S.W. 642 - Social Work in Educational Settings  
Spring Summer 2004

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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 inclusion, experiential learning, violence prevention, charter, home and private school education,) and current policies (including zero tolerance, privatization, voucher system, State takeover of school districts, weapons legislation) will also be included in our discussions.

An experiential approach to teaching will be a primary teaching tool in this class; come prepared to actively engage in class discussions, activities and presentations in small groups.

Course Objectives  
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

• Describe the social, economic, and demographic changes that influence the development and educational performance and needs of infants, children, youth, and young adults at various learning levels.
• Describe the processes of educational policy formulation, especially those related to needs and problems experienced by populations at risk.
• Analyze at least one major issue or policy in contemporary education in the U.S. and develop implications for social work intervention.
• Explain the various roles and functions of social workers working in educational settings; these may include: conflict mediation, advocacy on behalf of students and their families, treatment and interdisciplinary treatment planning, referral, outreach, cultural adjustment, and leadership in the enhancement of educational policies and programs.
• Describe federal and state programs that offer possibilities for enhancement of local school programs.
• Work effectively with professionals and lay persons in other social agencies, such as juvenile courts, health and mental health, child welfare, and public social services.
• Discuss typical ethical concerns related to social work in educational settings.

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

• **Multiculturalism and Diversity.** This course will review the recent national, regional, and local demographic shifts that have increased the ethnic and cultural diversity of children and families in educational institutions. A culturally sensitive, developmental perspective will be presented ranging from infancy through secondary education and culminating in the transition from school to the world of work. In addition, the particular policies and services regarding children and youth with illnesses and disabilities, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons will be reviewed.

• **Social Justice and Social Change.** Social workers in educational settings strive to maximize educational opportunities for individuals, groups, neighborhoods, and regions, and promote progressive local, state, and national policy. Relevant legislation and policies that seek to meet these goals will be reviewed, as well as the social justice implications of private and public schools. The role of the worker as a change agent will be reviewed and discussed in the course.

• **Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation.** These approaches are incorporated at all levels of practice in educational settings. This includes programs for the student and family, the organization and positive organizational culture in schools, and educational climates overall that promote children’s development to their maximum potential. Additionally, characteristics of at-risk children and youth and their particular vulnerabilities will be highlighted. These risks will include school failure, suspension, and expulsion, “dropping out,” unplanned pregnancy, insufficient preparation for the work force, family roles, and group and individual violence. Related concerns will include prevention of substance abuse, prevention of the transmission of disease (especially sexually transmitted diseases), and promotion of healthy lifestyles and development. Characteristics that buffer children from these stressors and research on resilience will also be examined.

• **Behavioral and Social Science Research.** The role of the social worker as a consumer of research will be emphasized. Relevant sources will include not only those in social work, but also the theories and empirical studies in interdisciplinary fields, such as human development and education. In addition, relevant theories and findings regarding accountability for service, empirical validation of interventions, and overall evaluation of practice in educational settings 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 educational settings. Particular issues may include confidentiality of and access to records and services provided, especially to minors, access to independent services by children and youth without parental consent, appropriateness of service delivery with regard to the age and developmental stage of the target group, parental permission and knowledge regarding sex education, mandated reporting of child abuse, neglect, and truancy, and policies regarding expulsion and suspension from school.
Accommodations for students with disabilities
If you need or desire an accommodation for a disability, I encourage you to contact me at your earliest convenience. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way that I teach can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. The earlier you make me aware of your needs, the more effectively we will be able 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 do decide to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential.

Course Resources
1. **Course Pack**, Social Work in School Settings, 2004, will be our class workbook. You will be expected to bring it to every class session. It is available at the Michigan Union Bookstore. A copy of the course pack as well as some of the other written resources will be made available in the Social Work Library. The "Alvarez" library also will have personal copies available for perusal.
2. **Readings** from the following texts will be required and/or recommended throughout the semester. (Depending on your interests and resources, you may want to purchase some of the following relevant books):
   - *There Are No Children Here* by Alex Kotlowitz. Doubleday

3. **Course Tools site** available for students registered in this class. You will be expected to check the site on a regular basis. Many resources will be made available on this site.

