



**COURSE TITLE/SECTION:** SOCW 7320/17852 Empowerment

**TIME:** Monday 1:00-4:00pm Room SW107A

**FACULTY:** Aabha Brown, LMSW

**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment request via email

**E-mail:** abrown28@uh.edu

**Phone:** 713/743-6255

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## **I. Course**

### **A. Catalog Description**

Prerequisite: 34 hours in social work or consent of instructor. Methods and skills for building collaborative alliance with consumer/ community systems to increase access to and control of needed resources. Emancipatory interventions and multicultural practice are emphasized.

### **B. Purpose**

The intent of this course is to provide a foundation for students to develop self-reflective empowerment practice skills in working with others different from themselves.

The first foundation of the course lies in the ability to actively be aware of one's own thoughts, emotions and actions to create a positive empowering environment. The course emphasizes facilitating one's own and others' empowerment through conscious use of self and modeling.

The second foundation lies in the ability to understand the nature and types of power and to analyze power relationships in specific situations. The course emphasizes facilitating one's own and others' ability to think and act politically to effect change in group situations.

The course is heavily grounded in theory and research on how people and political realities change.

## **II. Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- 1) demonstrate advanced knowledge of the history, theory, and politics of an empowerment approach to individual and social change;
- 2) identify and implement emancipatory intervention skills that promote

- personal, interpersonal and collective power;
- 3) use a model of collaborative practice skills to further involve and give a more equal share of power to clients and constituents of different gender, class, race, and sexual or affectional preferences, especially minorities of color, women, gay and lesbian persons, and those most economically disadvantaged;
  - 4) demonstrate advanced skills in working effectively with diverse constituencies and planning multicultural interventions;
  - 5) identify power and reconceptualize it in terms of oppressed groups, in order to help people, organizations, and communities utilize it effectively;
  - 6) identify institutional and community practices that disempower, and develop strategies to challenge them;
  - 7) demonstrate how to share empowerment theory and practice with constituencies who are unfamiliar or inclined to oppose such;
  - 8) demonstrate an ability to apply research methods for evaluating the effectiveness of empowerment practice.

### III. **Course Content**

This course will include the following topical (content) areas:

1. Empowerment (self, within others and institutions)
2. Basic cultural competence skills
3. Systems thinking, theories of change
4. Practice skills related to empowerment

### IV. **Course Structure**

Empowerment is fundamental to the practice of social work. This course is structured to further your understanding of empowerment and the roles of empowerment with individuals and groups. This course will utilize a variety of teaching and learning techniques including but not limited to: lectures, in-class group discussions, presentations, simulation, field trips and group activities.

**Being prepared for class and actively participating in activities and discussion is essential to your learning.** Instructor and students will create an open, collaborative, confidential and respectful atmosphere which allows for sharing of different perspectives to assure maximum rigor, learning and growth.

### V. **Textbooks**

There are two required texts for the course. Multiple texts & readings will be used in this course. All additional readings will be posted to Blackboard.

Saleebey, D. (2013). *The strengths perspective in social work practice*. (6<sup>th</sup> Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Glasser, W. (1998). *Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.

## VI. Course Requirements

### A. Reading Assignments

Readings are listed on the class outline and are to be completed prior to the scheduled class. Please note that the lectures are designed to clarify and supplement the assigned readings--they are not designed to review them in detail. It is critical that you remain current with the readings in order to participate fully in class discussions and activities. All required readings will be posted on the class Blackboard site.

### B. Written Assignment

1. Hero Assignment (details will be discussed in class)
2. Unreasonable Requests (details will be discussed in class)
3. Empowerment Presentation (details will be discussed in class)
4. Self Assessment (details will be discussed in class)
5. Class Attendance and Participation: Attendance and participation are expected for the full length of each class session.

