Trent BSW Course Descriptions

SWRK 1000H: Introduction to Social Work

An introduction to the profession of social work with an emphasis on its functions, values, ethics, and theoretical base. Methods of intervention, fields of practice, and ideological perspectives are explored, along with critical thinking about intersecting oppressions, diversity, and the practice of social work with various populations within Canadian and global contexts.

SWRK 1001H: Introduction to Social Welfare

Provides an overview of Canada’s social welfare system. Adopting a critical theoretical approach, the historical development of social policies and programs will be examined. Social welfare frameworks and systems in Canada will be considered in light of issues such as culture, ethnicity, class, dignity, diversity, hegemony, and oppression.


Introduces foundational social work theory, knowledge, ethics, and skills and expands anti-oppressive conceptual understandings about social work practice, its mission and values, the profession itself, and planned change stages and processes with individuals, families, and small groups. Introduces the emotional, intellectual, and professional/personal characteristics required for the practice of social work.

Prerequisite: 70% or higher in SWRK 1000H and 1001H.

SWRK 2002H: Foundations of Social Work Practice II

Features community organizing, advocacy practice, and social change engagement and further develops students’ anti-oppressive conceptual understandings of the profession and practice of social work. Applies foundational knowledge, theories, ethics, and skills to groups, communities, and organizations and examines the mission, values, and practices of social work as applied to critical practice.

Prerequisite: 70% or higher in SWRK 2001H.

SWRK 3000Y: Social Work Field Education Placement

This third year required course is comprised of three parts: orientation, field placement, and regular in-class integration seminars. Students will engage in a field placement (3 days per week, Mondays to Wednesdays, totaling 312 hours) within an approved agency setting that meets the accreditation standards of the Canadian Association for Social Work Education. The placement will be supervised by a Trent approved field supervisor and will provide opportunities for students to integrate social work theory and practice and apply and develop social work
knowledge and skills. Students should note that specific experiences vary between agencies depending on the focus of the agency, its programs, and its target populations. However, all students will gain and develop introductory level field practice experience. A significant portion of the learning in the course comes from the development of a Personalized Learning Goals’ Contract and the reflection of CASWE-ACFTS’s standardized learning outcomes to placement specific contexts. This course includes mandatory orientation and integration seminars. The in-class seminar component of the course is designed to support and facilitate student development occurring in field placements as well as the integration of theory and practice. Students will develop their knowledge and skills regarding key social work concepts, theories, and intervention approaches including process recording, critical thinking, and ethical practice. Students will not receive a numerical grade in this course. Placements are given as either a pass or fail and a pass is considered a grade of 65 % or above.

Prerequisite: A grade of 65% or above in each of SWRK 3001H, 3002H, 3003H, 3004H, and 3005H plus a Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening. A student with a criminal record that is unacceptable to a placement agency may be unable to complete the program.

**SWRK 3001H: Social Work Communication Skills**

This required course introduces a foundational understanding of generalist social work practice by presenting social work interviewing and assessment practice skills. Professional communication and documentation as a core social work skill is considered across the continuum of practice. Students will develop interview and assessment skills so that they can learn to conceptualize, assess, and apply supportive culturally appropriate intervention strategies with diverse service users. Students are encouraged to reflect upon, critically think, and practice social work skills, knowledge, and abilities, engage in professional, clinical, and academic writing, direct practice, clinical, forensic and motivational interviewing, as well as facilitate professional, socio-educational, and academic presentations. The course will be delivered using experiential learning approaches and utilize lab-based activities and assignments. The politics and ethics of communication in social work will also be considered.

Prerequisite: Admission to the BSW professional years.

**SWRK 3002H: Social Work Theory and Practice 1**

This required course presents a spectrum of theoretical approaches as applied to generalist social work practice with societies, communities, families, and individuals. This course will examine the roots of personal and social problems contextualized from the perspectives of working with diverse service user populations. This course offers readings, discussions, lectures, and assignments geared to assisting students to integrate mezzo and macro levels of social work theory and practice. An emphasis on practicing within multi-disciplinary diverse community-based frameworks, rooted in structural anti-oppressive analysis, will be utilized. The profession's
contemporary and historic obligations to promote social change and development are highlighted. Praxis or social action as an essential component to social work practice will be explored.

