

School of Social Work
Rhode Island College

SW 580: Integrated Practice in the Homeless Community

Instructors:

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Office hours: Social work seminar days from 4-5pm and by appointment

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Course Meetings

In this year-long two-semester elective course, social work students earn 1.5 credits each semester. The course meeting dates and locations are as follows:

Fall Semester

Wednesday, August 31 from 5-7:50pm at RI College SSW

Wednesday, September 7 from 6-8pm at Alpert Medical School Room 270

Wednesday, September 21 from 5-7:50pm at RI College SSW

Wednesday, October 5 from 5-8pm at Alpert Medical School Room TBD

Wednesday, October 19 from 5-7:50pm at RI College SSW

Wednesday, November 2 from 5-7:50pm at RI College SSW

Wednesday, November 16 from 5-8pm at Alpert Medical School Room 345

Wednesday, December 7 from 5-8pm at Alpert Medical School Room 270

Spring Semester

Wednesday, February 1 from 6-8pm at Alpert Medical School Room 280

Wednesday, February 15 from 5-7:50pm at RI College SSW

Wednesday, March 15 from 5-7:50 at RI College SSW

Wednesday, April 12 from 5-7:50 at RI College SSW

Wednesday, April 26 from 5-7:50 at RI College SSW

Course Overview

This course is experientially based, so it has several components:

1. Once a month during the fall semester class meets for a conjoint lecture/presentation with medical and nursing students at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University. At one

of these conjoint sessions students participate in a 1.5 hour training with the Rhode Island Medical Navigator Partnership (RIMNP), which prepares them for a year long relationship with a person who is experiencing homelessness.

2. Once a month during the fall and spring semesters the social work students meet in a seminar at the School of Social Work, to explore in depth the students' experiences in working with a person who has no home, and to integrate and apply social work research, theory and practice principles at the macro, mezzo, and micro system levels.
3. At least twice a month each semester each social work student in the course meets (often in conjunction with a medical or nursing student) with one person who is experiencing homelessness. The person who is experiencing homelessness is the student's teacher while the student offers resources and other supports. The frequency of these visits will vary according to the needs of the person experiencing homelessness and the student's schedule.
4. As needed and mutually agreed upon during the fall and spring semesters the social work students meet, along with medical and nursing students, with Craig Kaufmann, MD and Caitlin May, NP, for a case conference to address the biopsychosocial-spiritual needs of the persons with no home that the students are following throughout the academic year.
5. Once each semester the social work students participate in street outreach to people who are experiencing homelessness in conjunction with Megan Smith, Craig Kaufmann, and/or other outreach workers.
6. Once per semester the social work students attend a community-based organizing or policy meeting of their choosing (a non-exhaustive list of options will be provided).

A grid summarizing these expectations and other assignments is included in the syllabus (see page 7).

The course uses a comprehensive eco-systems, biopsychosocial-spiritual framework for understanding and intervening with homelessness in the United States and abroad. The course explores the interlocking dynamics of macro, mezzo and micro systems in creating, sustaining and addressing homelessness at both the "case and cause" levels.

In addition, the course uses a strengths, empowerment, resilience, consumer-oriented perspective that views the person experiencing homelessness as the expert on her or his own life. Students in the course will seek to establish a collaborative, collegial relationship with a person who is experiencing homelessness and is willing to be the student's teacher as the two (or more) people work together to link the person with needed resources.

Over the two semesters the course defines homelessness; identifies the different kinds of homelessness; explores systemic (economic, political, structural) causes of homelessness; surveys and critiques existing policies, programs and services to address homelessness; and presents guidelines for policy analysis, community organizing, and legislative advocacy at the local, state and federal levels with and on behalf of people who have no home.

In addition, the course addresses some of the interpersonal and intrapersonal issues that homelessness causes, exacerbates, or that contribute to homelessness. Focus is upon specific outreach and engagement skills, informed consent and other ethical protections and standards

(e.g., 49CFR, HIPAA), affective attunement, case management, goal setting, problem solving, solution focused interventions, harm reduction approaches, safety planning, motivational interviewing and the stages of change, maintaining boundaries, addressing trauma, interpersonal violence, LGBT-QQ issues, specific mental health challenges (such as psychotic disorders, substance use, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder) and physical health challenges. All issues will be addressed on the micro, mezzo and macro systems levels.

