1. Course Statement

a. Course description

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, as well as 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. The course will 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.

b. Course objectives and competencies
- Identify the importance of lifelong learning, including the effective use of supervision and consultation (Essential 37; EPAS 1).
- Demonstrate the use of effective communication strategies to market yourself as a professional social worker (Essential 41; EPAS 1, 6, 8).
- Develop a plan for professional resiliency (Essential 43; EPAS 1).
- Apply the 4 core components of emotional intelligence to future growth as a social worker (Essential 42; EPAS 1).
- Reflect on social work learning, especially related to key social work competencies (Essential 42; EPAS 1).

c. 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. The course will make use of a computer-based portfolio system.

d. Intensive focus on PODS
This course will integrate PODS (privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice) as the framework through which social work practice is viewed. Students will explore how these concepts manifest in social work practice. Students will provide a demonstration of a product or assignment and reflect on the relationship to 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. Using 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.
2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

There is one textbook for this course, *Digital Portfolio Construction: A guide for showcasing*, by Fitch, Ruffolo and Austin (2021). You can purchase this required text as an e-book or hardcopy from the bookstore or directly from the publisher ([https://store.cognella.com/95205](https://store.cognella.com/95205)) (note: you do not need the “active learning” supplement, but it comes free with the text). Consider this book a resource that will support you in this course and beyond in your social work career! All other readings and resources are provided on Canvas.

b. Class schedule

See Canvas Modules for the pre-work and post-work required for each session. Assignments (detailed below) are all published and available for you to work on anytime. Feel free to work ahead on assignments!

- Please note that class meetings are 2 hours long to ensure you have adequate time to complete required assignments and asynchronous material.
- We will not be meeting for Session 2. Work for this class session will be completed asynchronously.
- We will be meeting online via zoom for Session 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Date/Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues., 5/9, 1-3pm</td>
<td>Session 1: Looking Back at your MSW</td>
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<td>IN PERSON</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues., 5/31</td>
<td>Session 2: Shaping your Professional Brand Part 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>NO MEETING - Complete material asynchronously</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues., 6/14, 1-3pm</td>
<td>Session 3: Shaping your Professional Brand Part 2</td>
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<td>ONLINE - Zoom Link will be provided</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues., 6/28, 1-3pm</td>
<td>Session 4: Professional Identity and Professional Resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN PERSON</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues., 7/12, 1-3pm</td>
<td>Session 5: Lifelong Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN PERSON</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
c. Assignments

Assignments are fully detailed in Canvas. All assignments for this course are graded as “complete/incomplete.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due by end-of-day on:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portfolio Assignments</strong> (there are 3 “milestones” related to your portfolio further detailed below)**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milestone #1: Upload and Reflect on One Competency</td>
<td>Tuesday, 5/23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milestone #2: Update your Portfolio Profile</td>
<td>Tuesday, 5/30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milestone #3: Final Portfolio &amp; Competencies</td>
<td>Tuesday, 6/6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ongoing Mini-Assignments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Search</td>
<td>Tuesday, 5/16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resume Draft</td>
<td>Tuesday, 5/16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter of Reference</td>
<td>Tuesday, 5/23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completed Resume</td>
<td>Tuesday, 5/30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cover Letter</td>
<td>Tuesday, 5/30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Milestone Assignments

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.
Mini-Assessments

There are a series of “mini-assessments” 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. 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.
a. Attendance and class participation

Both class attendance and active purposeful participation in class discussion and activities are paramount for the successful completion of this course.

b. Grading

Please review the MSW Student Guide policies on Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction as well as Student Grievance procedures.

This course is graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U). Students must earn 70% or higher to receive an S.

c. 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.

d. 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.
e. 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

*Note, this assignment can be used in place of two mini assignments:
- Creating a final resume (mini-assignment: final resume)
- Drafting a cover letter (mini-assignment cover letter).

Because this class is meant to be practically useful to you, the date of the details of this alternative assignment and a due date should be negotiated with the instructor.

Overview:
As a newly graduated social worker, it will be important to begin thinking about your professional development and career advancement. This assignment requires you to think about the next step in your career. That is, where do you want to be in 5 years? You will then create a professional development plan that outlines the skills, experiences, and training necessary to achieve that next step in your career.

