



SW 699 Section 3: Social Work Capstone

Course title:	Social Work Capstone	
Course #/term:	SWW 699 Section 3, Fall, 2022	
Time and place:	Wednesday, 5-8 PM, 3816 (8/31, 9/14, 9/28, 10/12, and 10/26)	
Credit hours:	1	
Prerequisites:	None	
Instructor:	V. Paige Walker	
Pronouns:	She/her/hers or they/them/theirs	
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	You may expect a response within 48 hours	
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Office hours:	Wednesdays, 4 – 5 PM and by appointment	

1. Course Statement

This Capstone course will provide students an opportunity to reflect on their social work education, as well as look forward to their future social work career.

Students will:

- explore concepts of professional resilience and social work identity
- gain an understanding of lifelong learning as a core value of the social work profession.

The course will:

- provide an opportunity for students to integrate and apply learning from their academic career in a comprehensive manner.
- assess the students' overall mastery of social work competencies, as demonstrated through products produced over the course of their study and collected in a professional portfolio.

Students will be given the opportunity to develop a cover letter and resume, as well as explore interviewing and negotiating skills necessary to secure a social work position upon graduation.

Philosophy on Classroom Learning and Teaching

I value personal and collective reflection, and the notion that we are all teachers and learners. I am challenged by the need to balance teaching within the confines of the University, itself an oppressive system, and by my commitment to working against institutional oppression and towards liberation. I believe that transparently and directly articulating this, alongside a clear set of expectations and values, supports a productive learning environment. We will speak in more detail about our classroom guidelines. Below are a few of the philosophies I use to teach that I would like to highlight:

- All of us come to this course with various experiences, skill sets, backgrounds and values. No one set of experiences is “better” or “worse” than any other. It is important that we listen to and consider diverse opinions and perspectives, even those we strongly disagree with.
- Curiosity is the root of growth and learning. Being intellectually curious often means taking risks, asking uncomfortable questions, and engaging deeply with the course material. I expect and encourage us to have open and respectful disagreements and difficult conversations.
- Intellectual integrity and honesty matter. I expect you to use course readings and other learning material to frame and contextualize your opinions. I expect you to build thoughtful and cogent arguments to support your positions.
- The course material will affect each of you in different ways. While I don’t often offer trigger warnings, some of you may experience moments that recall a prior personal, painful, negative or traumatic memory. If you are able, I encourage you to stay with the conversation and the class when these challenging moments occur. If you are not, I encourage you to let me know and/or take care of yourself when these moments occur.
- I expect that each of you will be cognizant of the impact of your words on your classmates. I expect each of you to assume that your fellow classmates are not intending to purposefully harm or offend with certain language, actions, etc. I know this isn’t always easy.

This course functions best with open and honest communication. Please don’t hesitate to reach out with questions, comments and concerns.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that The University of Michigan, named for Michigami, the world's largest freshwater system and located in the Huron River watershed, was formed and has grown through connections with the land stewarded by Niswi Ishkodewan Anishinaabeg: The Three Fires People who are the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi along with their neighbors the Seneca, Delaware, Shawnee and Wyandot nations.

2. Class Requirements

Class Readings

All course material will be available on Canvas. Students are responsible for reading all material. Readings provide the foundation for classroom discussions and assignments and therefore, are required. We may not always discuss specific readings in detail in seminar, but you are responsible for their content and they should frame your thinking as we have class discussions.

I know that depending on your course load, readings can feel overwhelming. Please see me if you are having a hard time keeping up with the required reading for this course and we can discuss any changes that need to be made.

Grading: In Search of Liberation

In my opinion, traditional grading systems deeply minimize deep learning, risk-taking and intellectual rigor and hugely increase stress, anxiety and misery. This makes for irrelevant assessments of your actual learning. My assumption is that you are in this program because you are excited about engaging personally, professionally and academically in the study of Social Work. Thus, I assume the following:

- You will complete assignments thoughtfully and critically, and submit them in a timely manner;
- You will be present and engaged in classroom discussions and activities;
- You will let me know if there are issues happening in or out of the classroom that make it difficult for you to be a fully engaged student.

My hope is that operating with these assumptions, instead of with points and grades and percentages, will allow you to dig deeply into the course material without the stress of worrying about your grades.

Here are the School of Social Work's policies related to grading:

Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction

Student Grievance procedures

Policy for grading in special circumstances.

