SW 697-003: Social Work Practice with Community and Social Systems
Winter 2006

John Martin– Instructor
Tuesday 8:00 – 11:00 – 3816 SSWB
Office - 2670 School of Social Work Building
Email: jjmartin@umich.edu
Office Hours: Monday morning by appointment..

Course Description
This course prepares students to engage in integrated practice focused on working with community and social systems to support individual, family and community functioning. It builds on practice methods presented in the foundation and elaborates how social workers can work in partnership with community and social systems. Special emphasis will be placed on conducting this work in a multicultural context and on enhancing the well being of vulnerable and oppressed populations and communities.

Course Objectives
On completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of how community and social systems can play a role in improving the well being of individuals, families, organizations and communities;
2. Identify the critical primary and secondary structures in communities that can be mobilized for engaging in practice;
3. Describe how the gender, racial, religious, economic or other characteristics of a community affect the needs and assists to be mobilized in practice;
4. Demonstrate skills for engaging community systems and encouraging the participation of community members;
5. Identify how social work ethics and values can guide practice with community and social systems.

Relationship to Four Curricular Themes
1. Multiculturalism and Diversity: This course will focus on ways in which the characteristics of individuals, families and communities will drive the approach to practice. Therefore, the themes of diversity and multiculturalism will be addressed throughout the course. This will include attention to race, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, economic status, and sexual orientation.
2. Social Change and Social Justice: This course will focus on methods for increasing community participation and empowerment. Therefore, the themes of
social change on multiple levels toward the goal of social justice are central to this course. Special attention will be paid for developing methods that are democratic, participatory and focused on equity and equality.

3. **Promotion/Prevention/Treatment/Rehabilitation:** This course will consider how community and social systems can be mobilized toward promotion, prevention, treatment or rehabilitation efforts. For example, community and social system involvement can be an integral element of the promotion of mental health, the prevention of mental illness, the treatment of mental distress or the rehabilitation of the mentally disabled. This course will shed light on how these methods can be involved at these different types of practice focus.

4. **Social Science and Social Research:** Community and social systems practice is supported by research that suggests that well being is enhanced by the involvement of social supports and social networks. This course will be based in social research that guides this practice. In addition, social science methods will be introduced as a means for developing and evaluating specific practice methods.

**Relationship to PODS Content**

Social Work 697 is one of the concentration courses designed to provide intensive focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS). Materials on these four themes are woven in to the four curricular themes described above and are integral aspects of course readings, assignments, activities, and exercises. Methods for developing and implementing practice that addresses the PODS content are a major emphasis of Social Work 697.

**Course Responsibilities**

**Course Content**

This course will cover practice methods for working with multiple social systems to promote well being through the involvement of community and social systems. The primary focus will be on ways to work in partnership with formal and informal social systems in communities such as schools, neighborhood associations, self-help organizations, community centers and faith based organizations. Emphasis will be placed on ways in which different levels of practice -- including interpersonal, organizational, community, and policy -- can be involved in this kind of work. Under girding all of these levels is a focus on methods for encouraging community participation and empowerment.
Assignments

Assignment 1.

SWOT Analysis. The first assignment is to conduct a SWOT analysis of your field placement organization with particular attention to the opportunities and threats present in the task environment. Your focus will be on the potential or actual opportunities available for collaboration, networking, or coalition building in the community. The assignment will also include a Force Field Analysis of the driving and restraining forces at play as the organization attempts to improve its influence and or position in the larger community in order to secure more options for its client base. The paper will be 4 - 6 pages in length, single spaced with 12 point font. The paper is due March 7.

Assignment 2.

Group Assignment: In our second or third class session you will sign up for a group project that will work on a focused community skill. You will form groups of 3 persons according to your prioritized selection of community and social systems skills identified in the Skills Handout. Each small group will develop 3 products:

1. 20 minute class presentation regarding your selected skill.
2. an outline of your presentation
3. a bibliography corresponding to and supporting your presentation.

