



**COURSE TITLE/SECTION:** SOCW7317 (22427)  
Professional Self-Care & Social Work

**TIME:** 1:00pm-4:00pm Thursday **SPRING, 2012**

**FACULTY:** Sandra A. Lopez, LCSW, ACSW **OFFICE HOURS:** 12-2pm Tuesday  
4:30p-6p Thursday  
Other times by appt

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## I. Course

### A. Catalog Description

**Cr. 3 (3-0)** Knowledge and skills for integrating the practice of professional self-care in the social work profession

### B. Purpose

This course examines the natural consequences of helping (stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress disorder, and vicarious trauma) and their impact on social workers, organizational settings, and the profession. Students will develop advocacy and clinical practice knowledge and skills for integrating professional self-care across diverse social work practice settings.

## II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Critically examine the natural consequences of helping in the social work profession, especially stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress disorder, and vicarious trauma.
2. Recognize key individual worker characteristics, practice arena issues, and organizational factors which often contribute to the risk of developing these conditions.
3. Identify the specific signs and symptoms of stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress disorder, and vicarious trauma and their impact on workers and workplace settings.

4. Explore current research and the incidence of these conditions across a variety of social work settings such as child welfare, family violence, sexual abuse, health care, HIV, hospice, traumatic grief, etc.
5. Develop an understanding of professional self-care as a means of preventing, managing, and addressing these conditions, and promoting social worker resiliency, improving organization morale, and improving retention of workers.
6. Explore the role of social workers in advocating and promoting the practice of professional self-care at individual, organizational, and professional levels.
7. Identify future implications and trends for addressing professional self-care and evaluating its effectiveness in social work education, social work practice, and the social work profession.

### **III. Course Content**

This course will include the following topical areas:

1. Natural consequences of helping (stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, vicarious trauma);
2. Professional self-care program and strategies for individuals, organizations/agencies, and the social work profession;
3. Research regarding the prevalence of these conditions in the field of helping in general and in particular, social work.

### **IV. Course Structure**

This class will utilize several methods of instruction including lectures, discussions, in class practice exercises, discussion groups, guest lectures, assigned and recommended readings, and homework assignments integrated with the lectures. Blackboard Vista will be utilized as a means of posting assignments, supplementary required readings, essential updates, and for delivery and submission of assignments.

### **V. Required Textbook/Readings**

#### **Required Text:**

Meisinger, S. E. (2009). *Stories of pain, trauma, and survival*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

#### **Recommended Text:**

Rothschild, B. (2006). *Help for the helper: Self-care strategies for managing burnout and stress*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Additional required readings will be assigned throughout the course and will be posted on Blackboard Vista.

## VI. Course Requirements

### A. Reading Assignments & Blackboard Vista

The course outline contains topics to be covered and reading assignments to be completed on a weekly basis. Students are required to check in weekly to Blackboard Vista to access power point lectures, readings, resources, and other materials for classes. Class time will be designed to clarify, and supplement the understanding of assigned readings. It is **critical** that students remain current with all reading assignments to fully participate in class and in any Blackboard Vista discussions, and to experience academic and personal success in this course.

### B. Class Attendance & Participation (15%)

Class attendance and participation are critical factors for success in this course and will be evaluated based on regular and on-time full class attendance, participation in interactive discussions, and playing an active role in the development and hosting of the UHGCSW Annual Professional Self-Care day in April.

### C. Self-Care Plan (15%)

Students will develop a comprehensive self-care plan at the beginning of the course. Students will periodically evaluate their dedication and commitment to their plan. Specific guidelines and grading rubrics will be posted to Blackboard Vista.

### D. Social Worker Interview & Summary (20%)

Students will complete an interview of a seasoned social worker with a focus on gathering information about four major areas—first, their experience with stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, or secondary trauma, second, their practice of self-care strategies, third, their exploration of the barriers which impact self-care, and fourth, any recommendations for maintaining social worker resilience. Specific guidelines and grading rubrics will be posted to Blackboard Vista.

### E. Self-Care Strategy Demonstration (20%)

Students will have an opportunity to identify, research, explore, and present a brief demonstration of a self-care strategy in class. Specific guidelines and grading rubrics will be posted to Blackboard Vista.

### F. Professional Self-Care Project & Professional Self-Care Day (30%)

**This is a five part assignment.** Students, with the guidance of the course professor, will select a topic area for focus of independent study throughout the course. The selected topic must relate to the course

emphasis on professional self-care and social work. Specific guidelines for the components of the project, grading rubrics, and timetable for submission of materials will be posted to Blackboard Vista.

## VII. Evaluation and Grading

### A. Grades for assignments will be based on the following:

Class Attendance and Participation	15%
Self-Care Plan	15%
Social Worker Interview & Summary	20%
Self-Care Strategy Demonstration	20%
Professional Self-Care Project	30%

### B. Final course letter grades are based on the following scale:

A = 96 - 100	C+ = 76 – 79.9
A- = 92 – 95.9	C = 72 – 75.9
B+ = 88 – 91.9	C- = 68 – 71.9
B = 84 – 87.9	D+ = 64 – 67.9
B- = 80 – 83.9	F = Below 64 (Failing)

### C. Attendance and Class Participation

Attendance and class participation are an essential expectation of students in this course. Due to the interactive nature of this course, attendance and participation are considered to be absolutely critical to the successful learning in this course. Both will be observed and recorded. Should a student's grade be marginal, attendance and class participation records may influence the final outcome.

