**THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS**

**DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION, SOCIAL WORK, & ADDICTIONS**

**Brenda Sweeten, MSSW, LCSW**

Brenda.Sweeten@unt.edu

**Ethics and Professionalism in Practice (SOWK 4890-001)**

**(3 credit hours)**

**Spring 2011**

**Class: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00 am - 12:20 pm**

**Classroom: Gateway 137**

**Telephone: 940-369-6991**

**Office Hours: Chilton 218E**

**Thursday 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm and by appointment**

The instructor for this course has the option to revise or alter the course syllabus at any time as class needs dictate.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines ethics, values and professional practice as the foundation of social work practice with individuals, families, small groups, and communities. Students will attain the knowledge base of the social work professional code of ethics, value system and guiding principles. This course will examine complex and contemporary issues impacting social work practice as derived from key ethical processes related to dual relationships, confidentiality, privacy, self-determination, boundary issues, informed consent and many other aspects of practice. Students will also accept a professional persona that is consistent with the identification as professional social workers. This will require students to embrace self-reflection throughout the course to evaluate their own personal strengths, biases, and values. The examination of those concepts and dynamics involved in professional social work relationships will also be explored in consideration of the social context of client systems.

Students will also address the nuances of ethics and values in preparation of making informed decisions that will minimize liability in professional practice. The student’s capacity to apply techniques and concepts to actual practice situations will be emphasized. Students will learn to apply ethical decision making models to help contend with difficult cases. This systematic process will utilize multiple sources of information such as state and national codes and laws and legal obligations to resolve ethical dilemmas. Cases will be analyzed to hone critical thinking skills and make decisions that are consistent with social work values and ethics. The expectation of the course is that students will embrace the ethics and values of social work practice while demonstrating emerging professionalism.

**COMPETENCIES & PRACTICE BEHAVIORS**

The core competencies listed below are in accordance with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards 2008. Upon completion of the course, students will demonstrate the core competencies indicated below. The course objectives reflect the expected CSWE Practice Behaviors (PB) students will attain.

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| **Core Competency** | **Course Objectives**  **Students will** | **Assessment** |
| Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly. | Attend to professional roles and boundaries. | * Quiz * Self-reflective journaling regarding personal and professional values, various ethical dilemmas and corresponding principles and standards. * Group discussion/class activities |
| Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice. | Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice. | * Self-reflective journaling regarding personal and professional values, various ethical dilemmas and corresponding principles and standards. * Group discussion/class activities |
|  | Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and, as applicable, the International Federation of Social Workers Statement of Principles. | * Quiz * Self-reflective journaling regarding personal and professional values, various ethical dilemmas and corresponding principles and standards. * Group discussion/class activities |
|  | Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts. | * Self-reflective journaling regarding personal and professional values, various ethical dilemmas and corresponding principles and standards. * Group discussion/class activities |
|  | Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions | * Self-reflective journaling regarding personal and professional values, various ethical dilemmas and corresponding principles and standards. * Group discussion/class activities |

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the University's status as an institution of higher education. In the class setting, students shall follow their instructor’s directions and observe all academic standards and requirements published in course syllabi and other course materials. A student is responsible for responding to an academic dishonesty report issued by an instructor or other University authority. If a student fails to respond after proper attempt at notification, the University may take appropriate academic actions in the absence of the student.

If a student disagrees with an instructor’s determination of academic dishonesty or with an academic penalty that is calculated into the course grade, the student may appeal to the chair of the instructor’s department within three (3) days of receiving the instructor’s written decision. The student’s written request for appeal must detail: (1) whether the student is requesting appeal of the finding of academic dishonesty or the instructor’s academic penalty, or both;

(2) the specific basis for the appeal; and (3) any factual information in support of the student’s case, including any specific evidence. To see the full university policy, consult Student Standards of Academic Integrity #18.1.16.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The University of North Texas complies with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The University of North Texas provides academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to individuals with disabilities, as defined under the law. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and to inform me of your need for an accommodation. Requests for accommodation must be given to me no later than the first week of classes for students registered with the ODA as of the beginning of the current semester. If you register with the ODA after the first week of classes, your accommodation requests will be considered after this deadline.

