

SCWK 6903 - Social Work Foundation Practice 1

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 01, CRN 40847,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Michele Marie Irby

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Public Instructor Information

Instructor Title:

Instructor Professional Qualifications: MSW, LISW

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Course Description

6903. Social Work Foundation Practice 1. A foundation methods course based on an advanced generalist social work practice perspective. This course demonstrates application of the problem-solving process or the planned change process in the context of the strengths perspective. Attention will be placed on planning interventions with diverse individuals, families, and small groups. 3 s.h.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
	No readings		

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
8/24	Introduction to Social Work Practice Topics include advanced generalist practice, professional identity, social work roles, the planned change/problem-solving process, and introduction to strengths-based practice.	Powerpoint readings Blackboard Reflection #1: Becoming a Social Work Practitioner Due: Thursday, September 3 at 11:59 p.m.
8/31	Ethics, Values & Professional Use of Self Topics include the NASW Code of Ethics, professional values, ethical decision-making, boundaries, professional use of self, self-awareness, and personal versus professional values.	Powerpoint readings Blackboard Reflection #2: Values, Ethics & Use of Self Due: Thursday, September 10 at 11:59 p.m.
9/7	Understanding the Person in Environment Topics include person-in-environment, systems theory, ecological perspectives, social determinants, environmental influences, strengths, resources, and resilience.	Powerpoint readings Blackboard Reflection #3: Looking Beyond the Individual Due: Thursday, September 17 at 11:59 p.m.
9/14	Diversity, Difference & Cultural Humility Topics include cultural humility, intersectionality, identity, power, privilege, oppression, bias, assumptions, and culturally responsive practice.	Powerpoint readings Blackboard Reflection #4: Practicing Across Difference Due: Thursday, September 24 at 11:59 p.m.
9/21	Engagement & the Helping Relationship Topics include establishing rapport, building trust, empathy, active listening, verbal and nonverbal communication, professional boundaries, and barriers to engagement. In-Class Application: Engagement and interviewing practice	Powerpoint readings Blackboard Reflection #5: Building the Helping Relationship Due: Thursday, October 1 at 11:59 p.m.



9/28	Social Work Interviewing & Information Gathering Topics include interview structure, questioning techniques, probing, clarification, reflection, summarization, motivational interviewing principles, responding to emotion, and professional curiosity. In-Class Application: Interviewing skills practice and role-play	Powerpoint readings Blackboard Reflection #6: The Art of Asking Questions Due: Thursday, October 8 at 11:59 p.m.
10/5	Assessment in Social Work Practice Topics include biopsychosocial-spiritual assessment, strengths-based assessment, risk and protective factors, family and environmental assessment, formal and informal supports, and case conceptualization. In-Class Application: Assessment case exercise	Powerpoint readings Blackboard Reflection #7: Assessment Before Intervention Due: Thursday, October 15 at 11:59 p.m.
10/12	From Assessment to Change Topics include integrating assessment information, identifying client priorities, self-determination, collaborative decision-making, SMART goals, and intervention planning. In-Class Application: Goal-writing workshop	Powerpoint readings Blackboard Reflection #8: From Understanding to Planning Due: Thursday, October 22 at 11:59 p.m.
10/19	ENGAGE: The Referral Students receive the initial referral for the developing semester case and examine what is known, what remains unknown, initial strengths, assumptions, cultural considerations, barriers to engagement, and strategies for first contact. Major Assignment: Engagement & Initial Conceptualization – 50 Points	Powerpoint readings Blackboard Reflection #9: What Do I Know—and What Am I Assuming? Due: Thursday, October 29 at 11:59 p.m.
10/26	ASSESS: Understanding the Whole Person Students receive additional client information and apply biopsychosocial-spiritual assessment, person-in-environment analysis, strengths assessment, risk and protective factors, and cultural considerations.	Major Assignment: Begin Comprehensive Assessment Blackboard Reflection #10: Seeing the Whole Client Due: Thursday, November 5 at 11:59 p.m.
11/2	ASSESS: Case Conceptualization Additional family, environmental, and systemic information is introduced. Students integrate assessment findings, examine patterns and systems, identify strengths, prioritize concerns, and practice professional judgment.	Major Assignment: Comprehensive Assessment – 100 Points Blackboard Reflection #11: How Did New Information Change My Understanding? Due: Thursday, November 12 at 11:59 p.m. University Closed: Wednesday, November 11
11/9	PLAN: Collaborative Change Planning Topics include client-defined priorities, collaborative goals, SMART objectives, intervention selection, resources, barriers, responsibilities, outcome measurement, and client self-determination.	Major Assignment: Collaborative Planning – 75 Points Blackboard Reflection #12: Whose Goals Are We Working Toward? Due: Thursday, November 19 at 11:59 p.m.
11/16	INTERVENE: Putting the Plan Into Action Students apply evidence-informed and strengths-based interventions to the developing case while considering individual and family needs, culture, ethics, client preferences, and environmental context.	Major Assignment: Begin Intervention & Problem Solving Blackboard Reflection #13: Why This Intervention? Due: Because of Thanksgiving break, Thursday, December 3 at 11:59 p.m.
11/23	THANKSGIVING BREAK!!	
11/30	PROBLEM SOLVE: When the Plan Does Not Go as Planned Students receive an unexpected development in the semester case and must reassess the situation, identify barriers, respond to new information, and modify the intervention plan while maintaining a strengths-based perspective.	Major Assignment: Intervention & Problem Solving – 100 Points Blackboard Reflection #14: When the Plan Changes Due: Thursday, December 10 at 11:59 p.m.
12/7	EVALUATE, TERMINATE & INTEGRATE: Becoming the Practitioner The final class integrates evaluation and termination with the entire planned change process. Topics include goal attainment, client feedback, intervention effectiveness, transition planning, referral, ethical termination, professional use of self, cultural humility, and continued professional growth.	Major Assignment: Evaluation & Termination – 75 Points Final Assignment: Final Professional Reflection – 50 Points No additional Blackboard reflection is required.

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.