In developing your bibliography, library research and the use of references beyond the textbooks and handouts are required. You are encouraged to use the Internet and to cite material from at least two different internet sources. The majority of your bibliographic references are to be from books and journals. A minimum of 5 citations is required.

Group assignments are due on April 4, and presentations will occur during class on April 4 and April 12.

Assignment 3

Case portfolio: In order to integrate the course content with your field placement experience, the focus of this assignment will be to assess and document what you learned from one “case assignment” you are working on in the field. Your portfolio should include reflective essays, documents from your organization, written products related to the case, etc. This case can be an individual, family, group, or community or policy project. The portfolio should be turned in a 3 ring binder with dividers for each section.

Part 1 will be due February 14. Part 2 will be due March 28. Part 3 will be due April 18.
Part 1: Provide some background and context for the case. This should include the following:

- A brief description of your organization: where it is, what it does, who it works with, your role within it;
- A brief description of this case assignment and why you were assigned to it;
- How you view the central problem, issue, or situation this case presents. Who is defined as the ‘client”? Provide a brief review of some literature related to this particular case;
- How you view your role in relation to the case: How involved will you be? Who else will be working on this case and how you will work together.
- Provide a learning goal for this case: what do you hope to gain?

Part 2: Provide an assessment of this case. Use at least two assessment tools you learned in this class or SW 560 or 521. Please include copies of the genogram, eco-map, force field analysis, GIS map, community survey, focus group, etc. that you use in the assessment process. The assessment should include the following topics:

- A description of the client system;
- How the client system views the situation and how the situation has been handled in the past;
- The major strengths or resources of this client system;
- How issues of gender, ethnicity, race, age, sexual orientation and other identities impact on this case;
- Identify the impact of power and oppression on this client system;
- Identify the tentative “goals” and “objectives” for working on this case.
- Evaluate your progress thus far on your learning goal?

Part 3: Describe and analyze your work on this case. This should include the following:

- A discussion of your progress on this case: who has been involved? How did you engage the client and other systems?
- What strategies or methods did you use? How effective were they?
- What have you accomplished so far?
- What did you learn in relation to your learning goal?
- What have you learned about CSS practice from working on this case?

Class Participation:

Each week we will engage in group activities and discussion, therefore attendance is very important. Students are expected to attend every class session, be on time, and participate in discussions and group exercises. Class participation will be graded partially based on input the self-assessment form.

Grading:
SWOT and Force Field Analysis - 25% of your grade.

Case portfolio – 45% of your grade

Group assignment and class presentation – 20% of your grade

Class participation – 10% of your grade

A 100 point system is used. At the end of the term, the numerical grades earned for each written assignment will be averaged and translated into letter grades using the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-93</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-80</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>&lt;69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(no credit)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Papers will be graded using the following criteria:

a) The quality of the analysis and depth of understanding of the concepts, ideas, and information presented.
b) The clarity of expression and organization of the paper - is there a logical order to the presentation of your thoughts.
c) The appropriate use of references and resources, and the variety of resources referenced.
d) The use of proper grammar and the over-all professional presentation of the paper.

Grading Criteria for the Course

Each written assignment will be given a letter grade. The criteria I use are as follows:

A or A- Mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment. The difference between A and A- is based on the degree to which these skills are demonstrated.
B+ Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated additional critical analysis, creativity or complexity in the completion of the assignment.
B Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency – meets course expectations
B- Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content.
C or C- Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement to meet course requirements.
E Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

Readings
Readings for this course have been selected very carefully to reflect community and social system practice. Students should come to class having read the material and prepared to discuss and work with what has been covered. Some classroom exercises have been developed to synthesize and apply the readings to practice.

**Required:**

A coursepack is online and available through Ctools.

**Housekeeping**

*Accommodations for students with disabilities*
If you need an accommodation for a disability please let me know as soon as possible. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and teaching methods can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. I will make every effort to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. If you disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential.