4. The **NASW Journal, Children and Schools**, available in our library.
Course Expectations
This three credit class will meet for eleven sessions. Every session will offer an abundance of information. Out of class reading and preparation is essential. These are my expectations:

1. Attendance and Participation (This will account for 30% of your final grade)

   Attendance: Due to the experiential nature of the class format, many learning opportunities will be offered in the classroom. Therefore, your attendance is as mandatory as I can make it. Note: Missing more than one class session during the spring summer session will likely make an A grade out of reach.

   Participation: I define participation 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. Included in your “P” grade are several written assignments, mostly reflective in nature. I find great value in reflection papers. Having you reflect allows me to take a peek at how you learn from experiences you partake in and how you are able to write about them. The goal here is to have the writer analyze her/his feelings and thoughts about an issue of significance in our profession.

2. Assignments (70% of your final grade)

   Second Paper. More in class.

   Completing and correcting the quiz. This take home exam will cover legislation, rules and processes affecting the education of the child with disabilities as discussed in the text, in supplementary readings as well as in lectures and discussions. More on the process in class.

   Final Project. This participatory, group activity will offer you opportunities to meet regularly with colleagues, to facilitate and observe a small group, and to put together a presentation around a topic of choice. More in class.
### Schedule of Sessions and Requirements

**SW 642**  
**Spring Summer 2004**  
**Tony Alvarez**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| 1        | May 11   | Creating our learning environment  
History & Future of School Social Work  
Current Issues in Education          |
| 2        | May 18   | Our Educational System  
Models of School Social Work Practice  
Social Work Role  
Organization of Schools  
The Laws of the Land                |
| 3        | May 25   | Special Education  
IDEA  
MI Rules and Regulations  
Section 504  
ESEA                                  |
| 4        | June 1   | Special Education Procedures  
FBA's  
PBIP's  
Manifestation Determinations  
EI/AI Evaluations                    |
| 5        | June 8   | Inclusion  
The Wave  
Assessments…Point A…Environment      |
| 6        | June 15  | Assessments  
Interventions                          |
| 7        | June 22  | Interventions  
Parent Advocacy                         |
| 8        | June 29  | Best Practices                                                      |
| 9        | July 6   | Adventure-Based Practice  
Classroom Interventions               |
| 10       | July 13  | Evaluation Points                                                   |
| 11       | July 20  | Final Pointers  
Evaluation                                |
Summary of due dates of assignments:

- **Who Showed Up**  May 18  part of participation grade
- **Where I am from**  May 18
- **Me…by a thread**  June 15

- **Quiz…handed out**  June 8  S/U grade
  - Collected/corrected  June 22

- **Second Paper**  June 29  20 points

- **Small Group Project**  80 points
  - **Group/Topic Selected**  May 18
  - **Proposal submitted**  June 1
  - **Presentations**  TBD  50 points
  - **Written report due TBD**
  - **Facilitator paper**  2 weeks after facilitation  15 points
  - **Observer paper**  2 weeks after observing  15 points

- **Who is leaving**  July 20  part of participation grade

**Grading Procedure:**

Attendance and participation (30%) includes:
- Being fully present (points given for full/partial attendance)
- Fully/Actively (and silently) participating
- Completing class activities (homework, readings, etc)

Assignments (70%) includes:
- Graded assignments
- Quiz
- Small Group Project
Class Assignments

Who Showed Up (from an educational perspective)
Hand in during session 2                     S/U grade
In 3 pages, tell me about the "you" that has shown up to this class.
- How far along are you in the program? What is your Spring Summer schedule like? What brought you to SW 642? What do you hope to give to this class? What do you expect to take from this class? Are you clear about what you "want to be when you grow up?" Did you recently take a break? What is placement like? When were you last in a public school setting?
- Tell me about your K-12 schooling. Where did you grow up? In an urban/rural setting? Did you move a lot? Were you schooled in a public/private/charter school system? Home schooled? Share some memories from your elementary, middle or high school years? Do you recall your high school environment? Any guesses on what people were being suspended/expelled for? What was a way for someone in high school to "act up?"

