

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE**  
**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**  
**SW 520 Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice, Section 004**  
**(1 credit hour)**  
**Summer, 2008**

Classes/assignments are scheduled June 2 through July 3  
Grades will be posted by July 8

**Instructor:** Rodney A. Ellis (Rod), Ph.D., CMSW  
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**Office Hours:** By appointment in an Instant Messenger service  
**Pre-requisites:** 510, 512, 513, 517, 519, 522, 538.

### **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 ([www.utk.csw.edu](http://www.utk.csw.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*, 2007).

### **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 required Advanced curriculum course. The course examines how to (1) convert information needs related to practice decisions into well-structured answerable questions; (2) efficiently locate the best evidence with which to answer such questions; (3) critically appraise such evidence; (4) apply results to practice and policy decisions; and (5) evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the application of such results to practice and policy decisions.

### **COURSE RATIONALE**

In order to maximize services to client systems that are effective in achieving valued outcomes, and to minimize ineffective and harmful services, social workers must have the knowledge and skills to formulate well-structured answerable questions about practice and policy decisions, and locate, critically appraise, apply, and evaluate the best evidence for making practice and policy decisions within a culturally affirming generalist social work context.

### **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. Define, articulate, and apply principles of critical thinking, by learning how to recognize, define, and avoid practice fallacies, to improve care given and care received with diverse clients/client systems. (*content*:

*assertions and assumptions of practice; common logical fallacies when examining evidence; common errors in reasoning that violate principles of science called “practitioners’ fallacies”; steps in evidence based practice; controversies and misconceptions about evidence based practice).*

2. Formulate well-structured answerable questions about practice and policy decisions through engagement with the client, a mutual understanding of expectations, and a careful assessment of service needs and availability, the client/client system’s culture, context, and motivation. *(content: Client Oriented Practical Evidence Search” (COPES) questions; evaluation, prevention, assessment, description, and risk questions).*

3. Employ a scientific analytic approach using qualitative and/or quantitative methods to rigorously, critically and open-mindedly investigate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret available primary and secondary data and research findings, evaluation outcomes and other information toward formulation of professional judgments and conclusions *(content: steps in evidence based practice; utilizing electronic searches and information technology using methodological filters; quality of study rating forms and frameworks for evaluating research studies; meta-analysis).*

4. Analyze the influence and implications of cultural, geographic, community, gender-based, religious, political, ideological and other identities and orientations on thinking about social issues, concerns, ethics and values. *(content: identity formation; experiences of individuals in these contexts; formation of multiple identities; case studies of life experiences in identity formation and their relationships with the thoughts on contemporary social issues; critical analysis of self with respect to the above identity designations; history of cultural insensitivity in research; generalization of research findings to other groups; recruitment and retention of minority and oppressed populations in research studies; problematic issues in making research more culturally competent).*

## **ORGANIZATION OF COURSE AND BLACKBOARD**

This course will be taught entirely online. There will be NO SCHEDULED CLASS SESSIONS. Students will need to decide what grade they want to earn and will submit the required number of assignments in order to earn that grade. The section below entitled “Required Activities” describes what kinds of projects must be completed in order to earn each grade. This process is known as “contracting for a grade”.

Please note: Although you will not need to use APA style to complete these assignments, the assignments must be completed at an acceptable level in order to count toward the grade. Each assignment will, therefore, receive a satisfactory or unsatisfactory grade. Satisfactory completion of every assignment required for a specific grade will result in the student receiving that grade. Failure to complete an assignment or assignments satisfactorily will result in failure of the course. Students who submit an unsatisfactory assignment will have one opportunity to bring that assignment up to a satisfactory level.

Also please note: You MUST submit a written contract specifying which grade you wish to receive by Wednesday, June 11. Please do NOT post your desired grade on the discussion board. Please submit it directly to the instructor through the Gradebook or Drop Box in Blackboard..

With the exception of the required text (Gibbs, listed above) all materials for this course are posted on Blackboard. This includes the worksheets required for the weekly readings, as well as the materials and instructions for the projects required to earn a B+ or an A.

