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.

MSW Mission: The MSW program offers an accessible, advanced professional degree focused on social work practice in the fields of child and family welfare, health and social care, and international and social development, using a social justice lens. The purpose of this MSW program is to prepare our graduates to be competent social work professionals, equipped with state-of-the-art knowledge and skills, a critical analytic lens, and a social justice orientation.

### Year/Term
- 2017/2018 Term 1

### Course Title
- SOWK 531 (001) - Social Work Practice in Aging

### Course Schedule
- Thursdays, 2:00 – 5:00 pm

### Course Location
- Jack Bell Social Work Building, Room 028

### Instructor(s)
- Deborah O’Connor
  - Office Location: Room 332
  - Office Phone: 604-822-5299
  - e-mail address: Deborah.oconnor@ubc.ca
  - Office Hours: After class or by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to develop a critical model for Social Work Practice in the field of Aging which incorporates attention to intra-personal, interpersonal and structural issues associated with aging. Focus will be on discussing and critically analyzing selected topics related to practice with older adults and their families and those professionals who work with them. Students will be exposed to a range of topics intended to stimulate conversation, promote an unsettling of assumptions of what it means to age and ‘be old’, and to tease out how theory is used to inform Social Work practice. The goal is for students to begin to explicate an advanced-level practice model for working in the field of Aging that is grounded in ideas of social justice and human rights.

### MISSION & OBJECTIVES:

Consistent with the MSW mission, the objectives of this course are as follows:

1. Begin to articulate the links between theory, policy, research and Social Work practice in the field of Aging.
2. Develop ability to think critically about current policy and practice through reflexive practice and by applying ideas of social justice, human rights, and diversity to understanding issues related to aging.


4. Increase understanding and creativity about the role of Social Work in the field of aging.

5. Develop practice skills in the field of aging – I bring a particular expertise related to dementia and issues related to understanding and assessing (in)capacity and while the course will not be limited to exploring these topics, a substantial part of my teaching will be directed toward developing Social Work practice skills in relation to these two topics.

PRIMARY SOURCE OF READINGS:

Suggested Text:

For those interested in having a foundational text, I would recommend this book. I selected it because it is relatively recent and is one of the few texts that clearly takes a critical lens consistent with a social justice approach to social work. Given the diversity of student experiences in this class, my hope is that it will provide us with a coordinated and common foundation.

Highly Recommended Text:

I will be using several chapters from this text as required reading.

In addition, I have tried to select readings and resources that are mostly available on-line. Students are encouraged to read beyond these readings and share with colleagues readings and resources that they find useful as the course unfolds – an opportunity for sharing this will be offered at the start of each class and students will be encouraged to use UBC CONNECT.

Background General Text (in case you are looking for something more!)

In this course, I draw heavily on critical, post-structural/postmodern ideas to ground my approach to social work practice in the field of aging. My lens is consistent with the approach developed in this more generally-focused social work text. So although this text does not address aging practice per se, it helps to explicate the theoretical foundation I will be developing and provides what I think is one of the best overviews of an approach to
critical social work practice that is entirely relevant and applicable to direct practice.

COURSE POLICIES [attendance, participation, academic dishonesty]: Please review the UBC Calendar, including the “Academic regulations standards. They can be found at www.arts.ubc.ca.

Attendance and Participation:
This course depends upon the active participation of all students. You are expected to attend all classes, be on time, and be prepared to engage in classroom discussions and activities. This includes having read all required readings in advance of the class and helping to create a classroom climate of respect and openness. I understand that sometimes life intervenes and classes will be missed: I appreciate being notified in advance of anticipated absences and please note that if you miss three or more classes you may be deemed NOT to have met the course requirements for completion.

Technology is disruptive and can limit participation and learning of others. I request that all phones be turned off at the beginning of class and that if computers/tablets are to be used, they are ONLY used for note-taking or specified course-related activities. I will ask you to leave the class if you find you must attend to other matters on the computer.

Email Policy: I am readily accessed through email. But please bear in mind the following:
  a) I am a believer that as professional we need to integrate strategies for self-care into our daily/weekly regime. For me, this means that I often turn off the computer on the weekends so may not respond to inquiries until the following Monday.
  b) Questions requiring replies longer than a few sentences are best asked during office hours. I am happy to organize a time to meet with you and discuss questions, concerns and/or thoughts you may have.
  c) Your email is important to me and I want to make sure it doesn’t get lost. Please insure that the subject header contains the course title and you sign your name.
  d) I try to respond as promptly as possible to messages but sometimes emails get lost and/or I go crazy some days!) So if you have not received a response within two working days, do feel free to resend and remind!

