

**The University of Tennessee**  
**College of Social Work – BSSW Program**

**SOCIAL WORK 315—Social Work with Groups, Organizations and Communities**  
**Fall 2008**

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**BSSW Program Mission**

The BSSW Program at the University of Tennessee exists to fulfill a need for disciplined, highly educated and trained generalist social workers to help people improve their social functioning in a technologically complex, culturally diverse, and rapidly changing world without borders. There is a focus on the reciprocal relationships between persons and their environments. Social workers are doers; they are problem-solvers who are able to intervene in multiple-level systems and perform various professional roles. Their actions are guided and informed by a broad knowledge-base, code of ethics, and professional values. Social workers are educated and trained to do things right as well as to do the right thing.

The mission of the BSSW Program is to develop generalist social workers who are strategic thinkers, life-long learners, and opinion shapers. The knowledge-base, skills, and values necessary for generalist practice are taught in an environment that fosters professional development and prepares students for critical thinking throughout their careers. We are dedicated to preparing practitioners for the challenges of today's complex pluralistic world. Since the amount of knowledge doubles approximately every five years, what is taught today may soon be obsolete. Our challenge, therefore, lies in the on-going development and implementation of a curriculum that prepares and energizes students for generalist practice today and in the future.

**BSSW Program Goals**

Provision of education and training that enable students to become generalist social work practitioners who:

- are committed to advancing social and economic justice and the principles, values, and ethics that guide the social work profession
- are committed to evidence-based practice
- are grounded in systems theory and operate within a person-in-the-environment framework
- use the problem-solving process to intervene in multiple-level client systems
- have an understanding of human diversity, special populations, and domestic and international challenges, that informs practice interventions
- use critical thinking, evaluative, and leadership skills to address the needs of a complex, changing global world
- are committed to continuous development of professional self

**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 BSSW Handbook ([www.csw.utk.edu](http://www.csw.utk.edu)).

### **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*)

### **Disability Services**

If you need course adaptation or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 2227 Dunford Hall at 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

### **Course Description**

Social Work with Groups, Organizations and Communities (3) Generalist practice with emphasis on groups and communities, including treatment theories, techniques, and issues.

### **Rationale**

Social Work with Groups, Organizations and Communities is the third of three (3) required practice courses. This course is designed to help prepare students for entry-level social work practice. The focus on working with small groups and larger social systems will expand the foundation of students' knowledge and skills, enabling graduates to apply a broad range of practice interventions in social work settings.

### **Course Competencies**

By the completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments, and/or exams):

1. Demonstrate the basic knowledge required for assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation of small group interventions;
2. Demonstrate the basic skills needed for leading small groups;
3. Demonstrate the basic knowledge required for assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation of community-level interventions;
4. Demonstrate knowledge of diversity found in communities and an awareness of the factors that limit or oppress groups of people in communities;
5. Communicate knowledge effectively in verbal and written form;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the influences of socio-economic characteristics – of clients and social workers—on social work service delivery;
7. Demonstrate understanding of the role that social and personal power plays—and the potential for its abuse—in social work service delivery;
8. Identify other potential ethical conflicts for social workers—such as client self-determination versus the “directiveness” of the social worker.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **I. Readings**

In addition to the required texts identified in this syllabus, students will also be expected to read professional journal articles and research literature. These readings are on reserve in the University Library and on digital reserve (available through the library's website). Students should be prepared to discuss all readings before class begins on the day that they are listed.

## II. Assignments and Evaluation

- A. Group Organization Project: Each student will be assigned into a group by the instructor at the beginning of class. This group will be responsible for developing a new agency for East Tennessee and within the new agency a new program. The group will then provide a 30 minute presentation about their new agency and organization to the class. Guidelines are attached at the end of this syllabus. The purpose of this assignment is to address competencies #1, #3, #4, #5, and #6.
- B. Senior Research Project: Each student will begin a field agency-based research project to be completed in the spring semester. During the course of this semester, each student will work with their field agency supervisor and the course instructor to develop a research idea. Students may choose one of two options. This purpose of both options is to address course competency #5.

*Option 1:* Students can choose a research question, design a research methodology to answer this question, compile a concise review of the existing literature, collect data and then analyze the data. If this option is chosen, the project must be completed in time to be presented at the University of Tennessee's Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement in Spring 2009 (exact date to be announced). **Research projects for option 1 must be approved by the course instructor, student's field instructor and field placement program director (if necessary) before any data collection or analyses can occur.** An agreement form will be distributed in class and all forms must be signed and returned to the course instructor in order to receive full credit on the research project. All students are also required to complete all forms required by the University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects.