*Religious Observances*
Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

*Electronic Devices*
In consideration of your classmates and your own learning please turn off all cell phones and pagers during class. I prefer that you receive no messages during class time, if you must be on call for an emergency, please let your home or office know that you are only available for emergencies that no one else can handle. If you must carry a pager, please set it to vibrate only.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Session 1: January 10, Introduction and Overview

Activities:
Introductions
Overview of course and requirements
Defining community and social systems practice
Skills Presentation Options - handout

Session 2: January 17

Activity: Community Compact: an experiential exercise.

Readings
Adams and Nelson (text) Part 1: Chapters 1, 2, and 3. Context of Community and Family Centered Practice pp. 19-85
Delgado (text) Chapters 1-3 (introduction, urban communities, caring and helping), pp. 1-46.

Session 3: January 24, Principles of Community and Social Systems Practice Methods

Activity: Review assessment tools and skills you learned in SW 560 or 521,

Flow-charts, force field analysis, nominal group technique, eco-mapping, community needs and strengths assessment, utilizing frameworks of ethical and policy analysis, community surveys, focus groups etc.

Form groups and select additional skills for class presentation.

Video – Back from the Brink (Gaylord)

Readings
Delgado (text) Chapter 4 – principles and strategies, pp 47-67.
Gutierrez: Chapter 1.
Session 4: January 31, Entering and Engaging with Communities and Social Systems

Activity: Normal Park Neighborhood Association

Engaging exercises

Readings

Adams and Nelson, chapter 11
Delgado, Chapter 10
Gutierrez: Chapter 6

Handout Community Treasure Hunt

Session 5: February 7, Scanning and mapping methods for community and social systems: assets and needs

Activity: Participant Observation/Community Treasure Hunt

Readings

Delgado, Chapters 6, 7 & 8

Session 6: February 14, scanning and mapping methods for community and social systems: GIS systems

Part 1 of the Case Portfolio due

Activity: Field Trip regarding Information and Referral (2-1-1)

Readings

Adams and Nelson, chapter 12
Delgado, Chapter 9
Gutierrez, Chapter 11

Case Portfolio part 1 is due
Session 7: February 21, assessing community conditions

Activity: Human Services Community Collaborative

Readings
Adams and Nelson (text) chapters 4 and 5, and 13
Delgado, Chapter 5

There is no class during spring break.

Session 8: March 7, developing critical consciousness

SWOT analysis paper due.

Activities:
Video – The GI Bill, or In their Own Words, or You Can Quote Me On That, or Homelessness
Critical consciousness exercise – Cloverdale exercise

Readings:
Gutierrez, Chapters 2, 4, and 5

Session 9: March 14, changing community conditions through coalition building

Activities: Blueprint for Aging

Readings
Gutierrez, Chapter 7
Community Tool Box: Creating Coalitions and Partnerships, http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/coalitions/create/narrativeoutline.jsp
Session 10: March 21, Education, Skill Development and Self Help

Activity:  Beacon School

Readings:
Adams Nelson, Chapters 7 and 8 pp. 145-174
Gutierrez, Chapters 5 and 8

Session 11: March 28, Identifying and Securing Resources

Part 2 Case Portfolio Due

Activity - Washtenaw Housing Alliance

Readings:
Gutierrez, Chapters 9 & 10
Delgado, Chapter 11

Session 12: April 4, Group facilitation skills

Group Assignments Due

Activity: Group Presentation of Skills

Readings:
Gutierrez, Chapter 3
Community toolbox (http://ctb.ku/)


Session 13: April 11, Evaluating community and social systems practice

Activities: Group Presentations of Skills

Readings:
Delgado: 12 & 13
Gutierrez: 12 & 13

Session 14: April 18, Last class

Part 3 of the Case Portfolio is due.

Activities: Review and evaluate the course