

**Indiana University  
School of Social Work**

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**S540 (R792) Social Work Practice I: Theory and Skills (5 credits)**

**I. Course Rationale and Description**

This foundation practice course focuses on both theory and skills as a part of the lifelong process of developing competence as a professional social worker. Using a generalist perspective, directed at planned change, content is directed to fostering an understanding of the values and theoretical knowledge needed to effectively serve a wide variety of client systems - individual, family, small group, communities, and organizations. Supporting such a knowledge base is attention to a complementary set of skills that include such considerations as attending and responding behaviors, questioning and exploration, collaboration, and influencing strategies.

This course is designed to provide students with opportunities to learn about themselves and the implications of their personal beliefs and characteristics for professional social work; to learn about the fundamental values, ethics, and legal obligations of the profession; to learn the knowledge, theory, and skills associated with the processes of social work practice in a society of people with diverse backgrounds and characteristics.

**II. Objectives**

In this course, students are expected to demonstrate achievement of the following objectives:

1. Understand the fundamental values, ethics, and legal obligations of the profession.
2. Understand the connection among knowledge, theory, and skills necessary for generalist and ethnic-sensitive social work practice.
3. Understand of the purpose, nature, focus, tasks, dynamics, and issues associated with each of the fundamental phases or processes of generalist social work practice (i.e., preparing, beginning, exploring, assessing, contracting, working and evaluating, and ending).
4. Understand the application of the social work skills associated with each of the phases or processes of generalist social work practice.
5. Understand appropriate use of self in professional relationships, including self-awareness, empathy, respect, authenticity, and responsible assertiveness.
6. Communicate differentially and appropriately, including providing constructive feedback, in professional interactions with human beings of diverse backgrounds and characteristics (e.g., people of color, women, lesbians and gay men, and other populations-at-risk as well as those groups distinguished by age, ethnicity, culture, class, religion, and physical or mental ability).
7. Prepare clear and well organized professional social work case records (e.g., intake and social histories; social work assessments of person-issue-situation, including strengths as well as problems; contracts and plans, including clear specification of interventive goals; progress and evaluation notes; and closing summaries).
8. Ability to assess one's strengths, limitations, and learning needs, including evaluation of the quality and appropriateness of skill selection and application.

### III. Outline of Content

In an attempt to provide increased clarity, we have organized two outlines: one for the Theory and another for the Skills Training Portions of the Social Work Practice I Course:

<b>Social Work Theory Portion of S540 Course (Mondays)</b>		
Session Number & Date	Topic	Assignment (due on this date)
1. Mon., Jan. 11	Introduction & Overview - Phases/Processes of Practice	Preliminary Self-Assessment
Mon., Jan. 18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Class does NOT meet
2. Mon., Jan. 25	Professional Integrity - Central to Ethical and Effective Practice	Mattaini, Ch. 14; 5; Cournoyer, Ch. 2 (ms.)
3. Mon., Feb. 01	Ethical Decision Making	Mattaini, Appendix A [NASW Code of Ethics (1997)]; Mattaini, Ch. 3; 2; Cournoyer, Ch. 3 (ms.)
4. Mon., Feb. 08	Ecosystems Perspective	Mattaini, Ch. 1
5. Mon., Feb. 15	A PIE Approach - Generalist and Ethnic Sensitive Perspectives	Mattaini, Ch 4
6. Mon., Feb. 22	PIE Assessment	Mattaini, Ch 6
7. Mon., Mar. 01	Contexts for Assessment & Service	Mattaini, Ch 13
8. Mon., Mar. 08	Mid-Term Exam: Theory & Skills	
Mon., Mar. 15	Spring Break Week	Class does NOT meet
9. Mon., Mar. 22	Individuals	Mattaini, Ch. 7
10. Mon., Mar. 29	Families	Mattaini, Ch. 8
11. Mon., Apr. 05	Groups	Mattaini, Ch. 9
12. Mon., Apr. 12	Communities	Mattaini, Ch. 10
13. Mon., Apr. 19	Organizations	Mattaini, Ch. 11
14. Mon., Apr. 26	Summary; Preparation for Exam; Course/Instructor Evaluations	
15. Mon., May 03	Final Exam: Theory & Skills	

