



University of Central Florida
School of Social Work

SOW 6938.OW61 - Social Work Practice in Schools

Instructor: **Dr. Mev Waskiewicz**

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Email: mwaskiew@mail.ucf.edu or Course web mail

Term: **Spring 2009**

Class Day: **N/A**

Meeting Time: **N/A**

Class Location: **Web Based Format**

Credit Hours: **3 Hours**

Syllabus

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to enhance clinical knowledge and skills that are essential to effective school-based practice with students, families, and the community.

This course uses an ecological perspective in teaching the practice of social work in schools. Topics include the historical, theoretical, legal, research, policy, and practice issues relevant to the delivery of school social work services; the roles and tasks performed by social workers in public schools; school social work practice models; and the professional code of ethics.

This is a World Wide Web (W) course. W courses are conducted fully via web-based instruction and collaboration. Courses may require proctored examinations, and may include opportunities for face-to-face orientations, but there will be no class attendance requirements.

THE UCF CREED

Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

Integrity: I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.

Scholarship: I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.

Community: I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.

Creativity: I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.

Excellence: I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.

POLICIES

In addition to the information below, the student should become familiar with [School of Social Work Student Handbook](#) and [The Golden Rule Handbook for UCF Students](#). All policies included in these handbooks apply to this class. For more information on the Golden Rule Handbook go to <http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>

Modification of Syllabus

This syllabus may be modified at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be discussed with students in class and/or via email. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the student's email address is current in eCommunity.

Classroom Decorum

The instructor expects students to respect the culture, values, beliefs and rights of their classmates. During online class sessions, alternate points of view are encouraged and should be received by others with respect. Students should feel free to express their opinions and to refer to relevant personal situations without fear of disapproval or disrespect; however, the class session is not the place where students should indulge in personal venting or support seeking.

Attendance and Participation

Student attendance and participation are integral parts of this course. "Attendance" and presence are required for this class. **Students are expected to log on at a minimum of two to three times per week and are expected to post a substantive contribution to the discussion at that time.** A post involves more than visiting the course site to check in and say hello. A post is considered to be a substantive contribution to the discussion when a student either comments on other posts or begins a new topic. Comments such as "I agree" or "good post" are not considered substantive. Students must support their position or begin a new topic or add somehow to the discussion when logging on.

Students are also expected to assume responsibility for their own learning and to actively involve themselves in online class discussions and exercises. Students must be prepared for class. In the event exams are assigned, make up exams are not given, **ONLY** in extreme circumstances. These circumstances include exceptional health EMERGENCIES (that require that the student submit medical documentation), and the make up exam will be an essay exam. Out-of-town vacations, trips, mild illness (such as a cold), and other similar circumstances do not qualify as extreme. The instructor reserves the option to provide a make up exam in her or his absence.

Students who miss three (3) or more online class sessions regardless of the reason may have their final grade lowered by one letter grade. The only exception to this is if the student has a **documented** extraordinary circumstance (student hospitalization; severe illness; death in the family; car accident) preventing the student from participating in online class session. In that case, the student must present written documentation to the instructor.

Attendance during Finals Week: It is University policy that all classes **MUST** meet during the scheduled final exam session.

Written Assignments

Effective written communication skills are essential to professional social work practice. Thus, students are expected to present their ideas clearly and properly and to adhere to accepted standards of writing. *Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are to be correct in all written materials submitted and will be considered in grading written assignments.*

All written assignments must be typed in a 12-font print, and all margins must be one inch. The cover page of a paper is not considered a page of text. Work not conforming to these standards or demonstrating serious deficiencies in common English usage may be returned with out a grade. When references are required, they must be in the APA documentation style.

Students are encouraged to use the University Writing Center (UWC) for assistance in preparing written assignments. The UWC is located in MOD 608 (near the Communications Building). UWC staff may be reached at (407) 823-2197 or <http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/>.

Late Assignments

All assignments must be turned in to the assignment drop box by the due date. No assignments will be accepted by fax or email unless the instructor has given explicit prior approval. *Late assignments will lose a full letter grade for each day that they are late unless the student gained prior approval from the instructor.* No assignment will be accepted after the last day of class. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor regarding late assignments.