If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please see the instructor and/or contact the Office of Disability Accommodation at 940-565-4323 during the first week of class.

**CLASS POLICIES**

**INCOMPLETE POLICY**

A grade of Incomplete or “I” will not be given unless the student contacts the instructor and makes special arrangements for making up the required work.  Only emergency situations that prohibit a student from completing the course warrants a grade of “I”.  Therefore, it will not be given automatically.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Attendance and Punctuality **COUNT** in this class!

In order for students to achieve the course objectives, this class will depend heavily on the use of class/group discussion and occasional videos. There are activities done during class that will be important for you to participate in as part of your learning. This course will also emphasize professionalism in behavior and oral and written communication. Absenteeism will negatively impact your grade. Being present and *on time* to each class meeting demonstrates professionalism.

**Three absences are permitted without penalty provided no assignments are due that day as some assignments will not be allowed to be turned in late. One letter grade will be deducted from your final grade on the fourth absence and for each additional two absences. Furthermore, arriving late and/or leaving early may also negatively impact your grade. I will take roll at the beginning of each class. If you come in late, be sure to talk to me after class so I can note that you are present. If you are more than fifteen minutes late, you will be counted as absent for the day. Regular attendance is expected, as is punctuality**. If you know you are going to miss a class or are going to be significantly tardy, you should contact your instructor via e-mail in advance to alert her of your absence.

**CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.  The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

The Rehabilitation, Social Work, and Addictions department puts an extremely high value on its rapport with students, in part because it is our main task to prepare them for careers in human service professions. **The goal of PACS’ academic programs is to prepare students for ethically and socially responsible leadership roles in public and community service careers within an increasingly diverse and complex world.** As a faculty member, it is my responsibility to maintain the order and fairness in class and sometimes, it is necessary to remind students of appropriate behavior in the classroom. This is necessary because problematic behaviors can set the stage for serious problems in obtaining and retaining professional employment after graduation and there is the potential to disrupt and interfere with other students’ learning.

Therefore, the following behaviors will not be tolerated in class: Sleeping; Cross-talk, or carrying on private conversations during lectures and discussions; Wandering in and out of classes that are in progress; Taking or making cell phone calls or texts during class; Inappropriate use of laptops in class; Expectations that classes will be canceled when professors cannot be present and/or on days adjacent to holiday (this is a policy violation taken seriously by our accreditation boards); and Surliness and flippancy in communicating with faculty, staff and other students. Students may be asked to leave class at my discretion.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND MAKE-UP POLICY**

If you miss one of the scheduled classes for any reason, you are expected to get copies of notes and handouts from your colleagues. Any work that was due that day will be considered late and will have a maximum possible grade of “B” (89). The assignment will then be graded minus five points a day for each day it is late. Make-up quizzes/exams will only be given in circumstances *approved in advance* by the instructor.

**E-MAIL COMMUNICATION**

From time to time, I may need to communicate with the entire class or contact you individually. If/when those occasions arise, I will only email your UNT account. You are responsible for the information in that email. Failing to check it or have the address in the proper format will not be excused. Information may also be posted on Blackboard.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

**(You WILL need both texts.)**

Reamer, Frederic G. (2006) *Social work values and ethics*. [3rd Edition]. New York, New York: Columbia University Press.

Reamer, Frederic G. (1998). *Ethical standards in social work: A review of the NASW Code of Ethics*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**

This class will be taught using a variety of methods including lecture by the instructor, viewing and discussing videos on ethical issues relevant to social work practice, completion of a self-reflective journal, and participation in in-class activities. Quizzes will be given throughout the semester to demonstrate student understanding of social work ethical principles.

**CRITERIA FOR STUDENT EVALUATION**

Students’ progress will be evaluated utilizing the following criteria:

Professionalism, Participation and Punctuality 100

Self-Reflective Journal Entries (20 points each) 200

Quizzes (25 points each) 100

400

**COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS**

It is expected that readings will be done **prior** to class discussions. The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule, as class needs dictate.

