SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH OLDER ADULTS
SOWK 8260 | 3 credit hours

Spring Semester 2020
Class Meetings: Mondays, 4:00–6:00 P.M., 126 CPACS

Instructor: Professor C.J. Washington (Dr. Washington; She | Her | Hers)
Office: 206 CPACS
Office Phone: 402.554.2792
Email: cjwashington@unomaha.edu

NOTE: Students should contact the instructor via email rather than by phone. Email messages will be responded to within 24 hours, excluding weekends, holidays, and breaks.

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:00–3:00 P.M. or by appointment
Online Office Hours: Wednesdays, 6:30–8:00 P.M. or by appointment

Department: Grace Abbott School of Social Work
Main Office: 206 CPACS
Dept. Phone: 402.554.2972

COURSE INFORMATION
Description
This course is part of the advanced MSW curriculum and focuses on micro- and macro-level practice skills essential to competent and effective social work practice with diverse older adults. This course emphasizes clinical and complementary/alternative interventions (particularly creativity programming) that focus on individuals and small groups as well as community practice skills that involve social marketing and community organizing, networking, and collaborating with interprofessional community practitioners.

Rationale/Overview
The purpose of this course is to examine aging and the interaction of the biological, psychological, social, emotional, spiritual, economic, cultural, and environmental factors within a general social systems framework. Utilizing a service-learning pedagogy, the course focuses on micro- and macro-level practice skills essential to competent and effective social work practice with diverse older adults in a variety of settings. Theories of aging and models of intervention will be discussed, practiced, and critiqued as well as ethical implications in relation to diversity and populations at risk. Focusing on a
strengths-based perspective, this course provides a variety of viewpoints and case examples of best practices with older adults and their families/caregivers. This course incorporates a service-learning component that engages students with older adults individually and in small groups to complete psychosocial / psychoeducational / psychotherapeutic support and/or skill building projects with older adults residing and interacting in a variety of settings (e.g., adult day care, assisted living, senior housing, nursing home, senior center) utilizing various therapeutic intervention techniques (e.g., brief treatment, narrative therapy, CBT, creativity programming, life review/reminiscence, interpersonal therapy). This service-learning project involves student's use of social work skills that focus on individuals and small groups as well as networking and collaborating with community professionals that that may lead to sustainability efforts of interventions across the continuum of care for older adults.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes
1. Describe aging demographics, bio-psycho-social theories of aging, and common myths/stereotypes/ facts about aging.
2. Critique current research, policies, and services addressing older adults.
3. Examine common issues older adults face including, cumulative grief and loss, end-of-life planning, caregiving, abuse/neglect/exploitation, and major mental health challenges, specifically, depression, delirium, anxiety, dementia/Alzheimer’s disease, and substance abuse.
4. Identify factors that contribute to quality of life, including environmental and social well-being, control, choice, and the preferences/ challenges of “aging in place” (e.g., community vs. institutionalization).
5. Network and collaborate with other agencies/ organizations/professionals that provide services to older adults in a variety of settings across the continuum of care.
6. Apply therapeutic skills using life review/reminiscence activities, narrative approach, brief task intervention, cognitive behavioral therapy, interpersonal therapy, motivational interviewing, and/or alternative/ complementary intervention methods with older adults.
7. Reflect on personal feelings, fears, images, and aspirations related to experiences with older adults.

REQUIRED TEXT(S)/SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS
Required Text(s)

COURSE STRUCTURE/FORMAT
Lecture, discussion, experiential learning experiences, video and Internet resources, and guest presentations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Session 1 [date] | Introduction to the course and review syllabus  
View and discuss: “Social Work and Aging” or “Careers in Aging” |                                   |
| Session 2 [date] | Lecture: The context of social work practice with older adults      | Read: Ch. 1                       |
| Session 3 [date] | Lecture: Aging in place – income programs, health insurance, and support services | Read: Ch. 13  
| Session 4 [date] | Lecture: Guest speakers (Dr. Chuck Powell and Dr. Jane Potter)       | Quiz #1                           |
| Session 5 [date] | Lecture: Biological changes and the physical well-being of older adults / psychosocial adjustments to aging / introduction to comprehensive geriatric assessments and differential diagnosis | Read: Ch. 2 and 3                |
| Session 6 [date] | Field Trip: UNMC Home Instead Center for Successful Aging  
Conducting a biopsychosocial Assessment / differential assessment and diagnosis of cognitive and emotional problems | Read: Ch 4 and 5                 |
| Session 7 [date] | Lecture: Substance abuse and suicide prevention  
View and discuss: “Substance Abuse and Older Adults” | Read: Ch. 8  
Quiz #2 |
| Session 8 [date] | Lecture: Individual and Group interventions in the socioemotional and cognitive problems | Read: Ch. 6                      |
| Session 9 [date] | Lecture: Alternative interventions in the socioemotional problems | Read: Ch. 7                      |
| Session 10 [date] | Lecture: Alternative interventions in the socioemotional problems (cont.) | Read: Ch. 7 (cont.)               |
| Session 11 [date] | Field trip: Hospice House  
End of life care | Read: 11  
Quiz 3 |
| Session 12 [date] | Lecture: Support systems: spouses, partners, families, and caregivers | Read: Ch. 12                     |
| Session 13 [date] | Field trip: New Cassel Retirement Community and Franciscan Centre  
Adult Day Health Care  
Spirituality and social work practice | Read: Ch. 10                     |
### IMPORTANT DATES

