

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.

Year/Term	Fall and Winter, 2015-16
Course Title	SOWK 503 – Communication Skills in Social Work Practice (3 credits)
Course Schedule	Mondays, 5:00 – 8:00 pm (Term 1)
Course Location	Room 223 – Jack Bell Building (School of Social Work)

Instructor	Location	Office Hours	Telephone	E-mail Address
Alyson Quinn	Room 223	By appointment	604 734 2535	quinnal@mail.ubc.ca

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, Electronic interview 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.

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, simulated helping interactions, small group activities and video.

1. Attendance: You are expected to attend all classes and be present for the full three hours. 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 and Responsible Participation: You are expected to participate actively and responsibly in class. I ask you to speak, listen, and share with each other. Please take risks, try out new skills, and engage in classroom experiences. You will also be asked to complete assigned out of class readings and exercises, which serve as springboards for discussion in class.

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 of topics you are uncomfortable discussing. You are free to choose what you wish to share and what you do not. 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.

IMPORTANT: 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

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: Students can use the drop box located in the main office on the reception counter to submit their assignments or any correspondence to faculty, sessionals or staff. Items will be date-stamped and distributed to the appropriate mailbox throughout the day.

7. Return of Marked Student Assignments: Marked assignments will be returned (usually within two weeks) during class. End of term assignments are returned to students who provide a self-addressed and stamped envelope to the instructor who will mail back the assignment to students.

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.

9. Use of cell phones and other electronic devices: Cell phones, recording devices, and computers are not permitted.

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 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:

Shebib, Bob (2014). Choices: Interviewing and Counselling Skills for Canadians. 5th Edition, Toronto: Prentice Hall.

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

SESSION 1:	September 14th, 2015
TOPIC:	<i>Introductions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions and overview of course outline, expectations and learning outcomes• Core principles for effective interviewing and counselling
REQUIRED READING	Choices Chapter 2
SESSION 2:	September 21st, 2015
TOPIC:	<i>Professional Identity Self-awareness and Ethical Decision Making</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of self and ethics in social work interviewing• Ethical decision-making
REQUIRED READING:	Choices, Chapter 1 Web search: BC College of Social Workers (BCCSW). Download the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice & bring to class.
SESSION 3:	September 28th, 2015
TOPIC:	<i>The Social Worker-Client Relationship</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core conditions and facilitative dimensions in social work interviewing

- Contracting
- Maintaining the counselling relationship
- Appropriate and inappropriate self-disclosure

REQUIRED READING: Choices, Chapter 3

SESSION 4: October 5th, 2015

TOPIC: *Active Listening: The Basis for Understanding*

- Verbal and non-verbal attending, observation, active listening
- Encouraging, paraphrasing and summarizing

REQUIRED READING: Choices, Chapter 4

BREAK

NO CLASS OCTOBER 12TH, 2015, THANKSGIVING

SESSION 5: October 19th, 2015

TOPIC: *The Pursuit of Empathic Understanding*

- The Use and Purpose of empathy

REQUIRED READING: Choices, Chapter 6

SESSION 6: October 26th, 2015

TOPIC: *Interviewing skills: The Search for Meaning*

- The purpose of questions
- Open and closed questions
- Concreteness
- Transitions
- Choices, Chapter 5

REQUIRED READING:

SESSION 7: November 2nd, 2015

TOPIC: *Empowerment and Change: The Purpose of Counselling*

- Empowerment in social work interviewing
- Motivation and Stages of Change
- Specific types of counselling: MI

REQUIRED READING: Choices, Chapter 7, pages 226 - 240

SESSION 8: November 9th, 2015

TOPIC: *Empowerment and Change: The Purpose of Counselling (2)*

- CBT
- Reframing
- Brief counseling
- Goal setting

REQUIRED READING: Choices, Chapter 7, pages 241 - 270

SESSION 9:	November 16th, 2015
TOPIC:	<i>Difficult Situations</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance • Confrontation • Potentially dangerous clients
REQUIRED READING:	Choices, Chapter 8
SESSION 10:	November 23rd, 2015
TOPIC:	<i>Variations with Selected Target Groups</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling clients with Mental health concerns • Substance use issues • Suicide counseling • Counselling HIV Positive clients and clients with AIDS
REQUIRED READING:	Choices, Chapter 9
SESSION 11:	November 30th, 2015 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of all readings Chapters 1 – 9 inclusive • Preparation for final <p>Closings and final class</p>

ASSIGNMENTS FOR SOCIAL WORK 503

1. Weekly reflection 1 page.

Due: Session 2 - 11. Weight = 10%

This assignment is an opportunity to track your emotional process and reflect on it for the purpose of building empathic skills. Particular attention is to be paid to feelings you are experiencing in learning how to counsel.

