1. Course Statement

a. Course Description

Suicide is a leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Suicide risk assessment, risk formulation, and treatment are consistently difficult in practice and greater attention to this public health issue and prevention efforts are needed, especially so, by social workers who provide the majority of mental health services in the U.S. This one-credit course is designed for MSW students who are focused on interpersonal practice and will cover the following topics: the critical issue of suicide (prevalence), suicide-risk assessment (risk and protective factors, warning signs, components of the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale scale), formulating suicide risk (determining a level of suicide risk for subsequent alignment with appropriate action), and prevention approaches including evidence-informed interventions (including multi-level prevention at the universal, institutional, and individual levels). Students will have the opportunity to apply knowledge and practice skills with use of case vignettes, roleplays, and simulations.
b. Course Objectives

This 1-credit elective interpersonal practice course is intended to increase understandings of suicide and prepare social workers for practice with clients who may experience elevated risk for suicide. Specific objectives include increasing skills and confidence in suicide risk assessment, formulation of risk, and prevention-focused intervention approaches.

Learning Objectives:

1. Differentiate between suicide risk factors, protective factors, and warning signs.
3. Formulate a case conceptualization to determine suicide risk level.
4. Develop an intervention plan based upon suicide assessment and case conceptualization.
5. Explain and implement evidence-informed suicide prevention strategies.

c. Course Design

Class format will include asynchronous (slides, pre-recorded lectures, practice with clinical cases, videos of treatment, and discussion posts) and synchronous (live lectures, practice with clinical cases, and discussion) activities. This course is designed to be a flipped classroom where lecture material is primarily received outside of the course (pre-recorded videos), and the live class time will be focused on practicing clinical skills, processing course materials, and interactive discussion.

Synchronous items involve live class time (Saturday and Sunday in July) and asynchronous items involve work on your own time. Asynchronous content is a foundation for the live class, so it must be engaged with prior to the live class weekend. This means that the asynchronous materials must be watched, read, and processed prior to the weekend of live class.

Active practicing of skills, engaging in role-play, observation and critical analysis of assessment process, and mutual constructive feedback is critical to the skill development focus of this class.
d. Course 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.

Consideration will be given to the ways in which diversity factors such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, socioeconomic status and class, immigration status, ability, family status, geographic location, and ethnicity and culture interact with and impact health, mental health, and suicide prevention approaches.

2. Class Requirements

a. Foundational Clinical Knowledge

I will assume you have foundational knowledge in the following areas of interpersonal practice: engagement (e.g., active listening skills, building motivation for treatment, rapport strengthening), assessment (e.g., how to conduct a biopsychosocial assessment), and interventions (e.g., basics of what MI, CBT, and DBT are). Given the clinical background of students in this 1-credit course may vary, and some may come from pathways other than IP, I will aim to keep our focus on the specific topics of the course. If you find that you are less familiar with some of the foundational knowledge components listed above, please let me know and I will do my best to provide resources outside of our live class time.

My aim is to lay this content on top of your prior knowledge so when we talk about suicide assessment, for example, we are going to talk about how assessment is tailored for a focus on suicide and not what an assessment is or how to do a biopsychosocial. Similar for interventions, we will learn tailoring for suicide prevention and not spend copious amounts of time on what MI, CBT, and DBT are or how it is delivered outside of suicide prevention. We will always have brief overviews as a first step but they are intended to be brief so we can dive into tailored application.

b. Technology

Internet access will be needed for engagement with this course. Access will also be needed to a word processor such as Google Suite or Microsoft Office to complete assignments. For technological support, please contact the U-M ITS Service Center.
c. Text and Class Materials

To fully engage in the course and develop skills focused on suicide assessment and prevention, it is expected that students will complete all required readings.

Required readings (access will be available in CANVAS: under each module it will say what you have to read and the PDFs will be there! No need to search on your own 😊)

To Read Before Day/Class 1 (July 15):

To Read Before Day/Class 2 (July 16):

Note: books will be recommended at the end of the course if you are interested in learning more
d. Class Schedule

Live class times are as follows (due to the amount of pre-recorded asynchronous materials, our class time will be 6 hours in duration on each day with 1 hour for lunch; 5 hours of class time):

Saturday July 15th: 9 am to 3 pm (lunch break will be 1 hour at noon)
Sunday July 16th: 9 am to 3 pm (lunch break will be 1 hour at noon)

