

**School Vision: Building upon a foundation of social justice and an ethic of care, we are a community of learners actively engaged in the development of critical, transformative knowledge for social work practice.**

<b>Year/Term</b>	<b>Fall and Winter, 2016-2017</b>
<b>Course Title</b>	<b>SOWK 503 – Communication Skills in Social Work Practice (3 credits)</b>
<b>Course Schedule</b>	<b>Mondays, 5:00 – 8:00 pm (Term 1)</b>
<b>Course Location</b>	<b>Room 223 – Jack Bell Building</b>

<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Office Location</b>	<b>Office Phone</b>	<b>E-mail address</b>
Dr. Grant Charles	Room 337	604-822-3804	grant.charles@ubc.ca
<b>Office Hours</b>	By appointment		

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides students with a foundation of the values, knowledge and skills used to communicate in a professional social work context. The course will focus on the interview as a means to understand and apply the skills of ethical and effective interpersonal communication within a helping relationship. Basic and more advanced interviewing skills will be explored.

Through assigned readings, lecture and class discussion, role-play, video/DVD and other exercises, students will be introduced to the core values, principles and skills of interpersonal communication. Emphasizing experiential learning and reflective practice, the course is designed to assist students to make conscious use of a range of interviewing and communication skills.

The salience of race, culture, gender and class, as well as tailoring interviews to the specific needs of the individuals and systems within which we work, will constitute a primary emphasis of the course. Various feedback opportunities will be utilized to enable students to explore and critically evaluate their developing skills in a variety of contexts.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Students will develop an awareness of self in a professional helping context
  - Will identify and build on each student’s unique communication style
  - Will become aware of the conditions which inhibit or facilitate ethical and effective communication.
2. Students will acquire and build on skills in communicating clearly and effectively in a professional helping context. Some of these skills include:
  - Listening, probing, clarifying, reflecting
  - Initiating and developing relationships
  - Communicating cross–culturally, in the context of structural factors that influence the interview process, including race, culture, gender, class and role expectations.
3. Students will take responsibility for continued professional, personal, and political awareness, development and integration.

- Will develop self awareness in regard to the values, knowledge and skills used to communicate in a professional social work context
- Will understand communication and interviewing in the context of the BCCSW/ BCASW Social Work Code of Ethics.

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## COURSE POLICIES

The class will work in dyads, triads, small groups and in the large group. Teaching and learning will occur through lectures, instructor demonstrations, experiential exercises, reading and reflection, discussion and feedback, role-playing, and simulated helping interactions.

**Please Note: Student practice interview content is private and confidential between members present and the instructor. Any discussion or disclosure outside of the group is considered a serious breach of confidentiality**

1. **Attendance:** You are expected to attend all classes. Please notify the instructor in advance by email if you will be missing a class. Arrange for a colleague to take notes and pick up copies of any handout. Weather closure: Call 604-822-2277 for up-to-date information about possible closure of the campus due to weather.
2. **Active, Respectful and Responsible Participation:** You are expected to participate actively, respectfully and responsibly in class. Please take risks, try out new skills, and engage in classroom experiences.
3. **Interaction and Skill Practice:** During interview practice you will be asked to work with real and current issues, however, this does not require intimate self-disclosure. You are free to choose what you wish to share and what you do not. You can stop any interview at any time if you feel distressed or uncomfortable. Your choices will be respected. You are expected to be open, honest and constructive in your interactions with others in the class. If you create the right conditions, class colleagues will be more willing to offer feedback regarding your communication skills and your personal style.
4. **Consultation with the Instructor:** Due to the nature of the course and its objectives, students sometimes experience discomfort. If this should happen and you feel it is interfering with your class participation and learning, please consult with the course instructor.
5. **Assessment, Grading, Evaluation:**
  1. Attend all classes, be present for, and responsibly participate in, the full three hours each week. Please make every effort to arrive on time.
  2. Complete and turn in the assignments on time.
6. **Submitting Assignments:** Please submit all assignments via email at grant.charles@ubc.ca.
7. **Return of Marked Student Assignments:** Assignments will be returned via email.
8. **Late Assignments:** Only exceptional circumstances will justify a late assignment submission. Students are expected discuss any requests for late assignments directly with their instructor well in advance of their due date. A medical certificate may be required.