Finally, please note: If you are not finding the class time helpful I strongly encourage you to talk to me – my goal is to insure that this is a positive learning experience for everyone and I need your help to do that!

COURSE SCHEDULE

Sept 7   Introduction – Setting the stage

Recommended

Exemplar: Aging Discourses


Sept 14

Thinking Critically: Developing a Context for Social Work Practice

Readings


FrameWorks Institute (2017) Framing Strategies to Advance Aging and Address Ageism as Policy Issues Frame Brief  

Exemplar: “Normal" Aging, sexuality, sexism and intimacy


Exemplar: Aging demographics

Ivanova, I, with S. Daub, M. Cohen and J. Jenkins (April 2017) Poverty and Inequality Among British Columbia’s Seniors. Vancouver, Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)  

Guest speaker: I. Ivanova, CCPA
Sept 21  Conceptualizing Practice: Exploring the link between theory and practice for gerontological social work

Required Readings


Exemplar – Abuse against older adults


OR


Sept 28  Getting down to Practice: Assessment

Exemplar: Mental health and the mental health assessment


Additional Recommended


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**Oct. 5**

**Assessment Continued: Broadening the lens on Person-centred practice**


Guest speaker: Jim Mann

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**Oct 12**

**Assessment continued: Risk, Decision-making and Capacity**

*Required*


**Exemplar:**

[http://www.vancouversun.com/health/Pete+McMartin+Court+rules+year+Abbotsford+Alzheimer+patient+must+splate+living+will/9464670/story.html](http://www.vancouversun.com/health/Pete+McMartin+Court+rules+year+Abbotsford+Alzheimer+patient+must+splate+living+will/9464670/story.html)

Judge’s ruling regarding Margot Bentley (PDF – to be provided)
Recommended


BC Adult Guardianship Act

WE will be working through the incapacity module in this class. It can be found at: [http://www.trustee.bc.ca/reports-and-publications/Pages/certificate-of-incapability-guidelines.aspx](http://www.trustee.bc.ca/reports-and-publications/Pages/certificate-of-incapability-guidelines.aspx)


Oct 19 Caring, caregiving and Community Caring**

Readings


Exemplar


Recommended


**Background reading**


**Guest speaker:** TBC

**Oct 26**  
Student presentations

**Nov 2**  
Student presentations

**Nov 9**  
Student presentations

**Nov 16**  
Student presentations

**Nov 23**  
**Pulling it together: Developing a practice framework**


DOI: 10.1177/1049731514563578 rsw.sagepub.com

**Recommended**


ASSIGNMENTS

Proposed Assignment(s)

From a list created by the class, select a topic that interests you related to Social Work practice in the field of Aging. I encourage you to use your personal/professional experiences to ground your work - for example, this could include presenting a case/situation which you have encountered (and/or found problematic or puzzling) and then draw upon selected theoretical perspectives to analyze. Pay particular attention to explicating how this theoretical lens will direct practice. **You will work both individually and as part of a group on this topic.** Your research on this topic will be presented in four ways:

a) **Find and critique one policy/position paper** that is relevant to your general topic. Some suggestions include: the recent BC Ombudsman Report; National Advisory on Aging (NACA) position papers, position papers by Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; WHO position on aging and health;

Develop a one page critical summary and analysis, including a discussion of how this is relevant and/or informs Social Work practice in this area. Be prepared to discuss in class and share critique with other colleagues

Due: October 5, 2017
Value: 10% of final grade

b) **As a group, prepare eight (8) annotated bibliographies relevant to the theme of the class you will be presenting in.** Include a brief overview of the article (provide sufficient detail that colleagues will be able to use this information) and discuss its relevance to social work practice (ie. How does it help you think about your practice?). Note: Move beyond the general abstract to discuss explicitly in relation to your paper and provide concrete details around findings or what is being said. **These will be distributed to the entire class and used as course readings for second part of the course.** Approximate length of each bibliography should be about 1½ - 2 pages single-spaced. Please coordinate as a group to develop a range of readings that compliments and develops the theme of the topic area.

Due: One week before your presentation
Value 15% of final grade (see attachment for grading criteria)

c) **Class presentation**

By the third week of class, themes will be developed for each of the class presentation dates and you will be assigned (self-selected or by me) to a relevant theme based on your topic of interest. **Individuals are then expected to work collaboratively to develop the content for that day's class – you may work as a group or as a group of individuals who have coordinated your work efforts in order to avoid duplication.**
It is expected that the content of your presentation will be similar to that of your paper. However, be careful that you do not present too much content!!!! An important part of this assignment it to develop your teaching/presentation skills and that includes getting your colleagues involved in their own learning. Do feel free to use the class presentation as an opportunity for exploring/developing your ideas on the topic, including seeking input from your colleagues on questions you might have.