*Option 2:* Students can choose to do an in-depth systematic review of the literature. Here you will choose a research question that is of interest to you and your agency. You will then complete a systematic review of the literature, where you will summarize the most current and applicable research on your topic. You will not present at the Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement in Spring 2009, however, you will present your findings to the class next semester, along with producing a paper.

The project will be discussed frequently in class and all students will be expected to provide the professor regular updates on their progress and status. Specific guidelines for each assignment are attached to this syllabus and will be discussed in class on August 26, 2008.

- C. Examinations: There will be two exams. Missed examinations will be recorded as a "0". Only in the case of a verified absence with documentation will make-up examinations be permitted. The purpose of these two exams are to address competencies #1 through #8.

Exam 1 will cover assigned and presented material from August 28<sup>th</sup> through September 25<sup>th</sup>. This material covers information related to understanding and working with small groups.

Exam 2 will cover assigned and presented material from September 30<sup>th</sup> to November 6<sup>th</sup>. This material covers class information related to understanding and working in and with organizations and communities.

- D. Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to be in attendance at each class and to be prepared to discuss assigned topics and readings. Students are allowed to be absent or tardy three (3) times without penalty. Additionally, students are expected to be at the presentations and provide well-reasoned feedback to the groups as part of the attendance and participation grade. The purpose of attendance is to address competencies #1 through #8.
- E. Census Data Assignment: Each student will individually complete a homework assignment using data from the Census website to answer questions about local communities. The purpose of this assignment is for students to demonstrate competencies #3, #4, and #6.

For all exams and assignments, alternative arrangements, make-up exams, and deadline extensions are made rarely, at the discretion of the instructor, and in only in extenuating circumstances. Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each calendar day past the due date unless alternative arrangements are made with the instructor prior to the due date.

- F. College of Social Work IRB Form A: This form needs to be completed and turned into Dr. Craun sometime before the end of the semester *for those of you who are conducting your own research project* (Option 1). It should be completed after the methodology is set for the senior research project. If it is not turned in by the end of the semester the grade for the class will be an incomplete. Additionally, you may speak with Dr. Craun individually if you need an extension and need to turn this in at the beginning of January. An example of a granted extension would be: research project must first be accepted by agency's IRB. Competency #5 is addressed with his assignment.

**The course grade will be computed as follows:**

Organization Project...	30%
Census Data Assignment...	5%
Senior Research Project...	15%
Research Idea/Proposal (September 13th) (credit/no credit)	
Methodology/Lit Review or Search Terms (October 23 <sup>rd</sup> )	
Exam #1 (October 2nd)...	20%
Exam #2 (November 11th)...	20%
Class Attendance and Participation...	10%

**The grading scale for SW 315 is:**

A 93-100	C+ 77-79
A- 90-92	C 73-76
B+ 87-89	C- 70-72
B 83-86	D 60-69
B- 80-82	F Under 60

**Required Texts:**

Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull Jr., G. H. (2006). *Generalist practice with organizations and communities* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Toseland, R. W., & Rivas, R. F. (2005). *An introduction to group work practice* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

**Class Schedule and Readings****Introduction:****August 21, 2008****Introduction to the class****August 26, 2008****Senior Research Project Class Discussion****August 28, 2008**

Toseland & Rivas, ...*Group Work Practice*, pp. 3-43  
Topic: Introduction to Group Work

**September 2, 2008**

Topic: Understanding Group Dynamics

Toseland & Rivas, ...*Group Work Practice*, pp. 64-91

Ludwig, K. (2003). The impact of translation on the process of bilingual groups. *Social Work with Groups*, 26, 19-31.

**September 4, 2008**

Topic: Understanding Group Dynamics

Video in class: 18 with a Bullet**September 9, 2008**

Topic: Group Leadership

Toseland & Rivas, ...*Group Work Practice*, pp. 92-152

Kivlighan, D.M., Marsh-Angelone, M. & Angelone, E.O. (1994). Projection in group counseling: the relationship between members' interpersonal problems and their perception of the group leader, *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 43, 99-104.

**September 11, 2008**

Topic: Planning and Beginning a Group

Toseland & Rivas, ...*Group Work Practice*, pp. 153-218

Slusher, M. P., Mayer, C.J., & Dunkle, R. E. (1996). Gay and lesbians older and wiser (GLOW): A support group for older gay people. *Gerontologist*, 36, 118-123.