Class schedule

Date/Time	Agenda	Required Readings & Assignments
Week 1 8/31 – 5 PM	Class 1: Looking Back at your MSW	Read: Standards of Practice, NASW Code of Ethics, Letter to Self
Week 2 9/14 – 5 PM	Class 2: Shaping your Professional Brand, Part 1	Watch: Brene Brown “Vulnerability” Assignment: job posting, Values List
Week 3 9/28 – 5 PM	Class 3: Shaping your Professional Brand, Part 2	Read: Sinek “Start with Why” Chapters 3-6 Assignment: Update resume and cover letter
Week 4 10/12 – 5 PM	Class 4: Professional Identity and Professional Resilience	Read: William Bridges “Transitions” (Preface, Chapters 1, 2, and 4) Assignment: Letter of Recommendation and or Interview questions
Week 5 10/26 – 5 PM	Class 5: Lifelong Learning	Read: Yallom “The Gift of Therapy” introduction, Chapters 6, 9, and 23)

a. Assignments

The major assignment for this class is the development of a portfolio. For ease, this assignment is broken into 3 “milestones.” In addition, there are a series of ongoing “mini-assignments.” Details are as follows.

Please pay close attention to Milestone 3 of the portfolio assignment, in particular the grading rubric. This is the grade that will be used for CSWE accreditation.

Assignment Title: Portfolio

Purpose

This end of program assessment was designed to assess your learning of the 9 competencies required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) plus our School's added priority of P.O.D.S. (privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice).

Course Outcomes

This assignment provides documentation of student ability to meet the following course outcome:

- Reflect on social work learning, especially related to key social work competencies. (EPAS 1)

P.O.D.S. Capacities

This assignment connects to the many [P.O.D.S. capacities](#), including:

- Envision what social justice could look like in specific practice contexts
- Incorporate insights from those with insider and outsider statuses into social justice planning and actions.
- Foster environments and processes that are supportive and generative among those working for justice.

Task

There are 3 “milestones” related to this assignment. Detailed instructions for each milestone are provided within the Canvas site.

Milestone 1

Students have found it helpful to prepare one of the items for their master assignment early. This allows you to get feedback to ensure you are on the right track. For this milestone, you will:

1. Review the advanced competencies that [link to your specialized pathway](#)
2. Select one project/product that you have created while in the MSW program that you think best demonstrates your skill, knowledge, values, etc related to one competency. You will need to upload that project to your portfolio prior to completing this assignment. Instructions on how to update privacy settings and copy a share link for your project link are in the Privacy Settings section of the [SSW Student Guide to Portfolium](#).
3. Write a 2-4 paragraph description for your chosen competency. The paragraphs will clearly and thoroughly: 1) summarize and describe your project, including your specific tasks in the creation of the project, and 2) describe how this project demonstrates your attainment of the competency. This description should help the reader see a clear connection between your project and the competency you've selected. **Tip:** To better connect your paragraph description with the competency, use specific language from the competency statement throughout your paragraphs.

Milestone 2

For this milestone, you will complete the profile section of your Portfolium portfolio ([review tutorial as needed](#)). There is a great deal of information you can provide, but at a minimum, here you should provide:

1. **Your Introduction.** When completing this section, keep in mind that this is often the first thing someone will review when reading your portfolio. Consider: How do you want to introduce yourself to your audience?
2. **Education.** Add any relevant degrees and education.
3. **Work experience.** Include any prior work experience you would like to showcase in your portfolio.

When you are ready to submit, you may enter the URL for your portfolio through this quiz.

Milestone 3

This end of program assessment was designed to assess your learning of the 9 competencies required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) plus our School's added priority of P.O.D.S. (privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice). For each of the ten items (9 competencies + P.O.D.S), you will submit, by link, a project/product that you created that demonstrates your competency. Projects can be things you've created in class or in field. The key is that the instructor must be able to use them to assess your level of proficiency with that competency. Examples of projects could include (but are not limited to):

- papers
- presentations
- grants
- reports
- data visualizations

Instructions on how to update privacy settings and copy a share link for your project link are in the Privacy Settings section of the SSW Student Guide to Portfolium (Links to an external site.). In addition, you will complete a description of how the projects/artifact demonstrates your understanding or implementation of that competency. Additional assignment details are provided at the links below.

You will provide at least 5 different projects/products. That is, one project can be used to demonstrate more than one competency.

Please be sure that you are removing any and all identifying information from your projects. As an additional level of protection, you might consider sharing certain projects only with your instructor and removing them once your grade has been provided.

You must complete the assignment that corresponds with your specific pathway. You can access your pathway-specific assignment with the correct link on the Canvas site.

Grading Rubric

Students will receive a grade of "complete" or "incomplete" for this assignment. Numeric scores, including your self-assessed numeric scores, will be used to help our School of Social Work assess how well we are educating students related to the 9 CSWE competencies, plus P.O.D.S.

Instructor ratings for the final portfolio assignment (milestone 3) are based on a 5 pt scale. This is the rating scale our school uses for CSWE and is consistent across all classes and field.