Incomplete Grades

An "Incomplete" is only recorded in exceptional circumstances and in keeping with the School and University policies. Individual arrangements must be made with the instructor for the completion of the course requirements, but in no case will the due date extend beyond the end of the following semester. Students who experience chronic medical or personal problems that prevent them from participating in the online class regularly are encouraged to review policies relating to securing a leave of absence from their university studies.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment may result in an "F" for that assignment and may also lead to an "F" for the entire course and referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. (See the UCF Golden Rule for further information.) It is assumed that students will adhere to the academic creed of the University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Please do not ask for your grade to be changed without just cause or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Turnitin.com

The instructor reserves the option to use (turnitin.com); an online system which can determine if work has been copied from another source. You will be expected to submit all assignments in the electronic format. For a more detailed look at this process, please visit: <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Disability Access Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the instructor. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the instructor to request them.



Course Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

1. Analyze and assess the school as part of an ecosystem with the student, family, and community.
2. Demonstrate assessment competence with diverse populations within the school system.
3. Deconstruct the ecology of the school organization, identifying legal, educational, and policy issues that impact this system.

4. Integrate the effects of legal, educational, and social policy issues with school-based intervention planning.
5. Articulate the school social worker's roles and position within the ecology of the school.
6. Integrate the factors of developmental level, socioeconomic status, culture, race and ethnicity, disability, gender, religious, and sexual orientation in psychosocial assessment and treatment planning for students.
7. Critically apply practice theories, particularly cognitive behavioral theory and solution-focused theory, in assessment and intervention in school settings.
8. Compare and contrast evidence-based social work programs and interventions commonly utilized in school mental health and how these are effective with particular student groups.
9. Critically analyze the process of social work consultation with teachers and other school staff who impact the social and psychological well-being of children and adolescents.
10. Analyze local, state, and federal laws which govern the delivery of mental health and social work services to children and adolescents with special needs.

Required Texts and Materials:

Allen-Meares, P.A. (2007). *Social work services in schools* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Franklin, C., Harris, M.B., & Allen-Meares, P. (2007). *The school services sourcebook*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Additional readings and videos, available via the internet, are assigned throughout the course.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

The UCF Libraries has a full array of paper and electronic resources available for students and their research needs.

Students will be expected to utilize UCF library resources to search library databases for required readings. The following web sites which can help students find information, navigate through databases and learn how to use the library:

1. Library Instruction sessions - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Instruction>
2. Library Research Tutorials - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Instruction/LIToursTutorials.asp>
3. Streaming videos - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Videos/Default.asp>
4. Research Guides - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Guides/>
5. Ask a Librarian service - <http://library.ucf.edu/Ask/>
6. Consult with the librarian familiar with Social Work—Mr. Hal Mendolsohn

In addition to paper copies of books and journals, UCF students have the ability to access a vast selection of journals and books in electronic format while on or off campus. The web address to the library's catalog is <http://library.ucf.edu/>. The Ask A Librarian service provides students the ability to contact a library professional either by phone, on-line chat or email, and ask for assistance on "how to" locate, research, and obtain library materials. The web address for Ask A Librarian is <http://library.ucf.edu/Ask/>. A series of streaming videos, showing students how to search for a book or journal article, has been developed and are available at <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Videos/Default.asp>. Research Guides for different majors, that list books, journals, databases, and web sites have been developed and are available in electronic format at <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Guides/>. Another service to help students conduct library research is called Research Consultation. After a student has conducted his/her research and is in need of additional information, s/he can work with a librarian to locate material with the help of his/her expert searching capabilities. To set-up a

Research Consultation, students can either come into the library and sign-up at the Reference Desk or call the library Reference Office at 407-823-5880. Finally, students are always encouraged to visit the library and ask a Reference Librarian how best to conduct one's research. If a student has a simple question on how to locate either a book or journal title, the UCF Reference Libraries are happy to provide this type of service too.