- **Last day to drop a course (via MavLink) and receive a 100% refund**: January 19, 2020
- **Last day to withdraw from a course (via MavLink) with a grade of “W”**: April 3, 2020

**NOTE**: This syllabus is written as an expectation of class topics, learning activities, and expected learning outcomes. However, the instructor reserves the right to make changes in this schedule that may result in enhanced or more effective learning for students. These modifications will not substantially change the intent or objectives of this course.

### ASSESSMENTS (ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXAMS)

**Exams (4)**
- Four exams worth 50 points each.
  
  **Podcasts/Case Studies (3)**
- Three podcasts/case studies worth 50 points each.
  
  **New York Times Summary (1)**
- One *New York Times* summary worth 75 points.
  
  **Research Paper (1)**
- One research paper worth 150 points.
  
  **Attendance and Participation**
- 20 points (total)
  
**Total Points**: 595

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<tr>
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</table>
| Session 14 [date] | Class meets online: webinar and PowerPoint presentations  
Social work practice in identifying and preventing abuse and neglect of older adults | Read: Ch. 9 |
| Session 15 [date] | Guest panel  
Contemporary issues and future directions in social work practice with older adults | Quiz #4 |
GRADING SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98–100%</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94–97.9%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91–93.9%</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88–90.9%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84–87.9%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81–83.9%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78–80.9%</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77–77.9%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71–73.9%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68–70.9%</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64–67.9%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61–63.9%</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 60.9%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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WRITING GUIDELINES

Students should make sure that writing assignments are free of grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Papers should adhere to the most recent citation style outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA).

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

In this course, students will submit written work by making use of information and ideas found in print or online sources. Whenever material from another writer is used, it is important that students quote or paraphrase appropriately and cite the source.

The UNO Academic Integrity policy defines plagiarism as "presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting academic work in whole or in part as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person."

Failure to cite sources appropriately is plagiarism, a serious academic offense. Plagiarized work will not be accepted. Consequences for plagiarism are up to the discretion of the instructor; they may range, for example, from rewriting all or part of a paper to a grade of F for the course. Students who plagiarize more than once are subject to disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the university.

Students SHOULD NOT GUESS when it comes to using or citing another writer's work. Students should contact the instructor or a consultant at the UNO Writing Center with questions. Students should take a printout of the original source as well as the paper that is being written to the consultation.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY
The maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any student found responsible for violating the policy on Academic Integrity shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions. Violations of the policy on Academic Integrity include, but are not limited to, the following: cheating, fabrication and falsification, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials and/or equipment, complicity in academic dishonesty, falsifying grade reports, and/or misrepresentation to avoid academic work. More information about these areas and the procedures addressing academic integrity is available from the Office of Academic and Student Affairs (EAB 202 | 402.554.2262).

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS
Students are expected to arrive on time to class meetings. Students should come to class well prepared, meaning readings and other assignments have been completed. Students are expected to be respectful of their classmates and the instructor. Distracting and/or disrespectful behaviors will not be tolerated.

CELL PHONES, MOBILE DEVICES, AND LAPTOPS
Students are welcome to use cell phones, mobile devices, and/or laptops in class provided they are used for academic purposes such as note taking, accessing course materials, or researching course concepts and their use does not disrupt fellow classmates. Please silence devices if at all possible. A student who receives a phone call or text, should step outside the classroom to respond. DO NOT take pictures or video during class.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS
Students will be expected to have access to a computer frequently, as all writing assignments used will be typed out and not handwritten. The software students use to write assignments is irrelevant, as long as the writing guidelines outlined in this syllabus are followed. It is recommended that students have access to a computer weekly. Public computers are available on the UNO campus. Consult Information Technology Services and the Criss Library, for more information on equipment locations and availability.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT
Technical support for common university systems, including Canvas and email, is available from Information Technology Services technical support located in Eppley Administration Building (EAB) 104.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS
Reasonable accommodations are provided for students who are registered with Accessibility Services Center (ASC) and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact ASC (Location: 104 H&K, Phone: 402.554.2872, Email: unoaccessibility@unomaha.edu)
CRISS LIBRARY
UNO’s Criss Library offers a wide variety of resources that support student learning. Subject specialist librarians have in-depth knowledge of researching within specific disciplines and can provide guidance for a specific area of study. Students are encouraged to explore customized resources featured on the Criss Library website.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
The University of Nebraska at Omaha is prepared for a wide range of emergencies. Students should familiarize themselves with procedures and assistance available on UNO’s emergency information page. If travel to campus is not feasible due to a declared emergency, a combination of Canvas, teleconferencing, and other technologies will be used to facilitate academic continuity. Students will be notified of procedures through Canvas course site announcements and email as appropriate.