- 1, Not Competent: Project reflected no demonstration of understanding
- 2, Limited Competent: Project reflected limited or inconsistent demonstration of understanding
- 3, Emerging Competent: Project reflected emerging demonstration of understanding
- 4, Competent: Project reflected full demonstration of understanding
- 5, Advanced Competent: Project reflected demonstration of exceptional depth of understanding

**Please note that instructors must provide a grade for each item, not simply a total score for the assessment. [Here is a link to more detailed grading information for this assignment](#)

Assignment Title: Mini-Assignments

Purpose

There are a series of small “mini-assignments” that help students prepare for the job market.

Course Outcomes

This assignment provides documentation of student ability to meet the following course outcome:

- Demonstrate the use of effective communication strategies to market yourself as a professional social worker. (EPAS 1, 6, 9)

P.O.D.S. Capacities

This assignment connects to the many [P.O.D.S. capacities](#), including:

- Demonstrate intersectional humility in communication and interactions with others.
- Analyze types, levels and sources of power in practice contexts, theories and actions.
- Recognize how these intersect with each other and change in interactions with others and in different contexts.

Task

There are a series of “mini-assignments” related to this assignment grouping. Detailed instructions for each milestone are provided within the Canvas site.

Job search

Review social work position/job postings using a job search site of your choice. Select one position posting for which you would be interested in applying. Upload the posting to Canvas AND bring a paper copy to class.

Resume Draft

Upload your current resume draft. There is no need to do a lot of work yet, though you might want to update a few quick things. Next week, we will be discussing resumes and getting feedback on yours, so this assignment is designed (mostly!) to get you to locate yours and take a look at it - especially if you haven't looked in a while.

Letter of Reference

Complete a **Letter of Reference** for yourself. Imagine your field instructor and/or field faculty is providing a letter of reference. Write this letter as if it is coming from that person.

- Include behavioral examples of skills or qualities you highlight.
- Focus on the skills you think could be most transferable to your desired work setting.
- Focus on highlighting the things you think you are best at and that you believe your letter writer could articulate
- Use this article to give you guidance: [How to write a reference letter](#)

Upload your letter to canvas AND bring a paper copy to class.

Completed Resume

Make edits to your resume based on the lesson last session and the feedback you received. Upload a complete and polished resume to Canvas.

Optional: You may opt to also upload a revised resume to your Portfolium portfolio. Remember, upload the document to Portfolium as a PDF to avoid the system pulling your work history and duplicating what you may have already created.

Cover Letter

Draft a sample cover letter that highlights your strengths. Write the cover letter as if you are applying to the job for which you submitted the [job posting \(for the Job Search mini-assignment\)](#). Upload the cover letter to Canvas

Interview Questions Prep: To help get you prepared for interviews, write answers to the following questions (using the STAR Method - see below - when appropriate).

[JOB INTEREST] – What excites you about the prospect of joining this organization, and why do you believe that you are the best candidate for this role?

[FLEXIBILITY/ADAPTABILITY TO CHANGE | LEADERSHIP] – Describe a situation in which you identified a problem or inefficiency in your organization and took action to develop a solution rather than being assigned the task or waiting for someone else to address the problem. How did you recognize the need for improvement? What was the impact of your actions?

[BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS | INTERPERSONAL SKILLS] – Sometimes it can be difficult to work across departments/units or professions. Tell me about a situation in which you had difficulty working with people from various cross-functional areas.

[ADVISING/SUPPORTING] – Give me an example of a time when you helped a client/coworker navigate a difficult circumstance/situation and make the necessary adjustments to move forward. How did you approach that conversation, and what steps did you take to follow-through on the feedback you gave?

[ADVANCING THE MISSION] – What does having a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion

in your work look like to you. How do you approach centering diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of your practice?

[CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING | STRATEGIC THINKING | LEADERSHIP] – Tell me about a time when none of your supervisors were available to guide or direct you on a particular project or problem. How did you approach the situation so that you could continue with your work?

[BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS] – Tell me about a time when you've had to work with a client that you did not enjoy working with. How did you approach that situation and how did it compare to work with a client that you really connected easily with?

STAR Approach:

A quick reminder, in the behavior-based interview model, the best approach is to provide an overview of

your experience/example using the following framework:

- Situation (context, setting the stage, nuances, higher level of detail)
- Task (what was your responsibility)
- Action (what steps did you take during this task/project)
- Result (what was the outcome)

Grading Rubric

All mini-assignments are graded as complete/incomplete

Attendance

I expect you to arrive to class on time, prepared and ready to engage with your peers. Participation is a large part of this course, and thus I expect you to participate in a multitude of ways. I do not grade on participation and attendance. However, if you miss more than two classes and/or seem generally disengaged in class, I will reach out to you to have a conversation about the impact on your learning and on the community. Here is the School of Social Work's [Policy on Class Attendance](#), which you can also find in the MSW Student Guide.

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.

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](#).

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*