Due: presentations will take place between October 26 and Nov 16
Value: 25% of final grade (see attachment for suggested grading criteria)

b) Major Paper: 16-20 pages – this can be a group or individual paper.
Due: December 14, 2017
Value: 50% of final grade (See attachment for suggested grading criteria)

Please note: if you have another idea for an assignment that you think would be more relevant to your learning needs AND consistent with the course objectives, please feel free to discuss it with me.

GRADING CRITERIA

1. Assignment 1 – Policy Review

   a) Content - provides a clear overview that captures the essence of what this policy is about

   b) Analysis - provides a critical overview that recognizes usefulness and limitations

   c) Implications for social work – addresses how this document informs practice/policy (or can be used by social workers)

   d) Communication (writing style – uses good grammar, clear and easy to follow)

2. Assignment 2 - Annotated Bibliographies

   a. Content (6)
      • required number of articles reviewed
      • conveys a salient and useable synopsis of article as related to your topic;
      • promotes depth and understanding of this issue;
      o clear statement as to why this article is being selected as an important source of knowledge in relation to this topic. (IE: why do you think it is important that your colleagues know about this particular citation?

   b. Usefulness of Annotation (6)
      • Quality of selection (criteria include: current (or ‘classic' as opposed to dated), relevant to social work, reflects a diversity of sources;
ability to promote critical thinking;

c. Communication (3)
   • clear, well-written, good sentence-structure, logical development...

3. Assignment 3 - Class Presentations

a. Content (30)
   • develop salient overview of the issue (be careful about providing too much detail/information!);
   • contextualize issue (ie. Identifies theoretical lens being used...);
   • identify relevance to Social Work practice/ and/or policy

b. Analysis (40)
   • critique general understanding of the issue in light of theory, personal and/or professional experience;
   • insightful application of theory to understanding;
   • offer suggestions for practice/policy directives

c. Communication/Presentation skills (30)
   • engage class participation;
   • clear, coherent presentation;
     o innovative, interesting presentation;
     o realistic amount of material presentation

Grading of class presentations will be based in part on feedback from classmates.

4. Assignment 3 - Major paper

a. Content (20 points max.)
   20 - clear, comprehensive description of topic; selection of appropriate references - up-to-date, clearly relevant to focus of paper; breadth of sources including representation for contrasted perspectives and reliance on primary sources;
   16 - major attendance to most of above
   12 - minor attendance to most of above

b. Originality and Analysis (30 points max.)
   30 - original idea or approach: effort to integrate previously unintegrated material; creative development of theme and management of difficult conceptual task; perceptive critique of relevant literature; integration of class readings and discussions
   22 - major attendance to most of the above
   16 - minor attendance to most of the above - ie. repetition of material from references with only minor modification

c. Relationship to Social Work (maximum 30 points)
30 - clear, creative and relevant application of theoretical understandings to Social Work practice
22 - moderate link between content of paper to Social Work practice/policy
16 - minor attention given to connection/relevance between content and Social Work
0 - no connection made between content and Social Work

d. Written Communication Skills (20)
   - Logical Development (e.g., well developed and logically sequenced; continuity between initial orientation, body and final summary, clear progression between paragraphs);
   - Style (e.g., excellent sentence construction and choice of words, spelling correct, good transitions between paragraphs, correct use of technical terms, correct use of abbreviations)
   - includes all format and style requirements (e.g., abstract) per APA guide

GRADING CRITERIA:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percent Range</th>
<th>Mid-Point</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Represents work of exceptional quality. Content, organization and style are all at a high level. Student demonstrates excellent research and reference to literature where appropriate. Also, student uses sound critical thinking, has innovative ideas on the subject and shows personal engagement with the topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>76-79</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>Represents work of good quality with no major weaknesses. Writing is clear and explicit and topic coverage and comprehension is more than adequate. Shows some degree of critical thinking and personal involvement in the work. Good use of existing knowledge on the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>72-75</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>68-71</td>
<td>69.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>64-67</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>Adequate and average work. Shows fair comprehension of the subject, but has some weaknesses in content, style and/or organization of the paper. Minimal critical awareness or personal involvement in the work. Adequate use of literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>60-63</td>
<td>62.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Minimally adequate work, barely at a passing level. Serious flaws in content, organization and/or style. Poor comprehension of the subject, and minimal involvement in the paper. Poor use of research and existing literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Failing work. Inadequate for successful completion of the course or submitted beyond final date of acceptance for paper.</td>
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