

**Mary Baldwin University
Susan Warfield Caples
School of Social Work
SOWK 153
Introduction to Social Work
Summer 2020**

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Bachelor's of Social Work Program Mission

The mission of the Mary Baldwin Social Work program is to prepare students for beginning level generalist social work practice with oppressed, at-risk, and vulnerable populations. The program provides a rigorous intellectual base and opportunity for effective skill development and an educational perspective that views human diversity as normal, desirable, and enriching for society. Students are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values appropriate to the social work profession. Students in the program are expected to develop sensitivity to human suffering and injustice. They will develop an understanding of the factors that contribute to discrimination, oppression and vulnerability; and a strong commitment to advocacy, empowerment, social change, and economic justice.

Course Description

This course will provide an overview of the development of social work as a profession with emphasis upon various settings in which social work is practiced. The class material will further examine the emergence of the profession of social work, career opportunities for social workers, competencies, challenges, varying roles and practices required of social workers so that you may determine if this is an appropriate career path for you. With a focus on practical experiences of existing social workers, students will gain an understanding of the dynamics between knowledge, methods and values of the profession.

Required Text

Cox, L. E., Tice, C. J., & Long, D. D. 2019. *Introduction to social work: An advocacy-based profession* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

ISBN: 9781506394534

Student Study Site: <https://edge.sagepub.com/cox2e>

Recommended Websites

www.socialworkers.org

www.socialworker.com

www.socialworktoday.com

www.cswe.org

www.naswdc.org/practice

www.apa.org

www.hhs.gov

Upon the completion of the course students will be able to:	Social Work Program Competency	Instructional Strategies	Assessment Methods
Demonstrate professional behaviors that include the ability to engage in personal reflection, self-correction, management of personal values, and ethical decision-making to assure professional development and ethical practice with clients	2.1.1; 2.1.2	Written assignments, reading, lecture, class exercises, videos	Class participation, Reading Reflections, DSS visit, Short Papers, Exams
Apply critical thinking skills to inform and communicate professional decision making.	2.1.3	Readings, written assignments, mid-term exam, final exam , lecture, group discussion	Class participation, Reading Reflections, DSS visit, Short Papers, Exams
Identify ways in which cultural structures contribute to diversity and oppression and articulate methods that value difference, empower clients, and advance social and economic justice.	2.1.4; 2.1.5	Readings, experiential assignments, written assessments, mid-term exam, final exam, lecture, group discussion, videos	Class participation, Reading Reflections, DSS visit, Short Papers, Experiential Reflection paper, Exams
Respond to contexts that shape practice by working with various locations and populations	2.1.9	Experiential exercises, Mid-term exam, final exam, videos	DSS visit, Short Papers, Experiential Reflection paper Exams

Expectations of Students

Students are expected to approach this course with openness and an eagerness to learn. Students are expected to communicate questions and/or concerns to their instructor in a timely manner and to be open to feedback. Students are expected to be responsible for their learning.

1. **Personal and Professional Behavior**

Students are expected to use class time to foster the use of professional behavior and practice skills used as a social worker. The course offers students the opportunity for self-reflection, experimentation with unfamiliar ways of thinking and acting, the challenge of dependability and timeliness in completing assignments, and appreciation of the mutual accountability between instructor and student. This includes your ability to uphold the requirements of the MBC Honor Code. *Please be aware that your professors will be documenting your success in these areas as you progress through the BSW program.*

2. **Ethical Integrity and Honor Code**

Mary Baldwin students pledge to uphold the Honor Code. They pledge to refrain from cheating on assignments, papers and tests, to refrain from plagiarism, and always to be honest in their dealings with faculty, staff and other students. To maintain the integrity of the system, students, faculty and staff who witness Honor Code infractions are expected to report them.

Should I become aware of an Honor Code offense in this classroom, I will encourage the student(s) to self-report. If the student(s) does not self-report within 24 hours, I will submit the report myself.

If the Honor Code offense is related to a course assignment, I reserve the right to assess a grade penalty prior to and/or separate from any penalty awarded by MBU Online. The student's acceptance of responsibility or history of infractions will be taken into consideration as well as other information relevant to the student's performance in the course.

Plagiarism, cheating, and all other forms of academic misconduct are not only considered a violation of the MBU honor code, but are also a serious breach of the ethical code of conduct for the social work profession. You, as social work students, are expected to abide by the ethical standards of the profession. The National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics is available on the NASW website (www.socialworkers.org).

