

SS5117: SOCIAL WORK AS A PROFESSION

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Social Work as a Profession

Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

Course Number

5117

Academic Unit

Social and Behavioural Sciences (SS)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

Other Languages

Other Languages for Medium of Instruction

English, supplemented by Cantonese / Putonghua in guest lectures and in-class activities as situation requires.

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course, as a tailored-made social work values and ethical code for practice course, introduces students the generic base and generalist approach in social work practice with special emphasis on social work nature, origin, definition, development, functions, professional value, ethics and principles. In line with these emphases, students will come across the concepts of globalization, professionalization, and cultural diversity in the social work practice. In the course, students will discover their new social perspective and will take social work practice in an innovative way.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

| CILOs | | Weighting (if app.) | DEC-A1 | DEC-A2 | DEC-A3 |
|-------|--|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Describe and have reflections on the nature, definition, development, functions and core values of social work practice; | 25 | x | | |
| 2 | Recognize and locate innovative solutions to ethical dilemmas while taking into account of own personal and professional values; | 25 | x | x | |
| 3 | Identify different paradigms, perspectives, models and current contexts of social work practices from the global and local perspectives; | 25 | x | | |
| 4 | Evaluate and critically assess the issues and skills in applying the generalist model in direct social work practice. | 25 | x | x | |

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

| LTAs | Brief Description | CILO No. | Hours/week (if applicable) |
|------|-------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 1 | LTA1: Lectures | Lectures cover the major topics of the course with explanation, clarification, and discussion during the sessions. | 1, 2, 3, 4 |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|------------|--|
| 2 | LTA2: Tutorials | Tutorials are designed to facilitate students to discuss in smaller groups in a personal participatory way about social work nature, origin, definition, development, functions, professional values, ethics, generalist practices, cultural diversity and professionalization of social work. | 3, 4 | |
| 3 | LTA3: Group Presentation | Student presentation is organized to consolidate students' learning and application of social work values, ethics and generalist social work practices with global and local perspectives. | 3, 4 | |
| 4 | LTA4: Field Visit | Students will be arranged to meet social work practitioners or service recipients in the class and field visit(s). | 1, 2, 3, 4 | |
| 5 | LTA5: Student Consultation | Scheduled student group consultation is arranged to facilitate more teacher-student and student-student interaction and discussion, more in-depth learning and understanding of knowledge. | 1, 2, 3, 4 | |

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

| ATs | CILO No. | Weighting (%) | Remarks ("- for nil entry) | Allow Use of GenAI? | |
|-----|---|---------------|----------------------------|--|-----|
| 1 | AT1: Individual Reflective Journal In a paper of 1,000 words, students are assessed on their ability to produce self-critical reflections on social work values, ethics and generalist practices based on their review of any one of the selected books. | 1, 2 | 25 | - | No |
| 2 | AT2: Individual Paper Students are required to write a term paper with 3,000 words to critically discuss some social work concepts and ideologies. | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 40 | Allow AI to brainstorm and generate initial ideas only | Yes |
| 3 | AT3: Quiz Students are assessed on their understanding of the material covered in lectures. | 1, 2, 3, 4 | 35 | - | No |

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Individual Reflective Journal (25%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Ability to produce self-critical reflections on social work values, ethics and generalist practices, in writing.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Outstanding

Good

(B+, B, B-) High

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

2: Individual Paper (40%)

Students are required to write a term paper with 3,000 words to critically discuss some social work concepts and ideologies. (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Capability to critically examine the ethical and values issues involved in a case, and to provide solutions in an innovative manner, in writing.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Outstanding

Good

(B+, B, B-) High

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

3. Quiz (35%)(for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Capacity to define, compare and distinguish differences and similarities of important concepts and core values of social work.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Outstanding

Good

(B+, B, B-) High

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Not reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

1. Individual Reflective Journal (25%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Ability to produce self-critical reflections on social work values, ethics and generalist practices, in writing.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Outstanding

Good

(B+, B) High

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Moderate

Failure

(F) Not reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

2. 2:Individual Paper (40%)

Students are required to write a term paper with 3,000 words to critically discuss some social work concepts and ideologies. (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Capability to critically examine the ethical and values issues involved in a case, and to provide solutions in an innovative manner, in writing.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Outstanding

Good

(B+, B) High

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Moderate

Failure

(F) Not reaching marginal levels

Assessment Task

3. Quiz (35%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Capacity to define, compare and distinguish differences and similarities of important concepts and core values of social work.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Outstanding

Good

(B+, B) High

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Moderate

Failure

(F) Not reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

1.1. Ethics and Values

Origin, definition and nature of social work; development of social work; social work value; social work principles; ethical dilemmas; ethnical principles (human rights & dignity; social justice); ethical responsibilities; personal value; the helping relationship (Biestek's classic seven principles); professional roles

1.2. Paradigms, Perspectives and Models

Paradigms: humanistic; existentialist; functionalist; structuralism; heuristic paradigms

Perspectives: Human development perspective; ecological perspective; strength perspective; functional perspective

Models: Behavior therapy; cognitive approach; communicative-interactive approach; crisis intervention; ecological model; feminist practice; gestalt therapy; integrative approach; problem solving approach; social action approach; social planning approach; strength perspective.

