COURSE TITLE: Social Work in Educational Settings
COURSE NUMBER: Social Work 642, section 001
SEMESTER: Winter, 2006
DAY/TIME: Wednesdays from 6:00 to 9:00 PM
LOCATION: 2752 SSWB
INSTRUCTOR: Gary A. Stauffer, MSW
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OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays before and after class

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course presents foundation knowledge and skills essential to effective social work practice in school settings. Topics range from the evolution of social work in schools, school social work theory, assessment, and interventions for use in school settings. Education law, especially as it relates to special education eligibility and services, is a core aspect of the course. Content on multiculturalism, diversity, social justice, and social change are integrated into the course materials as those critical issues relate to practice in schools. Students will learn skills and abilities associated with various school social work roles and responsibilities; recognizing that the roles assumed by school social workers vary from state-to-state, district-to-district, and school-to-school.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
Upon completion of this course, students should have a comprehensive understanding and knowledge in five broad areas. Those five translate in the following goals: (a) knowledge of the history and role of social work in schools, (b) critical policy issues currently impacting education, (c) special education law and procedures, (d) theoretical frameworks for school social work practice, (e) prevention and intervention approaches in schools. These five areas are defined in more detail in the following course objectives.

1. Possess an historical perspective on the provision of social work services in schools.
2. Be aware of school social worker roles and responsibilities, and recognize the multiple levels and systems that school social workers can address in their practice including: individual students and families, groups of students, consultation with teachers and other school staff, classroom and school-level interventions, and coordination and collaboration with youth serving agencies outside the school.
3. Understand current critical issues being debated with respect to public schools, including: school reform, school-based services, competition, accountability, testing, vouchers, magnet schools, testing, charter schools, No Child Left Behind Act, etc.

4. Conceptualize a school as a complex social system, consisting of the interactions between the individuals within the school (students and staff), and individuals and organizations outside the school (families, neighborhood, community, county/city, state, etc.).

5. Understand conceptual models of social work practice used in the schools, including the ecological, family systems, risk and protection, resilience, and strengths-based approaches.

6. Understand the law, policies, and procedures addressing the provision of educational services to both special education and general education students.

7. Possess foundation knowledge about vulnerable populations of school children for whom school social work services are frequently targeted.

8. Be familiar with school social work professional practice standards and ethics.

9. Be able to identify personal and programmatic evaluative methods useful in school social work practice.

**RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES**

**Multiculturalism and Diversity** are critical issues impacting both schools and the practice of social work in schools. These issues will be presented, discussed and critically analyzed as they relate to practice and policy.

**Social Justice and Social Change** will be central to the topic of various roles assumed by social workers in schools. The focus of the course includes small or microsystem change (individual, families, and groups), and mid-level or mesosystem change (classroom and school), and awareness the issues impacting schools at the state and national level or exosystem level.

**Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation** will be themes reflected in the models and approaches to school social work practice. In addition, this course will emphasize the use of evidence-based prevention and intervention activities.

**Behavioral and Social Science Research** will be presented in this course to support school social work theory and practice methods. Assessment procedures, intervention planning, decision-making and intervention procedures will be directly borrowed from the behavioral and social sciences.

**COURSE DESIGN AND TEACHING METHODS**

The objectives of this course will be pursued through lectures, discussions, readings, case presentations, experiential activities, tests, a group project, and other class participation. Interaction within the class about the material and the assignments is intended to be a major catalyst for learning.

The instructor for this class has embraced an experiential model of social work practice. The belief is that your opportunity for learning that lasts and that will be integrated into your practice beyond the final exam is greatly enhanced by engaging in action within your immediate environmental context. Therefore, we will engage in activities during the class sessions and you will be asked to take action throughout the course aimed at increasing the learning.
Class attendance and participation is important and will be considered a factor in determining final grades. Students will be expected to take the initiative in notifying the professor of the time, date, and nature of any absence.

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND COURSE READINGS**

There is one required text book for this course, it should be available at Ulrich’s, the Michigan Union, and Michigan Book and Supply.


All other course readings will be handed out in class and/or posted on the CTools site for this course. These readings can be downloaded, read electronically, and/or printed.