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

### Required activities

*Project 1- In order to earn a “B”- Students must successfully and satisfactorily 1) read the required text (Gibbs) and complete one worksheet for each chapter based on the weekly readings and post questions and/or comments on the Discussion board. These worksheets and posts must be completed according to the schedule listed in the Course Outline below.*

*Project 2- In order to earn a “B+”- Students must successfully and satisfactorily complete all the activities*

identified in Project 1 (contract for a “B”) AND must view the 4 video clips posted on Blackboard and complete the assignments posted along with them.

*Project 3- In order to earn an “A”*- Students must successfully and satisfactorily complete all the activities described in both Project 1 (contract for an A) and Project 2 (contract for a B) AND must complete review the four PowerPoints posted on Blackboard and complete the assignment related to each. .

All assignments must be submitted according to the schedule provided in the course outline below. All assignments must also be submitted through Blackboard. Instructions for submissions through Blackboard will be provided in the Course Information section of the website.

### Grading Scale

The University of Tennessee grading scale is as follows:

93 – 100 A  
88 – 92 B+  
83 – 87 B  
78 – 82 C+  
73 – 77 C  
68 – 72 D+  
63 – 67 D  
<63 F

### Class policies

1. Students are expected to complete all assignments and submit them by the due date. Exceptions will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances in advance of the due date.
2. Incompletes will be given only according to the rules specified in the written policies of the most recent edition of Hilltopics.
3. All written assignments are due at midnight on the day specified in the course outline. Assignments received after that time will not be accepted unless prior approval is given.
4. Cheating and/or plagiarizing will not be tolerated. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be subject to the disciplinary procedures outlined in their university’s student policies.
5. University policy regarding religious holidays will be observed. Any student may request to be excused from class or rescheduling of an assignment to observe a religious day from his/her faith.

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

Gibbs, L.E. (2003). Evidence-based Practice for the Helping Professions. Pacific Grove, CA: Thomson/Brooks Cole.

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

The following assignments are due ON THE DAY listed below. Please note that classes begin on Monday, June 2. The first readings and worksheets are due two days later on Wednesday, June 4. Grades will be posted by July 8.

## Week 1- June 4, 2008

By this dates these tasks should be completed and submitted:

Those contracting for a B should have: Read chapters 1 and 2 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Those contracting for a B+ should have: Read chapters 1 and 2 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Those contracting for an A should have: Read chapters 1 and 2 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Please note that for the first week the assignments for all three grade contracts are the same. Students do not need to submit their contract statements until Week 2. At that point they must begin to complete all assignments relate to their chosen grade.

## Week 2- June 11, 2008

By this dates these tasks should be completed and submitted:

Submit a written statement of the grade for which you will contract.

Those contracting for a B should have: Read chapters 3 and 4 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Those contracting for a B+ should have: 1) Read chapters 3 and 4 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip #1, posted on Blackboard, and complete the exercise associated with it.

Those contracting for an A should have: Read chapters 3 and 4 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip #1, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it. 3) Reviewed PowerPoint #1, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it.

## Week 3- June 23, 2008

By this dates these tasks should be completed and submitted:

Those contracting for a B should have: Read chapters 5 and 6 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Those contracting for a B+ should have: 1) Read chapters 5 and 6 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip #2, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it.

Those contracting for an A should have: 1) Read chapters 5 and 6 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip #2, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it. 3) Reviewed PowerPoint #2, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it.

#### Week 4- June 30, 2008

By this dates these tasks should be completed and submitted:

Those contracting for a B should have: Read chapters 7 and 8 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Those contracting for a B+ should have: 1) Read chapters 7 and 8 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip # 3, posted on Blackboard and completed the exercise associated with it.

Those contracting for an A should have: 1) Read chapters 7 and 8 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip # 3, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it. 3) Reviewed PowerPoint #3, posted in Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it.

#### Week 5- July 5, 2008

By this dates these tasks should be completed and submitted:

Those contracting for a B should have: Read chapters 9 and 10 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard.

Those contracting for a B+ should have: 1) Read chapters 9 and 10 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip # 4, posted on Blackboard and completed the exercise associated with it.

Those contracting for an A should have: Read chapters 9 and 10 from Gibbs and completed the relevant worksheets from Blackboard. You must also post a comment, question, or some kind of discussion in the designated forum on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. 2) Viewed Video Clip # 4, posted on Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it. 3) Reviewed PowerPoint #4, posted in Blackboard, and completed the exercise associated with it

Grades will be posted by midnight, July 8.