Seminar sessions will be highly interactive, including students' presentations of summaries of readings, discussions of students' work in the field of homelessness, and skills building exercises. There is a 7 page paper for each semester; each student is free to decide in which semester she or he prefers to hand in the case study vs the policy analysis paper. Detailed descriptions of in-class assignments and written assignments are below.

Course Objectives

At the end of the semester, the student will be able to:

1. Define homelessness and discuss the strengths and limitations of those definitions.
2. Identify historical, mezzo and macro issues that create and sustain homelessness.
3. Articulate the ways micro, mezzo and macro issues intersect in the lives of people who are experiencing homelessness.
4. Explain the causes of economic inequality and the 2008 collapse of the housing market.
5. Describe how a strengths, empowerment, collaborative, egalitarian, resilience perspective shapes direct practice when working with and on behalf of people who are experiencing homelessness.
6. Identify the reasons for and features of effective interdisciplinary teamwork.
7. Describe different practice and policy models for addressing homelessness (e.g., ACCESS, Housing First) and the extent and quality of the research evidence to support each.
8. Regarding the person experiencing homelessness, present a comprehensive, evidence informed biopsychosocial assessment, case plan, and plan for tracking progress towards goal attainment, developed with a person who is experiencing homelessness; address ways to engage collaboratively with a strengths based focus.
9. Identify and address ethical issues that emerge in policy, community and direct practice focused on homelessness.
10. Identify and demonstrate skills social workers need to use to influence policy and practice to address homelessness

Expectations of Students

1. Attend **ALL** class sessions.
2. **TURN OFF ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES DURING CLASS.**
3. Be on time for the start of class, return on time from breaks, stay for the full class session. According to School of Social Work policy, students who miss more than three hours of class time may fail the class.
4. Do the reading.

5. Maintain confidentiality regarding issues raised in class in accord with standards specified in the School of Social Work Policies and Procedures Manual and in the NASW Code of Ethics.
6. Treat others in the class with respect. Express ideas, beliefs and opinions without personal attack.
7. Participate verbally and nonverbally in all class activities – role-plays, small group exercises, discussions.
8. Give others balanced feedback in a warm, supportive manner.
9. Honor deadlines. If an extension is needed, negotiate one with the instructor before the due date.
10. In all class discussions and writing for the course thoroughly change and disguise *all* potentially identifying information about clients. It is ethically imperative to maintain client privacy and confidentiality.
11. See “Criteria for grading class participation,” “Criteria for grading written assignments,” and “Criteria for grading the video presentation” found at the end of this syllabus for more detail regarding expectations of students.
12. If feeling frustrated, disappointed or otherwise dissatisfied with something about the course please tell the instructors. (The instructors promise to do their best to listen, even if they can’t fix it. Chances are, if they know of your concern, they’ll be better able try to address it. If you don’t tell them of your concern, they’ll not know you have one.)

Expectations of the Instructors

1. Attend each social work seminar class session.
2. Be on time. Be prepared for class.
3. In case of absence, make an alternate plan to cover the class session if at all possible.
4. Follow the SSW’s guidelines for confidentiality in the classroom.
5. Treat students with respect, in accord with standards set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics.
6. Provide written feedback on students’ performance in the course.
7. Give balanced feedback in a warm and supportive manner.
8. Meet with students, upon request, at times of mutual convenience either in person or by phone.
9. Adhere to the syllabus unless the class agrees to a change.
10. Maintain high expectations for student performance.

Required Readings

All required readings for the course are available online through the Blackboard site for the course.