<b>Social Work Skills Portion of S540 Course (Wednesdays)</b>		
Session Number & Date	Topic	Assignment (due on this date)
1. Wed., Jan. 13	Introduction & Overview of the Social Work Skills Portion of the Course	Cournoyer, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-11) and Chapter 4 (pp. 76-96). Complete Exercises 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, and 4-4.
2. Wed., Jan. 20	Talking & Listening: The Basic Interpersonal Skills	Review but do not do Exercise 4-5 (pp. 97-103). We will do Ex. 4-5 in class today. Bring an audiotape recorder and audiotape to class today (needed to complete class exercises).
3. Wed., Jan. 27	Preparing	Cournoyer, Chapter 5 (pp. 104-130). Complete Exercises 5-1 through 5-8. Do not do Exercise 5-9. We will complete that exercise in class today.
4. Wed., Feb. 03	Beginning	Cournoyer, Chapter 6 (pp. 131- 158). Complete Exercises 6-1 through 6-7).
5. Wed., Feb. 10	Exploring	Cournoyer, Chapter 7 (pp. 159-206) and complete the exercises except for Exercise 7-9. We will do that exercise in class at a later date.
6. Wed., Feb. 17	Videotaped Interview #1	Submit Workbook for Instructors' Review. CAREFULLY Review Interview Guidelines and Bring one VHS Videotape to Class
7. Wed., Feb. 24	Review Videotapes	Submit Process Recording; Self-Assessment of Performance; & Videotape itself

8. Wed., Mar. 03	Assessing	Cournoyer, Chapter 8 and complete the exercises (except for DAC of yourself and the summary exercise [8-3] which we will do in class at a later date. Complete remaining written portions of supplemental exercise 7-9 and conduct Session #1 with Practice-Client. Bring audiotape and recorder
9. Wed., Mar. 10	Assessing-Contracting	Cournoyer, Ch. 9. And complete the Chapter 9 exercises (except for the summary exercise [9-9] which we will do in class at a later date). Review Summary Exercise 8-3 and conduct Session #2 with Practice-Client. Bring audiotape and recorder
... Wed., Mar. 17	Spring Break Week	Class does NOT meet
10. Wed., Mar. 24	Contracting-Working and Evaluating	Cournoyer, Chapter 10 complete the exercises (except for the summary exercise [10-13] which we will do in class at a later date). Review Cournoyer's summary exercise 9-9 and conduct Session #3 with Practice-Client. Bring audiotape and recorder
11. Wed., Mar. 31	Working and Evaluating	Cournoyer, Chapter 11 and complete the exercises (except for the summary exercise [11-5] which we will do later). Review Cournoyer's summary exercise 10-3 and complete Session #4 with Practice-Client. Bring audiotape and recorder
12. Wed., Apr. 07	Ending	Review Cournoyer's summary exercise 11-5 and undertake Session #5 with Practice-Client. Bring audiotape and recorder
13. Wed., Apr. 14	Videotaped Interview #2	Submit Completed Case Record of 5-Sessions with Practice-Client. CAREFULLY Review Interview Guidelines and Bring one VHS Videotape to Class
14. Wed., Apr. 21	Review Videotapes and Summary;	Submit Process Recording and Self-Assessment of Performance re: Videotape #2 and the videotape itself
15. Wed., Apr. 28	Conclusion to Skills Portion	Submit Workbook for Instructors' Review. Course/Instructors Evaluation
16. Wed., May 05	(Class Party)	

### ***Required Readings***

- Cournoyer, Barry. (1996). *The social work skills workbook* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Mattaini, Mark A., Lowery, Christine T., & Meyer, Carol H. (1998). *The foundations of social work practice: A graduate text* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

### ***Recommended Readings***

- Devore, Wynetta, & Schlesinger, Elfriede. G. (1999). *Ethnic-sensitive social work practice* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Miley, Karla K., O'Melia, Michael, & DuBois, BrendaL. (1998). *Generalist social work practice: An empowering approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Prochaska, James O., Norcross, John C., & DiClemente, Carlo C. (1994). *Changing for good*. New York: Avon Books.
- Saleebey, Dennis. (1997). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). White Plains, New York: Longman.
- Turner, Francis J. (Ed.). (1996). *Social work treatment: Interlocking theoretical approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Free Press.

## **IV. Course Format & Assignments**

The major assignments from which the course grade is derived include:

1. **Written Workbook Responses** (10 points). Students are expected to submit for the instructor's examination their written responses to the exercises in *The Social Work Skills Workbook* and to other

learning activities as described by the instructor. Students submit their workbook exercises to the instructor for review at about the midpoint and again toward the end of the semester.

2. **Practice Case Record** (15 points). An especially important learning activity is the preparation of a **Description, Assessment, and Contract (DAC)** and other written recordings associated with your five-session work with a colleague-client
  
3. **Mid-Term Exam** (25 points). This exam is a written measure of the student's understanding of the theory and skills addressed, content covered, and learning experiences completed through approximately the half-way point in the course. Items are derived from classroom lectures, discussions, films/videos, and exercises as well as from the required readings from the Cournoyer (1996) and the Mattaini, Lowery, and Meyer (1998) texts. The exam will include short response, short-essay, as well as multiple-choice type items.

