



# SYLLABUS

## SWRK 3140 Introduction to Social Work Practice

### Acknowledgements

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Len Spearman and Tuula Heinonen have spent the majority of their academic careers at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba. Len Spearman is now retired but continues to be very active with the Faculty of Social Work as a Senior Scholar. Tuula Heinonen is Professor and teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses. Both have played a major part in developing the social work practice curriculum, and together they the textbook that accompanies this course.

Dr. Heinonen's background is social work in health care and international social development. Her current interests are social work and rural women in China, experiences of newcomers to Canada, and health care issues, policy and practice and social work in Finland. She has been active in both undergraduate and graduate curriculum development and teaching.

Dr. Spearman has practised in the field of mental health in both Canada and the United States. At the University of Manitoba, he has played a major part in designing the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) curriculum and the northern off-campus and distance education programs. He chaired the BSW Curriculum Committee for more than a decade.

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# Syllabus

Welcome to SWRK 3140 Introduction to Social Work Practice.

## Contacting your instructor

For information on contacting your instructor as well as other important information from your instructor see the Instructor Letter in your course website.

## Course description

The University of Manitoba *Undergraduate Calendar* describes this course as follows:

(Formerly 047.314) Introduces students to ecological and other generalist based practice frameworks and the role of professional social workers. Course emphasizes values and knowledge in context of a rational approach to problem solving which includes problem definition, assessment, contracting, intervention and evaluation. Pre- or corequisite SWRK 1310 (or 047.131), SWRK 2080 (or 047.208) and SWRK 2090 (or 047.209).

The course outlines the ideology, principles, and theory that underpin generalist social work practice. The content is generic to practice. This means that all social workers need to be able to understand and begin to apply, when appropriate, content presented in the course.

The accompanying textbook, also written by the authors of this course, contains most of the content. The course materials are intended to expand and develop a thorough understanding of the content by using exercises, reflection questions, interactive experiences, PowerPoint material and assignments.

We expect that students taking this course by means of distance education have at least some experience working in a social work or social work-related setting. Our intent is to use this experience to build a useful course and to help students feel that they have learned much about the basics of generalist social work practice.

## Course goals

Upon completion of this course you should know what it means to assess and intervene in social work practice using principles of generalist social work practice. This includes the ability to:

1. explain principles necessary for generalist practice, the need to understand social work beyond problem, the importance of social policy in generalist practice, and distinguish between generalist practice and what is to come in the course;
2. connect historical development of social work to current practice;
3. appreciate and use the ideological and professional value-base of social work practice;
4. select and illustrate how to use a variety of professional social work roles;
5. connect social and workplace or organizational policy to your practice of social work. This also means practising in the context of mandated practice (e.g., child protection);
6. illustrate how social workers can effectively build appropriate social work relationships (both voluntary and involuntary);
7. connect issues of cultural diversity to practice and illustrate how to use principles of cultural awareness;

8. begin to critically use and apply the problem solving process;
9. begin to apply the broad knowledge base of social work to practice;
10. assess clients and client situations using generalist principles and determinants of assessment; and
11. illustrate how to critically use, assess and intervene applying principles of:
  - a. strengths-based practice
  - b. an Aboriginal approach to practice
  - c. a feminist approach to practice, and
  - d. structural social work practice

## Course materials

### Required

#### Bookstore

The following required materials are available for purchase from the [University of Manitoba Bookstore](#). Please order your materials immediately, if you have not already done so. See your [Distance and Online Education Student Handbook](#) for instructions on how to order your materials.

#### Textbook

Heinonen, T. and Spearman, L. (2010). *Social work practice: Problem solving and beyond*. Toronto: Nelson Education. ISBN: 978-0-17-650038-2.

#### Required hardware and software

Headset with microphone

### Optional

Canadian Association of Social Workers, *Code of Ethics*, 2005:  
<http://www.casw-acts.ca/en/what-social-work/casw-code-ethics>

International Federation of Social Workers, *Ethics in social work, statement of principles*, 2004: <http://www.ifsw.org/f38000032.html>

Sinclair, R., Hart, M. & Bruyere, G. (2009). *Wíchitowin: Aboriginal social work in Canada*. Fernwood.