Assignments

1. **Submit each month in the social work seminar written notes documenting each contact with the person experiencing homelessness.** These notes are to be typed, written grammatically, articulately, succinctly and thoroughly, *without any potentially identifying information* in them. The notes will use only behaviorally specific terms and will adhere to the documentation standards laid out in the NASW Code of Ethics. The notes will specify the homeless person's views of her/his strengths, needs, goals, relevant assessment data, a plan that the student and homeless person have agreed upon regarding who will do what by when to achieve those goals, and a detailed plan for monitoring progress towards goal attainment. These will assist students in writing the case plan paper. Case notes that do not meet expectations regarding clarity, depth, behavioral specificity, non-judgmental language, ethical standards and grammar will not be accepted. (Graded as check, check plus, check minus)
2. **At 9:00 a.m. on the Friday before each Wednesday social work seminar session, each social work student emails both instructors (dsiegel@ric.edu and msmith_4798@email.ric.edu) a 1-2 page typed double spaced reflection** that examines one of the issues identified in the readings or class outline on the syllabus for that seminar session, or a relevant issue of the student's choice. At the bottom of the reflection the student will write a list of all activities the student performed for the course in the past month. The instructors will review these reflections before class and will invite students to explore them during seminar sessions. Examples of issues to reflect upon include, but are not limited to, the following: research regarding effective practices for addressing and ending homelessness; agency and social policies that help and hinder; policy practice and direct practice lessons learned; countertransference and transference dynamics in the social work student's relationship with the person experiencing homelessness; challenges and satisfactions in the student's teamwork with the medical and nursing students; ethical issues that have emerged; guidelines for coping with interpersonal boundaries, free will vs determinism, autonomy and self-determination vs paternalism; oppression, discrimination, race, ethnicity and culture; mental health and other clinical issues the person they're working with encounters; and more. Reflections that do not meet expectations regarding clarity, depth, specificity, and grammar will not be accepted. (Graded as check, check plus, check minus)
3. **At the end of each social work seminar session, each social work student hands in a 3X5 card on which the student has written three "take away" points** that are worth remembering from that evening's class. The instructor will summarize these, post the "take away" notes on Blackboard, and share the results with the students at the next social work seminar session. The "take away" cards must show thoughtful grasp of the day's material. (Graded as check, check plus, check minus)
4. **Each time the social work seminar meets, one student will present a five-minute PowerPoint summary of one of the required readings for that week, and present a question for class discussion based on the reading.** The student who is presenting that week will email the PowerPoint presentation to the class and the instructors 24 hours

ahead of class, and the instructors will post the PowerPoint on Blackboard, so that by the end of the year all students have a file of shared notes on readings. While the slides will contain detail, the presenting student's comments in class will *highlight main points only*, so the presentation in class will be brief, not mired in excessive detail. At the end of the summary presentation, the student presenting will ask the class a probing question for brief discussion. The PowerPoint slides are to be carefully edited, clear, succinct, accurate, and properly documented. Presenting *students are NOT to read the slides to the class*, but rather speak in an engaging, conversational manner so as to avoid the "death by PowerPoint" phenomenon. (Graded as check, check plus, check minus)

5. Each student will write a 7-page paper each semester and do a PowerPoint presentation of that paper. **Each student will write one case study paper and one policy analysis paper; each student may choose in which semester to hand in which paper. The paper is due on the last day of class each semester.**

- a) The case study paper is a comprehensive biopsychosocial spiritual assessment and intervention plan. The assessment and intervention plan must use relevant research from the literature and focus on case management and case advocacy with and on behalf of the person who is experiencing homelessness, with whom the student is paired for the year. The assessment must specify the homeless person's strengths, needs, goals, who is to do what by when to reach those goals, what data will be collected each week to monitor goal attainment, how the case plan is to be modified as needed. The paper will also identify potential resource limitations or systems barriers that have been (or will likely be) encountered and how those barriers will be addressed with and on behalf of the client. The paper will also explore the transference and countertransference issues that have emerged; ethical issues in the case and how they have been addressed; issues regarding ethnicity, culture, race, class, gender; the teamwork issues you have observed. Each student will also do a PowerPoint presentation of the paper, as a stimulus for seminar discussion. (The paper will be letter graded; the PowerPoint presentation will be graded as check, check plus, check minus.)
- b) The policy analysis paper uses the professional literature to identify and analyze a policy issue affecting the homeless person with whom the social work student is paired, or an issue that emerged when the student did street outreach or attended a community meeting. The paper will include the following: Trace the history of the issue or policy. Describe the current issue or policy and its effects on the person experiencing homelessness with whom you've been meeting. In what ways does the policy work well and in what ways does it present problems or challenges? Present a specific plan of action to address that policy issue at the macro, mezzo and micro levels. Include specific proposals for working with and on behalf of homeless people as you pursue policy change. Do a PowerPoint presentation as a stimulus for seminar

discussion. (The paper will be letter graded; the PowerPoint presentation will be graded as check, check plus, check minus.)

- Participate in all course activities and class discussions, adhering to the School of Social Work’s policies for class participation. In addition to attending all of the social work seminar sessions, required course activities include attendance and participation in the monthly lectures at the medical school, monthly interdisciplinary team case conferences at the medical school, RI Medical Navigator Partnership training session, once a semester community outreach activity, and once a semester community organization meeting.

