SOCW 546: Collaborative Conversations

THIS IS A SAMPLE OUTLINE. ACTUAL COURSE OUTLINE MAY VARY IN STRUCTURE, REQUIRED READINGS, TEXTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Course Description:

This course focuses on social justice informed social work practices, with an emphasis on critical, Indigenous, feminist and poststructural ideas.

Course Intentions:

The course provides the basics of socially just social work practice skills. Students have the opportunity to learn and apply practice skills and reflect on their experiences with them in practicum and class work. The course also reviews the theories underpinning various practice approaches. It is intended to provide a solid foundation for practice as well as ideas for future learning. Please understand that ethical, effective and socially just practice requires knowledge acquisition and skill development beyond what is offered in this course.

By the completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Explain critical reflection as it applies to social work practice and demonstrate how you might take up critical reflection in your own practice.

2. Critically reflect on the ways in which your location/positionality (factors such as class, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation) and life history impact the aspirations, perceptions, assumptions, beliefs and attitudes that you bring to social work practice.

3. Identify and critically analyse a range of social work practice methods, including the underlying assumptions, strengths and limitations of various approaches, with reference to their applicability for social justice work.

4. Describe the political and ethical dilemmas inherent in various social work practices.

5. Critically reflect on your knowledge base about practice, your ability to understand, critique and use relevant practice literature, and your plan for future learning.
**Educational method:**

This course utilizes adult learning principles – students (and instructor) are expected to think critically, be self-reflective, and take considerable responsibility for their own learning. While the instructor takes responsibility for the overall structure of the course, for some of the content and for student evaluation, students are responsible for some of the content (via class discussions and other forms of participation) and for actively and continuously engaging in learning. I anticipate that students will contribute to their own and class learning by bringing and sharing their own experiences and ideas, and by making the class a safe and respectful place in which others can do the same. Our learning to a large extent will depend on our willingness, within an educational rather than therapeutic setting, to practice respect, to listen, to trust, to take risks, and to be open to ideas and beliefs that we might not share. Students will have the opportunity in the first class to agree on ‘class climate commitments’ that can facilitate this process.

**Pre-requisite skills**

In order to benefit from and succeed in this course, you need some key skills. The units are intended to contribute to your existing abilities to:

1. Read academic texts effectively; i.e., understand within reasonable time;
2. Write academic essays;
3. Summarize extensive pieces of academic writings;
4. Paraphrase extensive pieces of academic writings.
5. Synthesise information from different sources.

The course site provides various resources and links for students seeking to strengthen their writing and analysis skills.

Students who hope to achieve a grade of B+ or higher should expect to work a minimum of 6 – 9 hours per week (on average) on the course, though the amount of time you spend will of course depend on factors like the reading, writing and analytical abilities you bring to the course. Please note that weekly attendance and active participation in class discussions and activities is expected.

**There is no required text for SOCW 546.**

All readings are available electronically through the course site or the UVIC library or (for a few optional readings) directly from the instructor. Engaging with all the assigned readings in a week is likely to provide the most effective practice learning, and likely to substantially contribute to assignment preparation. That said, the choice of what to read is yours; I recognize that students come to the class with varying levels of preparation and experience. The syllabus lists additional resources for each topic, all available through the UVIC library.

**Request for Accommodation:**

Please note that if you need assistance in order to fully participate and complete the assignments due to disability or for any other reason, you need to discuss this with me at the outset of the
course. All School policies on accommodation, assessment of student learning, submission of assignments, attendance and participation, grading, etc. can be accessed at: http://www.uvic.ca/hsd/socialwork/current/msw/policies/index.php

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism involves using other people’s work without due acknowledgement, irrespective of the site where the author’s work is published. Plagiarism may be done deliberately or unwittingly. Either way, it constitutes a serious act of academic misconduct and will result in failure in the course – NO EXCEPTIONS. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism and how you might prevent it from occurring, consult the university calendar: http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2015-09/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html

Multiple submission: Students cannot submit work that they have previously used (e.g. in other courses) in identical or similar form to fulfill any assignment in this course. Students who do so without prior permission from their instructor are subject to penalty.

