

**Valdosta State University, Division of Social Work
SOWK 7630 A Spring 2014
2 Credit Hours**

Professional Seminar

Instructor: Rhett Watson, LCSW, CACII
Office: Pine Hall
Office hours: Evenings, or following our class.
Phone: 249-4864 (Div. office); 229-300-1207 (cell)
E-Mail: rwatson@valdosta.edu
Class Dates: Tues. Jan. 14th, 8-10PM
 Tues. Jan. 28, 8-10PM
 Tues. Feb. 11, 8-10PM
 Tues. Feb. 25, 8-10PM
 Tues. March 11, 8-10PM
(March 17-21 Spring Break- No class)
 Tues. March 25, 8-10PM
 Tues. April 8, 8-10PM
 Tues. April 22, 8-10PM

****Office Hours: Rhett Watson (Instructor) - As a part-time VSU instructor, I do maintain a full-time employment. Thus, I can be available immediately following our scheduled classes, via e-mail correspondence, through pre-arranged visits via my email address. I will return all messages within a 48 hour window. I will stay around 30 minutes after each of our scheduled classes on Tuesdays to answer any questions and/or provide assistance.***

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

A seminar to facilitate and structure students' transition from graduate school to post-graduation social work practice.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course draws on topic areas that are relevant to beginning practice including the transition from graduate school, job marketability, job searches, assumption of a professional practice role, ethical social work practice, preparation for professional examinations, professional test-taking, and developing the attitude of a long-term learner. Speakers from the regional social work community will be asked to provide guest lectures to students. Students will work independently out of class to prepare for the licensure examination including taking practice examination in preparation for the actual examination. The class is designed to provide closure on graduate school and ensure their readiness for job searches and professional practice.

I reserve the right to alter the course content, including readings or elements of assignments, at any time. However, assignment due dates and grading standards will not be changed.

PREREQUISITES

Admission to the program.

RELATION TO OTHER COURSES

Built on the content of all other courses in the social work curriculum, SOWK 7630 is designed as a bridge to professional post-graduate social work practice. Course content helps students to transition into professional practice through preparing and completing the professional licensing exam. Additionally, the course provides content on salient aspects of professional social work practice. Finally, students are given skills to enable them to prepare a professional resume and to interview for professional positions.

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

Blazenet D2L will be used as a tool for course enhancement. Your documents will reside in the D2L course site, where you will find all handouts, and links to Internet sites. I want to encourage you to access the online course materials in Blazenet D2L as soon as possible. Begin with the Home Page and the top left link entitled "General Course Info," and then explore the rest of the course.

VSU D2LSupport

Valdosta State provides free technical support for students. If you need technical assistance with Blazenet D2L, call the Help Desk at 229-245-4357. You may also contact your instructor (Rhett Watson) for assistance.

COURSE OUTCOMES

This course is organized by outcomes that will provide focus, consistency, and clear evaluation criteria. Skills and knowledge that support achievement of the course outcomes will receive the majority of class time. These course outcomes are derived from the MSW program objectives, and will help you build toward achievement of those objectives. Lessons, materials, methods and assignments are organized toward your achievement of the objectives and toward what you as a student will be able to do differently, as a direct result of participating in the course:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- 1. Demonstrate understanding of social work professionalism as defined by the advanced generalist perspective.**
- 2. Articulate the importance of professional standards and licensure and for professional development.**
- 3. Demonstrate an understanding of licensure requirements, processes, and preparation for the licensing examination.**
- 4. Articulate an understanding of current social/cultural issues relevant to social work that present obstacles to services and/or ethical dilemmas.**

REQUIRED TEXTS/COURSE MATERIALS:

Social Work Examination Services (2010). Comprehensive review notes for state social work license examination (vol. 1 & 2, Version 5.6). Published by Social Work Examination Services. *Arrangements are made by the Division of Social Work to purchase these books at a discount and pass the cost savings on to students.*

COURSE POLICIES PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TO THIS COURSE (*Other, general policies are listed at the end of the syllabus in Grading Issues*)

Written Work & Submission of Assignments

- Your written work should show thoroughness, accuracy and professionalism. All work should be carefully proofread and corrected. Unless otherwise instructed, all assignments must be word processed, double spaced with numbered pages. Papers should use standard margins (one inch from the top, bottom, and sides).
- Late papers will lose one full letter grade (10%) for every 24-hour period they are late (including weekends).
- Written work will be carefully evaluated for grammatical errors, spelling, and concise and appropriate expression of concepts and ideas because this is one of the last courses that you will complete before presenting yourself to the community at large as a professional social worker. Social workers, in all career capacities, are expected to communicate as a professional, whether the written or spoken word.

ASSIGNMENTS

You will demonstrate your achievement of course outcomes through your submitted projects and assignments:

1. Critical analysis of three professional websites

You are to visit the following three websites:

National Association of Social Workers GA (<http://www.naswga.org/>); National Association of Black Social Workers (<http://www.nabsw.org/>); National Association of Social Workers (<http://www.naswdc.org/>). Spend time looking at the websites. Then do the following.