**[RESEARCH IDEA/PROPOSAL DUE BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS TODAY]**

- September 16, 2008**      **No formal class. This day please sign up for a ten minute slot to meet with Dr. Craun to discuss which senior project you want to do and the topic. It is easier to give you feedback in person.**
- September 18, 2008**      Topic: Group Assessment  
Toseland & Rivas, ...*Group Work Practice*, pp. 219-254
- September 23, 2008**      Topic: Methods for Running Treatment Groups  
Toseland & Rivas, ...*Group Work Practice*, pp. 257-319  
Hill, A. (2001) 'No one else could understand': Women's experiences of a support group run by and for mothers of sexually abused children. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31, 385-397.
- September 25, 2008**      Topic: Ending and Evaluating a Group  
Toseland & Rivas, ...*Group Work Practice*, pp. 389-438  
Goelitz, A. (2004). Using the end of groups as an intervention at end-of-life. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 44, 211-221.
- September 30, 2008**      Topic: Introduction to Organizations and Communities  
Kirst-Ashman & Hull, *Generalist Practice with...*, pp. 1-35
- October 2, 2008**      **Exam #1 (Covers material through September 25, 2008)**
- October 7, 2008**      Topic: Methods for Running Task Groups  
Toseland & Rivas, ...*Group Work Practice*, pp. 320-386
- October 9, 2008**      **FALL BREAK – NO CLASS**
- October 14, 2008**      Topic: Understanding Organizations  
Kirst-Ashman & Hull, *Generalist Practice with...*, pp. 112-156
- October 16, 2008**      Topic: Outcomes and Evaluating Macro Work  
Kirst-Ashman & Hull, *Generalist Practice with...*, pp. 310-338
- October 21, 2008**      Topic: Organizational Change  
Kirst-Ashman & Hull, *Generalist Practice with ...*, pp. 157-212

**October 23, 2008** Topic: Understanding Communities

Kirst-Ashman & Hull, *Generalist Practice with ...*, pp. 248-283

**[ METHODOLOGY/LITERATURE REVIEW or SEARCH TERMS/OUTPUT DUE BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS TODAY]**

**October 28, 2008** Topic: Using Census Data

Hillier, A. (2007). Why social work needs mapping. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 43, 205-221.

**October 30, 2008** **NO CLASS – Dr. Craun at CSWE in Philadelphia**

**November 4, 2008** Topic: Advocacy

Kirst-Ashman & Hull, *Generalist Practice with...*, pp. 339--370

**November 6, 2008** Topic: Fundraising

Kirst-Ashman & Hull, *Generalist Practice with ...*, pp. 456-467

**[CENSUS DATA ASSIGNMENT DUE BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS TODAY]**

**November 11, 2008** **EXAM #2 (Covers material from September 30 to November 6)**

**November 13, 2008** Group Project (2 groups)

**November 18, 2008** Group Project (2 groups)

**November 20, 2008** Group Project (2 groups)

**November 25, 2008** Group Project (2 groups)

**November 27, 2008** **THANKSGIVING – Enjoy!**

**December 2, 2008** Group Project (2 groups) - **Last day of class**

## Group Organization Project

The goal of this project is for you to better understand social service organizations, and in order to accomplish that goal, your group is asked to develop a plan for a new social service organization in East Tennessee. As a team, you are asked to establish either a non-profit or for-profit agency. Within that agency your group will establish a program that is meant to serve some need in the community. For example, if you decide to develop an organization whose mission is to help homeless teenagers, you'll also need to present a program that your agency will provide to those homeless teenagers to help them. At the end of the semester, your group will have 30 minutes to present your newly developed organization and program to the class. The class will be asked to view your presentation as a group evaluating your presentation for a funder (think United Way). Your group needs to convince your classmates that your agency is needed within East Tennessee, and your agency and the presented program can positively influence the issue your agency is designed to address. Your classmates (aka funders) will individually fill out evaluation sheets about your group's presentation and ideas.

In your presentation, your group needs to:

1. Identify and provide information about the need in your community;
  - a. What social issue is your newly developed agency tackling?
  - b. Provide data (both local and national) on this social need.
  
2. Identify your agency:
  - a. Is it a non-profit or for-profit agency? Explain your choice.
  - b. What is the mission statement of your agency?
  - c. Where is it going to be located? Be fairly specific and provide reasoning for that location.
  
3. Identify the program that will be presented to funders (although agencies often have many programs, you only need to develop and present one)
  - a. Talk about the program design:
    1. Whom will it serve? How many people will it serve?
    2. What will it do? What are the program's objectives? Find one or two articles that demonstrate the effectiveness of a program that is similar to what you are proposing.
    3. How will your staff/volunteers get it done? List relevant staff/volunteer qualifications.
    4. How will requested funds be used? Will clients be charged to participate in your agency's program?
  - b. Describe how you will measure the effectiveness of your program:
    1. What are your outcome indicators?
    2. Describe indicators that will be measured to determine the success of the project and how data will be collected to report the project's results.
  