Technology In The Classroom

Please refrain from using laptops, cell phones and all other electronic devices during class time. Cell phones should be turned off except in cases of emergency. If you must have your cell phone on during class, please explain this at the beginning of class and set your phone to vibrate. If you take notes on a laptop due to disability, or use any other assistive devices, please provide me with confirmation from the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability.

Late assignments:

A student who is unable to meet an assignment deadline due to illness, accident, or family affliction may be eligible for an extension. Extensions must be negotiated prior to the assignment due date or the penalty for late assignments will be applied: a grade level penalty during the first week of lateness (from an A- to a B+, or a B+ to a B, for example) and a further grade level penalty during the second week of lateness. Assignments are not accepted (hence a failing grade of N assigned) two weeks after the due date. Please note that extensions cannot be given for the final assignment due to university deadlines for submission of marks. If you are unable to complete the final assignment by the due date, you will need to apply for an academic concession and submit supporting paperwork prior to the assignment due date: http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2015-09/GRAD/Regi/AcCo.html

Assignment Basics:

This course has three assignments, as shown in the table below. While each assignment has specific grading criteria, all your work must demonstrate that you are familiar with and able to integrate course and outside materials, that you are able to engage with the material and your learning experiences, that you have critically self-located in your assignments, and that you are able to address the individual components of the assignments with intellectual honesty. I expect that students working at a graduate level will seek out and make use of resources beyond the
required course materials in preparing their assignments. All assignments in the course must be completed in order to pass the course.

Papers should be thoroughly proofread and corrected before turned in. All assignments should be submitted in hard copy as a Word document. Please ensure you keep a copy of your assignment. Papers must be typed in no less than 12-point font and double-spaced unless otherwise specified. Correct APA style and referencing system are required for all in-text and bibliographical references. Grammar, style and referencing are considered in grading. Please review the Writing Expectations document on the course site for additional information. If you are not familiar with APA referencing and style, please follow the guide on the library website: http://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/guides/index.php

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment and Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percent of Final Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 – Critical Reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 – Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 – Practice Framework</td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment #1 – Critical Reflection

Intentions: This assignment takes as its starting point the idea that socially just practice is not only enhanced by purposeful critical reflection, but that critical reflection is foundational to effective and socially just practice. This is an opportunity to practice critical reflection and consolidate your learning from readings/resources (and related discussions) from the first 3 classes.

Recommended Length: 6-8 double-spaced pages, exclusive of references.

Due:

Instructions: Drawing on the materials in the first 3 units to assist you, write a critically reflective piece outlining how your positionality and life/work experiences shape your beliefs and ideas about social work practice, including what it means to be a “professional”. Which of these beliefs or ideas might influence you towards socially just practice? How? Why? How do you/will you support these ethical/moral commitments? Which of these beliefs or ideas might constrain your ethical efforts? How? Why? How do you/will you challenge these beliefs or ideas? Format: Essay (paragraphs).

Assignment #2 – Assessment

Intentions: This assignment takes as its starting point the idea that the assessment and recording practices and processes that are central to social work practice are always shaped by social and political forces and enacted through dominant discourses. The purpose of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to apply your learning from assigned readings/resources (and related discussions) in the first 5 classes to an actual assessment of an individual or family with whom you are engaging in practicum (or employment) so that you might see and grapple with these
forces and discourses. Students not able to draw a ‘case’ from their practicum or employment may use one of those presented as the basis for their assessment.

Recommended Length: 6-8 double-spaced pages, exclusive of references.

Due:

Instructions: Drawing on the course materials in the first 5 classes to assist you, write an assessment of an individual or family.

Format and Instructions: Use as a template for your assessment the assessment form or format in use in your practicum/work setting. Students who are unable draw from their practicum/work setting will be provided with a sample psychosocial assessment form/format. Conclude the assessment with a brief critical reflection on how social/political forces and dominant discourses (at play in your practicum or work setting and/or about a particular population) shaped your assessment, where and how and why you resisted or attempted to resist these forces, and where and how and why you were complicit with them.

**Assignment #3 – Practice Framework**

**Intentions:** This assignment takes as its starting point the idea that some practice ideas, strategies and approaches will have more resonance and “fit” for you than do others. The purpose of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to consolidate your learning from assigned readings/resources (and related discussions) from the classes into a practice reference guide.

