Renison University College Land Acknowledgement

With gratitude, we acknowledge that Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

Fall 2019

**Course Code:** SOCWK 321R/ SWREN 321R  
**Course Title:** Social Work with Families

**Class Times/Location:** Tuesdays, 8:30-11:20 am, REN 0402

**Instructor:** Meg Gibson  
**Office:** REN 1422  
**Office Phone:** 519-884-4404 x28620  
**Office Hours:** By appointment or after class  
**Email:** margaret.gibson@uwaterloo.ca

**Course Description**

This course will introduce students to social work practice with families. Students will learn about the historical and contemporary context that brings social work workers and families together and what concepts and skills help them develop ethical and supportive relationships. Topics covered will include: common concerns that families face, the institutional roles that social workers have, common theories used in working with families, and practice skills in engaging with different types of individuals and families.

Students will learn about how the political, social, and institutional context shape the experiences of both families and social workers, and will reflect on how their own position and experience influence their encounters. Students will be introduced to and practice applying the ideas from psychodynamic,
systems/ ecological, cognitive-behavioural, feminist, strengths-based, anti-oppressive, and narrative approaches to working with families.

Students in this course will be asked to take an active and hands-on role in their learning. The pedagogical approach used presumes that all of us bring knowledge and ideas, and all of us have things to learn. Course activities require a combination of reading, discussion, writing, groupwork, creative activities, role plays, and reflective exercises. Students are asked to try new things and to support their colleagues in this learning process, with a recognition that everyone in the class has knowledge to contribute from their diverse experiences. This course asks students to examine their own feelings, beliefs, assumptions, and areas of discomfort, and use these reflections to inform their understanding and practice.

Student learning will be assessed regularly throughout the term to ensure that basic concepts are well-understood, however the course’s focus will be on developing our critical thinking skills, deepening our analyses of complex situations that social workers and families encounter, applying diverse theoretical approaches, unpacking our assumptions and mapping their relationship to larger social structures and power relations, and strengthening our abilities to build respectful and anti-oppressive relationships of mutual respect with colleagues and communities.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

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

A. Understand the range of settings and roles in which social workers work with families.
   - Develop an awareness of different contexts of social work practice.
   - Be able to reflect on how the context of practice influences what social workers do.

B. Critically assess the impact of larger histories and social relations on work with families.
   - Articulate how colonialism has affected families, social work institutions, and social work practices.
   - Articulate how power relations affect challenges faced by families and describe how marginalized groups have responded to these challenges.
C. Understand different approaches to developing ethical and effective social work interventions with families, colleagues, and communities.

- Articulate the importance of and strategies for developing respectful relationships in a social work role.
- Describe and compare several theoretical traditions that can guide direct social work practice with families.

**Required Text**

- Readings are available through Course Reserves, either online or at the Renison library.

**Readings Available on LEARN**

Check on LEARN regularly for weekly communication and additional learning materials.

**Course Requirements and Assessment**

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<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Date of Evaluation (if known)</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Summary and Application Assignments (RSAs)</td>
<td>Weeks 2-11, will count top 7/10 @ 4% each</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>Week 4, 5, or 6</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theory Reflection Paper</td>
<td>Friday, December 6, 2019</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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**Assessment 1**

Reading Summary and Applications (RSAs): 28%

A Reading Summary and Application (RSA) assignment is due, as a hard copy, at the beginning of every class on Weeks 2-11 (no RSA due on Week 1 and Week 12). RSAs cannot be submitted after class or electronically.

RSAs are expected to be approximately 1.5-2 pages in length (400-500 words). RSAs can be handwritten as long as they are legible.
Select one of the week’s required readings for each RSA. Each RSA must answer the following 2 questions:

i) What is the central focus of this reading? You may need to define one or more central terms.
ii) If you were a social worker, how could what you learned from this reading affect the way you worked with families?

RSAs will be graded out of 20, with 10 points awarded for each of the 2 questions. The bottom 3 grades from RSAs – including any missed weeks -- will be dropped from calculating your final grade. Therefore, only 7 out of the 10 possible grades will be included. Students must attend the class where the RSA is submitted in order to receive the marks. If any concerns arise about absences beyond your control, consult the instructor as soon as possible.

Although RSAs are only required to focus on one reading per week, students are still responsible for the material from all of the readings each week, and may find it helpful to cite another reading as part of the application discussion.

Educational Goals:
• Provide opportunity to review and integrate materials
• Provide opportunity to improve critical reading, writing, reflection, and encourage students to practice applying materials to possible social work scenarios.

Assessment 2
Group Presentation (35%): Due on the date assigned (Week 4, 5, or 6)
Students will be divided into groups of 5-6.

I. Develop a scenario in which a social worker is meeting with a family for the first time. Design the scenario to incorporate all group members into a role play except for the person who is video-recording (E.g. in a group of 5, you should have a family of 3 and 1 worker, with 1 person recording).
   i) Specify a type of work setting (e.g. counselling centre, shelter, substance use program, school, community program). Write this out in some detail first. Try to make the scenario realistic but not too extreme. Remember that
you don’t have to actually say all of the information in each role play.

ii) Develop a brief description of who is in the family and what brings the family there. Discuss the different people in the family, and a bit of a bio for the social worker(s).

iii) Write the scenario in no more than 1 page, single-spaced.