Instructions:
**Step 1. Identify your career goals:** What do you want to be doing? What are the specific skills, experiences, and knowledge required for this job? Consider the job responsibilities and the type of organization you would like to work for. Use this visioning activity to help. **You do not need to turn this step in, but it will help you create a more well developed product.**

**Step 2. Conduct a self-assessment:** Reflect on your strengths and areas for improvement. What skills and experiences do you currently possess that will help you achieve your career goals? What gaps do you need to fill in terms of skills, knowledge, and experiences? Use this self-reflection activity to help. **You do not need to turn this step in, but it will help you create a more well developed product.**

**Step 3. Develop a professional development plan:** Based on your career goals and self-assessment, create a plan that outlines the steps you need to take to achieve your career goals within the next five years. Your plan should include the following elements:
- **Specific training and education:** Identify any additional training or education that you need to complete in order to be competitive for your desired job. This may include specialized certifications, advanced degrees, or specialized training programs. Be specific. Find samples of these trainings and provide links in the document.
- **Mentoring and networking:** Identify individuals who can serve as mentors or who can provide you with guidance and support in achieving your career goals. List them by name if you have ideas of specific people. Identify professional organizations or networking opportunities that can help you make valuable connections within the field.
- **Relevant experience:** Identify any relevant experience that you need to gain in order to be competitive for your desired job. This may include internships, volunteer work, or paid employment opportunities.
- **A timeline:** Outline a timeline for completing the elements of your professional development plan. Be realistic about the amount of time it will take to complete each step, and make sure to include any necessary deadlines.

When you are setting goals, planning action steps, and tracking progress, there are multiple
ways of organizing the process, including detailed planning worksheets, online tools, apps, paper planners and calendars, and traditional pen and paper. One of the easiest ways to get started is to use a goal planning template. Feel free to use or modify any of the templates to fit your needs.

Requirements:
Your professional development plan can be in the form of a written narrative, utilize one of the sample templates (see below for examples), or in another format that makes sense to you. If you select a narrative option, there are no page length guidelines - this assignment is meant to be practically helpful to you, so take as much or as little space as you think you need.

If you’d like to make use of a template, feel free to modify one from below.
Sample template #1
Sample template #2
Sample template #3

Grading:
This assignment is out of 25 possible points. These points will be counted as extra credit, and are sufficient to “make up for” points unattained by the two assignments it is replacing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary (5)</th>
<th>Proficient (3-4)</th>
<th>Developing (1-2)</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory (0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career goals</td>
<td>Clear and specific career goals identified, including the job responsibilities and type of organization. The skills, experiences, and knowledge required for the job are accurately identified.</td>
<td>Career goals are identified, but they lack specificity and/or are not clearly linked to the job responsibilities and type of organization. The skills, experiences, and knowledge required for the job are somewhat identified.</td>
<td>Career goals are vague and/or not clearly linked to the job responsibilities and type of organization. The skills, experiences, and knowledge required for the job are not identified or are inaccurately identified.</td>
<td>Career goals are not identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-assessment</td>
<td>Thorough self-assessment that accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement. The skills and experiences</td>
<td>Self-assessment identifies strengths and areas for improvement, but may not be thorough or accurate in identifying the</td>
<td>Self-assessment lacks depth and may not accurately identify strengths, areas for improvement, the skills and experiences</td>
<td>No self-assessment is provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional development plan</td>
<td>possessed are accurately identified, and the gaps that need to be filled are accurately identified.</td>
<td>skills and experiences possessed and the gaps that need to be filled.</td>
<td>possessed, and the gaps that need to be filled.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formatting and organization</td>
<td>A comprehensive plan is provided that includes specific and accurate information about necessary training and education, mentoring and networking opportunities, relevant experience, and a realistic timeline for completing each step.</td>
<td>A plan is provided that includes most of the required information, but may lack specificity or accuracy in one or more areas. The timeline may not be fully realistic.</td>
<td>A plan is provided, but lacks specificity and/or accuracy in multiple areas. The timeline is not realistic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar and mechanics</td>
<td>The plan is well-organized, easy to follow, and effectively conveys the necessary information. Formatting, if applicable, is professional and appropriate.</td>
<td>The plan is generally well-organized and conveys the necessary information, but may be difficult to follow in some areas. Formatting, if applicable, is generally appropriate.</td>
<td>The plan lacks organization and/or may be difficult to follow in multiple areas. Formatting, if applicable, is not appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formatting, if applicable, is professional and appropriate.</td>
<td>The plan is free of grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors, and effectively conveys the intended message.</td>
<td>The plan may have some grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors, but they do not detract from the overall message.</td>
<td>The plan has multiple grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors that may detract from the overall message.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The plan is disorganized and/or impossible to follow. Formatting, if applicable, is not present.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The plan is riddled with grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors that make it difficult to understand.</td>
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Here are some additional resources you might find useful:

- [What is a Professional Development Plan (PDP)? 6 Steps [2023] • Asana](#)
- [Career path navigator | University of Michigan](#)