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| **WEEK** | **DATE** | **GENERAL TOPIC** | **ASSIGNMENT** |
| **1** | Jan 18 | **Class Introduction** Syllabus Review (text and assignments) |  |
|  | Jan 20 | **The History, Mission and Evolution of Social Work Values** | READING: Reamer Ch. 1 & 2 (pp. 1-20)  **Homework Assignment: SRJ entry Due 1/25** |
| **2** | Jan 25 | **Values, Virtues and Ethical Principles** | READING: Reamer Ch. 2 (pp. 21-41) |
|  | Jan 27 | **The NASW Code of Ethics** | READING: NASW Code of Ethics  Ethical Standards (pp. 5-24)  **Homework Assignment: SRJ entry Due 2/1** |
| **3** | Feb 1 | **NASW Policy Positions** | **Homework Assignment: SRJ entry Due 2/8** |
|  | Feb 3 | **Factors that Affect Moral Decision Making and Ethics** | **Quiz #1 over NASW Code of Ethics**  READING: The NASW Code of Ethics  Ethical Standards (pp. 5-24) |
| **4** | Feb 8 | **Moral principles:**  **Autonomy, Nonmaleficence, Beneficence, Justice, Fidelity, Veracity** | **Homework Assignment: SRJ entry Due 2/15** |
|  | Feb 10 | **Ethical Dilemmas and Decision Making: Looking at Ethical Theory** | READING: Reamer Ch. 3 (pp. 43-72) |
| **5** | Feb 15 | **Models of Ethical Decision Making** | READING: Reamer Ch. 3 (pp. 73-86) |
|  | Feb 17 | **Dolgoff’s Ethical Decision Making Screens** | **Homework Assignment: SRJ entry Due 2/24** |
| **6** | Feb 22 | **Ethical Dilemmas in Direct Practice:**  **Commitment to Clients, Self-determination and Paternalism, Divided Loyalties** | READING: Reamer Ch. 4 (pp. 87-108)  Ethical Standards (pp. 25-38, 56-79, 98-99) |
|  | Feb 24 | **Ethical Dilemmas in Direct Practice: Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Privacy** | READING: Reamer Ch. 4 (pp. 87-108)  Ethical Standards (pp. 25-38, 56-79, 98-99) **Homework Assignment: SRJ entry Due 3/3** |
| **7** | Mar 1 |  | **Homework Assignment: SRJ entry During**  **Class Period Due 3/3** |
|  | Mar 3 | **Ethical Dilemmas in Direct Practice: competence,**  **interruption and termination of services**  **access to records, payment for service** | READING: Ethical Standards (pp. 38-45, 79-83, 94-109)  **Quiz #2: Ethical Obligations in Social Work** |
| **8** | Mar 8 | **Ethical Dilemmas in Direct Practice:**  **Boundaries, Sex and Conflicts of Interest** | READING: Reamer Ch. 4 (pp. 108-120) Ethical Standards (pp. 45-56, 83-94)  **Homework Assignment: SRJ entry Due 3/22** |
|  | Mar 10 | **The Professional Relationship: Limits, Dilemmas, and Problems** | **Homework Assignment: SRJ entry Due 3/22** |
| **9** | Mar 15 | **SPRING BREAK** |  |
|  | Mar 17 | **SPRING BREAK** |  |
| **10** | Mar 22 | **Ethical Dilemmas in Indirect Practice:**  **Commitment to Equality, Distribution of Scarce Resources,** **Discrimination and Whistle Blowing** | READING: Reamer Ch. 5 (pp.123-154) |
|  | Mar 24 | **Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues:**  **Respect, Confidentiality, Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Disputes Involving Colleagues** | READING: Ethical Standards (pp. 111-122) |
| **11** | Mar 29 | **Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues:**  **Consultation, Referral for Services, Sexual Relationships, Sexual Harassment, Impairment of Colleagues, Incompetence of Colleagues, Unethical Conduct of Colleagues** | READING: Ethical Standards (pp. 122-150) |
|  | Mar 31 | **Organizational and Work Relationships: Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings** | READING: Ethical Standards (pp. 151-199)  **Homework Assignment: SJR entry Due 4/5** |
| **12** | Apr 5 | **Risk Management** | **Quiz #3: Identifying Ethical Breaches**  **Students will need their code of ethics**  READING: Reamer Ch. 6 (pp. 155-188) |
|  | Apr 7 | **Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals and to the Social Work Profession** | READING: Ethical Standards (pp. 201-246) |
| **13** | Apr 12 | **Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society** | READING: Ethical Standards (pp. 247-261) |
|  | Apr 14 | **Texas Rules and Regulations** | READING: Read the Texas Administrative Code Part 34 Chapter 781  <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/>  Rules Relating to the Licensing and Regulation of Social Workers |
| **14** | Apr 19 | **Texas Rules and Regulations** | <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/>  Rules Relating to the Licensing and Regulation of Social Workers  READING: Read the Texas Administrative Code Part 34 Chapter 781 |
|  | Apr 21 | **Changing World, Changing Dilemmas: Technology and Social Networking** | Reading TBA |
| **15** | Apr 26 | **Changing World, Changing Dilemmas: Immigration** | Reading TBA |
|  | Apr 28 | **Changing World, Changing Dilemmas: Managed Care, Genetics** | Reading TBA |
| **16** | May 3 | **Changing World, Changing Dilemmas: Abortion** | Reading TBA |
|  | May 5 |  | **Quiz # 4: Texas Rules and Regulations** |
| **17** | May 10/12 | **Final Exam** |  |