**Mid-Term Exam Date: Monday, March 8**

4. **Videotaped Interviews** (25 points). Each student, serving in the role of social worker, conducts portions of two formal interviews with a simulated client. These are videotaped for systematic evaluation. As a part of these assignments, students submit transcribed process recordings of these two abbreviated interviews along with a critical self-evaluation of their own performance. Each interview and associated written documents are valued at 12 and 1/2 points.

**Videotaped Interview #1 Date: Wednesday, February 17**

**Videotaped Interview #2 Date: Wednesday, April 14**

5. **Final Exam** (25 points). As a final measure of student learning, this examination includes material addressed throughout the entire semester, although a greater number of items will come from the second, rather than the first, half of the course. As in the first exam, items are derived from classroom lectures, discussions, films/videos, and exercises as well as from the required readings from the Cournoyer (1996) and the Mattaini, Lowery, and Meyer (1998) texts. The exam will include short response, short-essay, as well as multiple-choice type items.

**Final Exam Date: Monday, May 3**

#### V. **Course Policies, Evaluation & Grading**

Formal grades for this course are assigned on an 'A' (Excellent) through 'F' (Fail) basis. According to School of Social Work policy, a grade of 'C-' or lower in this course results in dismissal from the Master of Social Work program. Students enrolled in the course may earn up to 100 points. Final course scores generally conform to the following point ranges:

A	93.35-96.65	Excellent
A-	90.00-93.34	Superior
B+	86.76-89.99	Very Good
B	83.35-86.75	Good
B-	80.00-83.34	Satisfactory
C+	76.76-79.99	Acceptable
C	73.35-76.75	Marginal
C-	70.00-73.34	Unsatisfactory

**'A' Range Performance** (Grades of 'A' and 'A-'): The 'A' and 'A-' grades suggest *excellence* in scholarship, critical and reflective thinking, and performance. Written products are extremely well prepared and written. Papers and examinations are clear, precise, well-reasoned, insightful, and exceed expectations for satisfactory performance. Intellectual standards of advanced scholarship are consistently reflected in communications, products, and performances. Grades in the 'A' range suggest performance that is distinctly superior to that characterized as good, average, or satisfactory. Basic expectations are met and exceeded. Self-assessment and self-evaluation are consistently apparent in scholarly and professional activities. 'A' students regularly raise significant issues of relevance to the topic of study. She or he consistently reflects higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) in exploring topics and claims. Major concepts are routinely clarified, assumptions and speculations are regularly recognized; and distinguished from positions based on logical analysis and/or empirical evidence. Claims are consistently supported with evidence, and arguments are regularly presented in a fair and scholarly manner. 'A' grades suggest performance that is exceptionally strong. Excellence is relatively rare - even among highly qualified graduate students.

**'B' Range Performance** (Grades of 'B+', 'B', and 'B-'): The 'B' grades suggest consistent competence in scholarship, critical and reflective thinking, and performance. Written products are prepared and written well. They reflect clarity, precision, good reasoning, and considerable insight. Intellectual standards of advanced scholarship are generally reflected in communications, products, and performances. Grades in the 'B' range suggest performance that is *good* or *satisfactory*. Basic expectations are met. Self-assessment and self-evaluation are generally apparent in scholarly activities. The 'B' student periodically raises significant issues. She or he generally reflects higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) in exploring topics and claims. Major concepts are usually clarified, assumptions are generally noticed, claims are often supported with evidence, and arguments are usually presented in a fair and scholarly manner. In sum, the 'B' grades suggest good, solid, and satisfactory performance. 'B' grades are expected of highly qualified graduate students.

**'C' Range Performance** (Grades of "C+" and 'C'): The 'C' grades suggest a marginally satisfactory level of competence in scholarship, critical and reflective thinking, and performance. Written products are prepared and written in an uneven manner suggesting a minimal or marginal level of competence. They reflect some aspects of clarity, precision, good reasoning, and insight. However, the quality is mixed. Intellectual standards of advanced scholarship are inconsistently reflected in communications, products, and performances. Grades in the 'C' range suggest performance that is minimally or marginally satisfactory. Basic expectations are met but at a minimal level. Self-assessment and self-evaluation are sometimes apparent in scholarly activities. The 'C' student occasionally raises significant issues. She or he sometimes reflects higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) in exploring topics and claims. Major concepts are sometimes clarified, assumptions and speculations are sometimes recognized, claims are sometimes supported with evidence, and arguments are sometimes presented in a fair and scholarly manner. In sum, the 'C' student reflects performance that is marginal in nature. At the master's level, the 'C+' and 'C' grades should trigger thoughtful assessment of the goodness of fit between the student's characteristics and motivations, and the qualities needed by competent professional social workers.