Below is an assignments grid and list of due dates to help students track their completion of these assignments:

Assignments for class				Experiential components				Papers	
Takeaway cards (-, ✓, +)	Case notes (-, ✓, +)	Reflections (-, ✓, +)	Readings ppt (-, ✓, + and date)	Community meetings (Y/N and date)	Outreach (Y/N and date)	Case conference attendance (Tally)	Case study paper (ABCF)	Policy paper (ABCF)	
Sept	Sept	Sept		Fall	Fall	Fall			
Oct	Oct	Oct							
Nov	Nov	Nov							
Dec	Dec	Dec							
Feb	Feb	Feb		Spr	Spr	Spr			
Mar	Mar	Mar							
Apr	Apr	Apr							
Apr	Apr	Apr							

Takeaway cards are due at the end of each social work seminar.

Case notes are due at the beginning of each social work seminar.

Reflections are due to both instructors on the Friday before the social work seminars at 9am.

These dates are:

- Friday, September 16, 2016
- Friday, October 14, 2016
- Friday, October 28, 2016
- Friday, February 10, 2016
- Friday, March 10, 2016
- Friday, April 7, 2016
- Friday, April 21, 2016

All written assignments and experiential components are to be completed by Monday December 12, 2016 in the fall semester and Monday May 1, 2017 in the spring semester.

STUDENTS WHO HAVE NOT COMPLETED THE COURSE BY DECEMBER 23, 2016 WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONTINUE INTO THE SPRING HALF OF THE COURSE because

College policy is that the first half of a course must be completed before a student can take the second half of a course.

Grading:

Each semester, the final grade for the course consists of these components:

- 1/3rd of the grade: Attendance at all monthly lectures at the Brown Alpert Medical School, interdisciplinary team case conferences, the once a semester community outreach activity, the once a semester community meeting with an organization addressing homelessness issues, the biweekly meetings with team members and the person who is experiencing homelessness.
- 1/3rd of the grade: Attendance at and meaningful, appropriate participation in all monthly social work seminar sessions, including submitting the monthly case notes, monthly written reflections, presenting one reading highlight each semester, one PowerPoint assignment presentation of the 7-page paper for the semester, and a written take away card at the end of each class session.
- 1/3rd of the grade: a 7-page paper each semester.

Getting Help with the Course:

If the course is not meeting your needs or you're discontent with an aspect of the course, please tell the instructors. We want to collaborate with you to address your concerns.

The instructors are available by appointment to meet with you to help you outline your papers and to review drafts of portions of your papers or entire papers. Drafts of entire papers must be submitted to the instructors two weeks ahead of the due date so they have time to give you meaningful and detailed feedback and you have time to make revisions before the due date. If you need an individualized due date (i.e., an extension) you must make that request BEFORE the due date in the syllabus.

Grade of Incomplete

A grade of "Incomplete" can be given in place of a letter grade when the work for the semester has been passing but has not been completed, because of illness or some other reason justifiable in the instructor's opinion. The instructor has the prerogative to grant or deny the student's request. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for an incomplete and to do so prior to the last day of class. In order for an incomplete to be granted, a written contract for completion must be negotiated between the student and the faculty member, signed by both, and placed into the student's file. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the proper form and have it signed by both parties before grades are due. The instructor is not allowed to submit a grade of "I" without this signed form in the student's file. College policy requires that all Incompletes be completed by the end of the *next* semester. However, in the MSW program, when successful completion of one course is a prerequisite for beginning the succeeding course in the next semester, the student must complete assignments prior to the beginning of the upcoming semester.

Academic Honesty

Guidelines for avoiding plagiarism are available on the Rhode Island College Library website, at Purdue Owl, and on Blackboard. The School of Social Work at Rhode Island College recognizes that the profession of social work is based on a standard of honesty and personal, as well as professional integrity. Guided by the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics, the school promotes high ethical standards and views academic honesty as an integral component of those standards. Each of us is responsible for maintaining an honest environment and all of us must work together to ensure that academic honesty is pervasive. To promote academic honesty, students and faculty should present their work without plagiarism, cheating, obtaining unauthorized assistance, or submitting materials authored by others as their own. The College also has a policy on "self-plagiarism;" that is, work done in one course cannot be submitted for another course without the instructor's explicit permission.

Plagiarism is not tolerated.

A student who has engaged in academic dishonesty is subject to a range of consequences, including grading penalties, academic probation, or expulsion from the College, depending on the seriousness of the act (excerpted from the Rhode Island College Student Handbook, 2006).