Where I Am From poem
Share during session 2                     S/U grade
More in class

Me...by a thread
Share during session 6                     S/U grade
More in class

Quiz on legislation
Hand out session 5, correct during session 7                     S/U grade
More in class

Second Paper: 4-corners exercise with an individual client (Option 1)
Due session 8                              20 points
More in class

Second Paper: Relevant issues in school social work (Option 2) 20 points
Due session 8                              5-7 pages, include references
Format:
1. Choose a topic relevant to school social work/mental health in schools
2. Find at least three readings that cover said topic outside of course pack articles and text
3. Inform me of your thoughts on the topic, referring to the class sessions and the article(s).
Suggestions for topics include:
- “No label, no service” or Labeling kids to receive services ("at-risk", "special education eligible")
- Confidentiality and school social work practice
- Addressing the learning environment in promoting change
- The varied roles of the School Social Worker
- LGBT youth in schools
- Poverty and its effect on children’s education
- The notion of choice in education
- Gender discrimination policies in education
- Others: ___________________________________________

Second Paper: Social Work in Schools (Option 3)  

Due session 8  
5-7 page paper

1. Develop a list of questions to use in an interview* (prior approval by instructor) of a school social worker (ssw) or a school-based mental health worker(sbmhw) from a state or country other than Michigan. Have a conversation with her/him. Some topics to cover include:
   - How social work or mental health work is provided in the particular state you selected. What are workers expected to do in that state (required, practiced). What training is required? What are some common tasks? What are some common complaints? Comments on work with marginalized populations?

2. Do some research on the state you selected and see if the information you received from the person is supported statewide.
   - Use any and all resources to get this information. (E.g. through the SSW or Mental Health associations, through the State Dept. of Education’s website, interviews with teachers, administrators, other SSWers, parent organizations, articles, readings, websites, Associations and groups that support school-based MH/SSW services in that state

*interview is defined as being in contact with, as in …email, letter, phone, face to face

3. Reflect on what you have found out.

Note: Keep in mind the state’s public school schedule. Starting early to make contact with a person or two is strongly advised. I am expecting that you use several avenues to access the information. Obtaining all your information from only one or two sources will lessen the points you earn. Also keep in mind that in some states or countries, they offer mental health services through different venues. Be alert to seeking information about how students receive mental health services and from whom.

Who is Leaving

Hand in during session 11  
S/U grade

In 3 pages, put it all together.

A. Who is leaving the class? What did you learn from this experience? About yourself? about school social work? What are your thoughts about the role you might play were you to become a school social worker soon?

B. Reflection on the Small Group Experience

Small group project  
80 points

More in class
**Small Group Project**

*During session 2, you will assign yourself to a small group. You will be part of this small group during several sessions throughout the semester and will have opportunity to facilitate it, to observe another facilitator, and to actively participate.*

In your group, your task will be to prepare for a 50-minute presentation. The format and the topic for the presentation is to be determined by your small group and will have relevance to what we have studied in this course. Some ideas include:

- Presenting on a program (developing a conflict management program; What it takes to develop a crisis team in a school setting; an 8- session group on anger management)
- Presenting on a client (Pick a client - individual, family, classroom, school building, policy. Assess, +’s/-’s; diversity; Suggest an intervention plan; Propose an evaluation plan for the intervention plan)
- Presenting on a policy (Providing services without an IEP; Statewide Sex Education; What to do with suspended or excluded students; Ethical and effective Confidentiality)

During your presentation, you will provide 2 specific readings (resources) to the class, and provide the class with an evaluation tool for them to use on your presentation. The presentation should take 50 minutes which will include time for feedback and questions.

*Presentation Dates: Sessions 9(2 slots), 10(2 slots), 11(1 slot)*

*Class Structure for Sessions 3-8*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hour One</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:10- 7:00</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Laboratory Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hour Two</td>
<td>7:00-8:50</td>
<td>Lecture on the topic of the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>8:00-8:20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hour Three</td>
<td>9:10-9:40</td>
<td>Small Group Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hour Four</td>
<td>9:40-9:50</td>
<td>Check out/Wrap Up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Small Group Structure* (See Facilitated Wave Model)

*The 30 minute group* (5 groups with 7 members each)

For facilitator:

- Check In *who showed up for group (roles, attitude, focus,)*
- Announcements *summarize last session, *
- Attention to Focus *attend to squiggles, seek agreement for Point B, *
- The Challenge *the topic at hand *
- Guiding the Learning *what facilitator can do to enhance optimal learning *
- Check Out *tie up loose strings/dangling waves *

For observer:

- Inform facilitator of your chosen approach (participatory or “on the side”)
- Facilitate feedback segment
  - Offer your observations
  - Seek feedback from members
  - Summarize your experience

Both facilitator and observer will be expected to complete a 3 page paper (to be described in class) on their experience.