

COURSE OUTLINE - Fall 2025

SW1000(A2): Introduction to the Practice of Social Work - 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

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OFFICE HOURS:			

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: An introduction to the methods and skills used in effective, ethical, and anti-oppressive social work practice. The historical and theoretical contexts of social work will be examined as well as the impact of marginalization and oppression on individuals, families, and communities. Appropriate use of communication, counselling, and effective interview methods will be applied to example scenarios as students develop awareness of the factors that shape the practice of social work.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

- Hick, S., Stokes, J. (2016). *Social Work in Canada: An Introduction*. Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Blackstock, C. (2009). The occasional evil of angels: Learning from the experiences of Aboriginal peoples and social work. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*. (4)1, 28-37.
- Canadian Association of Social Workers (2005). Code of ethics.
- Canadian Association of Social Workers (2005). Guidelines for ethical practice.
- Mullaly, B. (2010). *Challenging oppression. A critical social work approach*. (2nd ed). Ontario: Oxford University Press. Chapter 2.

WEBSITES:

- Alberta College of Social Workers – www.acsw.ab.ca
- Association of Social Work Boards – www.aswb.org
- Canadian Association of Social Workers – www.casw-acts.ca
- International Federation of Social Workers – www.ifsw.org
- National Association of Social Workers – www.naswdc.org

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the historical and theoretical contexts of social work.
- Identify and analyze the effects of marginalization and oppression on diverse populations.
- Apply anti-oppressive principles to social work practice.
- Utilize effective communication, counselling, and interview techniques in a professional context.
- Reflect on their own values and biases to foster ethical and inclusive practices.
- Collaborate effectively with peers to analyze case studies and propose solutions grounded in anti-oppressive frameworks.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page

<http://www.transferalberta.ca>

**** Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS:

Assignment	Description	Grade	Due Date
Assignment 1	Exploring Personal Values	20	Sept 18 th
Assignment 2	Case Study: Anti-Oppressive Practice in Social Work	25	Oct 16 th
Assignment 3	Historical and Theoretical Contexts of Social Work	25	Oct 30 th
Assignment 4	Critical Reflection on Marginalization and Oppression in Social Work Practice	30	Dec 11 th

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Grading Chart

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Sept 4 th	Social Work and Social Welfare in Canada	Chapter 1	
Sept 9 th & 11 th	Toward a History of Social Work in Canada	Chapter 2	
Sept 16 th & 18 th	Social Work Theories and Practice Models	Chapter 3 Canadian Association of Social Workers (2005). Code of ethics. Canadian Association of Social Workers (2005). Guidelines for ethical practice.	Assignment 1
Sept 23 rd & 25 th	Social Work and the Health of Canadians	Chapter 6	
Sept 30 no class Oct 2 nd	Challenging Oppression	Mullaly, B. (2010). Challenging oppression. A critical social work approach. (2nd ed). Ontario: Oxford University Press. Chapter 2.	

Oct 7 th & 9 th	Mental Health and Social Work Practice	Chapter 7	
Oct 14 th & 16 th	Social Work with Women in Canada	Chapter 8 MMIP	Assignment 2
Oct 21 st & 23 rd	Social Work with Indigenous Peoples	Chapter 9 Blackstock, C. (2009). The occasional evil of angels: Learning from the experiences of Aboriginal peoples and socialwork. First Peoples Child & Family Review. (4)1,2009.Chapter 10	
Oct 28 th & 30 th	Racialized Canadians and Immigrants	Chapter 10	Assignment 3
Nov 4 th & 6 th		In class Exercises	
Nov 10 th		No Classes	
Nov 18 th & 20 th	Social Work with Older Canadians Social Work and Sexual and Gender Diversity	Chapter 11 Chapter 12	
Nov 25 th & 27 th	Social Work with Persons with Disabilities	Chapter 13	Presentations
Dec 2 nd & 5 th	International Social Work	Chapter 14	Presentations
Dec 9 th & 11 th			Presentations

Assignment 1: Exploring Personal Values and Social Work Ethics

Reflect on personal values and ethical frameworks and examine how they influence social work practice. In this assignment, you will explore your own personal values, beliefs, and attitudes, and analyze how they may impact your practice as a future social worker. Consider how your cultural background, upbringing, and life experiences shape your perspectives on issues such as poverty, marginalization, and oppression. Reflect on how these personal values align with or conflict with the ethical guidelines and values of the social work profession. This assignment will contain the following:

- A written reflection (3-4 pages) addressing the following questions:
 - What are your core values, and how were they shaped by your personal background?