Learning Accommodations

Students with special learning needs should notify the instructor in order to discuss appropriate accommodations. Rhode Island College is committed to making reasonable efforts to assist individuals with documented disabilities. If you are seeking reasonable classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, you should register with the Student Life Office (Craig-Lee 127, 456-8061). To receive accommodations for this course, please obtain the proper Student Life Office forms and meet with me at the beginning of the semester.

Grades for this Course

Points	Grade
95-100	A
90-94	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
69 or below	F

Course Outline for the Once-a-Month Social Work Seminar

First session (August 31, 2016): Course Overview (at RI College SSW from 5-7:50pm)

Topics:

- Define homelessness
- Present an overview of causes of homelessness
- Present a conceptual framework for the course: A strengths, empowerment and resilience perspective towards people who are experiencing homelessness; maintaining a simultaneous dual focus on person and policy
- Introduce the course components, activities, and assignments
- Explore students' reasons for taking this course - their goals and needs in the course
- Outline the reasons for interprofessional teamwork in addressing homelessness; present the features of effective interdisciplinary teamwork

Skills lab:

- Identifying beliefs, myths, stereotypes about homelessness (brainstorming exercise; YouTube video of man falling down)
- Recognizing systems dynamics that sustain homelessness (rope exercise)
- Engaging with a person who is experiencing homelessness (affective attunement, explaining one's role (role play exercise)
- Contracting with a person who is experiencing homelessness (role play exercise)
- Role playing how to explain one's role, and how to disagree agreeably, in an interdisciplinary team meeting

To read before doing actual outreach:

Erickson, S., & Page, J. (1999, August). To dance with grace: Outreach and engagement to persons on the street. Paper presented at the National Symposium on Homelessness Research, Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/167051/6817.pdf#page=149>

Second session (September 7, 2016): Introduction to work in the homeless community (at Alpert Medical School room 270 from 6-8pm)

- Meet with the medical students interested in doing work with the homeless community
- Come with your questions – dinner will be provided.

Third session (September 21, 2016): Resilience and Crisis Intervention in Homelessness Policy and Practice (at RI College SSW from 5-7:50pm)

Topics:

- History of the federal government's involvement in housing policy

- Causes of homelessness; different populations experiencing homelessness; different needs depending upon cause
- Housing First – what it is, the data behind it, why it’s not more widespread
- What resources exist that might be useful to the person with whom you are paired?
- How to write a case study and policy paper

Readings:

Eaton-Stull, Y. (2015). "Crisis intervention with individual and groups: Frameworks to guide social workers." Chapter 27, pp. 217-223 in Kevin Corcoran & Albert Roberts. *Social Workers' Desk Reference*. NY: Oxford.

Gitterman, A. & Sideriadis, L. A. (2014). "Social work practice with vulnerable and resilient populations." Chapter 1, pages 345-365 in Alex Gitterman (Ed.). *Handbook of Social Work Practice with Vulnerable and Resilient Populations*. 3rd ed. NY: Oxford.

McClendon, J. & Lane, S. R. (2014). "Homeless people." Chapter 17, pages 345-365 in Alex Gitterman (Ed.) *Handbook of Social Work Practice with Vulnerable and Resilient Populations*. 3rd ed. NY: Oxford.

Skills lab:

- Role play initial encounters
- Role play active listening skills – videotape with actors; deconstruct in class
- Role play responding to boundary challenges
- Role play how to respond with someone demands and rejects help simultaneously
- Role play how to respond to anger, expressions of hostility

Fourth session (October 5, 2016): Opioid Misuse Symposium (at Alpert Medical School from 5-8pm, rooms TBD)

- Multiple sessions will be offered. Students may select the topics of interest to them.

Fifth session (October 19, 2016): Experiences of Homelessness (at RI College SSW from 5-7:50pm)

Topics:

- Healthcare issues among people experiencing homelessness
- Using standardized assessment tools – benefits and drawbacks of the VI-SPDAT (vulnerability index) and the distinction of “chronic homelessness”

Readings:

Fazel, S., Geddes, J. R., & Kushel, M. (2014). The health of homeless people in high-income countries: descriptive epidemiology, health consequences, and clinical and policy recommendations. *The Lancet*, 384(9953), 1529-1540.

Kisthardt, W. E. (2009). "The opportunities and challenges of strengths-based, person-centered practice: Purpose, principles, and applications in a climate of systems integration. In Dennis Saleebey, *The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice*, 5th ed. Chapter 3, pp. 47-71. Boston: Pearson.

Saleebey, D. (2009). The strengths approach to practice: Beginnings. chapter 5 pages 93-107 in Dennis Saleebey, *The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice*. Boston: Pearson.

