

COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2025

SW1010(A2): Ethics in 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: In this introduction to the ethical principles of social work practice, students will explore the theoretical foundations of the codes and frameworks which inform social work professionals as they navigate ethical dilemmas and issues. Students will also reflect on the diverse value systems in Canadian society and the interactions between personal and professional values.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:

Social Work Ethics: Progressive, Practical, and Relational Approaches Paperback – Dec 23 2017

Dumbrill, G. C., & Yee, J. Y. (2019). *Anti-oppressive social work: Ways of knowing, talking, and doing*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press. (Required in multiple social work classes)

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Explain the theoretical foundations, principles, and codes guiding ethical social work practice.

- Integrate ethical codes of conduct and apply ethical decision-making models to address complex dilemmas in social work
- Incorporate cultural humility and inclusion into ethical decision-making, with particular attention to marginalized communities.
- Examine the interplay between personal, cultural, and professional values in ethical practice.
- Assess how diverse value systems and cultural perspectives influence ethical decisions.
- Demonstrate ongoing ethical awareness, self-reflection, and professional development.

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	Ethics Dyad	25%	Oct 3 rd
Assignment 2	Ethics Application	20%	Oct 24 th
Assignment 3	Presentations	25%	Nov 28 th – Dec 11 th
	Ethics Final	30%	Nov 21 st

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 8 th & 12 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Work Practice - Every day ethics 	Ch 1&2	
Sept 15 th & 19 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Snapshots of social works ethical history - Is Critical, Anti-oppressive social work still possible? 	Ch 3&4	
Sept 22 nd & 26 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New tools for ethical practice in an era of fiscal restraints - Progressive ethical social work administration 	Ch 5&6	
Sept 29 th & Oct 3 rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ethics of progressive community organizing - Does social work have the guts for social justice and reconciliation 	Ch 7& 8	Assignment 1
Oct 6 th & 10 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immigrant integration practice 	Ch 9	
Oct 13 th . No Class on the Monday Oct & 17 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do children really have rights? Ethics of working with children - Insider social work ethics: working with your own community 	Ch 10&11	
Oct 20 st & 24 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rational ethics and the third space - West meets east: Gandhian ethics in social work practice p 	Ch 12&13	Assignment 2
Oct 27 th & 31 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethical decision making 	Ch 14&15	Ethics Quiz

	- The ethical professional		
Nov 3 rd & 7 th	- Social work ethics within interdisciplinary teams in mental health	Ch 16	
Nov 10 th	No Classes		
Nov 17 th & 21 st	In Class Exercise		Ethics Quiz
Nov 24 th & 28 th			Presentations
Dec 1 st & 5 th			Presentations
Dec 8 th			Presentations

Assignments:

Assignment 1: Ethics Dyad (25%)

Students will pair up in dyads to analyze a hypothetical ethical dilemma relevant to social work practice. Together, they will:

- Analyze the situation using an ethical decision-making model.
- Identify the relevant ethical principles, codes of conduct, and legal considerations.
- Reflect on the role of cultural diversity and intersecting value systems in shaping the issue.
- Submit a comprehensive paper (6–7 pages) explaining their analysis and ethical conclusions.

Assignment 2: Ethics Application (20%)

Individually, students will select a real-life case study or ethical dilemma from Canadian social work contexts. They will:

- Identify the ethical principles and codes applicable to the situation.
- Discuss and **compare their personal values** and how these may influence their professional decision-making.
- Prepare a written report (5–6 pages) detailing their analysis, including a proposed resolution to the dilemma and justification using ethical frameworks.

Assignment 3: Presentation (25%)

Students will deliver a 15-minute presentation (in small groups 2–4 people) on a specific ethical challenge in Canadian social work. The presentation should:

- Outline the challenge and provide relevant context (e.g., cultural, social, or legal).
- Highlight diverse value systems at play and their implications.
- Propose ethical strategies for navigating the challenge.

Ethics Final (30%)

Students will complete a timed final consisting of multiple-choice, short-answer, and scenario-based questions. The final will assess:

- Understanding of key ethical principles, codes of conduct, and frameworks.
- Ability to analyze and resolve ethical dilemmas through practical application.

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.