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## UBC COURSE POLICIES:

Excerpt from the UBC calendar:

*Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from the final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes.*

**Disabilities:** The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family

obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Please review the UBC Calendar “Academic regulations” for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Also visit [www.arts.ubc.ca](http://www.arts.ubc.ca) and go to the students’ section for useful information on avoiding plagiarism and on correct documentation.

**Retaining Assignments:** Be sure to retain a copy of all submitted assignments in case of loss or if they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing. Students have the right to view their marked examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The examination remains the property of the university.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:**

Brew, L. & Kottler, J.A. (2016). Applied Helping Skills: Transforming Lives (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) and the BCCSW Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (online)

**COURSE SCHEDULE FOR SOCIAL WORK 503 (subject to modification)**

\*Readings and assigned exercises should be completed prior to class

<b>SESSION 1:</b>	<b>September 12, 2016</b>
<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b><i>Introductions</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions and overview of course outline, expectations and learning outcomes</li> <li>• Relationships, reciprocity, change and the use of self.</li> <li>• Acting ethically in practice</li> </ul>
<b>REQUIRED READING</b>	BC College of Social Workers (BCCSW) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (Download at: <a href="http://bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca">bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca</a> )
<b>SESSION 2:</b>	<b>September 19, 2016</b>
<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b><i>The Helping Process</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the process</li> <li>• Need, culture and context</li> <li>• Models of helping</li> </ul>
<b>REQUIRED READING:</b>	Applied Helping Skills: Chapter 1 (The Process Revealed), Chapter 2 (Clients in Need) and Chapter 3 (Models of Helping)
<b>Exercises</b>	As assigned
<b>SESSION 3:</b>	<b>September 26, 2016</b>
<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b><i>Building Collaborative Relationships</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of relationships</li> <li>• Empathy and connections</li> <li>• Relationship skills</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>REQUIRED READING:</b>	Applied Helping Skills: Chapter 4 (Skills for Building Collaborative Relationships).

<b>Exercises</b>	As assigned
<b>SESSION 4:</b>	<b>October 3, 2016</b>
<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b><i>Assessment and Understanding</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial interviews</li> <li>• Assessments</li> <li>• Objective and subjective sources of information</li> </ul>
<b>REQUIRED READING:</b>	Applied Helping Skills: Chapter 5 (Skills of Assessment)
<b>Exercises</b>	As assigned
	<b>October 10, 2016 Thanksgiving No Class</b>
<b>SESSION 5:</b>	<b>October 17, 2016</b>
<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b><i>The Exploration Stage</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking questions</li> <li>• Reflecting skills</li> <li>• Summarizing themes</li> </ul>
<b>REQUIRED READING:</b>	Applied Helping Skills: Chapter 6 (Exploration Skills)
<b>Exercises</b>	As assigned
<b>SESSION 6:</b>	<b>October 24, 2016</b>
<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b><i>Promoting Insight and Understanding</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The uses and limits of insight</li> <li>• Skills for promoting understanding</li> <li>• Preparing for action</li> </ul>
<b>REQUIRED READING:</b>	Applied Helping Skills: Chapter 7 (Promoting Understanding and Insight)
<b>Exercises</b>	As assigned
<b>SESSION 7:</b>	<b>October 31, 2016</b>
<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b><i>Facilitating Action</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving from insight and understanding to action</li> <li>• Setting attainable goals</li> <li>• Techniques for supporting action</li> </ul>
<b>REQUIRED READING:</b>	Applied Helping Skills: Chapter 8 (Facilitating Action)
<b>Exercises</b>	As assigned
<b>SESSION 8:</b>	<b>November 7, 2016:</b>
<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b><i>Progress and Evaluation</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating outcomes</li> <li>• Negotiating closure</li> <li>• Planning for continued change</li> </ul>

<b>REQUIRED READING:</b>	Applied Helping Skills: Chapter 9 (Maintaining Progress and Evaluating Results)
<b>Exercises</b>	As assigned
<b>SESSION 9:</b>	<b>November 14, 2016</b>
<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b><i>Your Next Steps</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of supervision</li> <li>• Ongoing learning</li> <li>• Caring for yourself</li> </ul>
<b>REQUIRED READING:</b>	Applied Helping Skills: Chapters 12 (Where to go next)
<b>Exercises</b>	As assigned
<b>SESSION 10:</b>	<b>November 21, 2016</b>
	<b><i>Special Topics</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As identified by the class</li> </ul>
<b>REQUIRED READING:</b>	As assigned
<b>Exercises</b>	As assigned
<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b>November 28, 2016</b>
	<b>Closings</b>

