I. Course
A. Catalog Description
Emphasizes the acquisition and development of practice skills in communication and problem-solving for all levels of social work practice. Development of practice skills and self-awareness; discussion of entry into field practicum, including problem solving around common issues.

B. Purpose
The social work practice skills lab is required of all students as part of the foundation course work. This course focuses on the development of skill sets necessary for generalist social work practice across the broad range of practice arenas and client systems including, but not limited to: individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, community groups, legislative groups, and boards.

II. Course Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following objectives:

1. Develop a conscious and deliberate use of self-awareness and the ability to selectively access various dimensions of self in social work practice

2. Develop skills of engaging, establishing rapport and relationship-building

3. Demonstrate basic interpersonal communication skills (e.g., attending, providing feedback, encouraging, active listening, and empathic and expressive communication) across all systems such as those indicated above in the course purpose

4. Demonstrate advanced interpersonal communication skills in either micro or macro settings (e.g., probing, questioning, contracting, partializing, going beyond what is said, reflecting, complex communications, advocating for clients’ issues)
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the influences of various cultural dimensions on communication

6. Demonstrate basic interviewing skills across systems, including preparation for and the structuring of interviews

7. Demonstrate skills in data gathering; note-taking and recording; and documentation

8. Identify and apply problem-solving strategies at all levels of practice

9. Identify and discuss the educational and professional roles of students and field instructors based on Field Practicum I experiences

III. Course Content
This course will include the following topical (content) areas:
1. Self-Exploration and Self Awareness
2. Professionalism and Ethics
3. Basic Interpersonal and Communication Skill Development
4. Cultural Awareness in Communication and Relationship Building
5. Social Work Interviewing and Data Collection
6. Establishing Rapport
7. Exploring, Assessing and Contracting/Goal Setting with Clients
8. Evaluating Goals and Documentation in Social Work Practice
9. Personal and Professional Growth Evaluation

IV. Course Structure
This is a participatory laboratory during which numerous exercises will take place. This class is structured as a hybrid format with a combination of face to face meetings and interactive activities delivered online. The policy for attendance can be found in the Foundation policies. Class members are expected to be present and to fully participate in the laboratory, including self-assessment in EACH session. This includes class exercises conducted online and includes completion of all assigned exercises and readings by assigned deadlines. Attendance, skills practice and demonstration in class constitute critical participation necessary for success in this class. A field specific discussion will be required throughout the course and allows students an opportunity to focus on integrating field practicum experiences with knowledge, skills and values learned in the online environment and classroom.

In addition to the in-class sessions, content of this class is also structured in Blackboard Learn. The syllabus, learning activities, all assignments and reading materials (with exception of textbooks) are maintained in Blackboard. In order to complete this class, you must have access to a computer with internet access as well as a video recording device. If you do not have these items, your success in this
class may be hindered. Many local public libraries offer free use of computers with internet services and video recording devices.

V. Textbooks

VI. Course Requirements

**Assigned Reading and Associated Quizzes (20%)**
You are expected to have read the assigned material and completed the online weekly quiz prior to coming to each class. Failure to read will make it difficult for you to participate in practice activities in class. There will be a total of 12 quizzes, for a total value of 20% of the final grade. The two lowest grades will be dropped. Each quiz consists of 10 multiple and/or fill-in questions. It is open-book, timed, and can be taken from anywhere on blackboard. The quiz schedule is listed in the Course Schedule. There will be no make-up quizzes of any circumstances.

**Genogram & Written Analysis (30%)**
The purpose of this assignment is for you to familiarize yourself with a social work assessment tool and to begin to look at multigenerational patterns that exist within families. Before constructing your personal genogram, you will complete the required reading. These readings will give you an idea of how to construct a genogram, how to track family patterns, including family facts, family functioning, family relationships, dynamics and roles, life transition, events, traumas, etc. After constructing your personal genogram, you will then write a 3-page write-up describing the intergenerational patterns you identified in your genogram.

