I. Course

A. Catalog Description
Cr. 3 (3-0) Knowledge and skills for integrating the practice of professional self-care in the social work profession

B. Purpose
This course examines the natural consequences of helping (stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress disorder, and vicarious trauma) and their impact on social workers, organizational settings, and the profession. Students will develop advocacy and clinical practice knowledge and skills for integrating professional self-care across diverse social work practice settings.

II. Course Objectives

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

1. Critically examine the natural consequences of helping in the social work profession, especially stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress disorder, and vicarious trauma.

2. Recognize key individual worker characteristics, practice arena issues, and organizational factors which often contribute to the risk of developing these conditions.

3. Identify the specific signs and symptoms of stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress disorder, and vicarious trauma and their impact on workers and workplace settings.
4. Explore current research and the incidence of these conditions across a variety of social work settings such as child welfare, family violence, sexual abuse, health care, HIV, hospice, traumatic grief, etc.

5. Develop an understanding of professional self-care as a means of preventing, managing, and addressing these conditions, and promoting social worker resiliency, improving organization morale, and improving retention of workers.

6. Explore the role of social workers in advocating and promoting the practice of professional self-care at individual, organizational, and professional levels.

7. Identify future implications and trends for addressing professional self-care and evaluating its effectiveness in social work education, social work practice, and the social work profession.

III. Course Content

This course will include the following topical areas:
1. Natural consequences of helping (stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, vicarious trauma);
2. Professional self-care program and strategies for individuals, organizations/agencies, and the social work profession;
3. Research regarding the prevalence of these conditions in the field of helping in general and in particular, social work.

IV. Course Structure

This class will utilize several methods of instruction including lectures, discussions, in class practice exercises, discussion groups, guest lectures, assigned and recommended readings, and homework assignments integrated with the lectures. Blackboard Vista will be utilized as a means of posting assignments, supplementary required readings, essential updates, and for delivery and submission of assignments.

V. Required Textbook/Readings

Required Text:

Recommended Text:
Additional required readings will be assigned throughout the course and will be posted on Blackboard Vista.

VI. Course Requirements

A. **Reading Assignments & Blackboard Vista**
The course outline contains topics to be covered and reading assignments to be completed on a weekly basis. Students are required to check in weekly to Blackboard Vista to access power point lectures, readings, resources, and other materials for classes. Class time will be designed to clarify, and supplement the understanding of assigned readings. It is **critical** that students remain current with all reading assignments to fully participate in class and in any Blackboard Vista discussions, and to experience academic and personal success in this course. In order to accomplish this goal, students can expect quizzes on the reading material at various times during the semester. The grades on quizzes will be a factor in the students' class participation grade.

B. **Class Attendance & Participation (15%)**
Class attendance and participation are critical factors for success in this course and will be evaluated based on a number of key factors including: regular and on-time full class attendance, participation in interactive discussions, leadership and participation in discussion and reflection of assigned readings, and playing an active role in the development and hosting of the UHGCSW Annual Professional Self-Care day in April.

C. **Self-Care Plan (15%)**
Students will develop a comprehensive self-care plan at the beginning of the course and will provide a brief 5 minute power point presentation in class about their intentions. Students will keep a journal of their weekly efforts to maintain self-care and will provide a formal evaluation of their activities near the end of the semester. Specific guidelines and grading rubrics will be posted to Blackboard Vista.

D. **Social Worker Interview & Summary (20%)**
Students will complete an interview of a seasoned social worker with a focus on gathering information about four major areas—first, their experience with stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, or secondary trauma, second, their practice of self-care strategies, third, their exploration of the barriers which impact self-care, and fourth, any recommendations for maintaining social worker resilience. Specific guidelines and grading rubrics will be posted to Blackboard Vista.

E. **Self-Care Strategy Demonstration (20%)**
Students will have an opportunity to identify, research, explore, and present a brief demonstration of a self-care strategy in class. Specific
guidelines and grading rubrics will be posted to Blackboard Vista.

F. **Professional Self-Care Project & Professional Self-Care Day (30%)**
   This is a five part assignment. Groups of students, with the guidance of the professor, will select a social work practice arena for focus of study throughout the course. The selected arena must have substantial literature to support presentation of impact and consequences of this field. Specific guidelines for the components of the project, grading rubrics, and timetable for submission of materials will be posted to Blackboard Vista.