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Self-Reflective Journal (SRJ) Entries**

Each of the 10 SRJs will be valued at 20 points each giving a total value of 200 points (50% of your final grade). SRJs will be graded using the following rubric:

Grammar and professional use of writing 5 points

Use of critical and in-depth thinking 15 points

You should complete this assignment independent of all other students.

Using proper grammar in written communications is very important in social work practice settings. It demonstrates professionalism and helps to establish your credibility. **Turning in a professional product that you can be proud of should be a priority EVERY TIME**! Make sure that all of your SRJ entries are carefully proofread and are typed, double spaced, and easy for the reader to understand your line of reasoning. **All entries should be a minimum of one full page in length but most entries should be one to three pages long, depending on the assigned entry.**  Reflective writing encourages critical thought and application of what you have learned in class and read in your textbooks.

To complete the SRJ entries you should complete the assignment as described on the Homework Assignments sheet, and include specific information showing your thoughtfulness in regard to the content of the assignment and its implications for you both personally and professionally. After each assignment is complete, you will need to also discuss:

1) Your feelings and emotions about the assignment’s subject matter;

2) Your thoughts about having to do the assignment; and

3) Your thoughts about difficulties you might have dealing with the particular subject/issues addressed in the assignment, keeping in mind your own personal values vs. those of the social work profession.

Remember, I will be looking carefully at your ability to **think critically** about the subject and your “personal struggle” with each topic. There are no right or wrong answers per se and I ask that you **be very honest** about any difficulties you have or feelings you are having difficulty rectifying. That is what this class is for!

**Quizzes**

Four quizzes will be given over the course of the semester, typically at the beginning of each month. The four quizzes are worth a total of 100 points or 25 points each (25% of your final grade).

**Professionalism, Participation and Punctuality**

Because this is a class focused on professionalism in social work your ability to get to class on time is important. Regular attendance is a must (see class attendance policy) because when you are in the workplace in the future, being punctual will be required. Consider this classroom your workplace and make every effort to be present and on time. Along with this show of professionalism comes your need to participate in class activities and discussion. This course will be full of activities that you will be required to participate in. Because some of the subject matter might be considered controversial by some or very personal to others, it will be important to demonstrate your professionalism by respecting all of your classmates, all of the time. A student’s inability to show respect for others will affect his/her final grade.

Professionalism, participation and punctuality will be monitored by the instructor and are worth 100 points for the semester (25% of your final grade). Events that will negatively impact this grade will be absenteeism, tardiness, lack of respect for peers, turning in assignments late, talking in class when someone else is speaking, etc.