

SALT LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Department of Social Work
SW 2750
PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND THE LAW

Instructor: Mequette M. Sorensen, M.S.W., C.S.W.
Office: Instructional Administrative Bldg
Office Hours: T/TH 10-12:00 or by appointment
Phone: 957-4455
E-mail Address: Mequette.sorensen@slcc.edu

Required Text: *Ethical Decisions for Social Work Practice*
Ralph Dolgoff; Frank Loewenberg and Donna Harrington

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to ethical and legal standards in the Social Work profession. The Social Work practitioner is in an ongoing, complex maze of difficult decisions requiring consciousness, boundaries, alertness and clear judgment. This course will provide students useful techniques and tools to analyze and assess and then, arrive at a resolution for many complex ethical issues within the Social Work arena.

Learning Outcomes:

The primary goal of SW 2750 is to provide the student an opportunity to address and analyze the complex ethical and legal arenas that confront social workers daily in their professional practice. The learning outcomes of this course match the college-wide learning outcomes established by Salt Lake Community College in the following ways.

SLCC Learning Outcome #1: Upon successful completion of any program, students should acquire substantive knowledge in the discipline of their choice sufficient for further study, and/or demonstrate competencies required by employers to be hired and succeed in the workplace.

SW 2750 Learning Outcomes: At the end of this course students should be able to:

- Gain substantive knowledge of the National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics.
- Demonstrate understanding of the NASW Code of Ethics through the application of its ethical standards to social work practice.
- Gain knowledge of useful techniques, tools and frameworks for making ethical decisions in social work practice.

SLCC Learning Outcome #2: Upon successful completion of any program, students should be able to communicate effectively.

SW 2750 Learning Outcome: At the end of the course students should be able to:

- Effectively communicate orally or in writing about key concepts of ethical decision making and techniques in analysis and assessment the ethical dimensions of practice problems.

SLCC Learning Outcome #4: Upon successful completion of any program, students should be able to think critically.

SW 2750 Learning Outcome: At the end of the course students should be able to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking skills through the application of decision-making frameworks orally and in writing in order to come to ethically appropriate resolutions to problems in social work practice.

SLCC Learning Outcome #5: Upon successful completion of any program, students should have developed the knowledge and skills to be civically engaged and/or engage in service-learning for community building in order to enhance their academic experience.

SW 2750 Learning Outcome: At the end of the course students should be able to:

- Develop the knowledge and skills to work ethically in a professional and constructive manner.

Methodology:

Through the application of the decision-making model to various specific ethical problems the student will become alert to the ethical aspects of practice. The student will begin to understand various assessment criteria in order to further clarify and integrate the ethical aspects of decision making in social work practice.

In order to assess a student's understanding of the ethical standards and assessment criteria the Professor will facilitate in class discussions therefore, attendance, participation and active involvement is **required**.

Course Requirements:

Weekly Readings – Assigned weekly readings as well as any additional information provided by the Professor will provide the format of weekly discussion. Therefore, the completion of readings prior to class is required in order for the student to participate competently.

Participation and Discussion – Class participation and discussion in class is necessary for assessment of student's competency. Assessments for solving specific ethical problems are not offered in a cookbook approach that indicate what to do exactly in every specific situation. Instead, various models will be presented to help social work students gain skills in analyzing and assessing the ethical dimensions of practice problems in order for the student to develop ethically appropriate professional behavior.

Participation and discussion requires that you be actively engaged in your own education. It is **your responsibility** to come to class prepared to engage in class discussions, participate in class group exercises and complete individual essays.

Essays – Students will complete 3 (2 midterm essays and 1 final essay) essays within the semester. The ethical dilemma subject will be presented to you in class and you will be given 1 week to complete your assignment. Each essay must be a minimum of 4 typed pages in length. The final paper must be a minimum of 5 typed pages, if outside sources are used in your paper you must include sources, citations and a bibliography. Assessment is based upon the student's demonstration of the ***Ethical Decision-Making Model*** in the development of the ethically appropriate resolution.

Other Useful Information:

Code of Conduct – The student is expected to familiarize and utilize the NASW Code of Ethics found at: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>

Final Grades – The final grade will be calculated according to how many points you receive on your 1st, 2nd and 3rd essay as well as the points you earned in attendance and participation.

Help – You can contact me via email at mequette.sorensen@slcc.edu .

Late Assignments – If you fail to turn in an assignment on time, it will be graded at 50% of the total score. **You can't make up a missed weekly discussion.**

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities – If you have a disability that needs accommodation, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in the College Center. To reach the DRC, call 801.964.4659 (voice) or 964.4646 (TDD).

Grading:

Assessment will be based upon participation, essays and the final paper. The point breakdown is as follows:

- Weekly discussions (analysis and assessment of ethical dilemmas of practice problems) 100
 - Essay #1 25
 - Essay #2 25
 - Final Paper 50
- 200

Grading:

200 – 188	A	159 –154	C+	125 – 120	D-
187 – 180	A-	153 –146	C	119 and below	E
179 – 174	B+	145 –140	C-		
173 – 166	B	139 –134	D+		
165 – 160	B-	133 –126	D		

Course Outline and Required Readings

Week 1: Introduction (Jan 13)

Introduction into class
Ethical Choices in the Helping Professions
Chapter 1

Week 2 (Jan. 20)

Martin Luther King Jr. Day - NO CLASS

Week 3 (Jan. 27)

Values and Professional Ethics/Guidelines for Ethical Decision Making:
Concepts, Approaches & Values
Chapters 2 and 3

Week 4 (Feb. 3)

Guidelines for Ethical Decision Making: Decision-Making Process/ Tools
Chapter 4

Week 5 (Feb. 10)

Client Rights and Professional Expertise
Chapter 5

Week 6 (Feb. 17)

NO CLASS

Week 7 (Feb. 24)

Value Neutrality and Imposing Values
Chapter 6

Week 8 (Mar. 3)

Confidentiality, Informed Consent, and the Duty to Protect
Chapter 8

Week 9 (Mar. 10)

SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (March 17) Essay #1 Due

The Professional Relationship: Limits, Dilemmas, and Problems
Chapter 7

Week 11 (Mar. 24)

Chapter 7 cont'

Week 12 (Mar. 31)

Social Justice, Limited Resources and Advocacy
Chapter 9

Week 13 (April 7) Essay #2 Due

Organizational and Work Relationships
Chapter 10

Week 14 (April 14)

Social Work with Selected Client Groups
Chapter 11

Week 15 (April 21)

Changing World/Changing Dilemmas
Chapter 12

Week 16 (April 28)

Whose Responsibility are Professional Ethics
Chapter 13

Week 17 (May 5)

Final Analysis Due