University of Minnesota School of Social Work
Syllabus

SW 8154-Organizations and Policy Advocacy

Part 1: Course information
SW 8154-Organizations and Policy Advocacy
1 credit

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

Course descriptions:
Short Description
This foundation course addresses community practice as it relates to human service agencies and organizations. Building upon theoretical approaches to human service organizations/agencies and their distinct attributes, the course addresses key practice knowledge, skills, and values that promote, develop, and maintain human service organizations that effectively meet community and client needs.

Long version:
This foundation course addresses community practice as it relates to human service agencies and organizations. Building upon theoretical approaches to human service organizations/agencies and their distinct attributes, the course addresses key practice knowledge, skills, and values that promote, develop, and maintain human service organizations that effectively meet community and client needs. Topics addressed include: frameworks for organizational analysis and models for organizational change from top-down to bottom up; strategic planning and maintenance; roles, functions and types of leadership; valuing and practicing diversity in organizations; empowering clients and stakeholders; the role of organizations in policy advocacy, coalition and campaign building.

Pre-requisites:
This is a required course for full-program (53-credit) students enrolled in the M.S.W. Program. You must be enrolled as a degree-seeking student in the M.S.W. Program or have permission from the instructor in order to be enrolled in this class.
Clinical Licensure Hours:
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>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
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Part II: Course outcomes

Course Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, students show a beginning ability to:
- Explain the role of macro-level intervention, especially policy practice and advocacy, in beginning social work practice, particularly as it relates to social services agencies/organizations.
- Explain the major theories on the nature and development of human services agencies/organizations, both descriptive and prescriptive, and how such theories shape the nature and environment of social service agencies/organizations.
- Identify and implement appropriate strategies for shaping organizational policy and advocacy, and for moving social services agencies/organizations to better address client strengths and needs.
- Integrate course content in social work practice settings, such as the student’s field placement.
- Identify the characteristics and roles that leadership and teamwork play in human services agencies/organizations; demonstrate foundation level knowledge and skills associated with forming and working in teams.
- Demonstrate a critical awareness of how one’s own practice shapes and is shaped by the organizational and environmental context of the agency/organization and delivery system.
- Describe and apply principles of cultural competence as they related to social work practice, particularly in regards to the nature and characteristics of human service agencies/organizations and their delivery of services to clients.

Social Work Practice Competencies
Successful completion of this concentration course implies that the student has achieved competency in the following advanced practice behaviors:

**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:
### Practice Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Covered in class through (i.e., activity, reading, content)</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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</table>
| Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values alienate, create, or enhance privilege and power | Module 4 discussions and readings  
Power/Privilege exercise                                                                 | Cultural competence checklist/self assessment |
| Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups | Lecture and discussion on bias within organizational context | Organ. Policy Shapes Practice Assignment |
| Recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences | Module 4 exercise and readings                                                                                   |                                         |
| View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants; | Module 3 on teams                                                                                                   |                                         |
| • Use frameworks: assessment to intervention                                     | Bottom-up Change Framework                                                                                      | Organizational Analysis Assignment     |

### EP 2.1.5 – Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers:

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| Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination            | Module 1 Readings and Discussion  
Bottom-up Change Framework (Module 3)                                            |                                         |
| Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice                       | Module 4 Readings and Discussion  
Exercise Module 4                                                                 |                                         |
| Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice                     | Exercise: Module 4  
HS Organizational Analysis and Framework                                            |                                         |

### EP 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:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use frameworks: assessment to intervention</td>
<td>Bottom-up Change Framework</td>
<td>Organizational Analysis Assignment</td>
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</table>
**EP 2.1.8 – Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services**

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers:

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| • Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being | • Bottom-up Framework for organizational Change in readings, lectures, discussion
• Readings, Lectures on Policy Practice and Advocacy | • HS Organizational Analysis Parts I and II |
| • Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action | • Module 2 Readings, Discussions, Exercise
• Web-based material on task group processes | • Team-building contract and assessment |

**EP 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:

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<tr>
<td>• Respond to changing context and populations</td>
<td>• Exercise-Module 2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| • Leadership to change/improve services | • Module 2: Leadership and teams
• Course Text | • Organizational Analysis Parts I and II |

