Course Title and Number: SW 101: Introduction to Social Work

Instructor:
Location:
Day and Time:
Contact Information:

Office Hours:

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: None

Course Description:

The course acquaints students with the history, philosophy, values, and knowledge base of the social work profession. The course emphasizes human diversity and generalist practice.

The goals of the course are to (1) provide students with an accurate understanding of what social workers do, (2) begin to socialize students to the values and philosophy of the social work profession, (3) introduce students to the methods and approaches of social work, (4) introduce students to the generalist social work practice paradigm, and (5) develop a basic level of critical thinking and writing skills needed in social work practice.

Linkages with Other Courses:

In addition to providing any undergraduate student at UNR with the opportunity to learn about the profession of social work, this course is the first course requirement for students who decide to pursue a social work major.

Relevant Competencies and Associated Foundation Practice Behaviors:

This course introduces students to the professional foundation competencies articulated by the Council on Social Work Education. In particular, at an introductory level, students will have knowledge and awareness of the following competencies:

1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession’s history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession’s enhancement and to their own professional conduct & growth.

- Advocate for client access to the services of social work.
• Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development.
• Attend to professional roles and boundaries.
• Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication.
• Engage in career-long learning.
• Use supervision and consultation.

2. Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards and relevant law.
• Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.
• Make ethical decisions by applying standards of NASW Code of Ethics and, as applicable, principles of the International Federation of Social Workers and the Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in SW.
• Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethnic conflicts.
• Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires synthesis and communication of relevant information.
• Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom.
• Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention and evaluation.
• Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

4. Engage diversity and difference in practice.
Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization and alienation, as well as privilege, power & acclaim.
• Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.
• Gain sufficient self-awareness to recognize the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.
• Recognize, value, and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences.
• View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as experts of their own circumstances.

5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize
the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.

- Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.
- Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice.
- Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social services delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to knowledge building.
- Use practice experiences to inform scientific inquiry.
- Use research evidence to inform practice.

7. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.
Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological and spiritual development.
- Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.
- Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

8. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery and they engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies.
- Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.
- Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

9. Respond to contexts that shape practice.
Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively.
- Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services.
- Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

10. Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive process of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to
achieve client-goals; using research and technological advances; developing, analyzing, advocating and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

- Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
- Use empathy and other interpersonal skills.
- Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.
- Collect, organize and interpret client data.
- Assess client strengths and limitations.
- Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives.
- Select appropriate intervention strategies.
- Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals.
- Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities.
- Help clients resolve problems.
- Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients.
- Facilitate transitions and endings.
- Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

**Course Objectives / Learning Outcomes:**

101.1 Identify and describe the various fields of practice within the social work profession.

101.2 Distinguish between micro, mezzo, and macro practice.

101.3 Identify and articulate the ethical principles expounded by NASW and the IFSW.

101.4 Identify core personal values and how these values influence decisions, judgment and behaviors.

101.5 Conduct searches for scholarly articles using electronic databases.

101.6 Critically examine multiple dimensions of a social issue.

101.7 Demonstrate ability to write using correct grammar, spelling and sentence structure.

101.8 Define cultural humility.

101.9 Identify and articulate elements of one’s own culture.

101.10 Define and distinguish between power, privilege, discrimination, and oppression.

101.11 Recognize common forms of structural oppression within our society.

101.12 Identify and distinguish between various fields of practice within the social work profession.

101.13 Define generalist practice.

101.14 Accurately describe the roles and functions that constitute social work practice.
Instructional Methods:

- Course goals are accomplished primarily through lecture / discussion, guest presentations, videos, class exercise, written assignments, and periodic exams.

