

Valdosta State University, Division of Social Work
SOWK 7700 Spring 2013
Social Work with Older Adults
3 Credit Hours

Instructor: Cindy Tandy, Ph.D., LCSW
Office: Pine Hall 215
Office Hours: Email; phone; Skype (peachy.teacher)
Phone: 229-245-4338 (direct); 229-249-4864 (Div. of Social Work office)
E-Mail: cctandy@valdosta.edu
Class: Fully Online

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Prerequisite: Concentration Status for SOWK students or permission of department head for other graduate students. Study of aging from a bio-psycho-social perspective within the context of culture and values with an emphasis on healthy aging.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will examine the aging process with associated biopsychosocial changes in the context of the ecological and person-in-environment perspectives. The course will focus on strengths, needs, and concerns of older adults and their families as well as caregivers. The assessment process will be presented, along with intervention approaches and challenges. Ethical principles and dilemmas will be addressed that are particularly applicable to older adults around issues of autonomy and end-of-life concerns. Diversity will be incorporated as it impacts changes, needs, and concerns of the aging population. This course is relevant for social workers and practitioners in related helping professions who function in social service agencies, solo practice, assisted living centers, geriatric care management, and other settings that serve older adults and their families or caregivers.

Basic Course Information:

Technical Competence Expected of Students

- Use word processing (i.e., Microsoft Word)
- Use email; insert attachments
- Use a web browser to access the Internet (i.e., Microsoft Internet Explorer)
- Download files from the Internet

Computer Hardware/Software Requirements

- Access VSU's Blazeview "Getting Started" for information on browsers, java, popups, and more.

Course structure

- Each of the modules of this course will be conducted asynchronously in one week blocks of time. Each module consists of required readings, "Dr. Tandy's Notes," and other activities, including online discussions. As you read through the

modules, you will come upon various exercises, charts, graphs, or figures that will help you better understand the material.

- Online discussions occur in an online discussion board, a place with designated topic areas for you to discuss the readings, lecture, and assignments and to engage your fellow students and professor in discussions of specific course issues. It is also a place for you to raise questions. Your fellow students and I will try to answer your questions. Within each discussion board, you will find prompting questions meant to highlight issues and stimulate discussion. You may login to the course and discussions anytime during the day (or night!).
- Note: You are always welcome to email your professor with general program comments, technical questions, and helpful hints. Feel free to email me anytime.

PREREQUISITE

Concentration Status for SOWK students or permission of department head for other graduate students.

RELATION TO OTHER COURSES

SOWK 7700 is a concentration elective. The assumption is made that students have completed foundation courses and are prepared to move on to areas of specialization. The course links from the micro and macro foundation practice courses as students learn about aging in the context of working with individuals as well as community groups. It also links to the Human Behavior in the Social Environment course that emphasizes theories, including theories of aging. Research knowledge is used by students as they complete a research paper. The course is related to other electives that focus on abuse and neglect, substance abuse, and clinical assessment and intervention.

REQUIRED TEXTS/COURSE MATERIALS:

McInnis-Dittrich, K. (2014). Social work with older adults (4th edition). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc. ISBN-10: 1285065352

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

Blazeview will be used as the Course Management System. Your documents will reside in the Blazeview course site, where you will find materials and links needed for the course sites. I want to encourage you to access the online course materials in Blazeview as soon as possible. Begin with the Home Page and the top left link entitled "Getting Started" and then explore the rest of the course. Technical assistance is described below in "Course and Division Policies."

COURSE OUTCOMES

This course is organized by objectives that will provide focus, consistency, and clear evaluation criteria. Skills and knowledge that support achievement of the course objectives will be emphasized in the course. These course objectives are derived from and will help you build toward achievement of the MSW program outcomes. 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. Explain and analyze biological and psychosocial factors and adjustments in later life, including illness and end-of-life issues.
2. Define and determine needs, concerns, and issues with respect to the support systems of older adults including partners/spouses, families, and other caregivers.
3. Explain components and issues with regard to biopsychosocial assessments for older adults, including assessments of strengths, cognitive and emotional problems, and potential risk factors (e.g., suicide; elder mistreatment).
4. Select and describe interventions and empowerment to enhance the coping capacities and mental health of older adults.
5. Apply professional ethical principles (e.g., self-determination, confidentiality, and competence) to decisions that arise in work with older adults and caregivers.
6. Explain and describe issues of diversity (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, culture, class/economic status, sexual orientation, and disability/ability) related to variation in the aging process and to practice with older adults and their families.

