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**Renison University College**  
Affiliated with the University of Waterloo  
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## Renison University College Land Acknowledgement

With gratitude, we acknowledge that Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Hodinohsyó:ni, and Attawandaran (Neutral) Peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River from mouth to source. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place in all corners of our campus through research, learning, teaching, community building and outreach. We are guided by the work of our Reconciliation and Restoring Steering Committee and Anti-Racism and Decolonization SpokesCouncil, as well as the [University of Waterloo's Office of Indigenous Relations](#).

## Winter 2024

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**Course Code: SOCWK 321R/SWREN 321R**

**Course Title: Social Work with Families**

***Mondays 2:30-4:20 PM/REN 3106B***

**Instructor: Dr. Debbie Wang**

***Office: Part-Time Office REN 1451***

***Office Phone: 519-622-0224***

***Office Hours: Mondays 1:20-2:20 PM***

***Email: [debbie.wang@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:debbie.wang@uwaterloo.ca)***

## Course Description

This course introduces students to social work practice with families. Students will learn how the political, social, and institutional contexts shape the experiences of both families and social workers. Students will practice applying the ideas from psychodynamic, systems/ ecological, cognitive-behavioural, feminist, strengths-based, anti-oppressive, and narrative approaches to

working with families. This course takes an active and hands-on approach in which students examine how their position, feelings, beliefs, assumptions, and areas of discomfort inform their understanding and practice. Throughout the course, there is a focus on developing critical thinking skills, deepening analyses of complex situations that social workers and families encounter, applying diverse theoretical approaches, unpacking assumptions, and mapping their relationship to larger social structures and power relations, and strengthening abilities to build respectful and anti-oppressive relationships of mutual respect with colleagues and communities.

### **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

**By the end of this course, you should be able to do the following:**

1. Describe how the range of settings, contexts, and roles in which social workers work with families influences what social workers do,
2. Critically assess the impact of larger histories and social relations on work with families,
3. Articulate how colonialism has affected families, social work institutions, and social work practices,
4. Articulate how power relations affect challenges faced by families and how marginalized groups have responded to these challenges,
5. Describe different approaches to developing ethical and effective social work interventions with families, colleagues, and communities,
6. Articulate the importance of, and strategies for, developing respectful relationships in a social work role, and
7. Compare several theoretical traditions that can guide direct social work practice with families.

### **Required Text**

There is no textbook for this course.

All required readings are available on LEARN and Course Reserves.

### **Course Requirements and Assessment**

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Date of Evaluation</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Reading summary and application	January 19, February 2 and 16	36%
Class discussions (Participation)	Ongoing	14%
Group presentation	March 22, 25 and April 1	25%
Theory and practice paper	April 8	25%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

***Reading Summary and Application (RSA, 36%)***

There are three Reading Summary and Applications (RSA), each worth 12% of your final grade. RSAs are designed to promote close reading and understanding of the material and how it might influence practice. You are not asked to offer personal reflections or opinions in these assignments – but will certainly be asked to do so for the final theory paper. Save your notes!

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 section.

***Class Discussion (Participation) (2 x 7% = 14%)***

Participation is a requirement throughout the course, with expected contributions to the assigned discussion activities in class. See the Course Schedule for exact dates.

Throughout the course you will be asked to participate in a range of ways. This participation will include being prepared for weekly discussions by accessing and reviewing all of the weekly materials, including content modules, links, and readings, and taking the time to think about the materials and how they relate to other learning and experiences. Your contributions to class discussions should engage with the course materials and with other people’s contributions and questions; as appropriate, you might also bring up relevant questions, announcements, resources, current events, experiences, and personal reflections.

Please note: any activities that are already being graded (e.g., preparing for and writing the Reading Summary and Application, completing work for the Group Presentation) does not count as part of “participation.”

***Group Presentation (25%)***

The Group Presentation will take place in class on the date indicated in the Course Schedule. For this assignment, students will be divided into groups of 4-6.