## Distance and Online Education (DE) Student Resources

In your course website there are links for the following:

- Contact Distance and Online Education Staff
- Distance and Online Student Handbook
- Distance and Online Education Website

## Course overview

### Overview

This course introduces the student to the practice and processes of social work. It is centred in generalist practice, in which the knowledge base of social work in a problem-solving process (assessment, contracting, problem definition, and evaluation) is extended through the application of important approaches to client situations and social issues. Students engage in the learning of a variety of social work theories, approaches, concepts, values, principles and methods of practice in this course. They

will also learn, through discussion of practice in the child protection field, the significance of connections between social and agency policy and front line practice. Social work requires the acquisition of practice, knowledge, and learning as a continuous process over the course of one's career and life. Over time and with experience, it is expected that skills will be developed and enhanced. As a foundation course in the practice of social work, SWRK 3140 is aimed at facilitating critical, thoughtful, purposeful and effective social work practice.

With unique experience and skills, an individual social worker selects, adapts, and integrates from among a number of established practice approaches and techniques. The workplace and the social environment offer constraints and opportunities as do the specifics of particular client situations. The ecological perspective, especially as it informs social work assessment, is discussed, in addition to other important and, sometimes contrasting, approaches such as a strengths-based approach, structural social work, and Aboriginal and feminist approaches. In addition, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and anti-oppressive practice are also important. As will be described and illustrated in the course, these approaches and features shape a social worker's orientation to practice.

## Topics

The course topics reflect the contents in the textbook as follows. Each unit correlates with a chapter in the textbook of the same number and similar title.

### Module 1: Introduction

Unit 1: Introduction: Understanding what is to come by exploring a case example

### Module 2: Fundamental principles

Unit 2: The emergence of social work in Canada

Unit 3: Ideological foundations and social work values

Unit 4: The variety of social work roles

Unit 5: Connection between policy and practice, including social work in mandated practice

Unit 6: The client-social worker relationship: Voluntary and involuntary relationships

Unit 7: Cultural diversity and cultural awareness in social work practice.

### Module 3: Problem solving and use of knowledge in focused assessment

Unit 8: The problem solving process

Unit 9: The broad knowledge base of social work

Unit 10: Determinants of assessment

### Module 4: Generalist Social Work Practice: Beyond Problem Solving

Unit 11: Strengths-based practice

Unit 12: An Aboriginal approach

Unit 13: A Feminist approach

Unit 14: Structural social work

## Learning activities

### Reading

For each real time (on-line) session, there are chapters in the textbook assigned for reading. You might find it useful to read the chapter summary first and then the chapter itself. This will give you a preview of what the chapter covers before you read it.

### Discussion forums

In the discussion forums you will respond to one of the reflection questions included in

each unit of the course materials. Please respond to what others write as you post your own ideas. In this way a discussion among students can occur. Two of your discussion entries (or postings) that you select will form part of our participation grade (10%).

## Online classroom

There are seven required Web Conferences in this course. We will discuss the reflection questions found in each unit of the course materials and questions you have about what you read in the textbook or other assigned material. Please be sure to post entries in the Discussion Forum after each unit is completed.

For details on accessing the online classroom and the schedule for the Web Conferences see the Web Conferencing Information and Assistance link.

## Evaluation and grading

### Distribution of marks

Evaluation	Percentage
1. Interactive participation: two postings graded from discussion forums (10%); and attendance at the online classroom sessions (10%).	20%
2. Assignment 1: Module 2, Units 2 – 7	25%
3. Assignment 2: Module 3, Units 8-10 (plus a review of 1-7)	25%
4. Take home examination: Module 4, Units 11-14 (plus a review of previous units)	30%
Total	100%

### Grading scale

Letter grade	Percentage range	Description
A+	> 93	Exceptional
A	86 – < 93	Excellent
B+	79 – < 86	Very good
B	72 – < 79	Good
C+	65 – < 72	Satisfactory
C	58 – < 65	Adequate
D	50 – < 58	Unacceptable
F	< 50	Failure

**Note:** All final grades are subject to departmental review.

### Plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation

You should acquaint yourself with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation as detailed in the General Academic Regulations and Policy section of the University of Manitoba *Undergraduate Calendar*. Note: These policies are also located in your *Distance and Online Education Student Handbook* or you may refer to Student Affairs at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/student>.

### Assignments and the take-home examination

Assignment 1 is a take-home test made up of short answer questions. The questions are drawn from content in Chapters 1 to 7 of the textbook.

Assignment 2 and the take-home examination are designed to enhance your learning about the application of concepts and approaches to social work practice. We hope they meet this goal. Both are take-home essay-type assignments. The take-home examination is connected to the work you did in assignment 2. When both assignment 2 and the take-home examination are completed, you will have drawn and used material from most chapters in the textbook and units in the course materials. Be sure you carefully read and understand both assignment 2 and the take-home examination before you proceed.

**Note:** Detailed instructions about the assignments are found in the assignment section in your course website.

### **Assignment due dates**

Consult your Course Schedule for the assignment due dates.

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