In most instances, the first incidence of such failure to properly cite, quote and/or appropriately include sources in the reference list will require that the assignment be revised making corrections as necessary. Failure to redo the assignment by the due date will result in "0" points for the assignment. An additional incident will result in a referral for investigation of an Honor Code violation.

3. **Writing**

Good writing skills are crucial for social workers. Being able to organize thoughts in clear sentences, using proper English, is essential in professional communication. All written materials submitted for the class will be evaluated on content as well as sentence construction, grammar, spelling and usage. The use of "person-first language" (e.g., *people with disabilities* rather than *the disabled*) in all written and verbal aspects of the class is mandatory. Please adhere to the style guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition).

4. **Learning Styles**

You are responsible for your learning. I am cognizant of our varying learning styles and abilities and will do my best to accommodate this in class. However, if you have a documented learning disability and need additional accommodations in learning, please let me know at the beginning of the semester so that I can best meet your needs and contact **Accessibility Services/Dr. Jenny Joczik: vjoczik@marybaldwin.edu**. **Special accommodations, as suggested by MBU Accessibility Services, are not retroactive.**

Special Instructions for Online Courses

Class Feedback: I will begin reviewing all class assignments following the deadline for submission. Additionally, I will be monitoring class activity, checking for questions, etc., at a minimum of twice per week. However, at least initially for the first several weeks, I will more likely be checking in with the class daily (Monday through Friday). **Please note that I will not be checking the class or providing feedback on questions, assignments, etc., on the weekends and/or holidays for MBU.**

Please note that timely participation in the class and completion of the assignments will allow for the most optimal learning experience. Therefore, it is my expectation that assignments, reading and written, will be completed by their due dates. **If assignments are late, a 5% penalty will be deducted for each additional day and assignments submitted more than two weeks after their due date will not be accepted.** You are strongly encouraged to communicate with me in advance of a due date if you are having difficulty completing an assignment.

No extensions are permitted for quizzes, tests, exams and extra credit.

Class Participation

"Come" to class! I want to know that you are "attending" the class and are ready to learn as well as share your thoughts about social work. You can demonstrate your "attendance" through your participation in discussion board posts, questions, and exchanges with your fellow students. I invite you to bring your ideas, questions, and whole selves to the class each and every week!

Please note that failure to participate in the class through discussion posts or submitting assignments within the first three weeks of class will result in being dropped from the course.

Assignments:

- 1) **Class preparation and participation** 40 points
Each week class will involve readings, discussions about readings and opportunities to practice or demonstrate some of what you have learned. You will be graded on timeliness, participation, willingness to learn, and attitude. Students are responsible for completing the course work and assignments according to posted timeframes. **Please note that discussion forums will only be available through the Sunday (11:59 pm) of the week it's due. You will not be permitted to make-up these assignments.** Refer to professional behavior expectations in Blackboard as they relate to course work and demeanor. (Competency 2.1.1)
- 2) **Introduction Discussion Posts** 20 points
Post an introduction of yourself to the class. Ten points will be awarded for posting a complete introduction (review requirements) and the remaining ten points will be awarded for responding to the post of **each** one of your classmates.
- 3) **Professional Journey Assignment** 40
This paper should comply with APA format (excluding an abstract) to include a title page and reference list (if applicable), double-spaced, size 12 fonts, 1-inch (normal) margins, and use a running head and page numbers (including the title page). Citations must be used where appropriate within the body of the paper and all references cited at the end of each paper (if applicable). This paper should be two to three full pages in length. No references needed for this paper.

The purpose of this paper is to describe your journey to taking an Introduction to Social Work course. Please include the following:

- 1) Discuss your interest in taking this class and the social work profession. Do you feel 'called' to the profession or believe this course would be helpful to you in an alternate profession? If so, please explain.
 - 2) What experience(s) have you had with impoverished, disadvantaged or minority populations? Include volunteer experiences and/or individuals in your community or family who may be or have been impoverished, disadvantaged or who belong to a minority population. Describe these experiences including when and where they occurred. Did this experience(s) lead to your interest in social work?
 - 3) If you personally are or have been impoverished, disadvantaged or belong to a minority group, how do you think this experience will impact your interest in social work (i.e., you'll have a greater sense of empathy, there may be potential triggers).
 - 4) Are you interested in a particular field within social work? What are your long-term goals?
- (Competency 2.1.1)

You will be required to submit the appropriate rubric with the assignment with your assessment of the work (circling, highlighting, etc.). Failure to submit the rubric will result in a loss of 5 points from the final assignment score.