## Learning Outcomes

Develop critical thinking about different families and social workers

Develop and demonstrate reflexivity

Demonstrate skills in summarizing and presenting materials for peers

Learn to work effectively in groups

### Step 1: Develop a scenario.

With your group, 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 (e.g., one social worker and 3+ family members).

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 the of the information in each role play.

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).

Write the scenario in no more than 1 page, single-spaced, 12-point font.

What to submit:

Have one member of your group submit your scenario to the Group Presentation dropbox. See How to Submit Your Assignment instructions, below.

### Step 2: Conduct role plays.

Either in person or using whatever online medium works best for you (e.g., Teams, Zoom), carry out and video record a series of role plays of the first encounter between the social worker and the family. Switch roles to have each person play the social worker and be sure that every group member plays a family member at least once. Start the encounter over again each time you switch roles (that is, don't just substitute in as the role play continues). Notice what is different in your experience of playing different roles. Each role play should be around 6-8 minutes long. To record your role plays you can either conduct them online and record the session, or record them using a camera or phone if you are meeting in person as a group.

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.

Discuss each role play immediately after it ends. Start discussions with observations from the family members, then the social worker, then the 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.

Step 3: View and discuss all role play recordings.

Between role plays and during the discussions, take notes as needed for your own reference.

After all the recordings are done, view the recordings and discuss the following as a group:

What did the social worker do that helped relationships develop?

What got in the way?

What did you see differently in the different roles – and over the different encounters?

Step 4: Create a presentation.

As a group, create a presentation of your experience and your reflections. You will give your presentation in person during the last weeks of class. You do not need to record it in advance. The presentation should be concise and take no more than 20 minutes. Please be prepared to share 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 present the sections of video during your class presentation.

Key Tips:

Discuss common strategies and limitations across group members rather than highlighting individual strengths or weaknesses of different individuals.

Before the due date, please test your videos, to make sure they are working and that you can present them in class.

What to submit:

Have one member of your group submit the presentation slides to the Group Presentation dropbox

Give the presentation in class on the date listed in the Course Schedule.

Presentation Guidelines

Overview

Provide an overview of your scenario as follows:

Summarize the scenario:

Who was in the family?

Who was the worker?

What was the setting?

What brought the family there?

What elements of the larger historical/cultural/socio-political context would you want to keep

in mind?

Hint: consider who the family members are in terms of social location and experience -- and their likely/known histories with service providers and institutions.

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

Group Reflection

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?

References

Include a reference list, including at least 5 items (readings, videos, specific weekly modules) from the course materials

Overall Considerations

Incorporate ideas and information from the readings, weekly modules, and other course materials in meaningful and thoughtful ways.

Be creative, clear, and engaging. Clarify connections and conclusions. Explain points of learning, debate, uncertainty, and consensus. Present questions as well as answers.

REMEMBER: You are not being evaluated on your skills as a “social worker” but on your group’s ability to reflect on and explore the scenario and the role play, drawing upon the course materials.

### **Theory and Practice Paper (25%)**

Educational Goals

This assignment provides students the opportunity to do the following.

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

Instructions

Write a 5-6 page paper (double-spaced) 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 theories that are to be selected here come from the second half of the course and go beyond the more general ideas of "relationships", "context", or "working with parents/children" in the first half of the course.

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

Introduction:

Provide an overview of working with families, any particular interests or experiences you wish to focus on, and a brief overview of the paper.

Discussion of 3 theories:

Select 3 theories from the course to discuss. Again, these need to be well-defined theories such as psychodynamic theory, systems theory, CBT, strengths-based approach, narrative approaches, anti-oppressive approaches, and other items covered in the second half of the course.

For each theory:

Give a 1 paragraph summary of the theory's key ideas. Define any terms. Assume the reader is not familiar with this theory.

Next, 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.

Conclusion:

Bring together your selected theories/ideas and be sure that the reader understands the takeaway message.

Overall writing:

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).

References:

References are not counted in page total

Meaningfully cite at least 5 items from the course materials.