Login and Password Information:

To access the "eCommunity" or "Class Login" portions of this course, students must follow UCF's [log-in and password conventions](#).

Teaching Methodology:

To stimulate student learning, the course will include a variety of teaching methods. These methods may consist of "guest speakers," discussion postings, journaling (response to reading material), written assignments, internet webcasts, and external learning activities (professional interview, field visit). Students are expected to be active in the learning process. This implies substantive class participation, quality of participation will be judged over quantity. Students are expected to demonstrate their mastery of course content, including reading material, through weekly class discussions, written assignments, a field visit, and an interview.

Evaluation of Learning and Grading:

School Social Worker Interview and Assessment (20 Points): The School Social Worker Interview and Assessment assignment gives students an opportunity to learn more about the role of a practicing school social worker. Students will design and conduct an on-site interview with a social work practitioner (MSW) working in a local school district. The student will write an assessment of the interview results. The goal of the interview is to gather information and understanding of organizational and direct services approaches, strategies, and interventions that serve students in the identified school. Following the interview, the student will write a 5-7 page assessment of the school environment and services to students from a social work perspective. Each student should develop their own interview questions according to fundamental assessment protocol and guided by theories and evidence-based practices presented in *The School Services Sourcebook*. The SSW Interview and Assessment is worth 20 points toward the final grade for the course. The assessment is due no later than March 27, 2009.

Students are required to submit the paper under the School Social Worker Interview topic in the Assignment Drop box area. Additional information pertaining to this assignment is located at Module 7, including a general outline for the assessment. All papers are to follow APA guidelines. See APA Quick Reference in the Introductory Module.

Discussion Postings (48 Points - 12 postings, possible 4 points each): Students will have an opportunity to answer module questions or reflect on other assignments. Students will complete 12 discussions, for a total of 48 points of the final grade for the course. Discussion postings will be evaluated using the following grading rubric.

Task	0	2	4
Response to questions (all responses must occur by deadline for any credit)	Did not post or posted after deadline	Substantive response to discussion question(s) – Original posting	Substantive response to discussion question(s) and to at least 2 or more students – Original and Follow up postings

Professionals in most disciplines must work collaboratively in their workplaces to succeed. School social workers must demonstrate skill in working collaboratively in group settings. Research on student learning demonstrates that interacting with peers enhances learning. The discussion postings are designed to give students the opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills in working collaboratively to analyze issues and solve problems. The discussion postings will be facilitated by the following activities: instructor questions/assignments concerning reading material, internet webcasts, interviews, field visits, or “guest speakers.” Discussion postings are included in each module. Each new module begins on Friday at 6:00 pm (EST) and ends the following Friday at 12:00 midnight (EST). Note: some modules cover two weeks. **You are expected to post a response to the discussion question/assignment as well as to respond to at least two other postings by the deadline.**

“Attendance” and presence are required for this class. **Students are expected to log on at a minimum of two to three times per week and are expected to post a substantive contribution to the discussion at that time. Students may reflect on the following questions to help guide their thinking about the topic under discussion:**

- What were the issues or ideas that made the most sense to you?
- What was the most important point to you and why?
- In cases where you praise or criticize the posting, provide specific examples that help illustrate your point.

Students cannot pass this class without participation in the online discussion. Each module will include a discussion question related to a reading assignment, a case example, or a web cast. The more discussion the better as it promotes dialogue and deepens our learning.

Individual Field Visit and Assessment (Total Points 20):

Arrange for a field visit to a local school, where you will interview the social worker and other related school staff. You will write a 5-7 page paper comparing and contrasting the school’s practices to best evidence-based practices, on (your choice of) ONE of the following issues: (1) Potential for conflict/violence in the school and the school’s approach to coping; (2) Prevalence of students with mental health diagnoses and school services to these children and adolescents; (3) Students who are involved with the criminal justice system and the school’s response and services; (4) The school’s immigrant and refugee student population and the school’s response and services; (5) Services to students who are physically or mentally disabled, who are gay/lesbian, or who are living in foster care or residential placement. The Individual Field Visit and Assessment is worth 20 points toward the final grade for the course. The assessment is due no later than April 17, 2009.