4) **Core Values Assignment** 40 points

This paper should comply with APA format (excluding an abstract) to include a title page and reference list (if applicable), double-spaced, size 12 fonts, 1-inch (normal) margins, and use a running head and page numbers (including the title page). Citations must be used where appropriate within the body of the paper and all references cited at the end of each paper (if applicable). This paper should be two to three full pages in length. No references needed for this paper.

The purpose of this paper is to gain an increased self-awareness as it relates to the social work profession's core values. You will be required to review the NASW Code of Ethics paying particular attention to the Ethical Principles. Please address the following:

- 1) How did you develop your value system?
- 2) What are the three most important values in your life?
- 3) What was your family's influence on your values?
- 4) Are there specific experiences or events in your life that helped shape your value system?
Please describe.
- 5) How do your values compare/contrast with the values in the NASW Code of Ethics? Critically evaluate your values and thoughtfully give examples of areas of compatibility with your values as well as areas of incompatibility.
(Competencies 2.1.1, 2.1.2)

You will be required to submit the appropriate rubric with the assignment with your assessment of the work (circling, highlighting, etc.). Failure to submit the rubric will result in a loss of 5 points from the final assignment score.

5) **Participant Observation in a Social Services Office** 80 points

This paper should comply with APA format (excluding an abstract) to include a title page and reference list (if applicable), double-spaced, size 12 fonts, 1-inch (normal) margins, and use a running head and page numbers (including the title page). Citations must be used where appropriate within the body of the paper and all references cited at the end of each paper (if applicable). This paper should be four to five full pages in length.

In preparing to be a social worker, it is important to understand the barriers, challenges and issues facing our future clients. This assignment asks that you take some time to visit your local welfare office and seek assistance. This opportunity will allow you to begin to build on your professional training by both observing your local office and the people who utilize and work in this office.

Please remember three important things:

- a. The public assistance office is a public space financed by tax dollars. Anyone has a right to go there.
- b. The people you see at the public assistance office may be in a vulnerable position. Be sure to conduct yourself in a respectful and sensitive manner.
- c. This experience is a part of your professional training. Remember that you are doing this as part of a program to prepare yourself for competent social work practice.

Then, go to your local public assistance office, USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ONLY, ask for the necessary paperwork, sit in the reception/waiting area and observe for one half hour. **NOTE: If you live in a rural area where there is no public transportation, imagine how difficult a task it might be getting to the public assistance office and reflect on those thoughts in your paper. In this case, you are permitted to use your own or whatever transportation resource you have available.**

Your paper should include the following:

- d. How do you feel about asking for public assistance? Explain.
- e. How did you go about finding the office? Was it easy to locate? Was it accessible? Was public transportation, if applicable, difficult or easy to use?
- f. What did you observe when you were there? What were your thoughts and feelings?
- g. What were your expectations before you went? Where did these expectations come from? Did the experience 'match' the expectations?
- h. How are social myths regarding poor people and people on public assistance reflected in what you observed and your reactions to what you saw?
- i. What have you learned about the public assistance system through this exercise?
- j. What have you learned about yourself through this experience? How does this experience challenge your personal values? (Competency 2.1.1-2.1.5, 2.1.9)

You will be required to submit the appropriate rubric with the assignment with your assessment of the work (circling, highlighting, etc.). Failure to submit the rubric will result in a loss of 5 points from the final assignment score.

Alternate Assignment: Social Work Practitioner Interview Paper 80 points

This paper should comply with APA format (excluding an abstract) to include a title page and reference list, double-spaced, size 12 fonts, 1-inch (normal) margins, and use a running head and page numbers (including the title page). Citations must be used where appropriate within the body of the paper and all references cited at the end of each paper to include personal communication, agency brochures/literature, etc., referenced in the paper. This paper should be four to five full pages in length.