1. Aside from the obvious (race, geographical area etc), identify one substantive difference in each webpage, a theme focus or purpose that is unique and particular to each to each organization and describe that difference.
2. Identify a particular aspect of each organization's webpage that you might find useful in the near and distant future.
3. Identify how joining any particular national organization will help you meet your professional goal(s).

10 points total Due Jan 28th.

2. LMSW Licensure Practice Exams 1, 3 & 4

Submit, in class, your answers for the practice exams 1 & 4 (don't destroy your textbook—make a photocopy). the idea is to do this at home, then bring a copy to class, which you will hand in, along with a 1 to 2 page critique of your test. Here is the protocol.

1. take test at home.
2. score it on honestly.
3. review your wrong answers and right answers.
4. notice any patterns in your wrong answers
5. write a critique of your testing. include the following:
 - a. your overall score
 - b. comment on the things you seemed to know well.
 - c. identify and comment on the things you did not do well on.

- d. observe and comment **on any patterns** you notice in your right/wrong answers.
- e. comment on any self-observations you made during the exam that could be liabilities during the test-taking.

This assignment will be graded according to the timely completion and submission of the exam responses. **This assignment carries 20 points for each submission**

Due dates:

Exam 1: Feb 11 - bring in hard copy and written critique paper

Exam 3: March 11 - bring in hard copy and written critique paper

Exam 4: April 8- bring in hard copy and written critique paper

Total 60 points

2. Writing Assignment: "Changes"

Write a 3-5 page self-reflection paper on how you have modified or perhaps even changed some of your values, attitudes, and assumptions over the course of this MSW program. This could involve values, attitudes, and assumptions with regard to yourself and your own professional boundaries, behaviors, "use of self," etc., or toward your clients, or toward the social work macro world (i.e., supervisors, agencies, etc.). In addition, and in light of the first part of the assignment, write about how you view yourself as a budding professional. Do you like what you see? Remember that your perceptions of yourself may not be consistent with what you project to others!

This assignment carries 20 points

Due date: Feb 25

4. Professional development plan

A major part of professionalization is the pursuit of specific areas of expertise. Each of you, in the first few years after graduation, will want to continue your life long learning process, by a. focusing on specific areas of growth/expertise and b. planning some structured learning activities that aid you in those specific areas. These areas can be learning more on a particular subject (for example, personality disorders) or learning more about specific treatment methods (EMDR for example). The structured activities could be any number of things including joining a book club, reading a specific book, creating a reading list, joining a supervision group, attending workshops or training, getting online certification in an area or enrolling in an ongoing training program (For example, reading a book on personality disorders or attending a week long training on EMDR).

Your task in this assignment is to list three growth areas of interest and briefly comment -no more than 2 sentences per each area, why it is an interest.

Then, for each of those three interests, identify two specific structured learning activities that you will honestly look for during the first two years after graduation

This assignment carries 10 points

Due date: March 25

ASSESSMENT and ASSESSMENT ISSUES

GRADING SCALE

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79 (a "C" involves one deficiency point—See Student Handbook, p. 21)
D	60-69 (a "D" involves two deficiency points—See Student Handbook, p. 21)
F	Less than 60 (an "F" involves three deficiency points and you must retake the course—See Student Handbook, p. 21)

I will need to inform your Advisor if your final grade falls below a "B."

Please Note: Students should be aware of various issues that may adversely affect their grades and even their participation in the program. These regulations arise from legal codes, The Georgia Board of Regents, Valdosta State University, or the Valdosta State University Division of Social Work. All of them are listed in the Student Handbook at <http://www.valdosta.edu/sowk/documents/StudentHandbook07-08.pdf> IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO READ AND UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE STUDENT HANDBOOK. *Remember the "STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING" signed by all students (see pages 20-24).*

Please contact me with any special needs or developing problems. I will help you all if I can.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan. 14, 2014 8-10PM

- Course overview and introduction to the seminar
- Discuss of assignments.
- Discussion of clinical supervision: what it is and what it is not
- How to study for the licensure exam
- Open discussion

Jan. 28, 2014 8-10PM

- **Theme: "SW Practice in the Community"**
- Group activity: Guest speaker: Justin Anderson, LCSW, Mobile Crisis Unit
- questions about the profession

Jan 28th. comparison of three websites assignment (bring to class)

Feb. 11 2014, 8-10PM

- **Theme: "What We Are Looking For?"** Job seeking skills and directions
- Discuss resume creation/building
- Questions about the profession

Feb 11: LMSW Practice Exam 1 Due (hard copy; in class)

Feb. 25 2014, 8-10PM

Theme: "SW Practice in Community Mental Health Setting"

- Guest speaker: Amy Crumbley, LMSW, Behavioral Health Services
- Questions about the profession

Feb 19: "changes reflection paper due " paper due (hard copy; in class)

March 11, 2014, 8-10PM

- **Theme: "Finding Your Niche".**
- poco evaluation - explanation and self-assessment

March 11: LMSW Practice Exam 3 Due (hard copy; in class)

