University of Minnesota School of Social Work  
Syllabus  

SW 5907-School Social Work  

Part I: Course information  
SW 5907-School Social Work  
1 credit  

Faculty contact:  
Name:  
Email:  
Phone:  
Office Location:  

Course descriptions:  
   a. Short Version:  
      This course prepares students to apply social work knowledge and skills in school  
      settings through prevention, assessment, intervention and evaluation from an ecological  
      multilevel approach focused on students, families and the school community.  
   b. Long Description:  
      The purpose of this class is to prepare students for social work practice in school settings. Emphasis  
      will be on providing school social work services from a multi-level approach with the student, family,  
      school and community, grounded in an ecological perspective, school social work standards, values,  
      ethics and cultural competence. The content areas will include prevention, assessment, evidence  
      informed interventions and evaluation methods in school practice, social and political influences on  
      education, advocacy and influence on school decision making and culture, attendance and truancy,  
      services to students with disabilities, school mental health, school violence, crisis intervention,  
      response to Intervention, family involvement, group work, confidentiality and ethical decisions,  
      interdisciplinary consultation and collaboration, and community collaboration.
Clinical Content for MN Social Work Licensure:

This course contains some clinical content, as required by the Minnesota Board of Social Work for eligibility for the Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW). The number of hours in each required category is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Differential Diagnosis</th>
<th>Assessment based treatment planning</th>
<th>Clinical Intervention Methods</th>
<th>Evaluation methodologies</th>
<th>SW values and ethics</th>
<th>Culturally specific clinical assessment</th>
<th>Other areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part II: Course outcomes

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to develop the knowledge skills and practice approaches needed to work as a social worker in a school setting. Students will be able to

- Demonstrate application of social work knowledge and skills in a school setting.
- Identify critical social and political trends in education and their influence on the focus and delivery of social work services in schools.
- Understand the impact of social influences on the education and social emotional development of students.
- Demonstrate how to analyze social systems and apply interventions from an ecological perspective at the organizational, community, school, family and student interface.
- Understand and utilize the principles of Response to Intervention and evidence based school social work practice in the selection of multilevel interventions in schools.
- Be familiar with the state and federal enabling legislation for students with disabilities and school social work practice in special education.
- Identify and evaluate models of prevention, assessment, intervention and evaluation in school social work practice.
- Become familiar with trends in school mental health and meeting the mental health needs of students.
- Develop knowledge on use of self in effective interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration to address the social emotional and behavioral needs of students and families.
- Understand the complexities of confidentiality and ethical decision making in a school setting and application of decision making guidelines.

Competencies and Practice Behaviors:

Successful completion of this course implies that students will have progressed towards achieving some of the core social work competencies by demonstrating the following practice behaviors.
### Competency: 2.1.1 – Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession’s history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession’s enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behavior</th>
<th>Covered in class through (i.e., activity, reading, content)</th>
<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced: Apply knowledge of social services, policies and programs relevant to their area of practice</td>
<td>Sessions 3, 4, &amp; 11</td>
<td>Social Worker interview paper, Practice reflection essays, Practice Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced: Develop a plan for ongoing professional education, including supervision.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Competency: 2.1.2 – Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced: Identify and analyze value-based and ethical dilemmas that arise in their area of practice, using professional codes of ethical standards and through appropriate professional consultation.</td>
<td>Session 3, 7, 10, 11, 13 &amp; 14</td>
<td>In-class case scenarios Applications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Competency: 2.1.3 – Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Covered in class through (i.e., activity, reading, content)</th>
<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced: Identify and synthesize multiple sources of knowledge to understand policy and practice issues related to their area of practice.</td>
<td>Session 2, 3, 8 &amp; 11</td>
<td>Practice paper Practice Reflection essay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EP 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
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</table>
- **Advanced**: Engage in practice that challenges the systems of privilege and oppression by utilizing the culturally relevant assessments and interventions specific to the context of their area of practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covered in class through (i.e., activity, reading, content)</th>
<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 6, 8, &amp; 11</td>
<td>Practice paper Reflection essay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EP 2.1.6 – Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research**

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced: Demonstrate ability to use practice experience to shape research questions, methods and processes to advance knowledge in an area of concentration.</td>
<td>Session 5, 8, &amp; 11</td>
<td>Practice Reflection essay Practice paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Competency: 2.1.7 – Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment**

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Assessed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced: Evaluate and synthesize theories and perspectives of human behavior and the social environment to choose and apply methods of assessment, intervention and evaluation in their area of practice.</td>
<td>Sessions 2, 3, 7, 11, &amp; 14</td>
<td>Practice paper In-class case scenarios</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Competency: 2.1.9 – Respond to contexts that shape practice**

