Course Value Statement:

The value of this course comes from learning to remain calm and skillful within conflict that is heavy with emotional charge and rigid positions. As a social worker this will happen everyday in your professional life; as a human being it will happen in your personal life as well. Your course effort will result in having skills needed for building peace in your professional and personal life.

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.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, 2011 – 2012). Available online at: http://dos.utk.edu/files/HT2011revised.pdf.

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 2227 Dunford Hall (865) 974-6087, VP: (865) 622-6566, Fax: (865) 974-9552, Email: ods@utk.edu.

Course Description

This is a course on the principles and techniques of mediation and conflict resolution strategy. 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. This course is designed to introduce the student to theory and techniques of conflict resolution and mediation.
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 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. Mediation can be used create change through the resolution of conflicts at both micro and macro levels. The wide range settings in which mediation can be used make this conflict resolution approach an important tool for social workers.

Course Competencies
At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1) Conduct a mediation session including:
   a. preparation
   b. opening statement
   c. facilitating “story telling”
   d. defining the dispute to be resolved
   e. facilitating brainstorming solutions
   f. reframing
   g. and writing up an agreed upon solution

   (Advanced practice: P1: Creatively work with unique, ambiguous, value-conflicted, or otherwise complex situations and resolve problems that are resistant to traditional solutions; P3: Evaluate practice theories and models, and design and implement evidence-based practice; Populations at risk and social justice 2: Appropriately implement methods of advocacy and social change strategies with and on behalf of client systems); (Content: in-class simulations; vide taped mediation sessions; course readings from text on mediation; on-line readings on mediation and mediation skills; readings in text and on line on the use of mediation to facilitate change for vulnerable populations)

2) Describe the ethical principles that guide social work mediators

   (Advanced practice: Values and ethics 1: Judiciously apply the value base of the social work profession and its ethical standards in all professional interactions); (Content: Textbook readings on ethics for mediators; online readings on ethical principles; readings on the importance and limitations of neutrality);

3) Identify and demonstrate important interpersonal mediation skills
(Advanced practice: P1: Creatively work with unique, ambiguous, value-conflicted, or otherwise complex situations and resolve problems that are resistant to traditional solutions; Populations at risk and social justice 2: Appropriately implement methods of advocacy and social change strategies with and on behalf of client systems); (Content: in-class simulations; in-class skills practice; video taped mediation sessions; course readings from text on mediation; on-line readings on mediation and mediation skills;)

4) Identify special issues concerning mediation with persons from different and diverse cultures

(Diversity 2: Assess and work sensitively with practice, ethical, and research dilemmas that may arise when working with diverse client systems) (Content: Readings from course text on cultural issues in mediation; on line readings on how cultural differences impact the development of conflict, the use of mediation to resolve conflict between persons from different cultures, and special communication skills needed for conducting mediations with persons from different cultures)

5) Identify special issues concerning the use of mediation in various practice contexts, including work with couples, families, parents and children, adoptions, community systems and organizations, and in criminal justice contexts

(Collaborative Learning Environment Statement:)

This course will be offered online in both an asynchronous and synchronous fashion. The course will include readings, short instructional videos, recorded lectures, discussion boards, journals, video communication and development, audio recordings, online quizzes, and live on line (synchronous) classroom formats.

As a professor, I have things to teach and things to learn. As a student you also have things to learn and things to teach! In this class I have a role and you have a role. Below are descriptions of the role responsibilities.

My role:

- I will provide relevant material to read, meaningful engaging activities to complete, and clear methods of assessment to accomplish the objectives of the course.
- I will communicate clearly about technology requirements for this class.
I will elicit and consider your feedback throughout class to understand your experience as a learner.
I will tell you what I am learning through working with you.

Your role:

- You will take responsibility for accessing technological help as needed through UT OIT helpdesk.
- You will engage in the course material, activities, and assessment of this class.
- You will provide feedback to each other, me, and very importantly, to yourself!
- You will be prepared to fail at some tasks and improve as the course progresses.

By engaging with each other and honoring and executing the roles well, we will be able to create a collaborative learning environment.

**Required Text**

The required texts are:


The instructor may also require the reading of other book chapters and online materials during the course of the semester. This book is on sale from online sources such as Amazon.

**Assignments:**

**Mediation Simulation Video**- 25% of grade (Due mid and end of semester)
**Course Competencies: #1, #3**

Students will videotape two examples of their mediation skills through a simulated mediation session.

