TOPICS: SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK FROM INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES
SOWK 485/585
Summer 2010
Class Dates July 12, 2010-August 24, 2010
Travel July 30-August 14, 2010
Minnesota State University Mankato
Department of Social Work in conjunction with Extended Learning

FACULTY

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PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The Topics in Social Work course provides an opportunity for students at the Bachelors, Masters, post-Baccalaureate and post-Masters level to enroll in an academic course that focuses on a current topic in the field. This course is being offered for 1 or 3 credits at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This specific Topics course will focus on School Social Work. For students unfamiliar with the field of school social work the course will provide an overview of school social work in the United States with the opportunity to compare and contrast the provision of school social work services in other countries. For the seasoned professional, this course will examine current practices in the United States and allow them to be compared and contrasted with school social work practice in other countries. Evidence-based practice and cultural responsiveness in the provision of school social work services will be emphasized.

PLACE IN BSSW/MSW CURRICULUM

This course is one of the courses offered by the MSU, M Social Work Department that is considered an elective course for both the Bachelor of Science in Social Work and the Master of Social Work program. It is generally taken upon or after admission to the social work major or to the MSW program. Although it is preferred that SOWK 430/530 School Social Work be taken as a pre-requisite OR a student has at least one year experience as a school social worker, this is not required. Additionally, students from related professions are invited to enroll in this course as it will both increase their knowledge about school social work and enrich student learning in the course.
INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

The Topics in Social Work course contributes to the University mission related to promoting learning through effective teaching and scholarship. It is essential that school social workers stay abreast of new developments within the field and be able to assess the impact of this on their current practice. Best practices in the field are ever changing and require ongoing continuing education. The course is also supportive of the College mission to promote exploration, understanding, explanation and transformation of the social world through graduate teaching and learning.

BSSW/MSW PROGRAM GOALS

This course meets the departmental goals to prepare students as competent professionals at both the graduate and undergraduate level, and to further the education of practitioners in the field of social work. Students from all disciplines are encouraged to develop an understanding of the roles and tasks of not only social workers but also other helping professionals, understand the issues of working with diverse populations in school settings and populations at risk, and engage in critical thinking about these issues as they impact their work with children, families and staff in school settings. Finally, students should be able to engage in self directed and cooperative learning, each of which is a skill for professional practice.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1) Students will increase their knowledge base about current school social work practice in the United States.

2) Students will explore models for school social work practice delivery in the United States and abroad.

3) Students will identify similarities and differences between school social work practice in the United States and abroad.

4) Students will examine the use of evidence-based practice in the field of school social work in the United States and abroad.

5) Students will reflect on how culture impacts the development and delivery of school social work services in the United States and abroad.

6) Student will develop a plan to apply learning from this course to their practice.

READINGS

All readings for this course will be posted on the course website. A schedule of due dates for the readings will be provided in May 2010 so that they may be read prior to course travel.
TEACHING METHODS

This is a hybrid course that combines travel abroad and activities with school social workers in each country visited combined with web-based assignments and hands-on learning. The course has been designed using current best practices in course development. Students are expected to attend all planned activities and incorporate the information gleaned from the activities into all assignments for this course. Assignments will be clearly delineated by academic level (undergraduate/graduate) and number of credits to be earned in the course (1 or 3 credits). The teaching methods in this course will:

1) engage and challenged students;
2) develop a process for learning about other cultures; and
3) result in lifelong learning.

Students will be asked to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching methods utilized in this course. Feedback will be collected via an anonymous survey form posted on the course website. Desire to Learn (D2L) will be the platform utilized for the course website.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ORIENTATION

An orientation session will be scheduled at the start of the course via distance education technology. The purpose of the orientation will be to review the syllabus and course assignments, in addition to providing an introduction to the course website and use of the library databases. Information about the scheduled session will be made available in June 2010.

Note: SOWK 485 is the undergraduate course and SOWK 585 is the graduate course.

Note: Alternative methods for submitting completing Assignment 1 and 2 utilizing technology are being explored. Additional information about these options will be included in an updated version of the syllabus provided to students in May 2010.

