

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

**Syllabus: SW-540 - Principles and Techniques of Mediation  
Spring 2005**

**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. (*Hill topics, 2004*).

**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:**

This is a course on the principles and techniques of mediation. Mediation is an alternative approach to dispute resolution in which an impartial third party, called the mediator, works with parties involved in a dispute in order to facilitate the peaceful and satisfactory resolution of the dispute.

**Course Rationale:**

The rapid growth of mediation as an alternative approach to dispute resolution in a wide variety of settings makes this course a useful elective for social work students studying to become either direct service workers or community practitioners. Mediation is now being used in a wide range of settings and with a wide range of types of disputes. Mediation is being used in such problem areas as marriage and family disputes and problems; divorce and post-divorce conflicts; child protection; criminal justice; workplace harassment; parent-child disputes; community disputes; adoptions; disputes involved with the provision of mental health services; disputes involving persons with disabilities; peer mediation in schools; and intercultural disputes, to name just a few of the contexts in which mediation is being used. There are also approaches to couples and family "therapy" that are mediation based that have been developed and are being used.

## **Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course students are expected to be able to:

1. Describe a general approach to mediation that can be used in a wide range of social work practice settings;
2. Demonstrate an opening statement for use in a mediation, and discuss the role that the opening statement plays in mediation;
3. Engage parties in a dispute in the “story telling” portion of a mediation session. The student will also be able to demonstrate the use of active listening, open ended questions, and reframing during disputant’s story telling. The student will also be able to describe the importance of the story telling portion of a mediation session;
4. Assist disputant’s in a mediation session to define the “problem to be solved” in a win-win manner. The student will also be able to describe how the win-win definition of the problem to be solved functions as a reframing of the problem;
5. Discuss the differences between a disputant’s “positions” and her or his “needs;”
6. Engage disputants in a mediation session in a “brainstorming” session to find solutions to the “problem to be solved;”
7. Assist disputants in the writing of a conflict resolution agreement;
8. Plan for follow-up meetings to a mediation session;
9. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of joint mediation sessions, caucus sessions, and shuttle mediation;
10. Discuss the use of mediation as a conflict resolution process in a variety of social work practice settings, including but not limited to mental health; child protective services; gerontology; juvenile justice; adult criminal justice; community settings; divorce; child and family conflict; special education; and school violence problems; and
11. Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of oppression, poverty, learning history and gender, age, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation on the development and resolution of conflict, with a special emphasis on the role that diversity plays in the use of and conduct of mediation as a conflict resolution mechanism.