4. Identify other agencies in East Tennessee that will impact the services your agencies provide.
  - a. Which agencies will you have a complementary relationship with? Will your agency be located within a host setting?
  - b. Will your agency have a competitive relationship with another East Tennessee agency?

- c. Is your agency duplicating services provided by a more established agency? If so, provide your reasoning.
5. Sustainability and Funding: You are presenting for only 12 months worth of funds.
    - a. Describe how the project will be phased out or sustained at the end of the 12 month funding cycle. If it will be sustained, where will you look for additional funds?
    - b. As this group represents only one funding source, provide other ways your agency will look at obtaining funds (for example: fundraising (be specific), grants, fee for service, etc.)

For your 30 minute presentation utilize technology and be creative in your presentation to the class, while still getting the needed information across. Dress as you would if you were really presenting this to a group of funders. You should provide some time to answer questions from the class/funders, but how you divide your 30 minutes is up to your group. Throughout the second half of the course, you will be provided time during class to meet with your group to work on your agency and presentation.

The scores from your classmates on the group evaluation will be tallied. Open-ended feedback from the class will be typed up without identifiers and provided to the group by the instructor. The group with the overall highest average score on the feedback sheets from the class will receive two bonus points that will be added on to everyone in the group's final grades.

### **Research Project Guidelines: Option 1 – Running a study**

The research project begins in the fall semester and concludes in the spring. If you choose to do this project, you will be required to present your research on a poster at the University of Tennessee's Annual Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement in Spring 2009 (exact dates to be announced). Your research project should be designed and conducted in collaboration with your field supervisor. A signed research agreement form is required before any data collection may begin. These forms are available from Professor Craun or you can get them from the class website on Blackboard.

For confidentiality purposes, your field agency and supervisor will not be identified in your research presentation. All questions, concerns, problems, and issues should be directed to Professor Craun.

1. ***Research Ideas/Proposal*** (due September 11, 2008)  
 For this assignment, you are required to turn in a list of your ideas for a research project. This does not need to be structured in formal paragraphs, but should include all description or explanation needed to fully develop your ideas. Please include your agency's name and target population. This is your opportunity to brainstorm all possible research topics and get feedback. When considering the full scope of possible research ideas, consider what you would like to know, what your agency/field instructor would like to know, and what your clients might like to know. Ultimately, your research project topic is your choice. However, please remember that your project should benefit your agency in some way. There is no suggested length for this

assignment. It should be as long as needed to list and explain all possible research project ideas. Feedback and discussion of your ideas will be done individually with the instructor.

## 2. **Methodology and Literature Review** (due October 23, 2008)

### A) *Methodology*

For this assignment, you must describe your research project in great detail and as precisely as possible. The suggested length of the methodology section is 5-6 pages. A complete methodology section addresses the following headings:

**Research Question** - state the main question(s) that your research will seek to answer. Include a statement about why it is important to answer this question and the potential relevance of this research for your fieldwork agency

**Sample**— describe the sample or population that you will use and your rationale for using it. Also, describe the population to which you hope to generalize your findings.

**Sampling Plan**— describe how study participants will be selected for inclusion in your research.

**Study Site**— describe where the data will be collected. What are the advantages/strengths of collecting data at this site? What are some potential problems, concerns, or limitations of this site?

**Operationalization of Concepts**— identify and describe the variables you will use in your research and how will they be measured (for example: the use of standardized scales, assessment tools, specific interview questions, etc.). If possible, identify the dependent and independent variables. If you will be developing or assessing an intervention, clearly describe the intervention here (for example: Describe the intervention and its agenda/curriculum. What are the goals or desired outcomes of the intervention? How will your research evaluate specifically if these goals have been met, and so on?) .

**Data Collection**— describe how the data will be collected and who will be collecting it. Also, discuss any problems that you may encounter and how you will obtain informed consent from study participants.

**Data Analysis**— describe how you plan to analyze your data. Be sure that your planned analyses are appropriate to answer your research question and that the data you collect fits the chosen analyses. You are not expected to describe specific statistical tests, but rather describe the types of analyses or comparisons that you plan to do with the data you collect.