Anderson, K. M., Cowger, C. D., Snively, C. A. (2009). Assessing strengths: Identifying acts of resistance to violence and oppression. In Dennis Saleebey, *The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice*, 5th ed. Chapter 10, pp. 181-200. Boston: Pearson.

Willse, C. (2010). Neo-liberal biopolitics and the invention of chronic homelessness. *Economy and Society*, 39(2), 155-184.

Skills lab:

- Role play supporting an individual experiencing homelessness in preparing for a medical appointment, and/or providing advocacy in that appointment. Use a vignette from Maté or O'Connell as a starting point.
- Share and discuss topics for first semester case study or policy papers

Sixth session (November 2, 2016): Analyzing Ethical Challenges (at RI College School of Social Work from 5-7:50pm)

Topics:

- Decide order for presentations of PowerPoints for first semester papers (presentations will happen at Alpert Medical School from 5-6 p.m. on November 16 and December 7 prior to joint sessions on those dates)
- Students present the ethical issues they are identifying as they meet with the homeless person and the RIMNP team members.
- Using these examples, the instructor presents an ethical decision making framework and guides the class in applying it (Discussion includes state and federal regulations, federal and state laws, agency policies, court decisions, principles from moral philosophy. Ideas such as 49CFR and HIPAA, boundaries, dual relationships, informed consent, distribution of scarce resources, autonomy and self-determination vs paternalism, duty to protect/Tarasoff, harm to self are explored.)

Readings:

Reamer, F. G. (Jan./Feb. 2005). "Eye on Ethics: The challenge of paternalism." *Social Work Today*. http://www.socialworktoday.com/news/eoe_0105.shtml

Reamer, F. G. (2003). "Boundary issues in social work: Managing dual relationships." *Social Work*. 48(1): 121-133. <http://www.bu.edu/ssw/files/2015/09/Reamer-F.-Boundary-Issues-in-Social-Work-Managing-dual-relationships.pdf>

Reamer, F. G. (2006). *Ethical Standards in Social Work*. 2nd ed. Washington, D. C.: NASW. (choose sections of the book of most interest to you)

Skills lab:

- Students will apply the NASW Code of Ethics, state law, federal law, court decisions and the ethical decision making framework to specific ethical challenges that have arisen in their work with a person who is experiencing homelessness
- Share and discuss topics for first semester case study or policy papers

Seventh session (November 16, 2016): First semester paper presentations and joint discussion: The criminalization of poverty and homelessness and the ways to combat it (at Alpert Medical School room 345 from 5-8pm)

- Begin presentations of first semester papers
- Readings as decided upon by speaker(s)
- Dinner provided

Eighth session (December 7, 2016): First semester paper presentations and joint discussion: Systemic causes of and social justice responses to homelessness (at Alpert Medical School room 270 from 5-8pm)

- Continue presentations of first semester papers
- Seek student input into the spring semester syllabus
- Readings as decided upon by speaker(s)
- Dinner provided

Ninth session (February 1, 2017): Joint discussion: The impacts of trauma and its intersections with homelessness (at Alpert Medical School room 280 from 6-8pm)

- Welcome back from break!
- Readings as decided upon by speaker(s)
- Dinner provided

Tenth session (February 15, 2017): Economic inequality and the housing crisis: Causes and fixes (at RI College SSW from 5-7:50pm)

Topics:

- What has caused economic inequality in the U.S. to grow since the 1970s?
- What caused the 2008 collapse of the U.S. housing market?
- Identify and critique proposed federal responses to alleviate economic inequality and expand the supply of affordable housing

Skills lab possibilities:

- Watch Robert Reich's documentary, "Inequality for All." Summarize its key points in your own words. Explain the connection to homelessness in America.
- Watch the film, "The Big Short," summarize its key points and explain its connection to today's affordable housing situation.

Eleventh session (March 15, 2017): Skills for influencing mezzo and macro policy (at RI College SSW from 5-7:50pm)

Topics:

- Decide order for presentations of PowerPoints for second semester papers (presentations will happen during the April 12 and April 26 seminar sessions)
- How to analyze a policy – How to research its history and functioning
- How to try to change a policy – Strategies
- How to organize and mobilize a community of people experiencing homelessness
- How to organize and manage a coalition of organizations to address homelessness
- How to write a letter to the editor, legislative testimony
- How to speak with an agency administrator or legislator
- How to run a meeting
- Identify and discuss current legislative initiatives on the local, state, and federal level that impact people experiencing homelessness

Readings:

In Corcoran, K. & Roberts, A. (Eds.) (2015). *Social Workers' Desk Reference*. NY: Oxford.:

Chapter 115: Mizrahi, Terry, "Community organizing principles and practice guidelines." pp. 894-906.

