

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Syllabus: SW-535 - School Social Work  
Spring 2004**

**Code of Conduct:**

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook (<http://www.csw.utk.edu/mssw/>).

**The Honor Statement:**

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (*Hilltopics*, 2003).

**Disability:**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

**Course Description:**

The purpose of this course is to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for successful and competent social work practice in public schools, with an emphasis on assessment skills and skills in collaboration, crisis intervention, and prevention. Current social problems influencing the practice of social work in schools (e.g. homelessness, HIV/AIDS, violence, substance abuse, racism) will be examined. Both traditional school social work practice as well as emerging practice paradigms, such as full service schools, will be discussed.

**Course Rationale:**

Public schools are emerging as an increasingly important setting for social work practice due to the expanding scope and complexity of the bio-psycho-social needs of the increasingly diverse population of children, youth and their families in public schools. The public school setting is one, enduring focus for many students and their families. Additionally, while the needs and problems of this population are increasing in complexity, the social service resources available to them may be fragmented and/or constrained. Social workers in schools must be knowledgeable about these multiple factors and skilled in direct practice with students and their families while also being knowledgeable and skilled in collaboration with multiple non-social work professionals.

## **Course Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able:

1. To understand the social, emotional, cultural and economic issues affecting diverse groups of students (e.g., students of color, gay & lesbian students) and schools and be able to assist diverse groups of students and families in overcoming barriers to learning.
2. To understand the needs of students at risk due to disability, economic condition, family disruption or other environmental factors and be able to work with teachers, school counselors, school psychologists and family resource center staff in addressing student needs.
3. To serve as liaison between home and school, assist parents in understanding their children's needs, interpret student assessments to parents, and work with the parents in developing parenting skills.
4. To perform case management functions, facilitating the coordination and integration of community services to benefit students and their families.
5. To support students with special needs by preparing social histories, contributing to the development and implementation of individualized education programs (IEPs) and helping ensure the participation of parents.
6. To understand federal, state and local laws and policies affecting students including issues such as services for disadvantaged students, services required by students with disabilities, due process rights of students and families, child abuse and neglect, HIV and AIDS, confidentiality, attendance, suspension and expulsion.
7. To describe and analyze the roles and functions of school social workers (e.g. advocate, teacher, broker, etc...) in their practice with diverse groups of students, families, school personnel, and diverse communities.
8. To understand how the social organization and political environment of the school influences the practice of school social work.
9. To develop skills in a) differential assessment of the problem; b) developing interventions based on empirically supported research (i.e. "what works") with diverse populations; and c) evaluating the outcomes of these interventions.
10. To address a number of ethical dilemmas facing the social work practitioner in the school setting including an exploration of one's personal values and potential conflicts between one's personal and professional values.