**Case Analysis (20%)** The purpose of this case analysis is to evaluate your ability to engage, assess, intervene and evaluate on both the micro and macro level. Your paper should be 4-5 pages. Specific instructions for the case analysis will be provided.

**Case Role Play (20%)**
Each student will develop a case based on one of five types of cases. These cases will be edited by the professor and posted to Blackboard. All students should familiarize themselves with all of the posted cases. Throughout the course, students will be assigned to role play these cases with another student in class. Other students will provide verbal feedback.

**Participation (10%)**
In addition to regular class attendance, active participation and full engagement in class discussion and activities are required and expected. Professors will evaluate each student’s full engagement. Role will be taken at the start of each class session, and if you miss more than 2 classes, you will be in jeopardy of failing this course.
VII. **Evaluation and Grading**
The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the college.

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
A = 96-100\% & C+ = 76-79.9\\
A- = 92-95.9 & C = 72-75.9\\
B+ = 88-91.9 & C- = 68-71.9\\
B = 84-87.9 & D = 64-67.9\\
B- = 80-83.9 & F = Below 64\\
\end{array}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genogram &amp; Written Analysis</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Analysis</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Role Play</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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VIII. **Policy on grades of I (Incomplete):**
The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either (a) passing a course or (b) still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they receive an "I" grade to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students should be instructed not to re-register for the same course in a following semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or to a "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements, and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work completed in the course. The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of W.

IX. **Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism**
Please click the link below for the full explanation of the Academic Honesty policy and procedure

Definitions:

“Academic dishonesty” means employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic endeavor that contravenes the standards of ethical integrity expected at the University of Houston or by a course instructor to fulfill any and all
academic requirements. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, the following:

**Plagiarism**

- Representing as one’s own work the work of another without acknowledging the source (plagiarism). Plagiarism includes copying verbatim text from the literature, whether printed or electronic, in all assignments including field.

**Cheating and Unauthorized Group Work**

- Openly cheating in an examination, as copying from another’s paper;
- Being able to view during an examination, quiz or any in-class assignment an electronic device that allows communication with another person, access to unauthorized material, access to the internet, or the ability to capture an image, unless expressly permitted by the instructor;
- Using and/or possessing “crib notes,” as unauthorized use of notes or the like to aid in answering questions during an examination;
- Giving or receiving unauthorized aid during an examination, such as trading examinations, whispering answers, and passing notes, and using electronic devices to transmit or receive information;
- Securing another to take a test in the student’s place. Both the student taking the test for another and the student registered in the course are at fault;

**Fabrication, Falsification, and Misrepresentation**

- Changing answers or grades on a test that has been returned to a student in an attempt to claim instructor error;
- Using another’s laboratory results as one’s own, whether with or without the permission of the owner;
- Falsifying results in laboratory experiments;
- Misrepresenting academic records or achievements as they pertain to course prerequisites or corequisites for the purpose of enrolling or remaining in a course for which one is not eligible;
- Representing oneself as a person who has earned a degree without having earned that particular degree

**Stealing and Abuse of Academic Materials**

- Stealing, as theft of tests or grade books, from faculty offices or elsewhere, or knowingly using stolen tests or materials in satisfaction of exams, papers, or other assignments; this includes the removal of items posted for use by the students;
- Mutilating or stealing library materials; misshelving materials with the intent to reduce accessibility to other students;

**Complicity in Academic Dishonesty**

- Failing to report to the instructor or departmental hearing officer an incident which the student believes to be a violation of the academic honesty policy;

**Academic Misconduct**

- Any other conduct which a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest or improper in an academic setting.
Process:
Students shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty to the instructor of record involved or to the appropriate authority if the alleged act is not associated with a specific class within 5 class days of the incident. Faculty or instructor of record shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty through their college hearing officer within 5 class days of the incident. The faculty should include the recommended sanction in the report. The college hearing officer will notify the student of the report and recommended sanction. The student can accept the sanction and waive a hearing or request a college hearing. A hearing shall be set within 10 days and would be consist of two faculty and three students chosen by the hearing officer.

X. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Practice Skills Lab Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson/ Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Textbook Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due (by Wednesday 11:59PM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Jan 17</td>
<td>Introduction to Practice Lab</td>
<td>Cournoyer, Ch. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Field Seminar: Professional Goals and Expectations for Field</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 Jan 24</td>
<td>Self-Exploration, Social Work Professionalism &amp; Ethics</td>
<td>Cournoyer Chs. 2 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Chapters 2 &amp; 5 quizzes Due Jan 23 at 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
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<td><em>Field Seminar: Self-Assessment</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3 Jan 31</td>
<td>Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills</td>
<td>Cournoyer Ch. 4</td>
<td>Chapter 4 quiz Due Jan 30 at 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Field Seminar: Stages of Practice</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4 Feb 7</td>
<td>Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills cont’d</td>
<td>Cournoyer Ch. 3</td>
<td>Chapter 3 quiz Due Feb 6 at 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Field Seminar: Developing a Plan</em></td>
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<td>Case Development Due Feb 6 at 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5 Feb 14</td>
<td>Culture as an Influencing Factor in Social Work Practice</td>
<td>Cournoyer Ch. 6</td>
<td>Chapter 6 quiz Due Feb 13 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Field Seminar: Effective Supervision</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6 Feb 21</td>
<td>The Social Work Interview: Data Gathering &amp; Documentation</td>
<td>Cournoyer Ch. 7</td>
<td>Chapter 7 quiz Due Feb 20 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Field Seminar: Safety in Field</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7 Feb 28</td>
<td>Developing Skills of Engagement &amp; Establishing Rapport</td>
<td>Cournoyer Ch. 8</td>
<td>Chapter 8 quiz Due Feb 27 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Field Seminar: Agency Analysis</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8 Mar 7</td>
<td>Intensive Practice Skill Building-Exploring</td>
<td>Cournoyer Ch. 9</td>
<td>Chapter 9 quiz Due Mar 6 at 11:59pm</td>
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XI. **Americans with Disabilities Statement**

The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact the UH Center for Disabilities at 713-743-5400.

XII. **Counseling and Psychological Services**

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS ([www.uh.edu/caps](http://www.uh.edu/caps)) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. Also, there is no appointment necessary for the “Let's Talk” program, which is a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. [http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html](http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Mar 14</th>
<th><strong>Field Seminar: Community</strong></th>
<th>Genogram Due Mar 6 at 11:59pm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Mar 21</td>
<td><strong>SPRING BREAK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Mar 28</td>
<td>Intensive Practice Skill Building-Assessing</td>
<td>Cournoyer Ch. 10</td>
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<td><strong>Field Seminar: Social Problems</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 10 quiz Due Mar 20 at 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Apr 4</td>
<td>Intensive Practice Skill Building-Contracting</td>
<td>Cournoyer, Ch. 10 continued</td>
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<td><strong>Field Seminar: Ethics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Apr 11</td>
<td>Intensive Practice Skill Building-Working &amp; Evaluating</td>
<td>Cournoyer Ch. 11</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Field Seminar: Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 11 quiz Due Apr 3 at 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Apr 18</td>
<td>Intensive Practice Skill Building-Ending</td>
<td>Cournoyer Ch. 12</td>
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<td><strong>Field Seminar: Self-Care</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 12 quiz Due Apr 10 at 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Apr 25</td>
<td>Intensive Practice Skill Final Touches</td>
<td>Cournoyer Ch. 13</td>
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<td><strong>Field Seminar: Agency Connections</strong></td>
<td>Chapter 13 quiz Due Apr 17 at 11:59pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Field Seminar: Evaluation and Next Semester</strong></td>
<td>Final Case Analysis Due Apr 24 at 11:59pm</td>
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XIII. **Addenda: Classroom guidelines**

Some classroom practices have been created to promote students’ learning and the quality of the course experience for the whole class.