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### ASSIGNMENTS FOR SOCIAL WORK 503

#### 1. Self-assessment of current level of attitudes and skills.

**Due: September 19, 2016. Weight = 10%**

You will complete the provided self-assessment form. The purpose of the assignment is to provide you with a baseline measurement of your current communication skills. You will later use baseline assessment as a point of comparison as you progress through the course

#### 2. Self-assessment and DVD or video demonstrating current level of skills.

**Due: October 15, 2016 Weight = 30%**

For this assignment you will work with a class colleague. One of you will assume the role of client and the other will be the interviewer. The interview (approximately 10 minutes) must be based on a current issue that your colleague is addressing. It is not a role play. For the purposes of this assignment it does not matter the degree of skill you demonstrate. You are simply doing a baseline demonstration and assessment of your current skills. Your analysis and understanding of what transpired are more important. You will complete the provided assessment form. Please include your DVD recording with your submission. Your final submission should be no more than six pages in length (double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margin).

In this assignment you will conduct a **critical evaluation** of your work. This will involve filling out the provided assessment form and contrasting your current assessment with your initial self-evaluation.

### 3. Reflections Assignment

**Due: October 31, 2016 Weight = 20%**

Put yourself in the place of a client. Using the format provided in class, choose an issue you are struggling with in your life. It is your choice to decide upon what and how much you want to discuss. You will not be graded based upon the depth of the struggle but rather upon the quality of your articulation of the following areas. Briefly outline your struggle and the impact it has on your life, discuss how your struggle would be seen in a counselling relationship, articulate a goal to deal with the struggle along with how you will achieve change, a timeline for the change and how you would determine if you have met your goal. Also identify up to three barriers you may encounter while you are attempting to deal with the issue and suggest ways in which you may overcome them. Your reflection paper should be no more than five pages in length (double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margin).

### 4. Self-assessment and DVD or video demonstrating current level of skills.

**Due: December 4, 2016. Weight = 40%**

This final assignment is your opportunity to demonstrate the skills you have acquired in the course. Specifically, you will be required to demonstrate advanced interviewing skills. The purpose of the assignment is not to solve the presented issue but rather to demonstrate the skills you have been reading about and practicing in class. For this assignment you will work with a class colleague. One of you will assume the role of client and the other will be the interviewer. The interview (approximately 20 minutes) must be based on a current issue that the 'client' is addressing. It is not a role play.

In addition to completing the recording you will also complete and submit the provided critical evaluation assessment form that will be provided to you.. Included in your written submission will be and analysis of your use of self, an identification of the skills you used, a summary of your strengths and areas for improvement and an assessment of the overall effectiveness of the interview.

Please include your DVD recording with your submission. Your final submission should be no more than six pages in length (double spaced, 12-point font, 1 inch margin).

UBC GRADING CRITERIA			
Letter Grade	Percent Range	Mid-Point	
A+	90 – 100	95	Represents work of exceptional quality: Interview and analysis are both at a high level of accuracy and insight. Consistently demonstrates self-awareness particularly their impact on the client and the flow of the interview. Shows personal engagement with the topic. Uses a variety of techniques to engage and connect to the client and to authentically facilitate the interview process. Is highly client centred and empathetic. Able to identify and critically evaluate options.
A	85 – 89	87	
A-	80 – 84	82	

B+	76 – 79	77.5	Represents work of good quality with no major weaknesses.
B	72 – 75	73.5	Comprehension is more than adequate. Shows some degree of critical thinking and personal involvement in the work. Uses a range of skills.
B-	68 – 71	69.5	Good beginning use of existing skills and knowledge. Demonstrates an awareness of self and the use of skills. Able to identify options.
C+	64 – 67	65.5	Adequate and average work. Shows fair comprehension of the subject, but have some weaknesses such as lack of attentiveness to client, misses client concerns and/or interviews have no structure and/or are disorganized. Uses a restricted range of skills.
C	60 – 63	62.5	Minimal critical awareness or personal involvement, unable to follow client's lead.
C-	55 – 59	57	Ability to articulate and evaluate options somewhat superficial.
D	50 – 54	52	Minimally adequate work, barely at passing level. Serious flaws in demonstration of skills and use of the interview. Poor comprehension of the subject, and minimal involvement demonstrated by a lack of empathy and an unawareness of self.
F	0 – 49		Failing work. Inadequate for successful completion of the course.