1.3. Practices: Ecological Perspective, Generic Base and Generalist Approach of Social Work Practice

Phases of intervention: Engagement phase; Assessment phase; Action phase; Evaluation and termination phase.

Ecological perspective: Microsystem; Mesosystem; Exosystem; Macrosystem; Ecological transition; Risk and opportunity; seven steps of ecological treatment model

Generic Base and Generalist practices: Practice with individuals and families; Practice with groups; Practice with organizations and communities

Interdisciplinary collaboration: working with criminal justice practitioner; working with health care professional; working with educational professional

1.4. Professionalization, Globalization and Diversity

Attributes for a profession; profession vs. semi-profession; professionalization; challenge to social work profession; cultural sensitivity; cultural diversity; international social work practice; globalization; indigenization of non-local social work practice; authentication of local practice; concept of sustainability.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

| Title | |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Banks, S., & NØhr K. (Eds.). (2012). Practising social ethics around the world: Cases and commentaries. NY: Routledge. |
| 2 | Coady N., & Lehmann, P. (Eds.). (2008). Theoretical perspectives for direct social work practice: A generalist-eclectic approach. NY: Springer. |
| 3 | Johnson, L.C., & Yanca S.J. (2010). Social Work Practice: A Generalist Approach. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. |
| 4 | 周永新、陳沃聰編。(2013)。《社會工作新論》。香港：商務印書館。 |

Additional Readings

| Title | |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Blyth, E. (2009). The professionalization of social work in England. China Journal of Social Work, 2(2), 131-141. |
| 2 | Carey M., & Green. L. (Eds.). (2013). Practical social ethics: complex dilemmas with applied social care. Surrey: Ashgate. |

| | |
|----|---|
| 3 | Council on Social Work Education. (2008). Council on Social Work Education: Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. Alexandria, VA: Author. |
| 4 | Dylan, A. (2013). Environmental sustainability, sustainable development, and social work. In M. Gray, J. Coates & T. Hetherington (Eds.), <i>Environmental Social Work</i> (pp. 62-87). Oxon: Routledge. |
| 5 | Fook, J. (2002). <i>Social work: Critical theory and practice</i> . London: Sage. |
| 6 | Healy, L.M. (2006). Universalism and cultural relativism in social work ethics. <i>International Social Work</i> , 50(1), 11-26. |
| 7 | International Federation of Social Workers (2014). Global definition of social work. Retrieved February 25, 2015 from http://ifsw.org/get-involved/global-definition-of-social-work/ |
| 8 | International Federation of Social Workers, International Association of Schools of Social Work (2014). <i>Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles</i> . Retrieved February 25, 2015 from http://social-workers.info/ |
| 9 | International Federation of Social Workers, International Association of Schools of Social Work & International Council on Social Welfare (2012). <i>The global agenda for social work and social development: commitment to action</i> . Retrieved February 25, 2015 from www.globalsocialagenda.org |
| 10 | Pullen-Sansfacon A., & Cowden, S. (2012). <i>The ethical foundations of social work</i> . NY: Pearson. |
| 11 | Social Workers Registration Board (2010). <i>Guidelines on code of practice for registered social workers</i> . Retrieved August 29, 2014 from http://www.swrb.org.hk/Engasp/guidelines.asp |
| 12 | Suppes M.A., & Wells, C.C. (2013). <i>The Social Work Experience: An Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare</i> . Boston: Pearson. |
| 13 | 徐永德 (2022)。《社會工作與社會學》。香港：商務印書館。 |
| 14 | 關志健 (2024)。《7天改不了社會》。香港：香港城市大學出版社。 |
| 15 | The International Association of School of Social Work (IASSW) http://www.iassw-aiets.org/ |
| 16 | The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) http://ifsw.org/ |
| 17 | The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) http://ifsw.org/ |
| 18 | The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), National Codes of Ethics http://ifsw.org/publications/national-codes-of-ethics/ |
| 19 | Hong Kong Social Work Registration Board (SWRB) http://www.swrb.org.hk/ |
| 20 | National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Code of Ethics http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/code.asp |
| 21 | The British Association of Social Workers (BASW), the Code of Ethics for Social Work http://cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_112315-7.pdf |