**Instructions:** Describe and explain the practice ideas, approaches and methods that have particular resonance and “fit” for you and illustrate how you have applied or might apply these in practice, preferably with reference to actual practicum and/or employment experiences. You can choose one approach (e.g. social constructivist, narrative, Indigenous, feminist) or a variety of ideas. You can focus on how these ideas/approaches/methods apply for you in practice in a particular area (e.g. addiction, trauma, child protection, mental health) and/or with a particular population (e.g. men who have been violent, Indigenous youth, immigrant women) – or not. Provide a rationale for your choices that includes an explanation of how they embody/produce a socially just approach to practice. Include a reflection on how your positionality shapes and influences your choices. Conclude with a brief description of your intentions for future practice development.

Recommended Length: 18-20 double-spaced pages, exclusive of references.

Due:

Format: Essay (paragraphs) OR point form OR combination.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND LIST OF READINGS

Please note that all readings can be accessed through the CourseSpaces and/or UVIC library site (search on journal title and select correct volume/issue OR Google scholar search OR search via SUMMON).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1:</th>
<th>Introductions/review syllabus/class climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Critical reflexivity as a foundational practice skill**


**Additional resources**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2:</th>
<th>Engaging with the ‘Other’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


**Additional resources**


**Week 3:** **Meeting here and now**


**Additional resources**


**Week 4:** **Assessment and recording practices**


Additional resources


Week 5: Trauma/Mental Health


Additional resources
Augusta-Scott (Eds.) *Narrative therapy: Making meaning, making lives* (pp. 229-250). Thousand Oaks: Sage (Available in library or can be borrowed from instructor)


**Week 6: Narrative foundations**


**Week 7: Narrative methods**


**Additional resources**


Deconstructing addiction – Narrative approaches:


**Week 8:** Solution-focused methods


**Additional resources**


**Week 9: Indigenous Approaches**


**Additional resources**


Week 10: **Feminist approaches**


**Additional resources**


Week 11: **Response-based methods**


**Additional resources**

Centre for Response-based Practice: [http://responsebasedpractice.com/default.htm](http://responsebasedpractice.com/default.htm)


**Week 12:** Mindfulness (Final class)


**Additional resources**


**WORKING WITH GROUPS? THESE RESOURCES MIGHT BE USEFUL**


**Video Resources:**
(some of which we will watch in class)

*Acts of resistance, acts of reclaiming* (Loretta Pederson 20 min)

*Solution-focused change videos* (Coert Visser)
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXImcis97qw&list=PLC90BBA374DC9B838](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXImcis97qw&list=PLC90BBA374DC9B838)

*Solution focused sessions with a child* (Gerald Sklare 56 min)

Solution focused work with John Littrell and Daisy Roman (48 min)

*Justice doing in community work & therapy: From ‘burnout’ to solidarity* (Vikki Reynolds - 42 min):

*Relocating the problem of disability: The intersection of critical disability theory with the principles of narrative practice* (Vikki Reynolds & others – 33 min).

*Narrative principles 1* (John Stillman - 34 min)
Harlene Anderson: The philosophical stance – A way of practicing (56 min)
http://vimeo.com/album/2026985/video/47009785

Reconstructing identities and inviting preferred stories of self: Narrative practices in mental health settings and prisons (Marilyn O’Neill and Gaye Stockell - 23 min)

Narrative conversations with mandated men (Tod-Augusta Scott - 26 min)

Narrative work with suicidal thoughts 27 min (+ power point)

Narrative ideas in psychiatry/mental health: 5 video clips from Ron Coleman (55 min total)

Coordinating stories in therapeutic conversations. Difficult and complex conversations in therapy. Key slides from her talk, an exercise to engage with, and list of further relevant reading. (Glenda Fredman – 47 min)

Neighbourly ways of being and communal ways of working. How narrative practices can strengthen communities of supports that include but do not centre on therapists, coaches, consultants, and social workers. (Peggy Sax – 25 min)

Inviting paranoia to the table: A narrative perspective (Amanda Worrall - 33 min)

EMDR for Trauma: Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (Francine Shapiro - 53 min)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADzQ0QnxTkg

Four short EMDR demonstration videos (8 -10 min each): http://www.emdrinaction.com/emdr-session