



Graduate College of Social Work

[www.uh.edu/socialwork](http://www.uh.edu/socialwork)

**COURSE TITLE/SECTION:** SOCIAL WORK 7325 (17848)  
Assessment in Social Work Practice

**TIME:** Thursday 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm, Room SW 107B

**FACULTY:** Donna Amtsberg, LCSW

**OFFICE HOURS:** GCSW 411 – By appointment only, please see contact info below

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**\*\*THIS COURSE SYLLABUS MAY BE AMENDED BY THE INSTRUCTOR DURING THE SEMESTER\*\***

## I. COURSE

### A. Catalog Description

Knowledge and skills for assessment of clients at the individual, group, family, organizational, and community levels.

### B. Purpose

This advanced practice course prepares students to conduct assessments of clients at the individual, group, family, organizational and community levels. Utilizing a strengths perspective, it focuses on the collaborative nature of assessment and the design and implementation of assessments that include evidence based strategies.

## II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

- 1) Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:
- 2) Describe how assessment informs all levels of social work practice;
- 3) Delineate the tasks involved in the process of assessment;
- 4) Compare and contrast the differences and similarities between problem-based and strengths-based assessment;



- 5) Discuss the collaborative nature of assessment and its relationship to social work values;
- 6) Determine the validity and reliability of different assessment tools;
- 7) Choose appropriate assessment tools for use with clients at the individual, group, family, organizational and community levels;
- 8) Explain how assessment methods are used in the evaluation process;
- 9) Utilize culturally sensitive models for assessment of racial/ethnic minority clients, families and communities;
- 10) Demonstrate assessment skills that take into account special client considerations including, but not limited to, race/ethnicity/social class, gender and sexual orientation;
- 11) Conduct a strengths-based assessment with clients at the individual, group, family organizational and community levels.

### III. COURSE CONTENT

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

1. Evidenced based methods;
2. Individual, family, organization, community and self-assessment;
3. Assessment tools to address various issues and age levels, inclusive of multicultural content and special groups.

### IV. COURSE STRUCTURE

Assessment is an essential aspect of competent social work in any professional environment. This course is structured to further your understanding of how and what to assess in any setting and 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. TEXTS

The citation for the textbook is provided below. Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

**Required:**

Jordan, C. & Franklin, C. (Eds.) (2011). *Clinical assessment for social workers: Quantitative and qualitative methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Chicago: Lyceum Books, Inc. [ISBN: 978-1-933478-80-7]

**Other Required Readings on Blackboard:**

Green, W. & Simon, L. (2012). *The Columbia Guide to Social Work Writing*. Chichester, NY: Columbia University Press.

Pipher, M. (2006). *Writing to change the world*. New York, NY: PenguinGroup.

Ragg, D. M. (2011). *Developing practice competencies. A foundation for generalist practice*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

## 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. Some readings are assigned directly from the textbook, while other readings can be found via the UH Library, the internet, or posted on the class Blackboard site.

### B. Written Assignments

1. Self-Assessment (Pre and Post) (20%)  
Self-awareness and use of self are critical components when conducting assessments. Students will receive a handout with specific questions to be answered for a self-assessment. This assignment will be completed at the beginning and end of the course.
2. Cultural Chart (10%)  
Assessing your cultural influences and how they inform your practice is required to practice culturally competent assessments. Students will receive a chart and series of questions that will need to be answered in a poster presentation.



3. Family Assessment (15%)  
Students will write a family assessment based on characters presented to them in an in-class viewing. Students will be required to pair with a classmate and edit their work prior to turning in the final paper.
4. Organizational Assessment (15%)  
Students will use a handout to guide them in an assessment of their field practicum agency. If students are not in field at the time, arrangements can be made to conduct assessment of workplace or another agency.
5. Rapid Bio-psychosocial Assessment (15%)  
Because of the busy settings in which social workers assess, this assignment offers a chance to conduct a rapid, brief and multi-dimensional assessment on an individual. Students will pair up and conduct rapid biopsychosocial assessments on one another.
6. Experiential Community Assessment (15%)  
Students will identify a community to conduct a group assessment that focuses on the sensory, historical and current experience of that community.
7. Class Attendance and Participation (10%)  
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.	Self-Assessment 1 & 2	20%
2.	Cultural Chart	10%
3.	Family Assessment	15%
4.	Organizational Assessment	15%
3.	Experiential Community Assessment	15%
4.	Rapid Biopsychosocial Assessment	15%
5.	Attendance / Participation	10%