1. **Attendance and Punctuality.** Students are expected to attend class regularly. Punctuality is an important professional practice. Class will begin promptly. Students are considered absent if they arrive more than 15 minutes late to class, leave early, or do not come to class. While occasional lateness or absence is understandable, a pattern of either will affect the final grade. Students should contact the instructor in advance of any absence and provide justification of the reasons for absence. Students should work with the instructor to identify appropriate ways to make up the contents of any missed class. In addition, anyone missing 2 or more classes will be referred to the MSW program academic advisor for a student success plan.

2. **Class Participation.** The class experience is *co-constructed*. Students are expected to participate in an interactive exchange among students and the instructor. Participation and discussion are a critical part of the course. In addition to class attendance, your contributions to and participation in the discussion should reflect critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis of the content presented during class and in the required readings. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class and should be prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments.

3. **Professional Behavior and Ethical Conduct.** The classroom is an opportunity to practice professional behavior consistent with our Code of Ethics, including mutual respect. We share the class as a time to learn in a safe and nonjudgmental environment. Students are encouraged to demonstrate tolerance and respect for opinions that differ from their own. Active involvement in class sessions and small group activities entails some level of personal self-disclosure. Students might share personal information during class discussions or demonstrations. Because of the nature of the vulnerability, trust, and openness needed to learn about how to be an effective social worker, it is extremely important that confidentiality be maintained and the student’s right to privacy respected by all. Revealing personal information about others outside of the classroom is a breach of confidentiality. If you wish to share with others outside of the classroom, please reveal only your own reactions and avoid using names or identifying features of your classmates. The same guidelines are to be followed when sharing about clients that you may have worked with.

Due to the diversity of our program and the uniqueness of each individual, there may be topics on which you may disagree with your instructors or other students. Your instructors strive to present you with the most up to date evidence-based information concerning effective social work interventions. However, not everyone in this class will have the same values or beliefs based on their own unique upbringing and personal experiences. Students are expected to think critically and to disagree in a respectful manner. This involves active and attentive listening, seeking to understand each other’s viewpoints, asking clarifying questions, and sharing your own opinions in a respectful manner. Personal attacks, use of derogatory language or other inappropriate classroom conduct will not be tolerated and may serve as grounds for dismissal from the class. Please refer to the [GCSW Code of Student](#).
Conduct for more information or guidance on this topic. Please also see Section 1.07 of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics available on Blackboard for more information concerning appropriate conduct for social workers.

4. Communication: Effective communication between students and instructors is key. Students are expected to check UH email and Blackboard daily, as this is the way in which the instructors will communicate any changes or updated information to the class. The best way to get in touch with your instructors regarding any questions you may have is by email. Please use the email addresses above rather than Blackboard email. Leaving messages on the instructors’ voicemail is not recommended.

It is strongly recommended that students stay in communication with the instructors about any difficulties they may be experiencing in the course. If students are concerned about their class performance or have difficulty with class content, they are expected to reach out to the appropriate instructor for help understanding the class material/assignments prior to the end of the semester.

5. Late Assignments. All assignments are due at the date and time specified on this syllabus. Assignments turned in after this deadline will not be accepted unless there is a documented emergency or arrangements have been made with the instructor in advance. Even if arrangements are made in advance (which should be a rare occurrence), the grade value will be reduced by 10% for each day late, including turning in an assignment after the time deadline on the day it is due.

6. Electronic Devices. Please do not video or audiotape any lectures, discussions, or demonstrations. Recording parts of class sessions could pose problems with respect to confidentiality and privacy. Please make sure to turn all cell phone and electronic devices to silent before entering the classroom. If you use laptops/tablets to take notes or to view the power points, please make sure that you are using them for their intended purpose. Failure to do so may lead to your instructors not allowing them to be used by you, or your classmates.