COURSE POLICIES PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TO THIS COURSE (*Division of Social Work and VSU policies are listed at the end of the Course Schedule*).

General Grading Criteria for Written Work/Assignments

1. Accuracy: Precise, detailed, accurate, and demonstrating mastery of important knowledge and concepts, where appropriate.
2. Comprehensiveness and balance: Cover the essential information as fully and fairly as possible.
3. Clarity and correctness: Your written work should show clarity and should be accurate. Papers should be free of errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. If you do not proofread carefully, you run the risk of having your paper rejected for re-write, with penalty for lateness.
4. Honesty: Students must do their own original work.
 - Collaborative work require acknowledgement of the collaboration.
 - When outside sources are appropriate, these sources must be attributed fully and accurately using APA formatting.
 - Cheating or plagiarism, whether accidental or intentional, may lead to failure in the course.
5. Timeliness: Late papers will lose one full letter grade (10%) for every 24-hour period they are late (including weekends).
 - No revisions of assignments will be allowed without explicit permission— However, please feel free to meet with me (face-to-face, online, or by phone) to discuss your papers before the final due dates.
 - *Note:* Any Word documents submitted electronically and uploaded to Blazeview must have a .doc (Word 2003) file extension.

ASSIGNMENTS

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

1. Online Discussions

There will be 7 graded online discussions that relate to the modules. You will earn points for participating in these discussions. Further directions are located in "Discussions" in Blazeview.

This assignment carries 175 points (7 discussions @ 25 points each)

Due weekly, beginning with the second week.

NOTE: Students will have the option of completing EITHER 3. a. (Aging Issues Paper) OR 3. b. (Integrative Paper)

3. a. Aging Issues Paper

You will have an opportunity to explore the literature and write about a topic within this course that particularly intrigues you. In the Aging Issues Paper you will explore the professional literature that focuses on a population & issue (or problem) within the context of social work practice, as well as potential solutions. The paper should have a minimum of 12 citations from professional literature related to social work (e.g., journal articles, books). The paper should have a minimum of 16 and maximum of 20 double-spaced pages, including abstract, title page, and a separate page of references. Follow APA 5th edition for the formatting style of your manuscript.

This assignment carries 345 points

Paper is due July 21.

3. b. Integrative Paper *(not required for Continuing Education students)*

In the Integrative Paper, you will explore the professional literature to integrate assessment, intervention, ethical issues, increasing need for care, and end-of-life concerns for a fictional case study character that you will create and develop. In the Integrative Paper you will also explore the professional literature that focuses on caregivers who have a disability, have mental health issues, or who are abusive.

This assignment carries 345 points

Paper is due July 21.

Summary of Course Assignments & Evaluations		
Online Discussions, 7@25 points each	See Blazeview	175
Aging Issues Paper OR Integrative Paper	Due July 21	345
Total Possible Points		520

ASSESSMENT and ASSESSMENT ISSUES

GRADING SCALE

A	468-520
B	418-467
C	364-417 (a "C" involves one deficiency point—See Student Handbook, p. 21)
D	312-363 (a "D" involves two deficiency points—See Student Handbook, p. 21)
F	Less than 312 (an "F" involves three deficiency points and you must retake the course—See Student Handbook, p. 21)

MSW Students: I will need to inform your Academic 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 MSW 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 MSW 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 MSW students (see pages 20-24).*

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

Time Management

Think of this as a "Monday-Wednesday-Sunday" course.

1. **Monday:** The week begins. Log in, and check to see what assignments are due. Begin reading.
2. **Wednesday:** Most weeks you need to enter the discussion by Wednesday to post your response to the discussion question and so that other students can begin responding to you. Continue work on assignments and reading.
3. **Sunday:** All discussions are due by 11:59PM Sunday nights. Usually you will be participating in online discussions during the week, and your final comments are due by Sunday night.
4. **Other days:** **Of course you will be reading and working on assignments the other days, and you can log in and complete or post assignments anytime.**

COURSE SCHEDULE SUMMER 2013

Remember to log in AT LEAST every Monday, Wednesday, and Sunday

Note: The Course Schedule is a SUMMARY of the course assignments and due dates. Weekly Assignments are further explained (and often contained) in the Course Modules (link on the Home Page).