Required or recommended readings and videos all count as course items: lecture modules do not (Not citing the required materials can also affect grades in other sections).

You may also use outside sources as you see fit but these do not substitute for the need to cite course materials.

As always, you must cite anything that you use in accordance with academic integrity guidelines.

Use APA referencing format. See Purdue Owl Online Writing Lab – Reference List: Basic Rules

### Course Outline

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	Jan 8 – 12	Week 1: What is a Family?	Spindel, P. (2015) Statistics Canada. (2017). 2016 Census topic: families, households, and marital status
2	Jan 15 – 19	Week 2: Past and Present – Colonialism, Social Work, and Families	Hanson, E. (2009). “The Residential School System.” Hanson, Erin. 2009. “Sixties Scoop.” Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015)
3	Jan 22 – 26	Week 3: Building Relationships	DeAngelis (2019)OCSWSSW. 2008. Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice – 2nd Edition
4	Jan 29 – Feb 2	Week 4: Working With Children and Youth	O’Reilly & Dolan (2016) Sundar (2008)
5	Feb 5 – 9	Week 5: Working With Parents	Collins (2007) Moulding et al. (2015)
6	Feb 12 – 16	Week 6: 2SLGBTQI+ Families	Gibson & Gruson-Wood (2022)



Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
	Feb 19	Family Day	
	Feb 17 – 25	Reading Week	
7	Feb 26 – Mar 1	Week 7: Psychodynamic Approaches to Families	Sieber (2008) Solomon (2009)
8	Mar 4 – 8	Week 8: Systems Theories	Teater, B. (2010) Pope, N.D. (2015)
9	Mar 11 – 15	Week 9: Cognitive- Behavioural Therapy	Gehart, D. (2018)
10	Mar 18 – 22	Week 10: Strengths- Based and Anti-Oppressive Approaches	Kennedy-Kish, B. (2017)
11	Mar 25 – 28	Week 11: Narrative and Collective work with Families	Morgan, A. “What Is Narrative Therapy?”
	Mar 29	Good Friday	
12	Apr 1 – 5	Week 12: Concluding Thoughts	

### **Late or Incomplete Work**

Please keep in touch with the instructor if you think you might not meet a deadline. Deadlines can be extended with adequate notice. Late work without prior arrangement or accommodation will receive a grade reduction. Let the instructor know if you have questions.

### **Coursework Submission Policy**

All the assignments must be submitted to the corresponding Dropbox by the deadline specified in the [Course Schedule](#). Assignments submitted past the due date may be subject to a 2% deduction for each day.

### **Policy on Plagiarism**

“Policy 71’s glossary defines plagiarism, in part, as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others (whether attributed or anonymous) as one’s own in any work submitted whether or not for grading purposes”...

The Vice-President Academic and Dean has the authority to assess instances of plagiarism and the resultant penalties that are raised by an instructor. An instructor can propose a grade penalty to the Vice-President Academic and Dean, who will decide whether to accept the penalty or initiate a formal inquiry.”

For additional information on how plagiarism is dealt with at Renison, review the policy from where the above text is copied: [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#).

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. See Waterloo’s policy on [Fair Dealing](#). Violation of Canada’s Copyright Act is a punishable academic offence under [Policy 71 – Student Discipline](#).

### **Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)**

The use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) trained using large language models (LLM) or other methods to produce text, images, music, or code, like Chat GPT, DALL-E, or GitHub CoPilot, is not permitted in this class. Unauthorized use in this course, such as running course materials through GenAI or using GenAI to complete a course assessment is considered a violation of Policy 71 (plagiarism or unauthorized aids or assistance). Work produced with the assistance of AI tools does not represent the author’s original work and is therefore in violation of the fundamental values of academic integrity including honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and courage (ICAI, n.d.).