A critical measure, if not the most significant, of a student's learning is dependent upon the level of participation in the course. Consistent and ongoing class preparation, full class attendance, thoughtful completion of assignments and contribution to discussions will be an expectation of every student. Students will receive points for class attendance and participation as well as participation in class exercises. Any necessary absences must be discussed with the Professor in advance. **Students are allowed one absence without explanation. Two or more unexcused absences will result in a 10 point reduction of final grade.**

### \*\*\*\*\*LATE ASSIGNMENTS\*\*\*\*\*

**Late assignments will not be accepted UNLESS prior arrangements have been made with the Instructor. In the case of an unexpected emergency, student must notify the instructor within 24 hours of missing the due date as to the reason for missing the assignment and each situation will be handled on an individual basis. If there is no documented attempt to reach the instructor within 24 hours of missing the due date the student will receive a "0" for the assignment.**

## VII. Evaluation and Grading

The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the college.

A =	96-100% of the points	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%

Grading Distribution:

1.	Course Contract	(required, ungraded)
1.	Hero Assignment	(Min 15%; Max 25%)*
2.	Unreasonable Requests	(Min 15%; Max 25%)*
3.	Empowerment Presentation	(20%)
4.	Self Assessment	(20%)
5.	Class Attendance and Participation	(20%)

\*Student will designate weight of assignment on course contract.

**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**

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.

## X. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

WK	DATE	READINGS	LECTURE CONTENT	ASSIGNMENT DUE
1	January 26 <sup>th</sup>		Welcome & Introduction to Empowerment	
2	February 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Lee – Intro and Chapter 1 & 2 Saleeby Chapter 1	Historical Review of Empowerment in SW; Power and Oppression	
3	February 9 <sup>th</sup>	Gutierrez Part 1 & Chapter 1; Saleeby 2, 3 & 5	Strengths Perspective & Empowerment	
4	February 16 <sup>th</sup>	Changing Others Through Changing Ourselves Ted Talk: Martin Seligman	Use of Self; Positive Psychology; Happiness Assessments	
5	February 23 <sup>rd</sup>			<b>Hero Presentations</b>
6	March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Glasser Chapters 1-5 & 13	The Power of Choice	
7	March 9 <sup>th</sup>	Glasser Chapters 1-5 & 13	The Power of Choice	
8	March 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>SPRING BREAK – HAVE FUN!</b>		

9	March 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Empowerment POV Consumers; Language of Empowerment; Empowerment in Social Work Individual vs. Relational	Competent Empowerment Practice	<b>Unreasonable Requests</b>
10	March 30 <sup>th</sup>	Cohen – Chapters 9 & 10; When Hot and Cold Collide	Institutional Power and Change	
11	April 6 <sup>th</sup>	Cohen – Chapters 9 & 10; When Hot and Cold Collide	Institutional Power and Change	
12	April 13 <sup>th</sup>			<b>Empowerment Presentations</b>
13	April 20 <sup>th</sup>			<b>Empowerment Presentations</b>
14	April 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
15	May 4 <sup>th</sup>		Reflections on Empowerment	<b>Self Assessment</b>

\*\*\*The instructor reserves the right (and flexibility) to alter the Course Outline or schedule in order to better accommodate learning goals and time constraints. Student flexibility and tolerance for any necessary agenda shifts is required.\*\*\*

## XI. Bibliography

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## **XII. Americans with Disabilities Statement**

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. Please call 713-743-5400 for more assistance. Instructors may not provide accommodations without supporting documentation from the UH Center for Students with Disabilities.

## **XIII. Addenda**

**A. Cell Phones and Electronic Devices:** Students are asked to turn off/silence/place in vibrate mode all cell phones and electronic devices during class. Laptops and tablets may ONLY be used to take notes.

**B. Classroom Conduct:** Respect and confidentiality are cornerstones of the social work profession. These values create a safe space for honest, critical and diverse dialogue. The classroom is a great opportunity to practice these skills to create a richer learning environment for the students and Instructor. Students are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times. Students are encouraged to be honest and courageous in class to garner the best learning from the instructor and one another.

### **C. Consultation**

Students are encouraged to consult with the Instructor pertaining to the course. The Instructor can be reached by phone or email listed above. If student needs to set an appointment with the Instructor, those requests should be emailed with three 30 minute options listed in the text of the request.

- D. Late assignments will not be accepted.** In the case of an unexpected emergency, student must notify the instructor within 24 hours of missing the due date as to the reason for missing the assignment and each situation will be handled on an individual basis. If there is no documented attempt to reach the instructor within 24 hours of missing the due date the student will receive a “0” for the assignment.