Specific skills to be learned through the simulated mediations include:

- Conducting a mediations session:
  - Opening statement
  - Facilitating story telling
  - Defining the “problem” to be solved
  - Brainstorming
  - Facilitating negotiation; rating ideas
Building a tentative problem resolution strategy
Writing an agreement
Bringing the mediation session to a close

The purpose of these simulations is for students to learn mediation skills by practicing them in the simulations. Students will practice such skills as empathic listening; the use of open ended questions; reframing; speaking in a diplomatic and empathic manner; identifying disputants’ positions and needs; defining problems in a win-win manner; facilitating negotiations; interventions for interrupting angry exchanges between disputants; and writing up agreements. Simulations address competencies 1-3.

The student must:

- develop a conflict scenario
- locate people to play the disputants,
- and mediate the conflict.

One video tape will be due mid-semester and should reflect skills up to “Defining the problem.” The other will be due at the end of the semester and should reflect the mediation steps of “Brainstorming” to “Bringing the mediation to a close.” (See list of steps below).

Each video should not exceed 20 minutes.

Each student will not only self-assess their own videos, but will also be assigned two-four peer videos to critique and provide written feedback regarding observed mediation skills. These critiques will be anonymous.

The faculty, considering self and peer assessments, will also grade videos based on the attached rubric.

Skills Lab- 15% of grade (due throughout the semester as assigned)
Course Competencies #1, #3

You will have a series of conflict resolution skills labs to complete.

These are designed to allow you to practice, self-assess, and give and receive feedback on important conflict resolutions skills.

The skills include:

- Non-verbal communication
- Empathy
• Reflective listening
• Open ended questions
• Reframing
• Identifying the problem

You will be able to earn 5 points per lab. There will be 20 labs available for a total of 100 possible points to earn.

**Journal- 15% of grade (due weekly)**

**Course Competencies #2, #4, #5**

Each week you will complete a journal entry.

The journal entry serves two purposes:

- **Reflective practice:** This will be 250 word essay asking you to reflect on what you are learning about yourself personally and about mediation professionally by engaging the coursework.
- **Quiz question creation:** For each reading you will need to develop two quiz questions that will be used for the course.

Sometimes your journal entry will have both a reflective practice essay AND quiz questions; sometimes just one or the other. **If you have both it is important to create a separate journal entry for each.**

**A note about quiz questions:**

When you create quiz questions they must be:

- matching
- multiple choice
- true or false
- ordering
- fill in the blank

Please write the article citation in the heading of your entry, indicate the correct answer, and on what page the answer can be found.

Attached is a document on writing quiz questions.

**Completion of Online Mediation Module- 15% of grade due by mid-semester**

**Course Competencies #1, #2, #3, #4, #5**
You will complete an online-self paced didactic module on mediation. This module closely follows your required text- Friedman, Gary J, and Jack Himmelstein. Challenging Conflict: Mediation through Understanding. Chicago, IL: American Bar Association, 2008. You are to consult the text as needed to fully understand content referenced in the online module.

**Final Quiz- 15% of grade (due end of semester exam slot for this class)**
**Course Competencies #2, #4, #5**

You will complete a final quiz.

The quiz will be comprised, in part, of the questions you developed throughout the course.

The quiz will be mostly multiple choice, true false, and matching questions.

There will be one essay on the quiz.

You will have 3 hours to complete the quiz on this Blackboard site during the exam time allotted for this course. You may use your notes but not each other during the quiz.

**Class participation- 15% of grade (due weekly)**
**Course Competencies #1, #2, #3, #4, #5**

Excellent class participation includes:

- Having the appropriate technology for the course and actively solving technological problems by contacting the OIT helpdesk at 865-974-9900
- Meeting with your class partner for online "pair share" discussions
- Participating in discussion board, video board, or audio board assignments
- Completing assignments on time
- Asking for help with course content if you are confused or need guidance
- For the 2-3 live sessions we will have, being an active participant with your camera on and listening to others
- A willingness to fail as you learn new skills

**Grading:** Your grade will be a weighted average based upon the following percentages:
Your grade will be a weighted average based upon the following percentages:
Grading Criteria

Final course grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- A 92 and up
- B+ 87 to 91.99
- B 80 to 86.99
- C+ 75 to 79.99
- C 70 to 74.99
- D 64 to 69.99
- F below 63.99

Course Calendar-

Please refer to “Class Sessions” on the Blackboard site for the course calendar.

Most classes will occur asynchronously.

There will be 2 live online sessions: one just before mid-semester and one just before the end of the semester. For those students who are unable to attend the live online sessions due to work schedule, the sessions will be recorded, and the student will be expected to post a video response to the recorded class.