Three text books have been put on reserve in the School of Social Work library, including the required text by Dupper. The other two are:


**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

I invite any class member who has a special need or other personal limitation that may affect his or her participation in this course to let me know. We can discuss possible modifications or accommodations needed to insure your maximum participation and benefit from the course.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mid Term Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Project Assignment</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Group Evaluation Paper</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Observation Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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The mid-term and final examinations are intended to be exercises in learning the material as well as tools for evaluation. Each exam will be followed by an in-class review of the material.
The **Case Project Assignment** will involve work with a group of fellow students but result in each person contributing a separate individual paper. Each group will evaluate a case example and complete typical school social work tasks related to that specific student. Each person in the group will take responsibility to write up one aspect of the case example for which they will receive an individual grade. The group will serve as your primary resource throughout the process. This instructor may have feedback for you about the group functioning, but the “Group” will **not** receive a separate grade. More details of this assignment will be shared in class.

The **Work Group Evaluation** paper is intended to assist you in reflecting on how your work group functioned. I would like you to demonstrate an understanding of the components of Experiential Wave model for Social Work practice in this three-page paper.

A **classroom observation** of any K-12 student will offer you an opportunity to go to a school setting, negotiate that system, and do an observation of a student in the school environment. I’d like you to write about your experience during this process, as well as your “objective” observations of one student. In-class discussions of this aspect of the social work evaluation for special education eligibility will inform this assignment. The student observation can be summarized in one or two paragraphs. The entire paper is expected to be no more than 2 to 3 pages in length.

**Class participation** is vital to your learning in this class. What you get out of this course will be directly related to how much you put into the process. That said, I understand that everyone “participates” within their own style. Be present, engage in the learning process, and contribute in a manner that is comfortable for you. Absences will have a negative impact on your learning and can affect your final grade.

1. **January 11: Introduction**
   - Introduction to course and review of syllabus
   - History of school social work practice
   - Creating the learning environment
   - Models for school social work practice

   **Readings:**
   - Dupper, Chapter One and Two
   - Experiential Wave, Course Tools: Adventure folder

2. **January 18: Students with Disabilities**
   - IDEA and special education procedures
   - History of special education
   - Definition of Emotionally Impairment and Autistic Spectrum Disorders
   - Develop work groups

   **Readings:**
   - Dupper, Chapter Six
   - Special Education Laws Power Point, Course Tools: Special Education folder
   - Autism: A Medical Primer, Course Tools: Intervention folder
3. **January 25: Special Education Procedures**
   - Current Practices, Continuum of services, sample IEPT
   - Manifestation Determinations, Functional Behavior Analysis and Positive Behavior Intervention Plans
   - Pass out case examples for work groups

   **Readings:**
   - “To Tell or Not to Tell”, James Raines. Course Tools: Ethical Issues folder
   - Structure of Education Power Point, Course Tools: Our educational system folder
   - FBA’s and BIP’s, Course Tools: Special Education Procedures folder
   - Functional Assessment, Course Tools: Special Education Procedures folder

4. **February 1: Student-Focused Interventions**
   - Externalizing Disorders
   - Complete the case example IEPT in work groups

   **Readings:**
   - Dupper, Section Two introduction plus Chapter 3
   - Managing Conduct Disorders in School Settings, Course Tools: Specific Populations folder

5. **February 8: Student-Focused Interventions**
   - Internalizing Disorders
   - Complete and turn in organizational plan for case project

   **Readings:**
   - Dupper, Chapter 4

6. **February 15: Social Problems in Schools**
   - Implications of social problems on school performance
   - Interventions to meet the specific needs of youth impacted by social problems
   - Review of Course Material to date

   **Readings:**
   - Dupper, Chapter 5
   - Are We Failing Black Boys?, Course Tools:
     - Article in Kunjufu folder
     - Power Point in Our Educational System folder

7. **February 22: Mid-Term Exam**

   **Classroom observation papers due**
8. **March 1**: No Class, Winter Break

9. **March 8: System Focused Interventions**
   - Prevention Programs
   - Vulnerable student groups

   **Readings:**
   - Dupper, Section Three introduction plus Chapters 7 and 8

10. **March 15**: System Focused Interventions
    - Teacher consultation and principles of behavior management
    - Community organization and parent programs

    **Readings:**
    - Dupper, Chapters 9 and 10

11. **March 22**: Evaluating School Social Work Practice
    - *Case Projects Due*
    - Evaluating School Social Work Practice

    **Readings:**
    - Dupper, Chapters 11 and 12

12. **March 29**:
    - *Work Group Evaluation Papers Due*
    - Review of course material

13. **April 5**: Final Exam

14. **April 12**: Closure
    - Review final exam
    - Return case project papers and related discussion
    - Course Evaluations