

# University of Minnesota School of Social Work

## SYLLABUS SW 8313 [001,002,003] (3 credits)

### Professional Practice in Interdisciplinary Teams and Collaboratives

#### Course Description

Most professional practice occurs within the context of interdisciplinary or cross-functional teams. Such teams facilitate achievement of goals which could not be realized if individuals acted independently, rather than in collaboration with other professionals. Evolving social trends and professional practice standards make it impossible to serve clients effectively without collaborating with others from a range of disciplines—especially in host settings such as schools, psychiatric clinics, hospitals or juvenile courts, where professions other than social work dominate. Cross-functional teams of social workers from various agencies who are all working with the same client frequently develop intervention plans and evaluate their progress. Cross-functional teams of social workers from different units within the same agency are also common in practice settings where social work dominates, such as in child welfare. This course is designed to examine teamwork and collaboration across a range of social work practice settings and professional interface. Competence to meet the complex interpersonal and organizational challenges inherent in teamwork requires knowledge of team structures and dynamics, and skills to influence them.

The overall purpose of this course is to prepare human service professionals to achieve work goals through effective participation in teams and other collaborative processes, to proactively support a culture of collaboration, and to promote full participation of clients and family members on teams making decisions which directly impact their lives. Toward this end, students will assess their past and present performance on teams, set personal and professional goals for growth, and develop necessary skills and attitudes for effective functioning on interdisciplinary and cross-functional teams. The course emphasizes intensive experiential skill development to effectively engage the main challenges teams face---the distribution and use of power, conflict, decision making, dealing with deadlocks, problem solving, creativity, and valuing diversity.

This course provides a theoretical base for identifying and understanding how teams are organized and structured, team dynamics, team building, and functional requirements of effective work teams which are diversified by expertise, professional orientation and acculturation, and work unit identification. It examines features common to both interdisciplinary and interorganizational collaboration, including advantages and potential obstacles; developmental stages of teamwork; and roles and tasks of team leaders and members. Distinctions among multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teams will be explored.

#### Course Objectives

##### Upon completion of this course you will be able....

1. To maximize the opportunities and mediate the constraints inherent in interdisciplinary team efforts.
2. To facilitate meaningful participation of clients and family members on teams of professionals charged with serving their best interests.
3. To identify how the dynamics of power, social influence and culture in teams affect leadership behavior, member interactions, the impact of minorities, and interpersonal influence.
4. To assess sources of conflict on the team and identify a team's dominant mode of responding to conflict.
5. To envision and effectively introduce integrative solutions to conflict which threatens to undermine the efficacy of the team.
6. To identify factors which improve and impede problem-solving and decision-making by the team, and apply team-oriented approaches to problem-solving and decision-making which are most

- appropriate to achieving team goals.
7. To identify team norms and recognize their influence on team process.
  8. To recognize how stages of development affect a team's productive capacity and role behavior.
  9. To observe, evaluate and influence team communication patterns and climate in ways which optimize interpersonal trust and information processing.
  10. To assess your own performance and growth as a team member and contributor.
  11. To identify relevant differences between cross-functional and interdisciplinary teams and their practical implications for participation.

### Required Course Readings

Required readings for this course include Daniel Levi's *Group Dynamics for Teams* (2001) published by Sage Publications, and a reading packet available through the St. Paul Campus Bookstore. A list of optional recommended readings will be distributed during the class.

### Course Format

The instructor will use a variety of instructional methods, including experiential exercises, discussion, simulation, mini-lecture, guest speakers and case studies. The instructor will provide structure for sessions through clarifying objectives, facilitating discussion on critical concepts and issues, providing appropriate summaries and linkages to preceding and subsequent content.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The course grade is based upon performance in the following:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Portion of Grade</u>
<b>Individual Efforts</b>		
Active Participation in the Class Throughout		11 points
Topical Reflection Papers [3]	4 <sup>th</sup> class	8 points
	8 <sup>th</sup> class	8 points
	11 <sup>th</sup> class	8 points
<b>[Sub-total Individual Effort: 35 points]</b>		
<b>Team Efforts</b>		
Weekly Team Process Record [8weeks] for eight team meetings during class sessions 4-12: <i>[Points will be deducted from a base score of 20 for failure to satisfy the assignment criteria delineated in the syllabus]</i>		20 points
Team Written Report		35 points
Team Oral Presentation		10 points
<b>[Sub-total Team Effort: 65 points]</b>		-----
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS EARNED</b>		<b>100</b>

