

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

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM: School of Social Work

YEAR: Fall, 2015 – 16, Term 1

COURSE TITLE: Communication Skills in Social Work Practice, Social Work 310, Sections 001, 002,

COURSE SCHEDULE: Mondays 1:00 – 4:00, Term 1

INSTRUCTORS	SECTION / LOCATION	OFFICE HOURS	TELEPHONE NUMBER	E-MAIL ADDRESS
Kelly Allison	Section 001 Room 224	Mondays 12-1	604 626 8834	Kelly.allison@telus.net
Melissa Medjuck	Section 002 Room 222	Mondays 12-1	604 992 5520	Melissajmedjuck@gmail.com

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. The skills of attending and focusing will be given primary emphasis, and skills of intervention, secondary emphasis.

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.

This course serves as a preparation for all field education courses. This course is closely related to the SOWK 305 practice course. The knowledge, values and skills in interpersonal communication will be integrated with the generalist approach to social work practice.

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 beginning 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 begin the process of taking 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, 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. Medical certificates will be required for absences and the instructor must be informed in the event of any absence, Should you miss more than 3 classes, you may not be allowed to complete the final exam. Lateness will impact your grade.

2. Active and Responsible Participation: You are expected to participate actively and responsibly in class. We ask you to speak, listen, and share with each other. Please risk yourself, 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: You are expected to be open, honest and constructive in your interactions with others in the class. We will need to work at getting to know and to trust each other. You are expected to choose what you wish to share and what you do not. Your choices will be respected.

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. Lateness for class will not be accepted and marks will be deducted. Participation is graded and is worth 10% of your final grade.
2. Complete and turn in the two DVD assignments on time.
3. Complete and turn in weekly journal assignments and a final paper.

NOTE: Failure in this course may lead to disqualification for SOWK 315. If this course is failed twice, the student will be required to withdraw from the Social Work Program.

6. Submitting Assignments: Most assignments can be handed in during class. Students can also submit assignments to the instructors mailbox or via email, depending on the instructor's preference. Please make sure the assignment is date-stamped and distributed to the appropriate faculty mailbox.

7. Return of Marked Student Assignments: Instructors coordinate the return of marked assignments either by handing them back to students in class or from their office. 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: Students must discuss any requests for late assignments directly with their instructor and must be prepared to submit a medical certificate.

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: Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments in case of loss and should also retain all their marked assignments in case 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE FOR SOCIAL WORK 310

SESSION 1:	September 14, 2015
TOPIC:	<i>Introductions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions and overview of course outline, expectations and learning outcomes • The skills, process and pitfalls of counselling
REQUIRED READING	Shebib Chapter 2
SESSION 2:	September 21, 2015
TOPIC:	<i>Self-awareness and Ethical Decision Making (1)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of self and ethics in social work interviewing • Ethical decision-making in the context of changing values
REQUIRED READING:	Shebib, Chapter 1 Websearch: BC College of Social Workers (BCCSW)/BC Association of Social Workers (BCASW). Download the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice & bring to class.
SESSION 3:	September 28, 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 counseling relationship
REQUIRED READING:	Shebib, Chapter 3
SESSION 4:	October 5, 2015 – First assignment due
TOPIC:	<i>Active Listening: The Basis for Understanding (1)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal and non-verbal attending, observation, active listening • Encouraging, paraphrasing and summarizing
REQUIRED READING	Shebib, Chapter 4 pg 110-134
	NO CLASS OCTOBER 12, 2015 THANKSGIVING
SESSION 5:	October 19, 2015
TOPIC:	<i>Active Listening: The Basis for Understanding (2)</i>
REQUIRED READING:	Shebib, Chapter 4 pg 134-142
SESSION 6:	October 26, 2015
TOPIC:	<i>The Pursuit of Empathic Understanding (1)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use and purpose of Empathy
REQUIRED READING:	Shebib, Chapter 6 pg 183-196

SESSION 7:	November 2, 2015
TOPIC:	<i>The Pursuit of Empathic Understanding (2)</i>
REQUIRED READING:	Chapter 6 pg 196- 214
SESSION 8:	November 9, 2015 – second assignment due
TOPIC:	<i>Lab with Theatre Students</i>
REQUIRED READING:	Review Chapters 1-4 and 6
SESSION 9:	November 16,2015
TOPIC:	<i>Interviewing Skills: The Search for Meaning (1)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and closed questions • The purpose of questions
REQUIRED READING:	Shebib, Chapter 5, pages 148-168
SESSION 10:	November 23, 2015
TOPIC:	<i>Interviewing Skills: The Search for Meaning (2)</i>
REQUIRED READING:	Shebib, Chapter 5, pages 168-182
	November 30, 2015 – no class, final assignment due by noon

ASSIGNMENTS FOR SOCIAL WORK 310

You are required to prepare for each class by reading the noted chapters.

The assignments for this course are two DVDs due October 5th and November 9th. The two recorded interviews will be confidential. Only the dyad and the instructors will have access to them. The DVD's will be returned to the student after instructor viewing, and students are responsible for safeguarding/erasing them afterward.