**Unsatisfactory Performance** (Grades of 'C-' and lower): The unsatisfactory grades suggest a level of incompetence in scholarship, critical and reflective thinking, and performance. Written products reflect noticeable lapses in preparation. Poor communications, products, and performances are regularly noticeable. There are common inconsistencies in terms of clarity, precision, or good reasoning. Depth of insight varies from minimal to absent. Intellectual standards of advanced scholarship are regularly absent from communications. Unsatisfactory grades suggest performance that does not meet basic expectations. Self-assessment and self-evaluation are not commonly apparent in scholarly activities. The unsatisfactory student rarely identifies significant issues. She or he does not commonly reflect higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) in exploring topics and claims. Major concepts are not usually clarified, assumptions often go unnoticed, claims are infrequently supported with evidence, and arguments are sometimes presented in an unbalanced and unscholarly manner. In sum, the unsatisfactory student reflects sufficiently poor performance as to raise serious questions about his or her fitness for the profession of social work.

Due to the combined classroom and laboratory nature of the course, attendance at all class sessions is required. View this course as if it were **your social work job**. As will be the case when students engage in agency-based practicum experiences (beginning later during the foundation curriculum) or are later employed as professional

social workers, there are consequences for tardiness and absences. [Imagine the effects upon clients when their social worker fails to attend a session or is consistently late.] Students who are frequently late or absent will lose points toward their overall course grade. Similarly, assignments that are submitted after due dates may **not** be accepted. If accepted, points will be deducted from the grade.

Students enrolled in the Indiana University School of Social Work Master of Social Work program are expected to demonstrate behavior that is congruent with the fundamental values of the social work profession, the standards described in the *Indiana University Code of Student Ethics* (1990), and the *Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers* (1997). Academic dishonesty such as plagiarism and cheating as well as behavior that is unethical or illegal may result in a failing grade in this course and expulsion from the School and University.

Consistent with University policy, the grade of "I" (Incomplete) is warranted only under exceptional circumstances (e.g., illness or family emergency) and when the student has satisfactorily completed two-thirds of the coursework. Students should contact the instructor if personal or familial circumstances negatively affect the quality of their academic performance.

Course and instructor evaluation is viewed as a fundamental and ongoing responsibility of the professor(s). Therefore, evaluative feedback will be sought periodically throughout the semester. Indeed, the instructors welcome any and all comments about the course and its instruction. Toward the end of the semester, students will be provided a School of Social Work sponsored course/instructor evaluation instrument through which they may confidentially assess the overall quality of the course and the professor.

## VI. Course Instructors

**Barry Cournoyer** is Professor of Social Work at Indiana University. He earned a Masters Degree in Social Work (MSSW) from the University of Tennessee and a Doctor of Social Work Degree (DSW) from the University of Utah. He is a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers (ACSW), a Board Certified Diplomate in Clinical Social Work (American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work), a Diplomate in Clinical Social Work (National Association of Social Workers), a Certified Behavior Therapist, and a Board Certified Sex Therapist. He is recognized by the State of Indiana as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). His University office is ES4138G on the IUPUI Campus. Office hours during the Spring Semester are the hours just preceding and just following class periods. Appointments should generally be scheduled in advance by telephone or email. He may be reached by telephone at 317-274-6708 (University) and 317-259-7982 (Home) or through Electronic Mail (E-mail) at [bcourno@iussw.iupui.edu](mailto:bcourno@iussw.iupui.edu).

**Mary Jeanne Pies** is an Associate Faculty member of Indiana University School of Social Work and a Clinical Social Worker with Pleasant Run-HCI, where she serves as a community based family therapist with families identified by Marion County as high-risk. She earned a Masters in Pastoral Theology from St. Meinrad Seminary and a Masters of Social Work from Indiana University. She is member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers (ACSW) and is recognized by the State of Indiana as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). Appointments should generally be scheduled in advance by telephone or email. She may be reached by telephone at 317-693-9562 ext. 136 (Pleasant Run-HCI) or through email at [MPies@ix.netcom.com](mailto:MPies@ix.netcom.com).

**Donna Augenbergs** is an Associate Faculty member of Indiana University School of Social Work and a Clinical Social Worker with the Dawn Project - a special project composed of teams of Service Coordinators from the Midtown, Gallahue, Adult and Child, and BehaviorCorp mental health centers. The Dawn Project provides wraparound services to high risk children referred by Marion County Office of Family and Children's Services, the Juvenile Court, the Probation Department, or the Special Education Division of the Department of Education. Ms. Augenbergs is supervisor of the Midtown Mental Health Center Dawn Project Team. She earned a Master of Social Work degree from MSW from Indiana University, is a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers, and is recognized by the State of Indiana as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). Please schedule appointments by calling 317-726-2121, ext. 231 or email at [DAugenbergs@kidwrap.org](mailto:DAugenbergs@kidwrap.org).