## Description of Course Assignments

### Active Participation in Class [11 Possible points]

Regular attendance, diligent preparation and thoughtful participation is essential to achieving a positive educational outcome. Therefore, class members are expected to come to class on time each week, having read assigned materials, prepared to enter into reflective discussion, and willing to participate actively in class exercises. All class members will receive a standard score of 11 points in recognition of a norm of attendance, contributions to small group assignments and participation in class learning activities. Points will be deducted from the base score if you are late, miss class, or are unprepared for discussion or presentations.

### Topical Reflection Papers [possible 8 points each, for a total of 24 possible points]

Each three-page [typed, double-spaced] reflection paper will focus on a topic or issue of your choice from among those covered in the course readings, discussion and experiential learning activities. Your "topic" might be a particular team dynamic or team leadership skill and its application, or a particular issue or concept in teamwork. Your discussion of the topic should draw upon:

- your observations and subjective responses to in-class role plays, and other experiential learning activities
- your own past and present life and work experiences as a team member/team leader, including your team participation in this class as well as in your field placement, or in previous work settings
- >team structure, process, and participation which you have observed but not participated in directly
- relevant course readings, as well as discussion and lecture
- >relevant reflection upon how you are progressing towards the personal and professional development goals you set at the beginning of this class

It is expected that your reflection paper will **integrate** critical analysis of principles and concepts with actual team experience, including your own **subjective** experience and awareness of your own attitudes and behavior. The three reflection papers are an especially useful medium to explore use of self in interpersonal team processes -- that is, assessing what **you** bring to a situation or encounter that might influence its outcome. While a reference list is not required, cite sources within the narrative of your paper using APA style.

### TEAM PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

Based on background information obtained from each of the students in the class, the instructor will assign each of you to a group, which will develop into a team around a project assignment. Work on this team project will commence in the third class session. The instructor will be available to consult with the student teams but will not make team decisions, helping instead to facilitate the team's progress by providing process consultation on how your team is functioning and where appropriate, to suggest community or other resources.

This project has as its purpose the integration of your developing team process skills with the completion of a specific community/human services inquiry which will increase your awareness of the practical realities of occupationally diversified team and interorganizational collaborations. This inquiry will combine information obtained through direct methods, such as focus groups, surveys, or individual interviews, with relevant literature to illuminate a particular aspect or issue in teamwork or interorganizational collaboration. Based on its findings and analysis, each team will develop conclusions and recommendations in its final report.

Each team will decide how to structure and organize itself for dealing with its assigned task, and the way in which the team chooses to approach that task. The team will be given a formal charge to guide its activities during the third class session. In preparing to carry out this charge and project assignment, the following suggested steps may be helpful.

- < Get acquainted with each other personally and professionally and with the nature of each other's current or professional experience and aspirations, values, and beliefs.
- < Learn about the resources of each member including strengths, limitations, skills, interests, knowledge, and attitudes.
- < Explore how cultural background and personal preferences or orientation might affect individual workstyles and team functioning.
- < Discuss the level of your team's interest in your assigned topic, what you already know about the topic, where you might seek other perspectives, information, advice, or assistance.
- < Develop specific goal statements and objectives related to your assignment. Develop a work plan and timetable for meeting each of your goals and objectives, including the final report.
- < Write the final report in accordance with the general instructions in this syllabus, and the specific project assignment.