Assignment 1: A SNAPSHOT OF CURRENT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

SOWK485-1 credit

Research and describe the role of school social workers and how they incorporate evidence-based practice into their work in the United States. If possible, interview a local school social worker (check state school social work organization website for contacts). Support your description with a minimum of 2 journal articles. Write a 3 page paper for this assignment and attach an rtf version to the course D2L website discussion board. The paper should comply with APA style to include cover page and references. Respond to two other student’s postings. This assignment is due July 16, 2010.
**SOWK485-3 credit**  
Research and describe the role of school social workers and how they incorporate evidence-based practice into their work in the United States. If possible, interview a local school social worker (check state school social work organization website for contacts). Support your description with a minimum of 5 journal articles. Write a 5 page paper for this assignment and attach an rtf version to the course D2L website discussion board. The paper should comply with APA style to include cover page and references. Respond to three other student’s postings. **This assignment is due July 16, 2010.**

**SOWK 585- 1 credit**  
Research and describe the role of school social workers, how they incorporate evidence-based practice into their work, and how school social workers evaluate their practice in the United States. If possible, interview a local school social worker (check state school social work organization website for contacts). Support your description with a minimum of 5 journal articles. Write a 3 page paper for this assignment and attach an rtf version to the course D2L website discussion board. The paper should comply with APA style to include cover page and references. Respond to two other student’s postings. **This assignment is due July 16, 2010.**

**SOWK585-3 credits**  
Research and describe the role of school social workers, how they incorporate evidence-based practice into their work, and how school social workers evaluate their practice in the United States. If possible, interview a local school social worker (check state school social work organization website for contacts). Support your description with a minimum of 10 journal articles. Write a 5-6 page paper for this assignment and attach an rtf version to the course D2L website discussion board. The paper should comply with APA style to include cover page and references. Respond to three other student’s postings. **This assignment is due July 16, 2010.**

**Assignment 2: CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS IN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

**SOWK485- 1 credit**  
Explore in depth the culture of Singapore and Australia. Explore what is appropriate host and guest expectations (greeting-touch, gift giving, meals and customs)? Of what laws should visitors to each of the countries be aware? What social norms do you need to be aware of in the country (dress, levels of formality, personal space, regulations regarding bringing items into the country)? Note similarities and differences to your own culture. Write a 3 page paper summarizing your findings. Provide sources of information collected for the paper. Post the paper on the course D2L site in an rtf format and respond to two other students’ postings. **This assignment is due July 23, 2010.**
SOWK485- 3 credits
Explore in depth the culture of Singapore and Australia. Explore what is appropriate host and guest expectations (greeting-touch, gift giving, meals and customs)? Of what laws should visitors to each of the countries be aware? What social norms do you need to be aware of in the country (dress, levels of formality, personal space, regulations regarding bringing items into the country)? Note similarities and differences to your own culture. Write a 5 page paper summarizing your findings. Provide sources of information collected for the paper. Post the paper on the course D2L site in an rtf format and respond to three other students’ postings. This assignment is due July 23, 2010.

SOWK585- 1 credit
Explore in depth the culture of Singapore and Australia. Utilize a combination of credible Internet sources and research literature. Explore what is appropriate host and guest expectations (greeting-touch, gift giving, meals and customs)? What laws should visitors to each of the country be aware of? What social norms do you need to be aware of in the country (dress, levels of formality, personal space, regulations regarding bringing items into the country)? Note similarities and differences to your own culture and implications for professional practice in those countries. Support your findings with results of your research on the topic. Write a 3 page paper summarizing your findings. Provide sources of information collected for the paper. Post the paper on the course D2L site in an rtf format and respond to two other students’ postings. This assignment is due July 23, 2010.

SOWK585-3 credits
Explore in depth the culture of Singapore and Australia. Utilize a combination of credible Internet sources and research literature. Explore what is appropriate host and guest expectations (greeting-touch, gift giving, meals and customs)? What laws should visitors to each of the country be aware of? What social norms do you need to be aware of in the country (dress, levels of formality, personal space, regulations regarding bringing items into the country)? Note similarities and differences to your own culture and implications for professional practice in those countries. Support your findings with results from your research on the topic. Write an 8 page paper summarizing your findings. Provide sources of information collected for the paper. Post the paper on the course D2L site in an rtf format and respond to two other students’ postings. This assignment is due July 23, 2010.

Assignment 3: REFLECTIVE JOURNAL
SOWK485- 1 credit
Keep a journal each day on what you observed, thought, felt and learned. This assignment should be done in hard copy. Your journal can include written comments, pictures, collages, drawings—but should reflect your daily learning in this course. Journals should be turned in to professor prior to leaving Australia and will be graded on flight back to the United States and returned upon arrival. This assignment is due August 14, 2010.
SOWK485-3 credits
Journal each day on what you observed, thought, felt and learned. This assignment should be done in hard copy. Your journal can include written comments, pictures, collages, drawings—but should reflect your daily learning in this course. Journals should be turned in to professor prior to leaving Australia and will be graded on flight back to the United States and returned upon arrival.
This assignment is due August 14, 2010.