Students are required to submit the paper under the Individual Field Visit and Assessment topic in the Assignment Drop box area. All papers are to follow APA guidelines. See APA Quick Reference in the Introductory Module.

Reflection/Reaction Papers (12 Points - 3 papers, possible 4 points each):

A reflection is an expression of your perceptions and feelings experienced as a result of reading, rather than a report of factual information. It is a journal of your personal growth.

For this assignment, students will select three out of the following areas commonly associated with social work practice in schools for their reflection/reactions papers: school social workers (history, roles, and functions); behavior problems (e.g., bullying, school violence, depression and suicide); social problems (e.g., truancy, homelessness, abuse and neglect, substance abuse, teen sexual behavior); students with disabilities; interventions on behalf of vulnerable groups (e.g., GLBT, students being reintegrated into school from mental health and juvenile justice settings); parent involvement; and evaluating school social work practice. **The following two sources must be used for each paper.** First, students will select articles from the NASW journal *Children and Schools* and second, they will select a related chapter topic from *The School Services Sourcebook: A Guide for School-Based Professionals*, one of the required texts.

Students will find and read one scholarly journal article, as referenced above, and one chapter from the Sourcebook for each of the three areas selected. Students will write a two page typed paper on topic area. The first paragraph is a *very brief summary* of the key points from the article and chapter. Subsequent paragraphs include the student's reaction, relevance, and responsibility (3-R Format). Additional information pertaining to this assignment is located in the Introductory Module. The first paper is due no later than January 30th, second paper by February 13th, and third paper by February 27th.

Students are required to submit each of the three reflection papers in the Assignment Drop box area. All papers are to follow APA guidelines. See APA Quick Reference in the Introductory Module.

Grading Scale

A final course grade will be based on the total number of points accumulated from assignments. The course grading scale is noted below:

A Scale	B Scale	C Scale	D Scale	F Scale
	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	
A = 94-100	B = 84-86	C = 74-76	D = 64-66	F = 59 or below
A- = 90-93	B- = 80-83	C- = 70-73	D- = 60-63	

Announcements:

This course uses an **Announcements** discussion topic to provide essential information, clarifications, reminders and updates to the students in this class. Be sure that you access the **Announcements**

discussion topic each time you login to the course to ensure that you do not miss any pertinent information.

● Due Dates:

Assignments are expected to be submitted by the due date. *Late assignments will lose a full letter grade for each day that they are late unless the student gained prior approval from the instructor*; however no points will be earned for failure to participate in the discussion postings by the deadline for each module.

● Deadline Extensions:

Assignment deadline extensions will be given ONLY in extreme circumstances. These circumstances include exceptional health EMERGENCIES (that require that the student bring in medical documentation). Out-of-town vacations, trips, mild colds, computer malfunctions, power outages, and other similar circumstances do not qualify as extreme.

You must provide sufficient documentation of the emergency situation that made you miss the assignment deadline. The instructor determines what constitutes "sufficient documentation."

● Communication with the Instructor:

The best way to reach me is through course email. Other than course email, you may reach me by phone. I will provide you my number in a course email as well as in a discussion posting. If you call and leave a voice message, speak clearly and slowly, providing your name, the message, best time to return your call, and a return phone number including area code. If you email me, I should get back to you within 24 hours.

Although I strongly suggest that all issues, questions, and problems be dealt with online, students can feel free to contact me regarding any issues. When emailing, please include your name. I will attempt to respond to your call or email within 24 hours.

● Knight's Café:

Picture a country inn next to a beautiful stream just outside town where the entire community gathers from time to time throughout the day. The food is good and the coffee is great and always flowing. There are weekly specials to tempt you and always a fresh supply of their famous chocolate brownies! This is the place we can go for some casual conversation about anything – personal news, or group problems or frustrations. This is also the place that we'll use to inform each other of special events, travel, or other activities and you could even tell a joke if so inclined. Hope to see you at the Café!