Prerequisite: Admission to the BSW professional years.

**SWRK 3003H: Social Work Research**

This required course provides an overview of social work research methods and their application in anti-oppressive social change oriented practice. Students will develop a critical appreciation of research scholarship and contemporary applications of research in policy development, case assessment, program development and evaluation, as well as a generalist understanding of evidence based practice and knowledge production in social work. Social change oriented approaches to research and community based research methods and practitioner self-study will be considered as tools for knowledge production and mobilization.

Prerequisite: Admission to the BSW professional years.

**SWRK 3004H: Social Work and Indigenous Perspectives**

This required course examines the history of colonialism, multigenerational trauma, anti-racist social work practice, strengths of Indigenous cultures, and relevant current and traditional healing modalities. It also examines structural inequities, including institutional, social, historic, and economic systems, to understand the current challenges in Indigenous health and well-being. It helps students begin to bridge traditional Indigenous cultural teachings with evidenced-based research in order to provide culturally safe and appropriate care.

Prerequisite: Admission to the BSW professional years.

**SWRK 3005H: Diversity, Identity, Social Location, and Oppression**

This required course invites students to consider the dynamics of difference as they inform social work theory, research, and practice. Various dimensions of diversity are explored including age, class, culture, gender, race, spirituality, disability, and sexual orientation. The understanding of the meaning, dynamics, intersectionality, and impact of diversity, privilege, racial identity, as well as racism, discrimination, exclusion, and oppression are examined. A variety of anti-oppressive theoretical frameworks and intervention strategies are emphasized. Cultural safety/humility is explored and set as a standard for social work practice. Furthermore, the course encourages critical thinking, reflection, and awareness of one’s own identity, privilege, and motivations as an important starting point to understanding concepts of diversity and oppression.

Prerequisite: Admission to the BSW professional years.
SWRK 3006H: Social Work and Social Policy

This required course provides students with an overview of social policy in Canada and its role in anti-oppressive changed-oriented social work practice. Students will review historical policy processes and orientations to social welfare and consider their relevance in the contemporary social welfare context. The role of local, regional, national, and international policy development will be considered as will the role of research and advocacy practice in the Canadian policy development process.

Prerequisite: A grade of 65 % or above in each of SWRK 3001H, 3002H, 3003H, 3004H, and 3005H.

SWRK 3007H: Critical Social Work in Social Services

This required course invites students to explore the contemporary challenges of engaging in social change-oriented work as considered against the context of institutional practice in the social work field. Critical social work will be discussed as a tool for working within diverse social service organizations. Perspectives of organizational development, organizational theory, managerialism, and bureaucratic theories will be critically examined as perspectives shaping contemporary social work practice in organizations. The role of critical social work in maintaining and expanding social work traditions like critical reflexive practice, practice autonomy, and service user-centered practice will also be considered.

Prerequisite: A grade of 65 % or above in each of SWRK 3001H, 3002H, 3003H, 3004H, and 3005H.

SWRK 3101H: Social Work and Aging

This elective course prepares students for social work practice with an aging population. Students will explore and critically assess theories on aging, the situation of the elderly in Canada, the impact of oppression on the aging process, and current (as well as developing) gerontology social work practices. The course begins with an investigation of a range of perspectives on aging including life span theory, feminist approaches, critical race perspectives, and Indigenous knowledge(s). The course also examines how the challenges associated with aging may be further impacted by oppression related to ability, poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, marital status, trauma, neglect, abuse, isolation, grief, and colonization. Students explore social work gerontology practices and interventions in areas such as health care, nursing homes, at-home care, leisure activities, political advocacy, community-building, caregiving support, and case management. In addition, emerging web-based practices, entrepreneurial initiatives, informal systems of care, and at-home support are examined.