**Although groups will be given eleven in-class hours to work on their projects, it is expected that some additional group meeting time will be required outside of class to complete the project. Whenever the full group meets, a process recorder must be selected at the beginning of the meeting, and a process record [as described below] will be developed.**

#### **TEAM FINAL WRITTEN REPORT [35 possible points]**

At the end of the semester, your team will be asked to prepare and write a (1) detailed summary of the **task** outcomes---that is, how your team approached the job to be done, and what outcomes occurred specifically related to your efforts to be 'on task', (2) a summary evaluation of your team's **process** in completing its task, and (3) narrative describing your **findings, analysis, conclusions and recommendations** resulting from the inquiry undertaken by the team.

In completing (1) and (2) above, your team will need to utilize its weekly team process records and describe the life stages of your team, interpersonal dynamics, and conflicts and their resolution. In recording your process, you may wish to consider how well your team was able to:

1. utilize the team's resources
2. delineate the options and consider consequences of various options
3. make decisions
4. assign responsibilities
5. carry out responsibilities and hold members accountable
6. analyze and manage conflicts in the team
7. communicate among yourselves
8. get back on issues (or tasks) when the team digressed
9. relate to each other as persons and as professionals
10. deal with power and authority within the team

The following elements should be included in the task analysis portion of the final paper:

- < goal interpretation
- < problems encountered with understanding and completing the task
- < planning, problem-solving, decision-making methods used

#### **TEAM ORAL PRESENTATION [Possible 10 points]**

During the last two class sessions each team will present a summary description of its project assignment, which includes the same three basic elements included in the final written report. Each presentation will be about thirty minutes, followed by ten or fifteen minutes of discussion. Simple

audiovisuals may be used to enhance the quality of the presentations. For example, transparencies can be made directly from graphs, charts or other materials in your written report. This presentation will be discussed more in class.

### **WEEKLY TEAM PROCESS RECORD [possible 20 points]**

Each week, **one** of your team members should be designated as the team's **process recorder**. How this member is chosen on a WEEKLY BASIS should be part of your team's decision-making process.

The selection should be made at the beginning of each team session, and should be rotated so that all team members get to experience this observational-analytical role. The process recorder will be expected to briefly note the procedures and actions, plans for future activity, etc. which the team made during that session. The process recorder will be expected to lead a discussion of the process record at the beginning of the next team meeting prior to any team business.

The second part of the process record should include the process observer's COMMENTS about the quality of the interactions and participation, the group's cohesiveness, the group's ability to make decisions and/or resolve conflict, etc. In the process record, it is particularly important to note not only WHAT was done, but HOW it was achieved--- did everyone simply turn over responsibilities to one person? Did it appear to the process recorder that everyone participated in a given decision? **Course content should inform this process analysis.**

The process recorder should comment on his/her perception and opinion of the team's ability to achieve its task for that given week, not merely the particular life stage in which the group seemed to be in for that given week, and indicate her/his assessment of the team's climate in relation to the outcomes for that week. This process record is to be shared with the team at the next team session **before beginning** other activities, in order to check accuracy of the perceptions.

The weekly team process recordings will be turned in to the instructor weekly. The date of the team meeting and the name of the process recorder should be clearly indicated on each process recording.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

**Class Session 1**      **Introductions**  
**Course Overview and Expectations**  
**Personal and Professional Goal Setting**  
**Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, Transdisciplinary Teams**

EXERCISE:            "Is it a group, a team, or something in between?"

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**Class Session 2**      **Stages of Teamwork**  
**Characteristics of Successful Teams**  
**Interpersonal Communication and Team Building**  
**Norms, Cohesion, and Roles**  
**Team Maintenance and Task Behaviors**

EXERCISE:            "Looking Back Through Time"

TEAMS MEET for the first time during last 45 minutes of class: "Letting You Get to Know Me"

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**Class Session 3**      **Competition, Cooperation, and Collaboration**  
**Interpersonal Communication**  
**Conflict Management**

EXERCISE: Simulation: “Under the Influence: Conflict on a Cross-Functional Team”

TEAMS MEET during the last hour of class after receiving “Formal Charge to the Team”. ***A written ‘Team Process Record’ should be prepared to summarize this, and all future, team meetings.***

**Class Session 4**      **Power and Social Influence  
Team Leadership  
Decisionmaking Process and Models**

EXERCISE: TEAMS MEET during the last 75 minutes of class.