**EP 2.1.10(a)–(d)—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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Engagement</td>
<td>• Organizational Change Framework and Strategic planning</td>
<td>• Organizational Analysis Assignment Part I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Assess client strengths and limitations | • Bottom-up Model for Change
• Module 2 Readings and Lectures | • Organizational Analysis Assignment Part I |
| • Select appropriate intervention strategies | • Organizational Analysis Assignment Part II | • Organizational Analysis |
| • Critically analyze, monitor, | | |
Part III: Course requirements

CLASS FORMAT
One-hour class sessions are topically grouped into modules (length of actual class time will depend upon scheduling. Some of the content is delivered via Moodle; other content is supported/expanded at the Moodle site. The modules have introductory lectures on Moodle in order to allow for more participation in the classroom as we work on our course activities and discussions. The class also makes use of online work groups and discussion, guest speakers, web resources and assignments, quizzes and papers.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
The authors tell the stories of two social service agencies struggling to survive in a world of shrinking budgets, and increasing needs. One agency is in constant crisis mode (racial tensions; burnout after exhausting crisis-filled days), while the other lacks turmoil as it responds to similar demands and client needs. Using real-life vignettes drawn from actual experiences, the stories distill important lessons and unfold in a powerful manner that will resonate with any professional asked to work harder . . . with a smaller budget. Questions woven through each story connect to the book’s more theoretical material on leadership, personal mastery, and community-building. This is a book about how everyone in an agency contributes to leadership in a “learning community.” (Distilled from SAGE product description)

ASSIGNMENTS/EXAMS:
Organizational Policy Shapes Practice (15pts)
A short paper on how organizational policy shapes the student's direct interventions with clients (guidelines provided by instructor). The purpose is to help students see the connection between their practice in working with individuals and families and larger systems policy.

Human Services Organizational Analysis Part I (25pts)
Students work on an organizational analysis that a) describes the agency and its strengths as well as challenges b) recommends a change based upon the analysis and suggests a change strategy (bottom up or top down) to realize that change. In the Part I assignment the students prepare a 8-10 page paper on a and b above. Guidelines are provided by the instructor.

Human Services Organizational Analysis Part II (25pts)
Students continue work on an organizational analysis that a) describes the agency and its strengths as well as challenges b) recommends a change based upon the analysis and c) suggests a change strategy (bottom up or top down) to realize that change. In the Part II of the assignment the students prepares a 3-5 page paper on section c, a strategy to bring about the change. Guidelines are provided by the instructor.

Quiz (15pts)
An on-line short answer quiz that tests the student’s understanding of major concepts, theories and strategies found in the assigned course readings.

**Organizational Analysis Presentations (10pts)**
At the last session of the course, students will present to the class a summary of their agency analysis, proposed change, and strategy. Guidelines/criteria for the presentations will be provided.

**Class participation and discussion (10pts)**
Engaged participation in course learning activities, including classroom exercises, discussions and online discussions is expected of all students, and will be assessed as part of your semester grade. Participation includes coming to class, arriving on time and staying for the entire class, being prepared for classroom discussions by being thoroughly familiar with assigned readings or activities, keeping comments and questions focused on the course content and linking questions and comments to assigned readings as well as to contributions of other receive feedback on their participation grade approximately halfway through the semester.

**GRADE DISTRIBUTION**
The grade weight for each assignment is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Grade Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organ Policy Shapes Practice</td>
<td>Session 4 (date to be provided)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Analysis I</td>
<td>Session 11 (date to be provided)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>Session 13 (date to be provided)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Analysis II</td>
<td>Session 14 (date to be provided)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Session 14 (date to be provided)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</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

- You must take this class for a grade. This class is offered on an A-F basis only.

**COMPLETING ASSIGNMENTS AND INCOMPLETES**
Assignments are due in class on the date assigned. Failure to turn in an assignment on the due date will result in a lowered grade unless the instructor expressly grants an extension in writing; **students will lose one point for each**
day the assignment is past due. No papers will be accepted after the last class unless a contract for incomplete work in the course is approved by the instructor.

While incompletes are discouraged the instructor recognizes that sometimes factors prevent a student from completing a course on time. Those who are unable to complete the course on time must negotiate an incomplete with the instructor and, pursuant to School of Social Work policy, develop a contract with the instructor that will describe the work that remains to be completed and the date by which the work must be submitted to the instructor. A copy of the incomplete contract can be found in the M.S.W. Student Handbook. Copies of the contract are to be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies. Incomplete course grades will be converted to a grade of F if not completed within two semesters. Students must inform the instructor of the need for an incomplete by (date to be supplied, approx one week before last class). Also, a contract for the incomplete must be completed and signed by instructor and student by the last class session.