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced: Assess the impact of historical and contemporary contexts on practice and policy in their area of practice.</td>
<td>Sessions 2, 3, 4, 8, &amp; 11</td>
<td>Practice Reflection essay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FC Competency: 2.1.10 (a)-(b) – Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and
implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behavior</th>
<th>Covered in class through (i.e., activity, reading, content)</th>
<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced - Engage: Use empathy and sensitive interviewing skills to engage individuals and families in identifying their strengths and problems.</td>
<td>Sessions 3, 5-9, 11, 13-15</td>
<td>Practice paper Practice Reflection essay In-class case scenario applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced - Engage: Establish rapport and maintain effective working relationships with families and children.</td>
<td>Sessions 3, 5-9, 11, 13-15</td>
<td>Practice paper Practice Reflection essay In-class case scenario applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced - Engage: Employ diverse strategies to arrive at a collaborative focus of work and desired outcomes in social work practice with families and children.</td>
<td>Sessions 3, 5-9, 11, 13-15</td>
<td>Practice paper Practice Reflection essay In-class case scenario applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced - Assess: Conduct comprehensive bio-psychosocial, spiritual and culturally appropriate assessments as needed for social practice with families and children.</td>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Practice paper Practice Reflection essay In-class case scenario applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced - Assess: Administer and interpret standard assessment and diagnostic tools that are appropriate for use in social work practice with families and children (e.g., risk assessment, family strengths scale)</td>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Practice paper Practice Reflection essay In-class case scenario applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced - Assess: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to determine a range of potentially effective and appropriate interventions to improve practice outcomes related to social work practice with families and children, as well as to determine their existing strengths and assets.</td>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Practice paper Practice Reflection essay In-class case scenario applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced - Intervention: Use appropriate evidenced-based interventions to help families and children resolve identified and agreed upon problems.</td>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Practice paper Practice Reflection essay In-class case scenario applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced - Intervention: Implement evidenced-based interventions that enhance family and child capacities.</td>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Practice paper Practice Reflection essay In-class case scenario applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced - Intervention:</td>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Practice paper, Practice Reflection essay, In-class case scenario applications</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intervene at different levels to achieve the agreed upon desired practice outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced - Intervention:</td>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>Practice paper, Practice Reflection essay, In-class case scenario applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain accurate records documenting the assessment, interventions and outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced - Evaluate:</td>
<td>Session 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply research skills to analyze, monitor, evaluate and improve treatment alliance and interventions and programs in social work practice with families and children.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced - Evaluate:</td>
<td>Session 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate and disseminate research and evaluation results to a variety of local, regional, national or global audiences when appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part III: Course requirements**

**Text and Materials**

Required text is available for purchase at the book store:


Required readings and recommended readings not in the text are available through e-Reserves:


ASSIGNMENTS:

More assignment information and instructions are available on the course Moodle page.

School Social Work Interview
Students will conduct an interview with a school social worker and prepare a paper that summarizes what they learned about the design and delivery of social work services in that school. The purpose of this assignment is to provide students with an opportunity to explore the field of school social work. The paper will contain the following elements.
   a. 2-3 page, double spaced
   b. Name of school social worker and school, and brief description of school
   c. Include description of school social workers delivery of service
   d. Include influencing factors on the design and service delivery in this school
   e. Include impact and impression on your knowledge of school social work
   f. Submitted on due date

Practice Reflections
Students will provide essay responses to a set of 6 questions reflecting topics presented throughout the course. Answers should demonstrate reflective thought and synthesis of knowledge and understanding of the topic and application to school social work. Questions will be provided in advance at the start of the semester with due dates designated. Responses should be typed, double spaced and no more than a page.

Interventions that Work Practice Paper
The student will choose a need/problem presented by students in schools and prepare a paper that demonstrates the application of school social work services to assess and provide evidence based interventions from an ecological multilevel approach. The practice paper will include the following elements:

   a. 6-8 pages long, double spaced
   b. APA format with use of references
   c. A description of the student need/problem including scope and severity and impact on student achievement
   d. A description of an assessment method to assist in identifying need and focus of intervention
   e. A description of the evidence based interventions and implementation
   f. A summary of decision making process for selected level and focus of attention
   g. A description of an evaluation method selected to measure effectiveness of intervention
   h. A description of who and how you will report the outcome of the intervention and why
   i. Submitted on the due date
Grade Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Social Work Interview</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>aa/bb/cccc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Essay Questions</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>aa/bb/cccc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>aa/bb/cccc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GRADING SCALE:

A   = 93 - 100
A   = 90 - 92
B+  = 87 - 89
B   = 83 - 86
B-  = 80 - 82
C+  = 77 - 79
C   = 73 - 76
C-  = 70 - 72
D+  = 67 - 69
D   = 60 - 66

Students who are taking this class S/N must earn at least 70 points to receive a grade of S.