Class Policies:

- **Class Rules and Instructor’s Expectations of Students**
  - All students are expected to be active participants, learners, and teachers in the classroom. When students have something to say, their communication should be directed to the entire class, tell one-tell all. Excessive side talking or other classroom disruptions can result in attendance points being deducted.
  - In order to be effective learners and participants students are expected to be on time to class.
  - Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class.
  - Students are encouraged to seek additional materials from the media, libraries, and the Internet; to share these with the class; and to use these in their assignments.
  - Cell Phone and Electronic Equipment: You are expected to turn your cell phone, and other electronic devices, off during class. If you use a computer to take notes, discovery that you are using this computer to engage in activities not specifically associated with this class will impact your grade. Unauthorized use or misuse of cell phones and other electronic devices will result in consequences that may include a reduction in participation points, public confrontation by faculty, and/or a failing grade on a test or other assignment.
  - Students are expected to invest 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class. A three-hour class includes 6-9 hours per week of outside work.
  - Intellectual integrity and academic honesty are expected from all students.
  - Students are expected to display respect of fellow students’ unique characteristics including race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, creed, national origin, age veteran status, disability, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. All written assignments will use nondiscriminatory language.
  - Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

- **Knowledge, Values and Skills**
  - Cultural humility (introduced to the framework)
  - Self-reflection on personal values and culture
  - APA (introduced to APA manual and using it for citations/references)
  - Library research (introduced to electronic databases, explanation of peer-reviewed journals, distinction between types of sources)
  - Explanation of generalist approach
  - Explanation of micro, mezzo, macro
  - Fields of social work practice
- Exposure to major social issues, including poverty, central to the profession’s mission
- NASW Code of Ethics
- IFSW Values and Ethics
- Basic writing skills
- Introduction to the concepts of power, privilege, discrimination and oppression
- White privilege and the privilege walk

- Changes to Syllabus, Course Outline, and Grading Procedures
  - The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus and course plans as deemed appropriate for the course. It is important for students to note that in order to effectively address the unique needs of each classroom and group experience, the instructor may need to make adjustments to the timeline, reading requirements, and the involvement of guest or outside speakers. Students who are concerned with any changes or confused should contact the instructor immediately. Additionally, circumstances may arise that would require changes to grading procedures. Students will always be informed of any such changes.

- Use of Web Campus and Electronic Communication
  - Web Campus will be used to support this course. Students are required to use Web Campus to access additional required or supplemental readings, details of course assignments, and discussion boards. Web Campus will also be used to communicate to students any changes in course plans and other important notices.

- Writing Policy
  - Good writing skills to communicate information accurately and concisely are requirements for effective generalist social work practice. Therefore, all writing assignments will be evaluated for content, clarity of ideas presented, critical thinking, and clarity of writing.
  - All papers are to be typewritten, 11-12 pt font, double-spaced, and one-inch margins. Only hard copies will be accepted and are to be submitted on time for full points. Students must use APA format for citations and references. Please be sure to document your use of others’ scholarly work, ideas, and thoughts in your papers. Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and will be addressed according to UNR policy.

Class Attendance and Participation:

- School of Social Work Attendance Policy
  - The faculty of the UNR School of Social Work believes that class attendance and participation are critical aspects of the professional socialization process and engagement in the learning environment. Students are responsible for assisting in the creation of a learning environment that promotes such socialization and engagement. To do so, students should assume responsibility for their own learning by not being late or leaving early from class, being prepared for and participating in class-related activities, and consulting with the instructor outside of class, as appropriate. It is the personal responsibility of the student to consult with the instructor regarding absences from the class. Attendance and participation will be
part of grading as stated in the syllabus. No make-up of assignments, quizzes, or exams will be accepted without prior approval meaning before or the day the assignment is due.

- **SW 101 Attendance Policy**
  - There are no excused absences without arrangement with the instructor. Absences from class will be excused only due to extreme personal or family emergencies. If you are experiencing such an emergency, please contact the instructor by e-mail prior to or immediately following the missed class meeting. Students who miss 1 class will be deducted 1 point from their final grade. Students who miss 2 classes will be deducted 4 points from their final grade. Students who miss 3 classes will be deducted 6 points from their final grade. Students who miss 4 classes will be deducted 8 points from their final grade. Students who leave class early are also at risk of losing attendance points. **Students who miss 5 or more classes are at risk of failing the course, which is determined by the instructor on a case-by-case basis.**

**Readings:**

- **Required**

- Other readings will be assigned during the semester, and will be posted on Web Campus. See references.