March 25, 2014, 8-10PM

- **Theme: "Cultural Competency and Awareness"**
- Questions about the profession
- NASW Code of Ethics

March 25 : "Professional Development Plan (hard copy; in class)

April 8, 2014, 8-10PM

- **Theme: "SW Practice as Therapist"**
- Guest speaker, Elizabeth Johnson, LMSW, Behavioral Health Services
- Questions about the profession

April 8: LMSW Practice Exam 4 Due (hard copy; in class)

April 22, 2014, 8-10PM

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- **Theme: "Value System in SW Practice"**
 - Determination of personal value system
 - Look at clients' value systems
 - How do they work together?
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- Course wrap up
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DIVISION OF SOCIAL WORK and UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The goal of the Division of Social Work is to prepare students for the professional practice of social work. The Division requires students to adhere to professional practices and standards in all classes and practicum. These practices and standards are outlined in the *MSW Student Code of Conduct* which can be found on pages 23-27 of the current *MSW Student Handbook*. The Code of Conduct must be signed by all students beginning MSW students.

The following standards are not negotiable: Students may depend on well-planned classes and knowledgeable instructors. Professors are committed to the facilitation of student success. Learning is a complex phenomenon for which BOTH instructors and students are responsible. Evaluation criteria are stated clearly in the syllabus. However, if students have questions about grading, it is the students' responsibility to discuss these matters with their instructors. The course syllabus represents a contract between students and the instructor. Professors reserve the right to modify syllabi, and students will be notified in writing when such changes are made. Likewise, students are responsible for reading and following instructions on the syllabi.

Class Attendance. Because the MSW Program is a professional program, class attendance is **MANDATORY**. The Attendance Policy is extremely important and can be found in the current *MSW Student Handbook* on page 19. Students are expected to be on time for class and to return from breaks in a timely manner. Likewise, students are expected to participate in class discussions and activities.

Submission of Assignments. All assignments must be submitted ON TIME and IN THE MANNER directed by the faculty (e.g., brought to class, sent to an assignment drop box, etc). Deadlines are extremely important for professional social workers. Additional information about assignment submission is found in the Attendance Policy.

Academic Honesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not acceptable in a professional social work program. Students who engage in this type behavior risk failure on specific assignments, in the course, and possible dismissal from the MSW Program. Academic dishonesty is prohibited by the university as well as the Division of Social Work. The following link outlines [VSU's Academic Honesty Policies](#). The Academic Dishonesty Policy for the Division of Social Work is found in the *MSW Student Handbook* found as a link off the [Division web site](#).

Incompletes: Incomplete grades are given only in cases of extreme emergency with proper documentation, and are granted only with the prior approval of the instructor. Policies governing Incompletes are found in the *MSW Student Handbook*.

Academic Performance: Students are expected to maintain a 3.00 grade point average in the MSW Program. A discussion of all academic expectations and grading can be found in the *MSW Student Handbook*, including the Division's policy of Academic Deficiency Points given for grades lower than C.

Cancellation of Classes: The University President may cancel classes under specific emergency conditions. The most frequent cause of cancellation is inclement weather. Please

check the main page of the VSU web site if you have concerns about inclement weather or an emergency situation: <http://www.valdosta.edu>

ADDITIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION

Technology Assistance: Students having technology problems may contact the Help Desk (phone 229-245-4357) or e-mail a question at helpdesk@valdosta.edu. The Help Desk is located on the 2nd floor of the Odum Library. Their hours are 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM, Mondays – Thursdays; 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Fridays; 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM, Saturdays; and 1:00 PM – 9:00 PM, Sundays. If students are having problems with Blazenet, they may seek link to Common Questions & Solutions or use the Blazenet Contact Form.

Students may also visit or call the Hub at 229-245-6490. The Hub is located in 2616 Odom Library and is available to help students with problems in Blazenet D2L courses. Students also should talk with their instructors if the technology problems are not easily resolved.

Specific Learning Needs: Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should discuss their needs with the professor at the beginning of the semester. Students who are not registered with the Access Office for Students with Disabilities should contact VSU's Access Office or call 229-245-2498 (229-219-1348 for TTY). The office is located in Room 1115 Nevins Hall.

Students Experiencing Academic Difficulties. Students with academic concerns are strongly encouraged to contact the staff of the Student Success Center or call them at 229-333-7570. The Student Success Center is located on first floor of Langdale Hall on the main VSU campus. Services provided by the Success Center include tutoring, writing assistance, and help with time management. Students are encouraged to make appointments with Center Staff through the web link or by telephone. The Center is available to all VSU students, and evening appointments are available.

Additional services include the Counseling Center (phone 229-333-5940; e-mail pjraynor@valdosta.edu). Services are free of charge to students with emotional/mental, social, substance abuse and other problems. The Farber Health Services provides physical health services (phone 229-333-5886).

Emergency Campus Policy: The Police Contact Number is **229-259-5555**. The Campus Police Division is located in Pine Hall. Officers will escort students on campus, and emergency phones are placed across campus. Students are **strongly encouraged to program the campus emergency number, 911** (for local police) **and *447** (GA State Highway Patrol) **into their cell phone.**