Chapter 116: Marie Overby Weil & Dorothy N. Gamble, "Contemporary community practice models." Pp. 907-919.

Chapter 117: Michael Reisch, "Legislative advocacy to empower oppressed and vulnerable groups." pp. 920-927.

Skills lab:

- Write a letter to the editor, op ed piece, letter to an administrator, or legislative testimony; give each other feedback in small groups; brainstorm how to run an effective meeting; role play speaking to an administrator or legislator
- Share and discuss topics for second semester case study or policy papers

Twelfth session (April 12, 2017): Clinical issues intersecting with homelessness (at RI College SSW from 5-7:50pm)

Topics:

- PowerPoint presentations of second semester papers
- How the worker's color blindness may unwittingly oppress
- When countertransference goes unrecognized
- What to consider when terminating with the person you've been meeting with this year
- Homelessness in other countries
- Unique issues in homelessness among groups including people who are registered as sex offenders, people who have been incarcerated, immigrants and refugees at home and abroad, children, LGBT-QQ and transgender youths and adults, veterans, survivors of domestic violence, people who have experienced trauma, attachment issues, etc.
- How to work with people who are experiencing psychosis, substance use challenges, anxiety, depression, PTSD, bipolar disorder, gambling addiction, borderline personality disorder, conduct disorder, sociopathy
- Guidelines to terminate effectively with your team and the person with homelessness

Readings:

In Gitterman, A.(Ed.) (2014). Handbook of Social Work Practice with Vulnerable and Resilient Populations. 3rd ed. NY: Oxford. (This book contains chapters on many of the challenging life issues in our above topics list; feel free to read any of them. Two are indicated below.):

Courtney, D. M. & Meredith Hanson, M. (2014). "Alcoholism and other drug addictions," chapter 3, pages 54-72.

Lukens, E. P. & Devylder, J. E. (2014). "Schizophrenia," chapter 8, pp. 160-178.

Skills lab:

- Case consultations
- Role play termination conversations

Thirteenth session (April 26, 2017): Additional topics of interest, concerns for sustainable practice, and course wrap-up (at RI College SSW from 5-7:50pm)

Topics:

- PowerPoint presentations of second semester papers
- Reflecting on the year's experience in this course – lessons learned, suggestions for enhancing the course for future students, disillusionments, disappointments, satisfactions
- Considerations for making work with vulnerable populations sustainable: what “makes you tick”? What is important to you when considering an employer?

Skills lab:

- Values exercise (what is most important for you in a job?)

GRADING CRITERIA

Criteria for grading class participation:

Timeliness

- The student attends every social work seminar class session.
- The student attends every monthly lecture at the Brown Alpert Medical School, every biweekly meeting with the person who is experiencing homelessness, the RIHCN Partnership training session, the monthly case conference meetings, the community outreach activities, and the community organization meeting
- In case of absence or lateness, student lets the instructor (Megan Smith, MSW, LCSW) know in advance.
- In advance of assignment due dates, the student negotiates deadline extensions with the instructor and meets those individualized due dates
- The student consistently arrives on time, returns from breaks on time and stays for the full class session.
- The student comes to class properly prepared for presentations
- The student comes to class having done the readings

Respectfulness

- The student's behavior is in accord with the SSW's policies regarding other students' right to confidentiality in the classroom
- The student's behavior in the course is in accord with the NASW Code of Ethics. This includes disguising *all* potentially identifying information about clients in class discussions, papers and presentations.
- The student shows respect for difference and for others' feelings, including a nonjudgmental attitude, sensitivity to ethnic diversity and oppressed groups.
- The student turns off all electronic devices while in the classroom. This includes text messaging and excessive use of laptops during class. The student's focus is on classmates and the instructor during class, not on the computer screen.

- The student disagrees with others in a respectful manner
- The student offers others information and feedback in a respectful manner
- The student's comments show respect for client self-determination
- The student offers others balanced (corrective as well as positive) feedback in a warm, supportive manner
- The student shares class "air time", i.e., both uses it by speaking up at least once per class session, and also limits overuse of air time, thus allowing ample time for others to speak up as well.