**Assignments:**

Details of each assignment and expectations will be posted to Web Campus and discussed during class. A total of 200 points can be earned in SW 101 as follows:

- **Attendance & class participation** (40 points)
  - Students are expected to attend class, be on time, and participate in class activities and discussions. All reading assignments are to be completed before the class session in which the material is discussed. Students are also expected to stay abreast of current information through professional journals and news media. Excessive or disruptive text messaging, cell phone activity, or use of computers for purposes not related to the course material will result in a drop in participation points. Students will “sign-in” at the start of each class and will respond to a participation question at the end of each class. Students are at risk of losing one participation point if they leave class early. NOTE: 10 points of this category are reserved for “pop” quizzes, discussion boards and class activities.

- **Social Planning and Social Action** (15 points)
  - Each student will turn in a 3-4 page assessment of a film responding to how the issues addressed in the film relate to the course content of oppression,
discrimination, and racism. Students will be given a list of films and will be required to select one that they will watch and then respond to as required. Students will be required to incorporate and cite additional material. Assignment details and a list of films will be posted to Web Campus.

- **Agency Visit** (15 points)
  - The purpose of this assignment is to give you exposure to human service agencies and to begin building upon the value that social workers aim to understand the environment(s) that surround our clients. Students will identify and visit a human services agency to learn about the agency’s history, mission, and services. Students will try to gain insight into the experience of clients by observing the agency’s physical characteristics, atmosphere, and other procedures if possible. Students will post the details of the visit to Web Campus. Assignment and posting instructions will be posted to Web Campus.

- **Peer Review Paper** (20 points)
  - Students will write a 4-5 page research paper describing details of a social issue that is important to them. Students will select a topic from the textbook and utilize journal articles in addition to the book to support your discussion. Assignment details will be posted to Web Campus.

- **Final Reflections Essay** (10 points)
  - The purpose of this assignment is to reflect upon what you have learned about social work throughout the semester. Also, to read one chapter in the book that was not assigned reading (Chapters 4, 7, 10, 11). Assignment will be 2-3 pages.

- **Mid-term exam** (40 points)
  - Mid-term exam will cover material from Units 1 and 2 of the course.

- **Final exam** (60 points)
  - Final exam will cover materials from the entire semester.

**Grading:**

- Students will be graded on timely completion of all assigned papers and projects (see below), writing skills, class attendance and participation, mid-term and final examinations.

- **Late Assignments**
  - All assignments are due in class on the day indicated in the course outline (with the exception of the Agency Visit, which is posted on Web Campus). The instructor will not accept electronic submissions of assignments without having made a prior arrangement. Late assignments will be penalized by half of a grade per day, unless the instructor approves alternative arrangements in advance. Opportunities for make-up assignments are determined at the discretion of the instructor.
Grading Criteria
Students will be graded based on class attendance and participation, writing skills as demonstrated in required assignments, quizzes, and exams. Specific criteria for each assignment will be given out in class. (% of total points):

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<th>Percentage</th>
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University Course Policies:

- **Disabilities**: Students who have documented disabilities that may affect their learning or performance in this class should contact the UNR Disability Services Office (Thompson Student Services Building, Suite 100; (775) 784-6000; mzabel@unr.edu). The instructor will make those accommodations that are requested in writing by the aforementioned office.

- **Academic Success Services**: Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-4433) or www.unr.edu/mathcenter/, Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring/), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or www.unr.edu/writing_center). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

- **UNR Counseling Services**: helps students make the most of their university experience, both personally and academically. It is the primary facility on campus for addressing personal, psychological, and mental health and substance abuse treatment needs of both undergraduate and graduate students. The goal in counseling is to help students overcome difficulties they may encounter during their educational experience. For more information visit: http://www.unr.edu/stsv/cs/ or call (775) 784-4648.