Prerequisite: Admission to the BSW professional years or permission of the instructor.
SWRK 3102H: Anti-oppressive Child Welfare

This elective course prepares students for anti-oppressive child welfare social work. The course begins with a review of the history of child welfare in Canada, paying special attention to issues of colonization, racialization, sexism, poverty, and discrimination. Students examine the current structure of the child welfare system, including legislation, definitions of abuse/neglect, roles of workers, and demographics of service users. The inter-connections between child abuse and neglect, oppression, stress, mental health, substance use, the feminization of poverty, violence against women, discrimination, and surveillance are considered. Anti-oppressive theories and macro, mezzo, and micro levels of assessment and intervention strategies are examined. Emphasis is placed on the in-progress implementation of the Signs of Safety framework and the strengthening of the kin/kith foster care system. The tensions workers may experience when attempting to balance assessment of risk, prevention of abuse, safety strategies, and anti-oppressive practice will be examined. **NOTE: In order to have a 4th year placement (4000Y) in child welfare, a student must also register in 3102H Anti-oppressive Child Welfare in the fall as it is a co-requisite course.**

Prerequisite: Admission to the BSW professional years only.

SWRK 3103H: Social Work and Families

This elective course teaches interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives and practice approaches that are relevant for working with the contemporary family in all its forms. Various theoretical frameworks including Bowen, systems, feminist, structural, narrative, brief therapy, and Indigenous approaches provide the theoretical base from which students will begin to develop their family practice skills through the use of lectures, readings, class discussions/exercises, and interactive role play experiences.

Prerequisite: Admission to the BSW professional years only.

SWRK 3104H: Substance Use, Mental Health, and Recovery

This elective course will explore the meaning, role, and history of substance use, its connection with mental health, and the construction of drug/alcohol use as a social problem. Through the integration of theoretical knowledge and evidence-based practices and interventions, students will develop an understanding of the root causes of addiction. The links between trauma, oppression, and substance misuse and the impact they have on individuals, families, and communities will be explored. In addition, how to work with and support individuals, who are experiencing difficulties as a result of their substance use, will be covered. Students will learn how to screen and assess for both substance misuse and mental health issues affecting well-being, as well as how to formulate integrated, customized plans for intervention, focusing specifically on engagement, assessment, and crisis intervention.
Prerequisite: Admission to the BSW professional years or permission of the instructor.

**SWRK 3105H: Queering Social Work**

Contextualized within specific Canadian socio-economic-historical-political practice, research, and education realities and examples, this elective course provides an overview of queer history, presence/absence (particularly the historical exclusion of lesbians, trans, Indigenous, polysexual, and intersex individuals), theories, issues, stories, liberation, resistance, and victories. With an emphasis on self-reflection, this course will emphasize sexual and gender diversity, privilege, identity, and expression. This course will also review social relations and dynamics and their consequences for people who express difference, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, polysexual, and intersex (LGBTQI) issues and populations as related to social work, the cumulative impact of multiple intersecting oppressions on these groups, and heterosexist, cisgender, and homophobic impacts on theory, andragogy, policy, research, practice, and the everyday lives of queer identified people. The course also highlights support of queer persons, queer-straight alliances, as well as the protection and growth of queer communities.

Pre-requisite: Admission to the BSW professional years or permission of the instructor.

**SWRK 4000Y: Social Work Field Education Placement**

Building on SWRK 3000Y, this required social work field education course is comprised of three parts: orientation, field placement, and regular in class integration seminars. This course focuses on students honing and further developing their practice skills and shaping their styles of practice within the context of their placement agency and in relationship to social work values, ethics, skills, and knowledge. A significant portion of the learning in the course comes from the development of a Personalized Learning Goals’ Contract and the reflection of CASWE-ACFTS’s standardized learning outcomes to placement specific contexts. Student learning in the field placement will be evaluated through various means (i.e. journal reflections, critical incident reflections, and the completion of formal assessments). This course is also comprised of three parts: mandatory orientation, field placement and integration seminars. Students will not receive a numerical grade in this course. Placements are given as either a pass or fail and a pass is considered a grade of 65 % or above. **NOTE: In order to have a 4th year placement (4000Y) in child welfare, a student must also register in 3102H Anti-oppressive Child Welfare in the fall as it is a co-requisite course.**

Prerequisite: A grade of 65 % or above in each of SWRK 3006H, and 3007H, a pass in SWRK 3000Y plus a Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening. A student with a criminal record that is unacceptable to a placement agency may be unable to complete the program.
SWRK 4001H: Feminist Informed Trauma Practice

This required course explores feminist theories, assessment, counselling, mindfulness, and intervention. It presents an integrated trauma model for social workers to utilize when working with trauma survivors. In particular, this course will analyze intersectionality, the feminization of poverty, violence against women (VAW), racialized violence, children who witness violence, dating violence, the construction of masculine violence as a cultural norm, and violence within same-sex couples. Underlying causes of violence, along with cultural and systemic factors that perpetuate the problem, insidious and generational trauma, multi-disciplinary community-based response networks, practice models, intervention techniques, current integrated trauma models’ research, and related provincial and federal policy standards will be reviewed.