- How do your values align with the ethics of social work (e.g., respect for human dignity, social justice)?
- In what ways can your personal values influence your practice in terms of client relationships and decision-making?
- How will you ensure that your values do not interfere with providing anti-oppressive, client-centered care?
- Provide references to key ethical principles from the NASW Code of Ethics or similar social work ethics frameworks.

Assignment 2: Case Study: Anti-Oppressive Practice in Social Work

Apply anti-oppressive social work principles to a real or hypothetical case scenario, analyzing the impact of marginalization on the client. Choose a case study (real or hypothetical) in which the client faces marginalization or oppression. Analyze the case through the lens of anti-oppressive practice, considering how factors like race, gender, class, disability, and sexual orientation affect the client's situation. Identify how systemic oppression plays a role in the client's struggles and outline specific interventions that align with anti-oppressive and ethical social work practices. This assignment will contain the following:

- A written report (4-5 pages) addressing the following:
 - A brief description of the case scenario, including relevant background information.
 - Analysis of the key forms of marginalization or oppression impacting the client.
 - Application of anti-oppressive social work principles to the case, discussing how to empower the client.
 - Suggested interventions or strategies to address the systemic factors contributing to oppression.
 - Reflection on your role as a social worker in addressing power imbalances.
- Refer to course materials, including readings on anti-oppressive practice, to support your analysis and proposed interventions.

Assignment 3: Historical and Theoretical Contexts of Social Work

Examine the historical and theoretical foundations of social work and discuss how these inform contemporary practice. Write a 4-5-page essay that explores the historical development of social work as a profession, the key theoretical frameworks that guide practice (e.g., person-in-environment, strengths-based, systems theory), and the ways these have shaped the profession. Reflect on how an understanding of these historical and theoretical contexts helps shape your approach to social work practice today. This assignment will contain the following:

- A written essay addressing:
 - A brief overview of the history of social work, highlighting significant events, social movements, and changes in the profession.
 - An analysis of major social work theories

- A reflection on how you plan to integrate historical and theoretical knowledge into your practice.
- Cite relevant course materials, textbooks, and scholarly articles.

Assignment 4: Critical Reflection on Marginalization and Oppression in Social Work Practice Group Project (3-4 people) No more than 15 minutes in length

Critically reflect on the impact of marginalization and oppression on individuals and communities and explore strategies for addressing these issues within social work practice. In this assignment, you will engage in a reflective analysis of how various forms of marginalization and oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, ableism, classism, etc.) affect individuals, families, and communities. Using a real-life or hypothetical example, you will analyze how these systems of oppression manifest in a social work setting and discuss how social workers can challenge and address these issues in their practice. This reflection will also require you to explore your own positionality and the role it plays in how you approach and intervene in situations involving marginalized individuals or communities. This assignment will contain the following:

- **Create a Presentation** addressing the following:
 - Identify and discuss a case (real or hypothetical) where marginalization or oppression is a key issue.
 - Analyze how the systems of oppression present in this case affect the individual, family, or community, and discuss the social worker's role in addressing these issues.
 - Reflect on your own positionality/intersectionality, considering how your identity (e.g., race, class, gender, etc.) influences how you perceive and respond to marginalization in practice (each person will provide this)
 - Discuss specific anti-oppressive strategies or interventions that you, as a social worker, could employ to empower individuals and challenge systemic oppression.
 - Provide a critical assessment of the challenges social workers face when addressing oppression and marginalization in practice, and how you would work through those challenges.
- **Citations:** Refer to course readings, relevant social work frameworks (e.g., anti-oppressive practice, critical race theory), and scholarly articles to support your analysis.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students are expected to attend all classes and actively participate. Being prepared means completing assigned readings and tasks in advance and coming ready to contribute to meaningful discussions that value diverse perspectives and ideas.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is permitted, but it must be used responsibly. AI should be a tool to support and enhance your learning, not replace it. For example, AI may be

used to help brainstorm, organize, or edit your work, but it must not be used to generate full assignments or bypass the learning process. Improper use of AI may have academic consequences. Please review the guidelines and potential ramifications of AI use here:

Klimova, B., & Pikhart, M. (2025). Exploring the effects of artificial intelligence on student and academic well-being in higher education: a mini-review. *Frontiers in psychology, 16*, 1498132. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1498132>

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.