Course Outline

This class offers an overview to social work practice in the school setting. Students will be introduced to the educational system from the national, state and local levels. The complexities of working in a host setting will be discussed. Special emphasis will be placed on understanding the laws, the rules and the procedures that pertain to special education. The course will address methods for prevention and intervention with children of all ages and ability levels. The course will also pay special attention to looking at the tools that social workers have available to them as school social workers. Emerging trends in the field (including zero tolerance, privatization, voucher system, State takeover of school districts, weapons legislation) will also be included in our discussions.

Course Competencies

Students completing the requirements for this class will:

- gain knowledge in the history of school social work
- begin to understand the complex role that the school social worker can play in the school setting
- identify opportunities and skills for effective school social work practice
- distinguish the difference between school social work and social work practice
- increase one's knowledge of the laws pertaining to special education
• understand the influence of national, state and local mandates on school policies and practices in the local school building
• learn approaches to assessments, interventions and evaluations pertinent to school social work practice

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

• Multiculturalism and diversity. Recent international, national and local shifts in ethnic and cultural diversity of children and families will be reviewed. Policies and services for children and youth with disabilities will be a strong focus of the course. Special attention will be provided to working with children of color as well as with children consider "at-risk."
• Social Justice and Social Change. School social workers strive to promote optimal learning opportunities for all children and youth. The role of the worker as a change agent will be reviewed and discussed in the course. Relevant legislation and policies that seek to promote this egalitarian view will be reviewed and discussed.
• Promotion, Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation. This course will offer the perspective that intervention can and will occur with all client systems, namely with the individual, the family, the classroom, the school building, the school district and the community. Approaches will be demonstrated for all levels of practice. Building-wide prevention programs, promotion of peaceful solutions to conflict resolution, promotion of skills and values through character education, are some topics that will be reviewed and discussed.
• Behavioral and Social Science Research. Relevant theories and findings regarding service accountability, empirical validation of interventions and evaluation of practice will be covered.

Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

Professional social work ethics will be reviewed focusing on their application to the school setting. Particular attention will be placed on issues of confidentiality, access to records, access by minors to services without parent consent, mandatory reporting of abuse and neglect, and exclusion from services of children.

Course Resources

Reading is expected throughout this course from the text as well as other recommended sites. Complete listings of articles and books are contained in the attached bibliography.

Required:

**Strongly Recommended:**


**Recommended:**


**Course Expectations**

This three credit class will meet for thirteen (13) sessions. Every session will offer an abundance of information, much of it not contained in the text. Out-of-class reading and preparation is essential for success.

**Attendance**

It is expected that each student will attend all sessions of the class, for the full class period. Missing more than two class sessions may lead to a lowering of the final grade. When unable to attend, the student is responsible for the material covered and obtaining any handouts. Participation is defined as one's ability to involve oneself in all aspects of the class, in lectures and discussions, in small group activities, in experiential challenges, in the readings and in the assignments. Your presence and how you interact in the class will strongly influence how much you learn.

**Assignments**

1. **Paper No. 1 "You as a student"**  This first written assignment should be 3-4 pages in length. Respond to the following questions: what brought you to this class, what do you expect to take from the class, what can you give in return, what is your career path at this point in your studies, where are you from, what is your experience with public education, what is your placement like. Talk briefly about your own schooling, public/private/home schooled, urban/rural/suburban, was your school experience positive/negative/in-between and why, what experience did you have with special education students? This assignment is due Sept. 13 (Session 2).

2. **Paper No. 2 "Field Trip"**  This second written assignment should also be 3-4 pages in length. Because I will be presenting at the Michigan Association of School Social Work Conference on class day, there will be no class meeting. I am assigning you a "field trip" to replace the class meeting.
You are to attend a local school district school board meeting and write up the experience including who was there, the agenda, any conflicts that arose, audience involvement/participation, and your personal reactions. Please attach a copy of the agenda. As preparation for this observation, locate and comment in your paper on at least two articles about the role of a local school board. References can be found on the internet. (www.masb.org or www.asbj.com) This paper is due Nov. 1 (Session 9).

3. **Take Home Exam** The exam will be handed out at the end of the Nov. 1 (Session 9) class, corrected and collected during the Nov. 15 (Session 11) class.

This 30-item exam is primarily on legislation and special education procedures in the State of Michigan. Mostly multiple choice, some fill in the blanks, some short essay questions. All information will be presented in class sessions or in handouts. **No credit will be given to those who complete the exam and are not present to correct it.**

4. **Project/Presentation.**

Procedure to follow:

1. Form a group around a topic of interest. You are expected to meet with the group in and out of class. You are also expected to clarify the process that your group will follow, as well as the norms that you can expect members to abide by. Complete this during Session 2.