**Timeline**— design a chart illustrating how long you expect your study to take. Focus especially on your activities to the start of the spring semester in January. Tasks to be undertaken (and possibly completed) in the next four months include getting approval for your research from your field agency supervisor, putting together a study sample, collecting data, and data entry. In order to have adequate time to enter your data, analyze it, and design your poster, it is suggested that all data be collected by the end of February.

B) *Literature Review* (also due October 23, 2008)

The second part of this assignment is to develop an up-to-date, concise, and critical review of the literature related to your research project. This is not just a descriptive list or summary of each reference. Instead, the review should organize and synthesize the collected literature related to your research project then assess what is known and what is not known about your topic. Your literature review should identify the strengths and limitations of the literature and describe how your project “fills a gap” in this literature (this is answering the “so what?” question). Be sure to address any controversies surrounding your research topic (competing views, etc.) and to describe the type of research being reported in each piece of literature you discuss (empirical study, published literature review, and so on). Your review should be clearly organized and flow in a logical direction. Please refer to *Planning and Conducting Agency based Research* (Westerfelt & Dietz, 2005) for more guidance and tips on completing a literature review.

The literature review must include at least ten references; only *one* of these references may be from the World Wide Web. All others must be from professional journal articles or books found in the library or located through the library’s on-line catalog and/or databases. Since older references may be dated and not as applicable to social work practice today, the majority of reviewed references should be published after 1997. A list of all cited references should be attached to the literature review (in correct APA style). The suggested length for the literature review is approximately 6-7 pages.

**Research Project Guidelines: Option 2 – Doing a systematic review**

This research project will also start in the fall and end in the spring. If you choose this option you will not present at the University of Tennessee’s Annual Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement in Spring 2009, but rather will complete a systematic review paper on a social work topic and present your findings to the class in Spring.

In this project you will do the following: (1) Determine some needed information for your social work practice; (2) Convert this information need into an answerable question; (3) Track down the best evidence to answer your question; (4) Critically appraise the evidence; (5) Integrate evidence with practice experience and characteristics of your client. This semester you will tackle steps 1 through 3, while starting to consider step 4.

1. ***Research Ideas/Proposal*** (due September 11, 2008)

For this assignment, you are required to turn in a list of your ideas for a research project. This does not need to be structured in formal paragraphs, but should include all description or explanation needed to fully develop your ideas. Please include your agency’s name and target population. This is your opportunity to brainstorm all possible research topics and get feedback. When considering the full scope of possible research ideas, consider what you would like to know, what your agency/field instructor would like to know, and what your clients might like to know. Ultimately, your research project topic is your choice. However, please remember that your project should benefit your agency in some way. There is no suggested length for this assignment. It should be as long as needed to list and explain all possible research project

ideas. Feedback and discussion of your ideas will be done individually with the instructor.

2. **Research Question/Search Terms** (due October 23, 2008)

Remember when formulating a research question, having a precise, answerable question can help narrow down your search for applicable evidence. When formulating your question you want to include in the question information about the patient population of interest, the intervention being considered, and the outcome of interest. Some examples of research questions for systematic reviews include: (a) What group therapies improve family dynamics of adolescents with substance abuse problems? (b) What interventions are shown to prevent child abuse in rural communities? (c) Which interventions can decrease the use of restraints among violent psychiatric patients? For the first part of this assignment, you are to list the specific research question you will be addressing in your systematic review. This can be done at the top of the "Search Term Documentation Table", which can be found on Blackboard.

Using proper search terms can help you narrow down the literature to find those articles which are the most appropriate for your research topic. When searching the databases use the terms listed in your research question (client population, intervention, and/or the outcome). If your research question is quite narrow, you may have to expand the terms to become more encompassing. For example, if your research question deals with the treatment of depression in lesbian couples in Appalachia, you may need to expand your research term from Appalachia to rural areas, and lesbian couples to homosexual couples or gay couples. After choosing your search terms, you'll need to search relevant databases. For this project you should search academic databases, such as PsycInfo, PubMed, Sociological Abstracts, and Social Work Abstracts. You can look at additional resources like the Cochrane Collaboration or the Campbell Collaboration. Finally, some government agencies, such as the National Institute for Mental Health, and the National Institute of Justice, may have related research to your topic.

For this assignment, you will need to complete the entire Search Term Documentation Table worksheet (all eight rows). This worksheet is on Blackboard. There is an example of how to fill it out on the second page of the worksheet. This is to show me how you are looking for the empirical articles to answer your research question. From your searches, you need to print out twenty (20) of the best/most relevant abstracts to your research question. For each abstract, I would like bullet points stating why this article/abstract was chosen and is a strength for your systematic review. Additionally, provide bullet points on any drawbacks of using this article for your systematic review.