**Important Reminder:** you must watch/read all materials before both live class days since pre-recorded lectures are delivering the **majority** of course content and these materials will **not** be delivered in the live class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class/Day</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Modality</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Class 1: 7/15 | - Public health issue of suicide behavior in the US  
- Risk factors, protective factors, and warning signs  
- Barriers to help-seeking and stigma  
- Facilitators of help-seeking  
- Suicide risk assessment  
- Suicide risk formulation  
- Prevention approaches (live)  
- Gatekeeper training and screening  
- Safety planning  
- Practicing skills and clinical case in groups (live)  
- Discussion questions in groups (live) | Asynchronous (slides, pre-recorded lectures, practice with clinical cases, videos of treatment, and assignments)  
Synchronous- noted as live in yellow highlight- (live lectures and discussion groups) activities.  
Note: there will be brief overviews of all pre-recorded topics in live class to make sure materials were understood |
| Class 2: 7/16 | - Motivational Interviewing (MI)  
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)  
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)  
- Lethal means restriction counseling  
- Postvention  
- Cultural humility and anti-oppressive practice, tailoring for youth (live)  
- Challenges in practice, provider support, resources (live)  
- Practicing skills and clinical case in groups (live)  
- Discussion questions in groups (live) | Asynchronous (slides, pre-recorded lectures, practice with clinical cases, videos of treatment, and assignments)  
Synchronous- noted as live in yellow highlight- (live lectures and discussion groups) activities.  
Note: there will be brief overviews of all pre-recorded topics in live class to make sure materials were understood |
**NOTE: ALL STUDENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED IF THERE ARE UNANTICIPATED SYLLABUS CHANGES VIA ANNOUNCEMENTS IN CANVAS****

e. Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment/Task</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Required for Satisfactory Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>Attendance and participation in Day 1 and Day 2</td>
<td>July 15 and July 16</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion post reflection #1</td>
<td>Post from Day/Class 1 clinical case (due in discussion section of CANVAS)</td>
<td>7/20 by 11:59 PM in Canvas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion post reflection #2</td>
<td>Post from Day/Class 2 clinical case (due in discussion section of CANVAS)</td>
<td>7/26 by 11:59 PM in Canvas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMmersion #1</td>
<td>Suicide Assessment with Taye (must get 75% or better)</td>
<td>7/17 by 11:59 PM in Canvas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMmersion #2</td>
<td>Safety Planning with Henry (must get 75% or better)</td>
<td>7/23 by 11:59 PM in Canvas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMmersion #3</td>
<td>Motivating to treatment with Katrina (must get 75% or better)</td>
<td>7/29 by 11:59 PM in Canvas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All assignment descriptions will be posted on the CANVAS site with their due dates.

Assignment Overviews (greater detail in the assignments section of CANVAS):

1. **Participation and attendance**: Read below in section f, attendance and class participation.

2. **SIMmersion**: Virtual work with 3 of the SIMmersion clients (Suicide Assessment with Taye, Safety Planning with Henry, and Motivating to Treatment with Katrina). The goal is to get a score of **75% or better**. You must practice with all 3 clients at least 2 times but can attempt as many times as needed to achieve the score for each simulated case. You will submit the screenshot for your score of 75% or better through CANVAS as your assignment submission (upload a screen shot of your performance report score - I don’t need the full transcript, just the score). Higher scores are encouraged- 75% is just the lowest score that gets credit.
3. **Discussion post reflections**: Two discussion post responses are due in CANVAS and will be listed as a discussion post from Day/Class 1 and Day/Class 2. These posts are visible to the full class and will allow for group processing and learning along with others. No requirement to respond to anyone else but you certainly can if desired!

**Assignment Guidelines:** All assignments to be handed-in are due by 11:59 PM (Eastern Standard Time) on the dates posted in the syllabus and in CANVAS. Late assignments will result in an automatic reduction of points and put one at risk for not passing the course. Assignments more than 5 days late will not be accepted.

For all assignments you will be graded on:

- Meeting assignment parameters (we will review parameters for each assignment ahead of time)
- Good writing skills: clarity of thought, organization, and flow (see next section)
- Effort/ability to self-reflect and think critically
- Demonstration of social work values (empathy, strengths-based thinking, and client dignity)
- Insightfulness and clinical judgment
- Integration of reading materials
- Ability to discern which aspects of use of self would be important in assessment or intervention

**Writing skills:** Reflections are expected to be well organized, clearly written, and show minimal grammatical errors. In this and most of your classes you will be asked to demonstrate grammar, spelling, and professional writing. Please use the Sweetland Writing Center if you require writing assistance.

**f. Attendance and Class Participation**

*The course *opens* on June 30 and will *end* after the last assignment due on July 29.*

It is important that you attend each class session, engage in discussions and clinical practice with other students, and submit all assignments in CANVAS.

Missing one or both of our in-person classes, in part or in total for any reason, will result in an automatic impact on your grade with potential for not passing the course. *Email me if a conflict arises.*

**Student Time Expectation.** You are expected to read assigned materials, submit assignments, and participate in live (synchronous) class meetings. You should follow the modules sequentially from first to second. This is a 1-credit course and is offered in-person. This means that, as a student, you are expected to spend a total of **45 hours** throughout the course, including **synchronous and asynchronous** classroom time. For more details, please go to the [UM Center for Academic Innovation website](https://example.com).
g. Grading

The course is graded as S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory). Late assignments will not be accepted and will impact points/grading, unless arranged in advance. Please email the instructor regarding any lateness. Be mindful that attendance in the live classes and participation are important for a satisfactory grade.

Additional information can be found in the MSW Student Guide for policies on Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction as well as Student Grievance procedures and the policy for grading in special circumstances.

h. 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 in CANVAS. 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.

i. 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. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distance of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the Wolverine Culture of Care and the University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19.

j. 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