SOWK585-1 credit
Journal each day on what you observed, thought, felt and learned. This assignment should be done in hard copy. Your journal can include written comments, pictures, collages, drawings—but should reflect your daily learning in this course. Journals should be turned in to professor prior to leaving Australia and will be graded on flight back to the United States and returned upon arrival.
This assignment is due August 14, 2010.

SOWK585-3 credits
Journal each day on what you observed, thought, felt and learned. This assignment should be done in hard copy. Your journal can include written comments, pictures, collages, drawings—but should reflect your daily learning in this course. Journals should be turned in to professor prior to leaving Australia and will be graded on flight back to the United States and returned upon arrival.
This assignment is due August 14, 2010.

Assignment 4: NEWSLETTER ARTICLE
SOWK 485 (3 credits) and SOWK585 (3 credits) In a group of no more than 3 students, write 3-5 page article for publication in a school social work newsletter on a topic related to this course. Graduate students are expected to take a leadership role for this assignment. The topics discussed in the article should be supported by research and reflect the cultural knowledge gained abroad. The goal is to submit articles for publication to the NASW School Social Work Section Connection newsletter, the School Social Work Association of America newsletter, state school social work organization newsletters and the International School Social Work Network newsletter. This assignment is due August 20, 2010.

Assignment 5: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

All Students: Post on the course D2L discussion board three ways that you will use the awareness and knowledge learned as a result of participating in this class in your current practice or in your anticipated practice setting (minimum of 250 words). This posting is due August 24, 2010.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING
A total of 200 points can be earned in this course. Points will be accumulated through: 1) Current Practice—40 points, 3) Cultural Competence—50 points, 4) International School Social Work Practice—50 points, 5) Current Issues—40 points and 6) From Theory to Practice—20 points.

Students will be evaluated in accordance with the following system of letter grades: A, B, C, D and F.

**UNDERGRADUATE GRADING SCALE**

A - 90-100%
B - 80-89%
C - 70-79%
D - 60-69%
E - 59% or below

A grade of “incomplete” will only be awarded under rare circumstances. Students must meet with the instructor to request an “incomplete” as soon as possible in the semester, but at least two weeks before the last day of the course. The request must include a plan with a timeline for completing and having evaluated all coursework prior to the first day of the subsequent semester.

**GRADUATE GRADING SCALE**

A – 90% to 100% of possible points represents work of definitely superior quality
B – 80% to 89% of possible points represents a level of performance that is above average
C – 70% to 79% of possible points represents a below-average performance
D – 60% to 69% of possible points represents unacceptable performance
F – 59% or below represents unacceptable performance

A grade of “incomplete” will only be awarded under rare circumstances. Students must meet with the instructor to request an “incomplete” as soon as possible in the semester, but at least two weeks before the last day of the course. The request must include a plan with a timeline for completing and having evaluated all coursework prior to the first day of the subsequent semester.

**COURSE, DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

*For complete policies please refer to the MSW Program Graduate Student Handbook as well as the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, College of Graduate Studies and Research, and Minnesota State University, Mankato policy documents for Graduate Students.*

**STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The University and Department of Social Work is committed to providing equal education and employment opportunities to all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, veteran’s status, National origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical and mental disabilities, creed, status due to receipt of public assistance, or any other groups against which discrimination is prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Minnesota Statute Chapter 363, and other applicable state or
federal laws or State University System policy. Complaints of discrimination are filed with the Office of Affirmative Action located at 112 Armstrong Hall.

ACCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

In accordance with University Policy, the Department of Social Work is committed to ensuring equal educational opportunity and full participation for qualified persons with disabilities as is legally required under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 including section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. All students with a disability may request accommodation through the Office of Disability Services. Visit the Office of Disabilities Services at 132 Memorial Library or call 507-389-2825 (V/TTY). Student disability accommodations will be made by faculty based upon the advisement of the Office of Disability Services.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY AND ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students are expected to comply with the Student Responsibility Policy and Academic Honesty Policy stipulated in the MSW Program Graduate Student Handbook.

APA STYLE WRITING POLICY

Students are expected to comply with the stylistic guidelines of the American Psychological Association, fifth edition. The APA manual is available at the MSU Memorial Library reference desk, call number BF 76.7.P83 2001). The reference for the APA manual is:


An on-line source to help with using APA can be found at: [http://www.apastyle.org/](http://www.apastyle.org/)