- **Academic Dishonesty**: “Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses” constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student’s enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course, or giving an F for the assignment. For more details, see the UNR General Catalog.

- **Audio or Video Recordings**: Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents’ policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.
Sample Calendar:

### Unit One: Introduction to the profession of social work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment/Readings Due TODAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 28</td>
<td>Review of syllabus and key assignments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introduction to the class and “social work”</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 4</td>
<td>Social Work, Unique Nature of Social Work, Values &amp; Ethics:</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What are your views about social welfare?</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What is “critical thinking”?</td>
<td>Introduce Social Planning and Social Action Assignment Discus</td>
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<td>- Social Work dilemmas</td>
<td>Board Post Due: Mental Template</td>
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<td>- identifying personal values and political beliefs</td>
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<td>September 11</td>
<td>Empowerment, Human Diversity, and Structural Oppression</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
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<td>Privilege Walk – We will be going outside bring clothing layers.</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
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<td>Strengths Based Perspective</td>
<td>On-line reading: People’s History of the United States, Chapter 1. (Zinn,1980). Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 18</td>
<td>Cultural Humility Generalist Social Work</td>
<td>On-line reading: Cultural humility versus cultural competence. (Tervalon &amp; Murray-Garcia, 1998) Chapter 3 Social Planning and Social Action Assignment Due</td>
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### Unit Two: Social work practice

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<th>Date</th>
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## Unit One: Introduction to the profession of social work

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment/Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 25</td>
<td>Generalist Social Work Practice Continued:</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Overview of social work education (i.e. pre-major, major, field education, competencies)</td>
<td>Introduce Agency Visit Assignment</td>
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<td>Practice Settings:</td>
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<td>- Micro</td>
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<td>- Mezzo</td>
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<td>- Macro Practice</td>
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<td>Roles of social workers</td>
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<td>Planned change process</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>Generalist Social Work Practice Continued:</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Social Work Careers and Licensure</td>
<td>Class Activity</td>
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<td>Basics of APA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Agency Visit assignment review</td>
<td>On-line reading: The Columbia guide to social work writing. Chapter 2: Writing Strategies for academic Papers</td>
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<td>Mid-term Review</td>
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## Unit Three: Writing and an introduction to APA style

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment/Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>Social Work Databases and Searches</td>
<td>APA On-line Tutorial</td>
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<td>Writing in Social Work</td>
<td>Class Activity</td>
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<td>Web Campus Post Due-SW Roles</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>Mid Term Exam</td>
<td>Agency Visit Assignment Due – Web Campus Post</td>
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### Unit Four: Client populations and contexts

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment/Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 23</strong></td>
<td>Substance Abuse Mental Health</td>
<td>Chapter 5 Chapter 8</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker</td>
<td>Introduce Peer Review Assignment</td>
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<td><strong>October 30</strong></td>
<td>Families and Child Welfare</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker</td>
<td>On-line reading: <a href="http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/cps/index.cfm">http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/cps/index.cfm</a> Chapters 1,2,4</td>
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<td><strong>November 6</strong></td>
<td>Crime and Forensic Social Work</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker</td>
<td>On-line reading: 15 Disturbing Things We Need To Know, Chapter 9. (Crone, 2012) Peer Review Assignment Due</td>
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<td><strong>November 13</strong></td>
<td>Aging and Older Adults</td>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
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<td><strong>November 20</strong></td>
<td>Medical Social Work Disabilities</td>
<td>Chapter 15 Chapter 16</td>
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<td>Introduce Final Reflections Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>December 4</strong></td>
<td>The Environment and Social Work Course Conclusion</td>
<td>Chapter 17</td>
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<td>Final Reflections Essay Due</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>December 11</strong></td>
<td>Prep Day no class</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>December 18</strong></td>
<td>Final</td>
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<td><strong>December 27</strong></td>
<td>Final</td>
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References


