauk, S. [https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2012/02/02/what-should-your-fund-development-plan-include/](https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2012/02/02/what-should-your-fund-development-plan-include/) |
c. Assignments

Students will have time to work on group projects in class in order to receive coaching from peers and the instructor. Students will have an opportunity to share their products and gather feedback on their deliverables from their group members and/or the instructor. Individual student work products/assignments will be uploaded to canvas for grading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Percent of overall grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identifying and Assessing a Social Issue or Opportunity</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>October 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Community or Organizational Change Effort Intervention Plan</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>October 24</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Group project presentation and leave behind item</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>November 14 or 21</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Letter of Intent to funder, including budget</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>December 9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Coaching Simulation</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>December 9</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Culminating Assignment is a group assignment with 3 graded parts: Identification and Assessment of Issue, Development of a Change Effort Intervention Plan, and Presentation of the project with a leave behind item. The assignment gives students an opportunity to integrate and apply the course concepts. **This is a master assignment for all SW 509 sections.**

Course Outcomes. This assignment provides documentation of student ability to meet the following course outcomes:

- 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).
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• 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).

P.O.D.S. Capacities. This assignment connects to the following P.O.D.S. capacities:
Capacity Area A: Social Justice Vision and Actions
• Envision what social justice could look like in specific practice contexts
• Use processes that promote social justice, including those that resist and reduce disempowering and marginalizing dynamics (e.g., use accessible language, attend to power and marginalizing dynamics in groups and organizations, value diverse leadership and participation styles).
• Build on positive sources of power to envision and work toward social justice; work to reduce disempowerment.
• Build on indigenous knowledge/experiences of individuals, groups, and communities in practice and evaluation.

Capacity Area B: Working with Others for Justice
• Demonstrate intersectional humility in communication and interactions with others.
• Assess the advantages and disadvantages of working collaboratively within and/or access groups (defined by positionality and stigmatized status) and act accordingly.
• Initiate and promote dialogue/alliances/collaboration where/when appropriate within and across groups and boundaries.

Capacity Area C: Critical Structural Thinking
• Analyze types, levels and sources of power in practice contexts, theories and actions.
• Recognize the impacts of privilege and inequities on various levels of social ecology (individuals, family, organizations, community, society).
• Value and use multiple ways of knowing and constructing knowledge.

Capacity Area D: Critical Awareness, Use of Self, and Strengthening Survival and Coping Strategies
• Learn from those with different voices, values and experiences, including different ways of knowing.
• Demonstrate knowledge and skills for intersectional humility (be able to suspend one’s own assumptions and perspectives in order to understand / recognize alternative world views).
• Cultivate and use a critical “third eye” (ability to observe and evaluate one’s own actions and their consequences).

Capacity Area E : Praxis
• Modify existing theories/knowledge and generate new knowledge/awareness based on these reflections and critical structural thinking.

Assignment Components

Component 1. Identification of a community or organizational barrier/gap or opportunity
This piece of the assignment is designed to identify and understand a problem or opportunity within a community or a community organization. You will spend some time identifying and analyzing one specific issue. You may have the easiest time looking at 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: a. Community Issues: High crime in a specific area, lack of certain human services such as immigration services, cancer support services, domestic
violence services, limited access to food, b. Organizational Issues: Diversity within a board of directors, high staff turnover, funding issues, board engagement, program expansion.

This component of the assignment has several purposes:
- To learn the skills necessary for understanding and analyzing a community or organization;
- To gain experience in reflective practice at the community or organizational level; and
- To learn and practice skills important to working in a team.

**Component 2. The development of a change effort for this identified issue**
The change effort should be designed and implemented in a clear and thoughtful way. Intervention plans focus on changing behavior by intervening in the environment. This can vary greatly. An intervention plan may be a new policy, a change in programming, new practices, or a combination.

This component of the assignment has several purposes:
- To explore what an intervention plan may look like for an organization or community;
- To learn when and why to use an intervention plan;
- To practice the creation and development of a realistic intervention plan.
- To learn and practice skills important to working in a team.

**Component 3. An original presentation and materials, detailing the issue/problem and the proposed solution**
Assessments and intervention plans do little to help communities and organizations unless they are strategically distributed. For example, you may share it with a potential funder, with a community group, with the staff team that will implement it, or with a board of directors.

This part of the assignment has several purposes:
- To practice the skills necessary for effectively presenting information and material to stakeholders;
- To practice effective public speaking and public presentation skills, time limits, and answering questions.
- To think critically about what information will be compelling to a stakeholder audience.

This third part of the assignment is the culmination of the work done through the semester. The group will:

a. Create a 15-minute presentation detailing the needs assessment (part 1), as well as the intervention plan or proposed solution (part 2). You will decide who the audience (our class) will be. That is, if you decide you are doing a presentation to a potential funder, we will be that funder. This should be considered a professional presentation, one that can be used to educate your audience about an issue, therefore it should be engaging and easy to understand. You may use whatever visual aids you think will enhance your presentation. Please be prepared for questions.

b. Develop a “leave behind” item. You must include some leave behind item. This can be a handout, brochure, brief summary, PowerPoint presentation or some other item of your choosing. This written item should support and/or further explain the points made in your presentation. If your visual aid is in the form of a handout or pamphlet please provide hard copies for the class.