II. Videotape role plays of the first encounter between the social worker and the family. Each role play should be around 5-8 minutes long.

i) The goal of the social worker is to develop a working relationship with the family members and start to learn about what brings them there. The goal of the family members is to see if you can work with this person and express your initial concerns and/or hopes.

ii) Discuss each role play as a group immediately after it ends. Start discussions with observations from the family members, then the social worker, then any observers. Ask each other questions and discuss tricky moments and uncertainties. This is not about doing things “right” or “wrong” but about seeing how relationships develop.

iii) Switch roles to have each person play the social worker. Start the encounter over again each time (that is, don’t just substitute in as the role play continues).

iv) Be sure that every group member plays a family member at least once. Notice what is different in your experience of different roles.

III. Between role plays and during the discussions, take notes as needed for your own reference. After all the recordings are done, view the videos and discuss as a group. What did you help relationships develop? What got in the way? What did you see differently in the different roles – and over the different encounters?

THEN

IV. Present to the class as a group. This will be a 20-minute presentation and should include slides and/or handouts. Please included at least 3 clips from your role play videos to illustrate your points -- clips should be short and carefully selected. Do not simply show each section of role play and then comment on it – instead, answer the questions listed below and then show sections of video as immediate relevant. Try to discuss common strategies and limitations across group members rather than highlighting individual strengths and weaknesses of different individuals.

You must stay within the 20 minutes for the entire presentation since you
may be cut off at this point. Each group must test the technology in advance to ensure a smooth presentation.

Presentation guidelines:

Overview (max. 10 minutes)

☐ Give a summary of the scenario: Who was in the family? Who was the worker? What was the setting? What brought the family there? (Summarize: don’t read the whole description.)

☐ What in the larger historical/ cultural/ socio-political context would you want to keep in mind?

☐ What in the institutional context (organization where you were meeting, code of ethics, social work role) would you want to keep in mind?

Group Reflection (max. 10 minutes)

☐ What did the social worker(s) do that helped to build relationships?

☐ What did the social worker(s) do that got in the way of building relationships?

☐ What did different group members learn about themselves, and about the social work role with families, through this process? What differences in experience and interpretation arose among group members?

Overall considerations

☐ Try to incorporate ideas and information from the readings and lectures.

☐ Be creative, clear, energetic, and interesting. Encourage class participation. Clarify connections and conclusions. Explain points of learning, debate, uncertainty, and consensus. Present questions as well as answers.

GRADING:

Overview: 10%

Reflection: 10%

Presentation Format (Clear? Engaging? Concise?): 10%

Scenario (provide in written form to instructor): 5%

TOTAL: 35%
Educational Goals:
- Develop critical thinking about different families and social workers
- Develop and demonstrate reflexivity
- Demonstrate presentation skills
- Learn to work effectively in groups

Assessment 3
Theory Reflection Paper (37%): Due Friday, December 6, 2019. To be submitted electronically through LEARN.

Write an 8-10 page paper in which you consider what theoretical frameworks and key ideas from the course you would -- or would not -- prefer to use in working with families.

The following is a guide to what should be in the paper and how it is weighted in evaluation. Please select sub-headings as you see fit.

a. Introduction (4%): give an overview of working with families, any particular interests or experiences you would focus on, and a brief overview of the paper.

b. Description of your preferred theories – or any theories you plan to avoid (21%). You must address at least 3 major theoretical frameworks from the course.

For each theory discussed:
- Give a 1-2 paragraph summary of the theory’s key ideas. Define any terms. Assume the reader is not familiar with this theory.
- Explain why you would or would not use this theory. Try to be specific. Are there particular work settings, situations, or communities where you think this theory would be especially helpful – or especially unhelpful? Are there key concepts you would use, or any that you would avoid? How would who you are – your social position, experience, identity, and/or values -- influence your choices?
- Wherever possible, use examples to illustrate what you would or would not want to do. Use hypothetical case scenarios, your own experiences, or cases used in the course materials to make the ideas and arguments come to life.
c. Conclusion (4%): Bring together your selected/ideas and be sure that the reader understands the takeaway message.

d. Overall writing (6%): Write and edit for flow and clarity of argument or explanation. Proofread, and use consistent and appropriate paragraphing and punctuation. (Unclear writing can also adversely affect grades in specific sections).

e. References (not counted in page total) (2%): Cite at least 6 items from the course materials.
a. Required or recommended readings and videos shown in class all count as course items: lectures do not. (Not citing the required materials can also affect grades in other sections).
b. You may also use outside sources as you see fit but these do not substitute for the need to cite course materials.
c. As always, you must cite anything that you use in accordance with academic integrity guidelines.
d. Use APA referencing format. See https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_basic_rules.html