2. Complete the proposal form. This will include your "topic", as well as ideas as to how you will go about completing the task. Select a time for your presentation and include it on the form. Complete by the end of Session 3.

3. Complete the project

4. Give the presentation.
   - A 20-minute presentation
   - Provide the class with a 1-3 page summary of your findings, including references.

5. Complete Evaluating Project and Learning form. Reflect on both the process and content learned. Include a recommendation as to what you would change if you were to do it again. Submit to me as soon as possible following the presentation, but no later than Dec. 6 (Session 13).

**Content:** Suggested topics are listed here. It is anticipated that the group will present both the positive and negative sides of each issue during the presentation. There may only be one group per topic.

- Inclusion
- Labeling
- Compulsory Education
- Teaching of sex education in public school settings
- Corporal punishment in schools
- Uniforms and dress codes
• Charter Schools
• Bi-lingual education
• Medication use in schools
• Diversity
• Others........

Throughout the term, find out as much as you can about the topic using any and all available materials (interviews, readings, on-site observations, library and internet based research, discussions).

**Group:** This assignment will be done as a small group (maximum of five per group) project. One will serve as the moderator, and the others evenly divided to support one side or the other of the selected topic.

**Presentation Process:** Each group will have 20 minutes to share the information they have gathered with the class. However you do it, it has to present both sides of the issue. Some suggestions are: debate (point-counterpoint), talk show panel, game show, straightforward presentation, Power Point presentation.

**Participatory Nature:** This assignment has a strong participatory component to it. Engaging with the learning is critical. If you were learning about the diversity policy in three districts, for example, part of your project needs to include interviewing some of the persons affected by such policy. Using video taping or photographs is recommended, just make sure you have formally asked permission prior to taking pictures, even of buildings and such.

**Grading**

- Data gathered 30%
- Varied use of resources 30%
- Presentation performance 30%
- Scope/width of project 10%

**Session Schedule**

1. **Sept. 6**
   Introduction to the course
   History and development of SSW
   
   Reading: Text: Ch. 2; Struckman, Pryor & Secor: Torres

2. **Sept. 13**
   Systems and structure
   
   Reading: Text: Ch. 3 & 4; Dane
   Paper 1 due

3. **Sept. 20**
   At Risk Students
   
   Reading: Text: Ch. 9; Molidor; Ayasse; Wall
4. Sept. 27  "What's School Social Work Really Like?"
A panel of practicing school social workers from various grade levels and settings will describe "what they do."
There will be time then for small group discussion with various members of the panel.

Reading:  Text:  Ch. 12; Lewis

5. Oct. 4  Tony Alvarez - Adventure Education
Mr. Alvarez will present this class while I present at the Midwest School Social Work Conference in Milwaukee.

6. Oct. 11  Advocacy, Ethics, Confidentiality, FERPA

Reading:  Text: Ch. 6; NASW Code of Ethics, NASW and SSWAA Confidentiality Statements

Mrs. Bond-Manville and others will do a presentation on the partnership role of school social workers.

Reading:  Constable, Ch. 15; Pennekamp; Berrick & Duerr

8. Oct. 25  Field Trip - see details elsewhere in syllabus.

9. Nov. 1  Special Ed Laws and procedures

   Hand out exam
   Paper 2 due
Reading:  Text: Ch. 8; Constable, Ch. 10; Miesels
   Mich. Administrative Rules for Special Education

10. Nov. 8  Assessment and Intervention

Reading:  Constable, Ch. 33
   Presentations 1 & 2

11. Nov. 15  "Don't Forget the Parents!"

Reading:  Constable, Ch. 27
Correct and collect the take home exam
Presentation 3

12. Nov. 22  Bullying, violence prevention

Reading:  Text, Ch. 7; Constable, Ch. 22; Astor; Freeman
Presentations 4 & 5

Nov. 29 -  no class

13. Dec. 6  "Bringing it all together"

Reading:  Text, Ch. 11
Presentations 6 & 7

Grading

It is expected that each assignment will be completed in a thorough and professional manner. All papers are to be typed with double-spacing, 1" margins, and using 12-point font. Assignments turned in late, with excessive writing errors, poor English, spelling and punctuation or with any aspect of the assignment not performed will be downgraded.

Your course grade will be based on the following criteria:

1. Paper #1  5%
2. Paper #2  10%
3. Presentation  50%
4. Take Home Exam 30%
5. Attendance/Participation  5%

100%

Grades will be given as follows:  A = 4.0; A- = 3.6, B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0; B- = 2.7 and so forth. Each assignment will be multiplied by the weight listed above and added together. A total score of 3.9 or higher is necessary to receive an A in the course. Students may be down-graded .3 for more than 2 absences or failure to participate in class discussion.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


*These articles are also available in Freeman, E. *School Social Work Practice*.

Patricia Metz
Updated 8/02