### D. Incomplete Grades

The grade of I (incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are passing a course but, for reasons beyond their control, have not completed a relatively small part of all of the course requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not being able to meet the course requirements. (Source: University of Houston Graduate and Professional Studies Policy).

### E. Late Assignments

Professor will allow for submission of late assignments **only** if the student has made prior arrangements to do so and for appropriate and compelling reasons. Late assignments will automatically result in the lowering of the otherwise earned grade.

### F. Pagers and Cell Phones

Please show respect and consideration of others by taking responsibility for keeping pager and cell phone interruptions to a minimum.

**Laptop use will be allowed solely for note taking purposes and those students needing to do so must make formal written request to the Professor at the beginning of the course.**

#### **VIII. Policy on Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism**

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number (s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see Instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

#### **IX. Consultation**

Students are welcomed and encouraged to consult with the Professor, especially if it pertains to student's performance in the course.

Professor's office is located in room 204 of the Social Work Building.

Professor's email address is [slopez@uh.edu](mailto:slopez@uh.edu) and office phone is 713-743-8104.

**Addendum:** Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. For more information and/or assistance, please contact the Center for Students with DisAbilities at

713-743-5400. Instructors may not provide accommodations without supporting Documentation from the UH Center for Students with DisAbilities.

## **SOCW7397: PROFESSIONAL SELF-CARE & SOCIAL WORK COURSE OUTLINE**

- January 19            **Introduction and Overview of Course**
- Exploration of Personal Self-Care Commitment
- Initial Work on Self-Care Plan
- Exploration of Interview & Self-Care Strategy Interests
- January 26            **The Nature of Helping, Social Work, & Exploration of Settings**
- NASW Professional Self-Care Policy Statement
- Rothschild – Introduction & Ch. 1 – Psychotherapists at Risk
- Planning for Professional Self-Care Project & Day
- February 2            **The Neurophysiology of Empathy & Arousal**
- Rothschild – Ch. 2 – Managing the Ties that Bind &  
3 – Keeping Calm
- Self-Care Plan Due/Forming Partnerships & Groups**
- February 9            **Understanding Stress & Burnout**
- Dziegielewski, S. F., Turnage, B., & Roest-Marti, S. (2004).  
Addressing stress with social work students: A controlled  
evaluation. **Journal of Social Work Education**, Volume 40.1,  
Winter, pp. 105-119.
- Kim & Stoner. (2008). Burnout and turnover intention among  
social workers: Effects of role, stress, job autonomy and  
Social support. **Administration in Social Work**, Volume 32 (3),  
pp. 5-25.
- Holmes & Rahe Stress Scale/Student Stress Scale**
- February 16            **Compassion Fatigue**

Adams, et al (2006). Compassion fatigue & psychological distress among social workers: A validation study. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. 76 (1), 103-108.

Compassion Fatigue/Compassion Satisfaction Test

### **Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #1**

**\*Submit Project Proposal (via blackboard vista)**

February 23

### **Secondary Traumatization**

Bride, B. E. (2007). Prevalence of secondary traumatic stress among social workers. ***Social Work***. Volume 52, Number 1, pp. 63-70.

Professional Quality of Life Scale

### **Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #2**

March 1

### **Vicarious Traumatization**

Dane, B. (2002). Duty to inform: Preparing social work students to understand vicarious trauma. ***Journal of Teaching in Social Work***. 22 (3/4), 3-19.

### **World Assumptions Scale**

### **Review & Update of Self-Care Plans**

### **Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #3**

March 8

### **Celebrating Social Work Month: Professional Self-Care & Social Work Profession**

Social Worker Interview Summary Due/  
Class Reflections on Interviews

### **Meisinger (entire book)**

### **Provide Project Update (in class)**

March 15

### **Spring Break**

March 22

### **Promoting Individual Social Worker Self-Care Programs (Prevention, Intervention, & Postvention)**

Saakvitne, K. W., Pearlman, L. A., & Staff of the Traumatic Stress Institute (1996). **Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization.** New York: W. W. Norton.

Gentry et al. Accelerated Recovery Program

#### **Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #4**

March 29

#### **Promoting Organizational Self-Care Programs**

Bell, H. et al (2003). Organizational prevention of vicarious trauma. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*. Volume 84, Number 4, pp. 463-470.

Guest Lecture – Organizational Self-Care

#### **Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #5**

April 5

#### **Future Trends & Social Work Implications: Advocacy for Self-Care & Exploring the Ethical Issues**

Munroe, J. F. (1999). "Ethical issues associated with secondary trauma in therapists" in Stamm, B. H. *Secondary Traumatic Stress: Self-Care Issues for Clinicians, Researchers, and Educators*.

Kanno (2010). Supporting indirectly traumatized populations: The need to assess secondary traumatic stress for helping professionals in DSM-V. *Health & Social Work*, Volume 35, No. 3, 225-227.

NASW Professional Impairment Policy Statement

Green Cross Foundation Standards

#### **Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #6**

April 12

#### **Guest Lectures – Self-Care Strategies**

#### **Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #7**

**Provide Project Update (in class)**



April 19

**Words of Wisdom from Seasoned Social Workers (Panel)**

**Self-Care Strategy Demonstrations #8**

April 26

**Professional Self-Care Project Presentations & Posters**

Course Wrap-up & Course Evaluations

**UHGCSW Professional Self-Care Day (4:00pm-6:00pm)**