You will be responsible for making an appointment with a BSW, MSW or LCSW practitioner and conduct a 30-45 minute face to face interview. **You will be required to email the interviewee's name, agency, and credentials to the instructor for approval prior to conducting the interview.** The data collected in this interview will be used to write a paper focusing on the perceptions of this social worker regarding the profession and her/his practice. Relate how this person's perceptions differ or reinforce what has been discussed and read for this class. Also, indicate what new issues were introduced that enhanced your understanding of the social work profession.

The following will help guide the interview and should be covered in the paper:

- 1) The social worker's education (degrees they hold, college(s)/university they attended).
 - 2) Name of agency and job title.
 - 3) What does a typical "social work day" look like?
 - 4) What population does the social worker work with?
 - 5) Identify whether the social worker is engaged in prevention, service delivery (helping people cope with a problem that already exists), social change (examining the root of the problem and seeking to eliminate the problem altogether), or a combination.
 - 6) What skills are needed to do this job?
 - 7) How is the NASW Code of Ethics used on a daily basis?
 - 8) What are some of the continuing education opportunities?
 - 9) How the social worker deals with various clients in their respective environments?
 - 10) How the social worker and/or agency is committed to social and economic justice?
 - 11) What new perspectives have you gained?
 - 12) What are your thoughts about what you learned?
 - 13) How did this experience influence your decision for further pursuance of a BSW degree?
- (Competencies 2.1.1-2.1.5, 2.1.9)

You will be required to submit the appropriate rubric with the assignment with your assessment of

the work (circling, highlighting, etc.). Failure to submit the rubric will result in a loss of 5 points from the final assignment score.

5) **Poverty Simulation and Practice Application Assignment** 80 points

Complete the poverty simulation “game” at www.playspent.org, noting your reflections (thoughts and feelings) as you progress through the game. Upon completion of the game, enter into a discussion with your classmates, through the discussion board, about the experience. What did you learn that was a surprise? What preconceived ideas were challenged as a result of the experience?

After completing the exercise and discussing (discussion board) with your classmates, write a paper consisting of four to five full pages. This paper should comply with APA format (excluding an abstract) to include a title page and reference list, double-spaced, size 12 fonts, 1-inch (normal) margins, and use a running head and page numbers (including the title page). Citations must be used where appropriate within the body of the paper and all references cited at the end of each paper to include personal communication, agency brochures/literature, etc., referenced in the paper. This paper should be four to five full pages in length. You are required to use a minimum of 3 scholarly references.

After completing the exercise and discussing (discussion board) with your classmates, write a 3 – 5 page paper in which you

- 1) reflect upon your experiences as a result of the exercise
- 2) research rural versus urban social work, paying particular attention to the appropriate option for your residence
- 3) describe how the simulated exercise would be impacted by living in an urban versus rural area
- 4) if you were working with someone whose situation was similar to that of yours in the simulation, how would you utilize strengths-based perspective and empowerment to assist the client?
- 5) what remnants of social Darwinism, blaming the victim, and just world beliefs persist in welfare policies and in the attitudes of the general public about social welfare clients? and
- 6) consider one idea that would help promote more efficient, quality services given your experience of trying to access services and/or resources in this simulation.

You will be required to submit the appropriate rubric with the assignment with your assessment of the work (circling, highlighting, etc.). Failure to submit the rubric will result in a loss of 5 points from the final assignment score.

6) **Mid-Term and Final Exams** 100 points each

A mid-term exam covering all material studied the first half of the semester will be administered as indicated on the course schedule. A final comprehensive exam will be administered at the end of the semester according to the course schedule. **Please note: there are no extensions for exams; and failure to take the final exam within the designated timeframe will result in a failing grade for the course.**

GRADING

Class preparation and participation	40 points
Introductions to Class	20 points
Professional Journey Assignment	40 points
Core Values Assignment	40 points
Participant observation of welfare office	80 points
Poverty Simulation Assignment	80 points
Mid-Term exam	100 points
Final exam	100 points

A total of 500 points is possible

Grades are earned in the following way:

A	=	465-500
A-	=	450-460
B+	=	435-445
B	=	415-430
B-	=	400-410
C+	=	385-395
C	=	365-380
C-	=	350-360
D+	=	335-345
D	=	330-315
D-	=	310 - 300
F	=	under 300 points

NOTE: This course is a prerequisite for many of the social work major courses. You must complete this course with a minimum of C- before taking these other courses. Failure to do so will require that the course be retaken. Failure to submit the Final Exam will result in a failing grade for the course, per academic policy.