Self-awareness

- The student's oral participation shows ability to make conscious, purposeful use of self in interactions within the classroom
- The student's comments show awareness of her or his own feelings, behaviors, and motivations
- The student shows the ability to use the group to meet her/his own learning needs, while respecting the needs of others
- The student demonstrates receptiveness to feedback and an ability to integrate feedback into behavioral change
- The student self-discloses in class appropriately

Critical thinking

- The student asks relevant questions
- The student's comments show that assigned readings were understood.
- The student's comments are clearly stated, succinct and immediately germane to the focal issue under discussion
- The student's comments show depth of analysis
- The student's comments explicitly integrate material from other SSW courses
- The student's stated opinions are supported with data and/or logical argument
- The student's comments integrate course content with field experiences

Criteria for assessing the reading highlight PowerPoint presentation:

- The reading is from the reading list on the syllabus for that week
- The reading is not one that another student has already presented (if more than one student is presenting on the week you chose, coordinate in advance with that classmate)
- The presenter has written an accurate, thorough, articulate, coherent summary of the reading's main points in PowerPoint form, and emailed that to the instructor and the class at least 24 hours in advance of the classroom presentation
- The reading highlight PowerPoint slides are completed thoroughly, articulately, are well organized and carefully edited for proper grammar. The first slide provides the citation for the reading in proper APA format.

- The five-minute presentation includes a brief statement of what led you to choose to highlight this reading, what about it resonates for you or troubles you, your reactions to the reading, and how this reading might enhance your clinical practice
- The presenter includes in the five minute presentation a question or issue related to the reading for class discussion and leads that discussion. The discussion question is an interesting and thoughtful one (not superficial or formulaic)
- The presenter's comments in the presentation are well prepared, coherently organized, thoughtful, articulate, audible, delivered in an engaging way, link the reading to course content, and address each aspect of this assignment
- The presenter talks to the class without reading from the summary or PowerPoint slides. **DO NOT READ THE POWERPOINT SLIDES TO THE CLASS; THIS IS DEADLY DULL FOR YOUR CLASSMATES.** Use your slides as prompts to guide your conversational, engaging presentation of ideas.
- The presentation takes just five minutes (If you strongly feel that more than five minutes are important for the class, you must get the instructor's and the class' consent first, so other students have a voice in determining how class time is used)

Criteria for assessing the monthly reflections:

The reflection is written articulately, in a well-organized, logically coherent manner, using proper grammar, word usage, syntax and spelling. It addresses course topics, reflects critical thinking skills, self-awareness, identifies lessons learned, applies course readings to actual practice, and raises important questions for policy and direct practice. Proper citations in APA format are used as appropriate. The language is gender neutral, and free of pejorative or judgmental terms. A list, at the bottom of the last page, of the course activities the student has attended in the past month, is included.

Criteria for assessing the “take away” cards:

The student’s written “take aways” are legibly written, clearly articulated, grammatical, and reflect accurate understanding of main points from that day’s class. A well done “take away” card shows that the student paid close attention to the day’s main points and that the student is building her or his knowledge and skills from week to week.

Criteria for grading the semester papers:

Conceptual Coherence

- The paper begins with an introduction that states the *purpose(s)* of the essay, gives a *conceptual overview* of its main point(s), and explicitly states how the main points fit together
- The paper ends with a *summary that conceptually ties together* the preceding discussion
- Ideas flow *logically*. The paper is coherently organized. *Transitional statements* provide segues that link the discussion conceptually as the paper moves from idea to idea. The paper is a coherent whole; it does not jump about disconnectedly.
- *Theory* and practice are *explicitly integrated*

- Assertions are *substantiated with logical argument* and with information from relevant literature

Thoroughness

- Each aspect of the assignment is addressed *thoroughly*
- *Readings from this semester's course syllabus* are included, and are explicitly and accurately cited. It's fine to cite class handouts and readings from other courses and your own research, but these do not substitute for citing books, chapters and articles on this semester's syllabus. Including readings from this semester's syllabus offers some evidence that the student did some of the reading and is able to apply it.
- If the paper includes a literature review, the *number of references* adequately reflects the published literature on the topic. For this course, you may consider 20 references a rule of thumb.
- The paper includes a page of references in *proper APA citation format*
- All potentially identifying information about the client(s) has been disguised.

Grammar and word use

- *Proper spelling, grammar, and sentence structure* are consistently used
- The writing is *clear, succinct and articulate*
- The writing is *gender neutral* and *free of pejorative* language