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

Part IV: Course content

INTRODUCTION (Session One)

Content
A. Introduction to Course, Objectives, and Responsibilities
B. What are Social Service Agencies?
   o A brief history of social service agencies in the U.S.
   o Nature of agencies and their advocacy role
C. Exercise/discussion: Scale your field agency on empowerment-oriented characteristics

Assignment Introduced
Organizational Policy Shapes Practice (Due Session 4). A short paper on how organizational policy shapes direct interventions with clients (guidelines provided by instructor). Student reflect upon their current practice experience at the agency.

Required Readings

MODULE 1 (Sessions 2-3): ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AND HS AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS

Content: Human Service Agencies Within the Context of Organizational Theory
A. Organizational Theory
B. How HSOs Differ from Other Organizations
C. The Life Cycle of Human Service Organizations
D. Quest speaker: Leading an HSO to Change
Required Readings (View Moodle Module 1, PowerPoint/Lecture)


MODULE 2 (Sessions 4-9): AGENCY TRANSFORMATION: BOTTOM-UP AND TOP DOWN

Content: Changing HSOs

A. Force Field Analysis and Organizational Change Theory
B. Changing Organizations From The Bottom Up: A Practice Framework for the Line Staff Worker.
C. Changing Organizations From the Top Down
   - Mission, visioning, and “all that stuff"
   - Strategic planning
D. Tools and Techniques of Planning
E. Leadership and Teamwork
F. Case Study/Class Exercise
   - The woman’s co-op, the clash of two organizational cultures: Environmental forces challenge the culture that has held this organization together

Assignment Introduced

Human Services Organizational Analysis Part I
Students begin work on an organizational analysis that a) describes the agency and its strengths as well as challenges b) recommends a change based upon the analysis and c) suggests a change strategy (bottom up or top down) to realize that change. In the Part I assignment the students prepare a 8-10 page paper on a and b above. Guidelines are provided by the instructor. Part I will be due to the instructor by session 11 of the course (dates to be inserted).

Required Readings (View Moodle Module 2, PowerPoint/Lecture)

- Browse this website: http://www.effectivemeetings.com/
  - Read the following entries:
MODULE 3 (Sessions 10-11): AGENCY PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Content: This module uses the development of a grant and its components to demonstrate the basics of the planning process. The class uses materials from the Minnesota Council on Foundations to develop a grant, learning in the process the techniques and skills associated with:

A. Problem Definitions: Techniques to Assess Problems/needs
B. Writing Outcome Objectives
C. Writing Process Objectives
D. Principles for Budgeting and Linking Budget to Evaluation.
E. Exercise: Students work as members of a neighborhood agency planning an advocacy intervention to better serve clients. Guidelines are presented for the exercise.

Human Services Organizational Analysis Part II

Students continue work on an organizational analysis that a) describes the agency and its strengths as well as challenges b) recommends a change based upon the analysis and c) suggests a change strategy (bottom up or top down) to realize that change. In the Part II of the assignment the students prepares a 3-5 page paper on section c, a strategy to bring about the change. Guidelines are provided by the instructor. Part II will be due to the instructor and by session 11 of the course (dates to be inserted).

Required Readings (View Moodle Module 3, PowerPoint/Lecture)

- ***Grant writing material from the Minnesota Council on Foundations at the following site: http://www.mcf.org/nonprofits/successful-grant-proposal

MODULE 4 (Sessions 12-13): TOWARDS A CULTURALLY COMPETENT AGENCY

Content:

A. The Cultural Competence Continuum
B. Agency Awareness and Assessment
C. A Cultural Competency Checklist for Agencies: Empowerment and Advocacy
D. Sustaining a Welcoming Workplace
E. Steps to Embracing Difference in a Transformative Agency/learning community
D. Principle for Budgeting and Tying Budget to Evaluation.
E. Exercise: Students work as members of a neighborhood agency planning an advocacy intervention to better serve clients. Guidelines are presented for the exercise.

Required Readings (View Moodle Module 4, PowerPoint/Lecture)

MODULE 5 (Sessions 14-15): Wrap Up

Content:
A. Summary of Course and Discussion: Using Part III of Burghardt and Tolliver
B. Student Presentations of Agency Analysis
C. Course Evaluation

Required Reading:

Additional Bibliography


- Burghardt, S. Macro practice in social work for the 21st century. CA: SAGE.