## 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 22 <sup>ND</sup>	Course Syllabus Review of Blackboard (BB) Jordan & Franklin, Chapter 1 Mary Piper, Chapter 2	Welcome & Introduction to Assessment; Awareness of Self; <i>Review Self-Assessment Assign.</i> Review Experiential Learning activity	<b>"I Am From ..." Poem</b>
2	January 29 <sup>th</sup>	Jordan & Franklin Chapter 9 Ragg, Professional Self-Awareness Chapter 1	Ethics of Assessment; Phases of Assessment; Culturally Competent Assessment; <i>Review Cultural Chart Assignment</i>	
3	February 5 <sup>th</sup>		Cultural Chart Small Group Presentations	<b>Cultural Chart Due</b>
4	February 12 <sup>th</sup>	Jordan & Franklin Chapters 2 & 3 Ragg, Chapter 4	Data Collection Sources & Methods; Quantitative & Qualitative Assessment; Standardized Assessment Tools; Strengths Based Assessment; Clinical Writing	
5	February 19 <sup>th</sup>	Jordan & Franklin Chapters 8 Gerhart & Tuttle Article	Organizational Assessment; Family Assessment; Viewing: "The Fighter"	
6	February 26 <sup>th</sup>		Family Assessment Work Day No Class-Work On Own	
7	March 5 <sup>th</sup>	Ragg, Chapter 6 Piper, "Mr. USA"	BPS Lecture + Skill Review	<b>Family Assessment Due</b>
8	March 12 <sup>th</sup>		In Class: Conduct BPS and Process	
9	March 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>SPRING BREAK – HAVE FUN!</b>		



WK	DATE	READINGS	LECTURE CONTENT	ASSIGNMENT DUE
10	March 26 <sup>th</sup>	Homan, Chapter 5 Netting, Chapters 7 & 8	Macro/Community Assessment AVDRT Presentation	<b>Rapid Bio-Psycho Social</b>
11	April 2 <sup>ND</sup>		Organizational Assessment; In-class presentations	<b>Organizational Assessment Due</b>
12	April 9 <sup>th</sup>	Netting, Chapters 5 & 6 "A Change-makers Guide to Storytelling"	Community Assessment; Storytelling	
13	April 16 <sup>th</sup>	Online Learning for those not at Red Dun Ranch	Experiential Learning Red Dun Ranch	
14	April 23	Online Learning for those not at Red Dun Ranch	Experiential Learning Red Dun Ranch	<b>Self-Assessment 2 Due</b>
15	April 30 <sup>th</sup>	Online Learning for those not at Red Dun Ranch	Experiential Learning Red Dun Ranch	
16	May 7 <sup>th</sup>		Final Class	<b>In Class: Process Experiential Learning</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

Collins, D., Jordan, C., & Coleman, H. (2007). *An introduction to family social work*. (2nd Ed.). Itasca, IL: Peacock Publishers.

Corey, M. and Corey, G. (2006). *Process and practice groups* (7th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Dillon, C. (2003). *Learning from mistakes in clinical practice*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Helton, L., & Jackson, M. (1997). *Social work practice with families: A diversity model*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Hepworth, D. H., Rooney, R. H., Rooney, G. D., Strom-Gottfried, K., & Larsen, J. (2006). *Direct social work practice: Theory and skills* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Jordan, C. & Franklin, C. (2003). *Clinical assessment for social workers: Qualitative and qualitative methods* (2nd ed.). Chicago: Lyceum.

Mattaini, M. A. (1997). *Clinical practice with individuals*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Shellenberger, S. (1999). *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention* (2nd Ed.). New York: W. W. Norton.

McGoldrick, M., Giordano, J., & Pearce, J. (Eds.). (1996). *Ethnicity and family therapy* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Murphy, B. C. & Dillon, C. (2003). *Interviewing in action: Relationship, process, and change*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Netting, E., Kettner, P., & McMurtry, S. (2007). *Social work macro practice* (4th Ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

Saleebey, D. (2006). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.



Toseland, R. W., & Rivas, R. F. (2001). *An introduction to group work practice* (4th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

## 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. **PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

- 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.