If concerns about a taped interview and/or analysis arise, the course instructor may consult with the other SOWK 310 class instructor. In the case of an appeal, the student's permission will be sought for further review of the tape.

In addition, weekly journal entries are due starting in the second week of class till November 23rd. On November 30th, a paper is due.

1. DVD demonstrating skills of chapters 1 – 3 – Due: October 5, 2015. Weight = 30%

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.

You may choose to interview a classmate. 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 tape.

It is not the purpose of this interview to solve the problem or to give advice. The intention is for you to demonstrate the skills you are reading about and practicing in class up to and including the end of Chapter 3. Specifically, the tape should demonstrate explaining confidentiality to your client, followed by relationship and sessional contracting. If time allows, you will engage in some issue exploration.

Review your DVD, and write a brief synopsis, no more than three typed pages (double spaced), outlining your perception of your use of the basic communication, interviewing and counseling skills **using the headings outlined below**. Papers that are longer than three double spaced typed pages will not be accepted.

The instructor will review 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 (including, but not limited to: preliminary stage, internal “voice,” nonverbal language, triggers, objectivity)
- Strengths and areas for improvement
- Conclusion (in your conclusion, assess/comment on the overall effectiveness of the interview)

2. DVD demonstrating skills of chapters 1 – 6 (not 5)– Due: November 9, 2015. Weight = 30%

This DVD is another opportunity for you to demonstrate use of communication skills you are learning within the context of a more advanced interview.

Select a different partner to work with from DVD#1 (but make sure this same partner is available for second term assignment #1). Practice interviewing your partner about an issue he or she is currently experiencing then tape your interview for submission to your instructor. This video will include relationship contracting (including explaining confidentiality) and sessional contracting and **15 minutes of issue exploration**. Indicate at the start of your paper what time you finish contracting and begin issue exploration (i.e. At 5:10 minute mark, issue exploration begins).

Your instructor will give you specific directions about this assignment.

It is not the purpose of this interview to solve the problem or to give advice. The intention is for you to demonstrate the skills you are reading about and practicing in class up to and including the end of Chapter 6 (excluding chapter 5).

Review your tape and write a brief synopsis, focusing on the issue exploration, no more than three typed pages (double spaced), outlining your perception of your basic communication, interviewing and counseling skills, **using the headings below**. Submit the analysis and the DVD to your instructor. Papers that are longer than three double spaced typed pages will not be accepted.

Instructor will review the DVD and return it to you with feedback.

Criteria for Evaluation:

Demonstration of skills in Chapters 1 - 6 (not 5)

Critical analysis of performance including:

- Analysis of use of self (including, but not limited to: preliminary stage, internal “voice,” nonverbal language, triggers, objectivity)
- Strengths and areas for improvement
- Conclusion (in your conclusion, assess/comment on the overall effectiveness of the interview)

3. Weekly reflective journal assignment (Weight 10%) and final personal reflection paper (Weight 20%)

Individual Reflective Journal Assignment

What is a reflective journal?

A reflective journal is a means of recording ideas, personal thoughts and experiences, as well as reflections and insights into your own learning experience. Reflective journals help you to actively engage with the course material, to critically analyze your current knowledge base and skills, personal beliefs and values with new incoming information and experiences. A reflective journal is a tool to help review and consolidate learning, to evaluate performance, to plan future learning based on past learning experiences.

What are the expected outcomes from doing a reflective journal?

- ✓ Students can gain a clearer overview of their learning progress
- ✓ Students can gain an insight of their own strengths and weaknesses as a learner
- ✓ Students can realize learning strategies which suit their personal needs
- ✓ Students will become more capable in planning for overcoming learning difficulties
- ✓ Students will understand and appreciate the importance self-evaluation in the role of improving oneself

How does a reflective journal relate to our course objectives?

Reflective journaling supports an awareness and critical analysis of your own attitudes, beliefs, behavior and feelings and how they affect the professional helping context.

As you learn about the conditions and skills that can facilitate effective communication, reflective journaling will help you integrate the course information into your personal communication style and identify your strengths, weaknesses and possible strategies for enhanced learning.

Journaling will help you reflect on the ways race, culture, gender, and role expectation influence the communication process.

When will we do the journals?

You will write a 1-2 page (double spaced) journal entry outside of class to be handed in at each class from week 2 until week 10 (a total of 9 submissions). These individual journal entries will not be marked for their content, but rather marked for: legibility, length and checked for completion (be sure to keep a copy of each journal

entry).

What will I write about?

Some questions to get you started:

- 1) What was the most relevant observation or learning for you from last week's class or this week's readings?
- 2) What feelings did you have about your learning or during your practice session?
- 3) How does this new learning fit with your previous knowledge of counselling?