You should be prepared to show your work. To demonstrate your learning, you should keep your rough notes, including research notes, brainstorming, and drafting notes. You may be asked to submit these notes along with earlier drafts of their work, either through saved drafts or saved versions of a document. If the use of GenAI is suspected where not permitted, you may be asked to meet with your instructor or TA to provide explanations to support the submitted material as being your original work. Through this process, if you have not sufficiently supported your work, academic misconduct allegations may be brought to the Associate Dean.

In addition, you should be aware that the legal/copyright status of generative AI inputs and outputs is unclear. More information is available from the Copyright Advisory Committee: <https://uwaterloo.ca/copyright-at-waterloo/teaching/generative-artificial-intelligence>  
Students are encouraged to reach out to campus supports if they need help with their coursework including:

- Student Success Office for help with skills like notetaking and time management
- Writing and Communication Centre for assignments with writing or presentations
- AccessAbility Services for documented accommodations
- Library for research-based assignments

### **Electronic Device Policy**

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

### **Attendance Policy**

This course requires class discussions, experiential exercises, and group presentations; therefore, class contribution is imperative. The instructor expects your participation by attending class regularly.

### **Communication Policy**

Email, using the uWaterloo provided email address, is the approved method of communication for Renison. The Office 365 email that you use to login using your WatIAM login and password is secure and confidential. Take caution when forwarding your WatIAM email to an external email service as confidential information forwarded to a third-party provider could be a data security breach and violation of FIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) under which all students, staff, and faculty are bound by law.

### **Final Examination Policy**

There will be no final examination for this course.

### **Accommodation for Illness or Unforeseen Circumstances**

The instructor follows the practices of the University of Waterloo in accommodating students who have documented reasons for missing quizzes or exams. See [Accommodation due to illness](#).

### **Accommodation Due to Religious Observances**

The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may seek accommodations on religious grounds. Accordingly, students must

consult with their instructor(s) within two weeks of the announcement of the due date for which accommodation is being sought. Failure to provide a timely request will decrease the likelihood of providing an accommodation. [See Request for accommodation on religious grounds.](#)

## **Academic Integrity, Grievance, Discipline, Appeals and Note for Students with Disabilities**

**Academic Integrity:** 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 [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity](#) websites for more information.

Renison University College is committed to the view that when a problem or disagreement arises between a faculty member and a student every effort should be made to resolve the problem through mutual and respectful negotiation. Most issues are resolved by a student/faculty meeting to discuss differences of opinion. It is only after this stage, when a common understanding or agreement is not obtained that further actions listed below could be taken.

**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](#) website 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 or academic advisor. 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 the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the Department’s administrative assistant, or Academic Advisor, 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 is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

**Academic Integrity Office (UWaterloo):** The website can be found at [uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/](http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/)

### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

[AccessAbility Services](#) is located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, and 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 AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Students are encouraged to register with AccessAbility Services (AAS) at the start of each term if they require accommodations due to a disability. However, some students not connected to AAS may require accommodations later in the term. In that case, you should immediately consult with your instructor and/or your Academic Advisor.

### **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](mailto:counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca): counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4096
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services
- [Health Services](#) – Student Medical Clinic: 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
- [Empower Me](#): Confidential, multilingual, culturally sensitive, faith inclusive mental health and wellness service.
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 844-437-3247
- [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. Email: [ok2bme@caminowellbeing.ca](mailto:ok2bme@caminowellbeing.ca) Phone: 519-884-0000

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.

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.

If you feel that you are experiencing the above from any member of the Renison community (students, staff, or faculty), you may contact Melissa Knox, Renison's external anti-harassment and anti-discrimination officer, by email ([mnknox@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mnknox@uwaterloo.ca)) or by phone or text (226-753-5669). Melissa is an employment and human rights lawyer and part-time Assistant Crown Attorney for the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. Melissa is experienced in case management, discipline and complaints processes, and works with organizations across Canada to foster safe, respectful, and inclusive work and learning environments through policy development, educational workshops, conflict mediation and dispute resolution, and organizational culture audits.

For additional information see Renison's [Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse](#) policy.