2. Synopsis and Electronic interview demonstrating current level of skills.

Due: September 28, 2015. Weight = 20% Chapters 1 - 3

This assignment is an opportunity for you to demonstrate use of the communication skills you are learning within the context of a beginning / exploratory interview.

By the second week of class select a partner in the class to work with. Practice interviewing your partner about an issue he or she is currently experiencing and then tape your interview for submission to your instructor – maximum 10 minutes. Your instructor will give you specific directions about this interview.

The purpose of this interview is not to solve the problem or give advice. The Electronic interview is intended to give you an opportunity to demonstrate your skills you are reading about and practicing in class up to and including the end of Chapter 3.

Review your Electronic interview, and write a brief synopsis, no more than 2 pages, outlining your perception of your use of the basic communication, interviewing and counselling skills using the headings below.

The instructor will review it and return it to you.

Criteria for Evaluation

Demonstration of skills in Chapters 1 -3

Critical analysis of performance including:

- Analysis of use of self
- Identification and analysis of skills used
- Strengths and areas for improvement
- Overall effectiveness of the interview

3. Mindfulness skills

Due: Session 2 - 11. Weight = 5%

Each pair of students will be assigned a session and both will demonstrate the ability to calm clients with a mindfulness technique. The class will be the forum to practice this skill – 5 minutes are allotted each session for this demonstration.

4. Synopsis and Electronic interview demonstrating current level of skills.

Due: November 2nd, 2015. Weight = 25% Chapters 1- 6

This assignment is an opportunity for you to demonstrate use of the communication skills you are learning within this course.

You will be paired with a theater student. Practice interviewing your partner about an issue he or she is currently experiencing and then tape your interview for submission to your instructor – maximum 15 minutes. Your instructor will give you specific directions about this interview.

The purpose of this interview is not to solve the problem or give advice. The Electronic interview is intended to give you an opportunity to demonstrate your skills you are reading about and practicing in class up to and including the end of Chapter 6.

Review your Electronic interview and write a brief synopsis, no more than 3 pages, outlining your perception of your use of the basic communication, interviewing and counselling skills using the headings below.

The instructor will review it and return it to you.

Criteria for Evaluation

Demonstration of skills in Chapters 1 -6

Critical analysis of performance including:

- Analysis of use of self
- Identification and analysis of skills used
- Strengths and areas for improvement

- Overall effectiveness of the interview

Transcription of interview (Instructor will give specific instructions for the transcription – do not deviate from this template).

4. Final Synopsis and Electronic interview demonstrating current level of skills.

Due: December 7th, 2015. Weight = 40% Chapters 1- 9

This assignment is an opportunity for you to demonstrate use of the communication skills you are learning within this course.

Select a partner in the class to work with. Practice interviewing your partner about an issue he or she is currently experiencing and then tape your interview for submission to your instructor – maximum 20 minutes. Your instructor will give you specific directions about this interview.

The purpose of this interview is not to solve the problem or give advice. The Electronic interview is intended to give you an opportunity to demonstrate your skills you are reading about and practicing in class up to and including the end of Chapter 9. In your Electronic interview you must demonstrate use of either CBT or MI techniques.

Review your Electronic interview and write a brief synopsis, no more than 4 pages, outlining your perception of your use of the basic communication, interviewing and counselling skills using the headings below.

The instructor will review it and return it to you.

Criteria for Evaluation

SECTION 1 (1 page)

- 1. Goals of the interview
- 2. Objectives for self

SECTION 2

Transcription of interview (Instructor will give specific instructions for the transcription – do not deviate from this template).

SECTION 3 (3 pages)

Final comments

Critical analysis of performance including:

- Analysis of use of self
- Identification and analysis of skills used
- Strengths and areas for improvement

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. Comprehension is more than adequate. Shows some degree of critical thinking and personal involvement in the work. Uses a range of skills. Good beginning use of existing skills and knowledge. Demonstrates an awareness of self and the use of skills. Able to identify options.
B	72 – 75	73.5	
B-	68 – 71	69.5	
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. Minimal critical awareness or personal involvement, unable to follow client's lead. Ability to articulate and evaluate options somewhat superficial.
C	60 – 63	62.5	
C-	55 – 59	57	
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.