DATES	MODULES	READINGS	DISCUSSIONS	DUE
June 5-9	Modules 1-2	Chapters 1-2	Disc. 1	June 9
Jun 10-16	Modules 3-4	Chapters 3-4	Disc. 2	June 16
June 17-23	Modules 5-6	Chapters 5-6	Disc. 3	June 23
June 24-30	Modules 7-8	Chapters 7-8	Disc. 4	June 30
July 1-7	Modules 9-10	(Readings in BV)	Disc. 5	July 7
July 8-14	Modules 11-12	Chapters 9, 12	Disc. 6	July 14
July 15-21	Modules 13-14	Chapter 13	Disc. 7	July 21

Final Paper (“Aging Issues OR “Integrative”) is due July 21.

Please Note: Students should be aware of various issues that may adversely affect their grades and even their participation in the MSW 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 MSW Student Handbook found on the Division of Social Work page. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO READ AND UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE STUDENT HANDBOOK. Remember the “STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING” signed by all MSW students.

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

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 VISTA, they may seek link to Common Questions & Solutions or use the Vista 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 VISTA courses. Students also should talk with their instructors if the technology problems are not easily resolved.

Technology Assistance: Continuing Education Students having technology problems may contact Distance Learning (phone **229-245-6490**) or e-mail a question to conted@valdosta.edu. Distance Learning is located on the 2nd floor of the Odum Library. Their hours are 8:00 AM – 5:30 PM, Mondays – Thursdays; 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM, Fridays.

CE students may also visit or call Julie Halter at Continuing Education (229-245-6484). Offices are located at 903 N Patterson St. Students also should talk with their instructors if the technology problems are not easily resolved.

The following services and information are specific to VSU academic students

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: 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.**

Should an emergency occur in a Social Work classroom, the Instructor will contact University Police (259-5555, Police Emergency Line). The University Police will dispatch officers to the scene and will contact 911, if appropriate. If Instructor is unable to make call (e.g., ill, injured, or unconscious), a student will immediately contact University Police.

EXPLANATION OF THE POCO MAP

As a part of our 2007-2008 MSW Curriculum Revision, you will begin to see the Program Objective Course Outcome Map or "PoCo Map" in each class syllabus. Your instructors will assist you in using the map while you are in the MSW Program. The "map" is simply a graphic representation of the MSW Curriculum which shows how all parts of the curriculum are interrelated.

The program objectives are derived from the goals of the MSW program. As we define it, program objectives are more specific than goals, and specify what we **intend or expect** students to accomplish by the end of the MSW Program. Think of them as targets to achieve. On the other hand, course outcomes **are much more specific**, course-related components of each program objective. The specific Course Outcomes are what each of you

should have achieved by the end of each course. They are measured directly through tests, assignments, discussions, and activities.

Perhaps the analogy of a community may be helpful. The advanced generalist social work community at VSU is made up of program objectives which can be thought of as individual businesses, institutions, and houses in our community. Like any community, each program objective (e.g., house, business) can stand alone, but they need each other to thrive and become a functional community. Course outcomes then can be seen as the walls, floors, windows and doors that are combined to comprise each objective and, ultimately the Advanced Generalist community.

The faculty has selected 19 Program Objectives to form the basic structure of the MSW Curriculum: 14 are foundation objectives and five are concentration objectives. The PoCo Map shows that these 19 Program Objectives are met in different courses across the two-year curriculum. For example, most of the objectives that are related to Social Policy will be met in the two required Policy Courses. Further, each of the 19 Program Objectives is linked with specific Course Outcomes.

In examining the range of courses that comprise the overall curriculum, we can begin to identify specific elements of knowledge, values, and skills that we expect students to achieve during the MSW Program. We have called these elements *Course Outcomes*. Outcomes combine specific chunks of knowledge and skills with a demonstration of their achievement, through application!

Think of a window, which might be a combination of a specific size of glass, with a type of wood and metal. The achievement is the building of a window; the window is an achieved product although its ultimate application is its 'fit' with the specific house. By examining the outcomes that students are expected to master per course, students can determine the actual content that will be learned. Further, we will identify specific assignments, exercises, and quizzes that relate to course outcomes.

The POCO Map ensures that all courses and the overall curriculum meet our own curriculum standards as well as national standards of social work education as set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (*July 24, 2008*).