Course Policies

There are many University and School of Social Work policies that govern this course. Please go to http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/Documents/SSWCoursePolicies.pdf to see a complete description of all the policies.
Part IV: Course content
Session Plan

Session: 1 aa/bb/cccc
Topic:  Introduction and Overview of Course Objectives and Expectation
       Overview of School Social Work in Minnesota and Professional Organizations

   Related Session Activities:
   Interactive Discussion Activity
   Lecture
   Media Clip: Day in the Life of a School Social Worker

Session: 2 aa/bb/cccc

   Required Readings:


   Recommended Reading:

   Related Session Activities:
   Lecture
   Share and discuss
   Due: Practice Reflection #1

Session: 3 aa/bb/cccc
Topic:  Ecological Perspective-Practice Application in School Social Work

   Required Reading:

Related Session Activities:
Lecture
Case scenarios application

Session: 4 aa/bb/cccc
Topic: School Organization and Community Systems of Practice

Required Readings:


Recommended Reading:

Related Session Activities:
Lecture
School policy review

Session: 5 aa/bb/cccc
Topic: Response to Intervention – A Multitier Prevention and Intervention System
Evidence Informed School Social Work Practice

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


Related Session Activities:
Lecture
Due: Practice Reflection #2

Session: 6 aa/bb/cccc

**Topic:** Vulnerable Student Populations, School Violence, Crisis Intervention

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**

**Related Session Activities:**
Lecture
School Response Teams Activity
Due: Practice Reflection #3

Session: 7 aa/bb/cccc

**Topic:** Achievement, Attendance and Truancy

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**


**Related Session Activities:**
Lecture
Case Scenarios Application
Due: School Social Work Interview Paper
Group Moodle Compare and Contrast
Session: 8 aa/bb/cccc

**Topic**: Students with Disabilities

**Required Reading**:

View Video on Moodle: Learning Disabilities/Learning Abilities

**Related Session Activities**:
- Lecture
- Due: Practice Reflection #4

Session: 9 aa/bb/cccc

**Topic**: Assessment and Planning

**Required Reading**:


**Related Session Activities**:
- Lecture
- Class activity: Assessment and the IEP
- Due: Practice Reflection #5

Session: 10 aa/bb/cccc

**Topic**: School Social Work with Families

**Required Reading**:

**Recommended Reading**:


**Related Session Activities:**
Guest Speaker: School Social Work Empowering Families

**Session: 11 aa/bb/cccc**
**Topic:** School Mental Health

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**

**Related Session Activities:**
Guest Speaker: Trends in School Mental Health
Due: Practice Reflection #6

**Session: 12 aa/bb/cccc**
**Topic:** School Social Work with Students, Individual and Group

**Required Reading:**


Recommended Reading:


Related Session Activities:
Lecture
Role play simulation

Session: 13 aa/bb/cc
Topic: Teaming Consultation, Collaboration and Teaming
Required Reading:


Related Session Activities:
Panel Presentation: Multidisciplinary Teaming In Schools and with Community Agencies

Session: 14 aa/bb/ccccc
Topic: Confidentiality and Ethical Decision Challenges in Schools

Required Readings:


Recommended Reading:


Related Session Activities:
Lecture
Discussion
In class case scenarios application

Session: 15 aa/bb/ccce

Topic: Evaluation Practices
Required Readings:

Related Session Activities:
Lecture
Student selection of evaluation methods

Assignment/ Practice Paper Due

Additional Bibliography:


Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) [http://www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)

Committee for Children [http://www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org)

Council for Exceptional Children [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

Minnesota Association of Children’s’ Mental Health [www.macmh.org](http://www.macmh.org)

Minnesota Department of Education [http://education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html](http://education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html)


National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention [http://www.promoteprevent.org](http://www.promoteprevent.org)

National Institute of Mental Health [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)
Office of Special Education Programs Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports  
http://www.pbis.org

Pacer Center  http://www.pacer.org/

SAMHSAs National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices  http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov

School Social Work Association of America  www.sswaa.org


The Helping Traumatized Children Learn Manual: Massachusetts Advocates for Children Web site: 


U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services  
http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html

UCLA Mental Health Project Center for Mental Health in Schools  http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

University of Maryland Center for School Mental Health  http://csmh.umd.edu/resources.html

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**Part V: policies**

See separate policies document