Please refer to the above 3 questions each week. In addition, here are some questions to “guide” your writing week-by-week:

SESSION 2:	September 21, 2015: <i>Self-awareness and Ethical Decision Making</i>
Reflective questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine that you are a client. What might your counsellor need to know about you (e.g., values, needs, preferences) to work effectively with you?
SESSION 3:	September 28, 2015: <i>The Social Worker- Client Relationship</i>
Reflective questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate your general comfort with self-disclosure and intimacy. What areas of your life are you reluctant or unwilling to talk about? To what extent would your friends and colleagues describe you as open or closed? Do you tend to be guarded about sharing information, or do you generally disclose a great deal to others? How does your comfort with disclosure vary depending on whom you are talking with (e.g., family, friends, authority figures, clients, colleagues, and strangers)? What are the implications of your answers for your work as a counsellor?
SESSION 4:	October 5, 2015: <i>Active Listening: The Basis for Understanding (1)</i>
Reflective questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List words, phrases, and situations that you think are your emotional triggers that might make it difficult for you to listen. How might you deal with these triggers?
SESSION 5:	October 19, 2015: <i>Active Listening: The Basis for Understanding (2)</i>
Reflective questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about times when you tend to be quiet. Consider some of the reasons such as (but not restricted to) self esteem, inner dialogue, culture, social learning, and the behaviour of others. How do you feel about silence? Are you comfortable with silence?
SESSION 6:	October 26, 2015: <i>The Pursuit of Empathic Understanding (1)</i>
Reflective questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn about expressing emotions when you were growing up? Explore how this might help or hinder your work in your field of practice. For example, if you grew up in a family or culture where emotions were seldom expressed, consider how this has impacted your current willingness to show your feelings or to encourage others to share their emotions.
SESSION 7:	November 2, 2015: <i>The Pursuit of Empathic Understanding (2)</i>
Reflective questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe in detail how you feel, think, and act when you experience specific emotions. For example, you might write, “When I feel scared, I want to escape. My breathing is shallow. I tend to look away. I become quiet. I think I might vomit.” (Hint: Use your imagination to visualize situations where you

	might experience the specific emotion.)
SESSION 8:	November 9, 2015: Lab
Reflective questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been your major learning so far? • What are the skills/ issues that you are still struggling to understand?
SESSION 9:	November 16, 2015: Interviewing Skills: The Search for Meaning (1)
Reflective questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about an experience where you had a strong reaction to being questioned. What were your thoughts and feelings during the encounter? How did you react? What are the implications of your answers for your work as a counsellor?
SESSION 10:	November 23, 2015: Interviewing Skills: The Search for Meaning (2)
Reflective questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about some of your personal and work relationships. Are you more likely to be the one asking questions or the one answering questions? In what ways does this impact the power dynamics of the relationship? What are the implications of your answers for your work as a counsellor?

Personal Reflection Paper

The 9 journal entries will form the basis for your Personal Reflection Paper. Your reflection paper should be about 5 to 6 pages (1500 to 2000 words maximum). On November 30, 2015, the personal reflective paper is due by noon. It should answer the question: "**What have I learned about myself as a counsellor.**" Here are some additional questions to guide your personal reflection paper...

Additional Questions for Reflection:

1. What core values, attitudes, or beliefs emerged as you worked through the self–reflection activities? Were there any surprises?
2. How might your central values influence you as a counsellor?
3. What major qualities or strengths do you have that will be an asset to you as a counsellor?
4. What weaknesses or unresolved issues might interfere with your work as a counsellor?
5. Do limitations in your life experience or particular prejudices hinder your ability to understand and relate to certain clients? How might you overcome your personal limitations?
6. Given your culture and worldview, what value conflicts would you most likely encounter as a counsellor? How will you resolve those conflicts?

Marking Criteria:

Weekly Journal Entries= 10%

The weekly journal entries will not be marked for content, but rather for appropriate length, presentation and legibility, number of entries. The entry must be handed in at the start of class.

Personal Reflective Paper = 20%

Criteria:

- Clarity and good observation in presentation of experiences or issues related to learning
- Demonstrates critical thinking by questioning assumptions and values underpinning previous knowledge
- Identifies strengths and weaknesses in counselling skills and knowledge and can suggest a way forward to address weaknesses
- Honesty in personal reflection and demonstration of good self awareness
- 'Multidimensionality' – learning is demonstrated in more than one aspect of communication (knowledge, skills and values)
- Covering material from chapters 1-6 and class discussions

4. Attendance and participation in class Weight = 10%

Participation marks will be given to reflect your attendance, promptness, active participation in facilitation exercises and discussions. Be aware that each absence will cost 1.5 points. If you are absent 3 times, you will get 0, and if you are absent more than 3 times, you may not be allowed to take the exam. Lateness will also impact your participation grade.

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.
A	85 - 89	87	Consistently demonstrates self-awareness particularly their impact on the client and the flow of the interview.
A-	80 - 84	82	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 empathic.
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. Good beginning use of existing skills and knowledge. Demonstrates a beginning awareness of self. Occasionally may monopolize the interview and/or use less skillful responses.
B-	68 - 71	69.5	
C+	64 - 67	65.5	Adequate and average work. Shows fair comprehension but has some weaknesses such as lack of attentiveness to client, misses client concerns and/or interviews have no structure and/or are disorganized.
C	60 - 63	62.5	Minimal critical awareness or personal involvement, Unable to follow client's lead
C-	55 - 59		Inconsistently uses skills
D	50 - 54	52	Minimally adequate work, barely at a 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.