Educational Goals:
• Deepen understanding of selected theories
• Apply critical analysis skills
• Begin to develop an approach to working with people.
• Practice personal reflection
• Make connections between individuals, relationships, and larger contexts (e.g. history of social work and colonization)
• Develop written communication skills
• Develop appropriate citation practices

Course Outline
All required readings listed will be available through course reserve. Recommended readings may only be available on reserve at library (not online). Other materials may be posted on LEARN over the course of the semester, including lecture slides and other materials used in class.
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
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<td><strong>RSA due</strong></td>
<td>Hanson, Erin. 2009. “Sixties Scoop.” Access at <a href="https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/sixties_scoop/">https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/sixties_scoop/</a></td>
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<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td>Reading week (no classes)</td>
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<td><strong>Recommended Readings:</strong></td>
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<td>American families: considering cultural context. *Journal of Family</td>
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<td>Social Work* 8(2), 1-19.</td>
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<td>Pope, N. D., &amp; Lee, J. (2015). A picture is worth a thousand words:</td>
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<td>exploring the use of genograms in social work practice. *The New</td>
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<td>Social Worker* 22(2), 10-12.</td>
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<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td>Cognitive-behavioural therapy, brief therapy, and mindfulness-based</td>
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<td>work with families <strong>RSA due</strong></td>
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<td>Gehart, D. (2017). Chapter 8: Cognitive-Behavioral and Mindfulness-</td>
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<td>Based Couple and Family Therapies. In *Mastering competencies in</td>
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<td>family therapy: a practice approach to theories and clinical case</td>
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<td>documentation, 3rd edition (pp. 309-376, <strong>focus on 309-352</strong>),</td>
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<td>Boston, MA: Cengage.</td>
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<td>Washington, K. T., Wittenberg-Lyles, E., Oliver, D. P., Baldwin, P. K.,</td>
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<td>caregiving: tailoring cognitive-behavioral therapies to the hospice</td>
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**Late Work**
RSAs cannot be handed in after the deadline unless exceptional arrangements have been made with the instructor. For all other assignments, contact the instructor well in advance if you anticipate trouble meeting the deadline. Unless prior arrangements are made, marks of 2% per day may be deducted for lateness. Assignments may not be accepted more than a week after the deadline.

**Electronic Device Policy**
Electronic devices are allowed in class, provided they do not disturb teaching or learning.

**Attendance Policy**
This course relies on participation and engagement with classroom discussions and activities, and the sharing of knowledge and ideas between all class members. Attendance is expected. If you are unable to attend a class due to illness or unforeseen circumstances, contact the instructor in advance.

**Academic Integrity:**
In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the UWWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage (https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) and the Arts Academic Integrity webpage (https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-undergraduates/student-support/ethical-behaviour) for more information.

**Discipline:** Every student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their own actions. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity (https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity) for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration, should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or Academic Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties are imposed under the University of Waterloo Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/guidelines/guidelines-assessment-penalties).

Students should also be aware that copyright laws in Canada prohibit reproducing more than 10% of any work without permission from its author, publisher, or other copyright holder. Waterloo’s policy on Fair Dealing is available here: https://uwaterloo.ca/copyright-guidelines/fair-dealing-advisory. Violation of Canada’s Copyright Act is a punishable academic offence under Policy 71 – Student Discipline.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4 (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant, who will provide further assistance.

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there are grounds. Students who believe they have grounds for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo):
http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

**Note for Students with Disabilities:** The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (NH 1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities, without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AAS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Intellectual Property. Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the instructor, which can include:

- lecture handouts and presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slides)
- lecture content, both spoken and written (and any audio or video recording thereof)
- questions from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams)
- work protected by copyright (i.e., any work authored by the instructor)

Making available the intellectual property of instructors without their express written consent (e.g., uploading lecture notes or assignments to an online repository) is considered theft of intellectual property and subject to disciplinary sanctions as described in Policy 71 – Student Discipline. Students who become aware of the availability of what may be their instructor’s intellectual property in online repositories are encouraged to alert the instructor.

Mental Health Support
All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

On Campus
- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 xt 32655
• **MATES**: one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
• Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

**Off campus, 24/7**
• **Good2Talk**: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
• Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
• **Here 24/7**: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
• **OK2BME**: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS website
Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources (PDF)](#)
Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information
A respectful living and learning environment for all

Everyone living, learning, and working at Renison University College is expected to contribute to creating a respectful environment free from harassment and discrimination.

If you experience or witness harassment or discrimination, seek help. You may contact Credence & Co., Renison’s external anti-harassment and anti-discrimination officers, by email (info@credenceandco.com) or by phone (519-883-8906). Credence & Co. is an independent K-W based firm which works with organizations toward thriving workplace cultures, including professional coaching, consulting, facilitation, policy development, conflict mediation and ombudsperson functions.

Harassment is unwanted attention in the form of disrespectful comments, unwanted text messages or images, degrading jokes, rude gestures, unwanted touching, or other behaviours meant to intimidate.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, discrimination means unequal or different treatment causing harm, whether intentional or not, because of race, disability, citizenship, ethnic origin, colour, age, creed, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, or other personal characteristic.