INCLEMENT WEATHER
In the event of inclement or threatening weather, students should use his/her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Students who are not able to attend class due to adverse weather conditions, should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Similarly, if the instructor is unable to reach the class location, students will be notified of any cancellation or change as soon as possible (by approximately 1 hour before class starts and by posting an announcement in Canvas). Students who cannot get to class because of weather conditions, will be provided allowances relative to attendance policies as well as any scheduled tests, quizzes, or other assessments.

PREFERRED NAME AND PREFERRED GENDER PRONOUNS
Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. The instructor will gladly honor a student’s request to be addressed by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise the instructor of this preference early in the semester so that instructor records may be changed appropriately.

WRITING CENTER
The UNO Writing Center offers free one-on-one consultations with trained consultants to all students, faculty, and staff. Their goal is to help writers improve their writing skills and confidence in all types of writing, in all subject areas, and at all stages of the writing process. For more information about their hours and locations or to schedule an appointment, go to unomaha.edu/writingcenter or visit their main location in Arts and Sciences Hall (ASH) 150.
SPEECH CENTER
The UNO Speech Center provides free consulting and coaching services to all UNO students, faculty, and staff in preparing oral presentations. The Speech Center Consulting Room can help students with presentation preparation, outlining, effective delivery techniques, along with any other presentational needs. Speech consulting will help at any stage in the speech-making process. For more information, visit the UNO Speech Center in Arts and Sciences Hall (ASH) 183 and 185.

STUDENT SAFETY
A variety of resources are available to support student safety and security. Students have experienced or are experiencing a difficult personal situation, should consult the resources available through the Division of Student Success.

OUTCOMES MAP AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Competencies
The student learning outcomes for this course are built upon the following nine social work core competencies set forth by the CSWE’s 2015 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) which is required for all accredited social work programs.
1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
5. Engage in policy practice.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

This map is intended to show how course topics, content, and activities align to the student learning outcomes outlined above. Course objectives are italicized to distinguish them from the core competencies set forth by the CSWE’s 2015 EPAS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Objective/Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>EPAS Competency</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Dimension*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Describe aging demographics, biopsychosocial theories of aging, and common myths/stereotypes/ facts about aging.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Readings, field trip comparison, in-class exercises, interview assignment; service-learning project, and quizzes</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Critique current research, policies, and services addressing older adults.</td>
<td>1, 4, and 5</td>
<td>Readings, field trip comparison, service-learning project, in-class exercises, guest speakers</td>
<td>K and CAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Objective/Student Learning Outcome</td>
<td>EPAS Competency</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Dimension*</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Examine common issues older adults face including, cumulative grief and loss, end-of-life planning, caregiving, abuse / neglect / exploitation, and major mental health challenges – specifically depression, delirium, anxiety, dementia / Alzheimer’s disease, and substance abuse.</td>
<td>6, 7, 8, and 9</td>
<td>Readings, field trips, field trip comparison, service-learning project, guest speakers, interview assignment, in-class exercises and quizzes</td>
<td>K and CAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Identify factors that contribute to quality of life, including environmental and social well-being, control, choice, and the preferences/challenges of “aging in place” (e.g., community vs. institutionalization).</td>
<td>2, 4, and 7</td>
<td>Readings, field trip comparison, in-class exercises, interview assignment, service-learning project, and guest speakers</td>
<td>K, V, and CAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Network and collaborate with other agencies/organizations/professionals that provide services to older adults in a variety of settings across the continuum of care.</td>
<td>1, 2, and 6</td>
<td>Field trips, guest speakers, field trip comparison, and service-learning project</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Apply therapeutic skills using life review / reminiscence activities, narrative approach, brief task intervention, cognitive behavioral therapy, interpersonal therapy, motivational interviewing, and/or alternative/complementary intervention methods with older adults.</td>
<td>1, 2, 4, and 8</td>
<td>In-class exercises, interview assignment, and service-learning project</td>
<td>K and S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Reflect on personal feelings, fears, images, and aspirations related to experiences with older adults.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Field trip comparison, interview assignment, field trips, service-learning project</td>
<td>CAP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dimensions Key:  
K = Knowledge  
S = Skills  
V = Value  
CAP = Cognitive and Affective Processing
REFERENCES AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

References

Classic References

**Journals**
*Journal of Gerontological Social Work*
*The Gerontologist*
*Journal of Applied Gerontology*
*Research on Aging*
*Applied Research in Quality of Life*
*American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Care*
*Generations*

**Websites**
National Association of Social Workers [https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Aging](https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Aging)
Association for Gerontology Education in Social Work [https://agesw.org/](https://agesw.org/)
The Gerontological society of America [https://www.geron.org/](https://www.geron.org/)
American Society on Aging [https://www.asaging.org/](https://www.asaging.org/)