Any supplemental materials need to include appropriate attribution of authorship for paraphrases or ideas acquired from another source or appropriate citations. Please review the Student Guide section on "Ethical Conduct in the University Environment." This section specifically addresses plagiarism and the possible consequences for engaging in this behavior. The University of Michigan Library system has an online resource that can assist you in preparing proper citations for assignments using APA format available here: http://www.lib.mich.edu/ug/research/citation guide/AP5thed/pdf.
### Culminating Assignment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder group (the audience) is identified. The product and presentation are appropriate for this audience.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The community or organizational need/issue/problem is clearly identified.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- includes all relevant stakeholders</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- data collection methods are appropriate for this need/issue/problem and community/organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The change effort/intervention plan presented:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- matches or connects clearly to assessment findings</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- demonstrates an understanding of the problem and how the problem is situated within the specific organization or community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- demonstrate that the needs and voices of those most impacted have been considered/integrated in the plan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The presentation supplemental materials:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- demonstrates graduate level work (graduate level quality)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- demonstrates an understanding of course materials</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- demonstrates the use of theoretical frameworks such as human behavior in the social environment or person-in-environment within the project group and/or with external stakeholders, such as organizations or communities</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Demonstrates the use of empathy, reflection and interpersonal skills within the project group and/or with external stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignment 4. Letter of Intent.** This is an individual assignment. Students will review a number of foundation funding their population of interest, community of interest, and social issue/need. The students will select one foundation as a potential funder. Students will write a 2-page letter of intent, including a one-page budget attachment for a program or project of interest to them.

**Assignment 5.** The Simmersion Coaching for Improved Performance Simulation Assignment is an individual assignment. This simulation can be completed any time during the course but before the last class session. To access the simulation: [https://training.simmersion.com/](https://training.simmersion.com/). You need to register with the access code provided to UM SSW students. Students are expected to reach 80% proficiency or complete the simulation 5 times, whichever comes first. Submit a pdf or screen shot of your final simulation transcript to canvas for grading.

d. **Attendance and class participation**

Class attendance is imperative for both your own learning and the learning of your peers, and certainly for my learning. I expect students to attend class and small group sessions. Excessive absences (more than 2) will result in a lower grade. Routine tardiness will also reduce your participation grade. If personal or professional circumstances require your absence from more than one class, please contact me as soon as possible. Note that, even if you are absent from a class, you are still responsible for the content and the required assignments due that day. Please review the [Policy on Class Attendance](#) found in the MSW Student Guide.

Class participation is more than attending the sessions. Participation includes preparation for class by doing the readings and completing draft assignments. Participation includes asking questions of the instructor and of your classmates. Participation includes contributing fully to your group project. Participation includes participating in at least one on-line community event or conversations. The event options will be provided by the instructor or can be identified by the student.
e. Grading
Final grades are based on 100 percentage points. Letter grades are assigned to point totals according to the point to grade chart below. Assignments are due on or before the dates listed on the syllabus and on Canvas, except where noted. Please submit all work on time. Except where indicated, late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for the first day past the due date and time, and a full letter grade for each additional day thereafter. I am not inclined to waive this policy, though I do understand there may be exceptional circumstances. Note: assignments are due by 5pm.

Additional grade policies are available in the MSW Student Guide. Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction as well as Student Grievance procedures and the policy for grading in special circumstances. Here are some resources around testing and grading from CRLT.

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<tr>
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<th>A+</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D+</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>94-99</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>88-90</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>84-87</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>78-80</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>74-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-93</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>81-83</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>71-73</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>&lt;64</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>E</td>
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f. 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. Additional information on class recordings can be found the Recording and Privacy Concerns FAQ.

g. 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.

h. 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

Instructor Teaching Philosophy. Adapted from Rosenshine, B. Research-based Strategies that All Teachers Should Know, American Educator (Spring 2012). I will begin each session with a review of what was covered the previous lecture. Students will be asked to provide the review of key concepts and “take-aways.” I will present material in small steps and provide class time for students to practice after each step. I will give clear instructions. I will provide models, templates and numerous examples of problem-solving, including rehearsal time. I will think aloud as I demonstrate. I will provide scaffolds for difficult tasks and notify students of possible errors. I will guide student practice through additional explanations, live review of drafts, and small group consultations. I will monitor students for understanding by asking specific questions and checking student responses. I will reteach material when necessary. I will teach material needed by students even when the students were expected to have mastered the material prior to the course. I will note student successes and give students ample opportunity to practice independently. I will provide feedback as students begin to practice independently. I will teach using a transparent and inclusive approach.

I use an engaged active learning approach and partner with the community to address real social work realated challenges. In addition to the course objectives and the CSWE competencies, we work to develop the following University of Michigan engaged learning student outcomes: (1) self-agency and innovation, (2) collaboration, communication, and teamwork, (3) social/civic responsibility and ethical reasoning, (4) intercultural engagement, (5) creativity.