VII. Evaluation and Grading

A. Grades for assignments will be based on the following:
   - Class Attendance, Participation, Exercises 15%
   - Self-Care Plan 15%
   - Social Worker Interview & Summary 20%
   - Self-Care Strategy Demonstration 20%
   - Professional Self-Care Project 30%

B. Final course letter grades are based on the following scale:
   - A = 96 - 100
   - A- = 92 – 95.9
   - B+ = 88 – 91.9
   - B = 84 – 87.9
   - B- = 80 – 83.9
   - C+ = 76 – 79.9
   - C = 72 – 75.9
   - C- = 68 – 71.9
   - D+ = 64 – 67.9
   - F = Below 64 (Failing)

C. Attendance and Class Participation
   Attendance and class participation are an essential expectation of students in this course. Due to the interactive nature of this course, attendance and participation are considered to be absolutely critical to the successful learning in this course. Both will be observed and recorded. Should a student’s grade be marginal, attendance and class participation records may influence the final outcome.

D. Incomplete Grades
   The grade of I (incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are passing a course but, for reasons beyond their Control, have not completed a relatively small part of all of the course Requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not being able to meet the course Requirements. (Source: University of Houston Graduate and Professional Studies Policy).
E. **Late Assignments**
Professor will allow for submission of late assignments *only* if the student has made prior arrangements to do so and for appropriate and compelling reasons. Late assignments will automatically result in the lowering of the otherwise earned grade.

F. **Pagers, Cell Phones, and Laptops**
Please show respect and consideration of others by taking responsibility for keeping pager and cell phone interruptions to a minimum. Laptop use for note taking purposes, accessing class materials, and exploring resources and materials related to class content will be allowed. It is assumed and expected that students will act responsibly and with integrity in maintaining this commitment.

VIII. **Policy on Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism**
Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an “I” for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number (s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person’s work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see Instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

IX. **Consultation**
Students are welcomed and encouraged to consult with the Professor, especially if it pertains to student's performance in the course.
Professor’s office is located in room 204 of the Social Work Building. Professor’s email address is slopez@uh.edu and office phone is 713-743-8104.

Addendum: Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. For more information and/or assistance, please contact the Center for Students with DisAbilities at 713-743-5400. Instructors may not provide accommodations without supporting Documentation from the UH Center for Students with DisAbilities.

SOCW7397: PROFESSIONAL SELF-CARE & SOCIAL WORK COURSE OUTLINE

January 17
Introduction and Overview of Course & Assignments

Exploration of Personal Self-Care Commitment
Initial Work on Self-Care Plan
Exploration of Interview & Self-Care Strategy Interests

January 24
The Nature of Helping, Social Work, & Professional Self-Care

Readings:

NASW Professional Self-Care Policy Statement (Prepare two page reflection of policy)
Planning for Professional Self-Care Day & Project

January 31
Individual Commitment to Self-Care

Assignment Due: Self-Care Plan & Powerpoint Presentations

February 7
Stories of Pain, Trauma and Survival

Readings:
Washington, DC: NASW Press (entire text) (Develop two page reflections of text)

February 14

**Understanding Stress & Burnout (See BV Powerpoints)**

**Readings:**


Holmes & Rahe Stress Scale/Student Stress Scale

February 21

**Compassion Fatigue (See BV Powerpoints)**

**Readings:**

Compassion Fatigue/Compassion Satisfaction Test

**Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #1**

*Submit Project Proposal (via BV)*

February 28

**Secondary Traumatization (See BV Powerpoints)**

**Readings:**

Professional Quality of Life Scale

**Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #2**

March 7

**Vicarious Traumatization (See BV Powerpoints)**

**Readings:**
Dane, B. (2002). Duty to inform: Preparing social work students...

**World Assumptions Scale**

**Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #3**

**March 14**  
Spring Break

**March 21**  
Celebrating Social Work Month: Professional Self-Care & Social Work Profession

Social Worker Interview Summary Due/Class Reflections on Interviews

**March 28**  
Promoting Individual Social Worker Self-Care Programs (Prevention, Intervention, & Postvention)

**Readings:**  

Guest Lectures – Self-Care Strategies

**Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #4**

**April 4**  
Promoting Organizational Self-Care Programs

**Readings:**  

Guest Lecture – Organizational Self-Care

**Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #5**

**April 11**  
Future Trends & Social Work Implications: Advocacy for Self-Care & Exploring the Ethical Issues (See BV Powerpoints)

**Readings:**  
Educators.


NASW Professional Impairment Policy Statement (Develop two page reflections of policy)


Green Cross Foundation Standards

**Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #6**

April 18

**Integrating the Practice of Self-Care**

**Student Self-Evaluation of Self-Care Plan**

**Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #7**

April 25

**Professional Self-Care Project Presentations & Posters**

Course Wrap-up & Course Evaluations

**UHGCSW Professional Self-Care Day**