Assignment Due: First Reflection Paper due at start of class today

First Weekly Team Process Record is due today from each team. *Refer to assignment section of this syllabus for the information which should be included in every team process record submitted.*

**Class Session 5**      **Only students at Moorhead site attend class today—students in Rochester and St. Paul do NOT attend class today. ALL students must complete reading assigned for today.**

**INTENSIVE TEAMWORK PRACTICUM with Moorhead students**  
[Instructor on site in Moorhead today] Moorhead teams will meet the last hour of class.

Assignment Due: Second Weekly Team Process Record is due from every team.

**Class Session 6**      **Only students at the Rochester site attend class today—students in Moorhead and St. Paul do NOT have class. ALL students must complete reading assigned for today.**

**INTENSIVE TEAMWORK PRACTICUM with Rochester students**

**Class Session 7**      **Only students at the St. Paul site attend class today--students in Moorhead and Rochester do NOT have class. ALL students must complete reading assigned for today.**

**INTENSIVE TEAMWORK PRACTICUM with St. Paul Students**

**Class Session 8**      **Overcoming Barriers and Obstacles to Teamwork  
Analysis of Team Climate and Functioning Cross-Functional and Interdisciplinary Teams Ethical Dilemmas in Interdisciplinary Teams**

Assignment Due: Second Reflection Paper is due at start of class today.

Third Weekly Team Process Record is due from every team [covering the three-week period of Intensive Teamwork Practicum]

Exercise: “Assessment of Power Among Group Members”  
TEAMS MEET during the last 90 minutes of class today

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**Class Session 9****TEAMWORK INTENSIVE**

This entire class period is devoted to working independently in your respective teams on the task your team have been given to accomplish. Each team will begin this three-hour work session by participating in the "Assessing Team Norms" exercise, which will require about 25 minutes to complete. The results of this exercise will be incorporated into your team's Weekly Team Process Record. Your team may choose to meet at a location to meet other than on campus, but wherever you meet, **teams are expected to begin meeting promptly at 1:30pm and continue to work through the three-hour time block. There will be no ITV hookup during classtime today.**

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**Class Session 10****Interdisciplinary Teams and Fields of Practice: Health and Gerontology****Guest Speaker**

Rogene Berquist, MSW, LICSW, ICU Social Worker, Methodist Hospital, St. Louis Part

**Assignment Due:**

Fourth and fifth Weekly Team Process Records due from every team in class today, summarizing your last two team meetings.

**Exercise:**

CASE FOR ANALYSIS: "They Dominated the Conversation"—Trouble in the Pediatric Cancer Care Team

TEAMS MEET during the last 60 minutes of the class period.

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**Class Session 11****Interdisciplinary Teams and Fields of Practice: Mental Health****Guest Speaker:**

The Influence of Field of Practice on Interdisciplinary Teams in Mental Health [Marilyn Israel or Susan Kundel]

**Exercise:**

TEAMS MEET during last 75 minutes of class.

**Assignment Due:**

Reflection paper #3 (the last) due today at the start of class

Sixth Weekly Team Process Record due today.

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**Class Session 12****Cross-Functional and Interdisciplinary Team//Fields of Practice: Child Welfare, Developmental Disability, and Schools****Speakers:**

Members of the Class---'Speaking from my Own Experience'

**Assignment Due:**

Seventh Weekly Team Process Record due from every team.

**Exercise:**

TEAMS MEET for the last 90 minutes of class today.  
*Random Process for Determining the Order of Team Presentations during the next two class sessions*

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**Thanksgiving Holiday Weekend---No class**

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**Class Session 13****TEAM PRESENTATIONS**

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**Assignment Due:** Eighth, and final, Weekly Team Process Record due from each team.

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**Class Session 14**      **TEAM PRESENTATIONS**  
**Feedback and Debriefing Team Experience**  
**Course Evaluation**

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SAMPLE