Prerequisite: A grade of 65 % or above in each of SWRK 3006H, and 3007H and a pass in SWRK 3000Y.

SWRK 4002H: Social Work Theory and Practice 2

Continuing from SWRK 3002H to move from macro and mezzo perspectives to micro level theoretical assessment and intervention models, and focused on the roots of social/personal problems, this required course examines social work theoretical models for working with service users including the use of self as therapeutic tool, planned change processes, understandings of diversity, identity, social location, intersectionality, and oppression, current research, and professional roles/functions.

Prerequisite: A grade of 65 % or above in each of SWRK 3006H, and 3007H and a pass in SWRK 3000Y.

SWRK 4003H: Community Social Work

This required course focuses on the theory and practice of community organization and development, with a particular focus on social change. Historical perspectives and contemporary approaches to community social work will be considered. The nature of a community, its structures and processes, community issues, and strategies of intervention are examined. Students will learn about the roles and responsibilities of the generalist social worker in working with diverse communities, building on skills already acquired for the other practice modalities of direct practice, research, and policy. Comparisons of government sponsored programs, grassroots’ initiatives, corporate social responsibility models, and global social responsibility measurement will be considered. The course will emphasize skills across a variety of practice techniques including community formation, organizing, and advocacy, locality development, identity based organizing, social planning, asset mapping, building community capacity, and collective problem solving. Finally, the course will emphasize the theme of “thinking globally, acting locally”.
Prerequisite: A grade of 65% or above in each of SWRK 3006H, and 3007H and a pass in SWRK 3000Y.

**SWRK 4004H: Social Work Leadership**

In this required course, students explore theories and styles of effective leadership in social work organizations. Emphasis is placed on developing leaders who are oriented toward evidence informed leadership practices in social work organizations and critical social justice outcomes. There is an emphasis on leadership in the context of organizational, community, and individual leadership. Through lectures, class work, case studies, assignments, role-plays, and hands-on activities, students will learn models for effective leadership of individuals, teams, and organizations. Key topics include: self-knowledge; critical thinking; effective communication; teamwork; leadership styles; and ethical leadership. Practical skills will be developed in areas such as fundraising, alliance building, strategic planning, social work entrepreneurship, needs assessments, program evaluations, data collection, documentation, and grant applications with a view to understanding the role of effective leadership in the execution of these complex business functions occurring in various settings.

Prerequisite: A grade of 65% or above in each of SWRK 4001H, 4002H, and 4003H.

**SWRK 4005H: Risk and Resilience: Throughout The Lifespan**

Focusing on risk and resilience theories and factors, this required course develops a critical understanding of human behavior in the social environment through an examination of relevant theories, assessment strategies, and social work practices. Students will be able to comprehend and assess the complex reciprocal interaction between various social systems and individuals, families, and communities throughout the life cycle. The course begins with overview of a range of perspectives on human psychosocial development, including, but not limited to, life span theory, developmental life course frameworks, feminist approaches, critical race studies, and Indigenous knowledge(s). Special consideration is given to the impact of oppression on human development and functioning (as defined through multiple lenses). Assessment strategies aimed at identifying factors that place individuals, families, and communities at risk for struggle across a variety of areas (i.e. mental, physical, emotional, and economic) are examined. Tools that assist with pinpointing moments of resilience and areas of strength are emphasized. Finally, social work intervention practices that are strength-based, give comprehensive consideration to individuals within the context of their social environments, seek to reduce risk, and highlight/support resilience are provided.

Prerequisite: A grade of 65% or above in each of SWRK 4001H, 4002H, and 4003H.