# School of Humanities Creative Industries SocialSci

## SWRK3007: Social Work Ethics
Online
Semester 1 - 2024

# OVERVIEW

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| **Course Description** | This online course focuses on high level ethical decision making relating to individual, group and community practice. It runs parallel to SWRK3300:Field Practicum. Students will be required to integrate and critique theoretical models and decision making tools relevant to their practicum field of practice. |
| **Requisites** | To enrol in this course students must be active in the Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) (12317), and have successfully completed SWRK2001, SWRK2003, SWRK2005, SWRK2200 and have successfully completed or be concurrently enrolled in SWRK3300. |
| **Assumed Knowledge** | SWRK2001, SWRK2003, SWRK2200 |
| **Contact Hours** | **Online**<br>**Online Activity**<br>Online<br>1 hour(s) per Week for 12 Weeks<br><br>**Self-Directed Learning**<br>Self-Directed<br>2 hour(s) per Week for 12 Weeks |
| **Unit Weighting** | 10 |
| **Workload** | Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course. |

# CONTACTS

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| **Course Coordinator** | **Online**<br>Dr David Betts<br>David.Betts@newcastle.edu.au<br>(02) 492 15782<br>Consultation: by appointment |
| **School Office** | **School of Humanities Creative Industries and Social Sciences**<br>Social Sciences Building<br>Callaghan<br>HCISS@newcastle.edu.au<br>+61 4985 4500 |

# SYLLABUS

**Course Content**

- Ethical theories and perspectives.
- Ethical decision making frameworks and models and their application in social work practice.
- Ethical decision making processes and practice responses to a diverse range of client presenting issues.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

**On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:**

1. Formulate an advanced awareness of their personal and professional values and how these impact on ethical decision making, and a capacity to appraise these values with reference to the requirements of professional practice.

2. Demonstrate a high level of self-awareness and open transparent decision-making that integrates and is responsive to feedback from clients, peers, supervisors and teaching staff

3. Incorporate a critical understanding of the application of the AASW Code of ethics and knowledge of a range of perspectives and theoretical frameworks that influence ethical decision making in practice

4. Develop and apply knowledge from a range of ethical frameworks, models and approaches to assessment and intervention with clients, paying particular attention to work with people from culturally, linguistically and spiritually diverse backgrounds

5. Develop a capacity to search for, analyse and present relevant literature in relation to ethical social work practice and specific issues related to social work practice.

**Course Materials**

A list of self-directed activities is located on Canvas. It contains required readings, podcasts and programs by week, as well as additional pre-recorded materials.

# SCHEDULE

| Module/Week | Week Begins | Topic | Learning Activity |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Module One: Week One** | 26 Feb | Overview of ethical perspectives and the history of understanding ethics. | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
| **Module One: Week Two** | 4 Mar | Why are ethics relevant in social work practice? | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
| **Module Two: Week One** | 11 Mar | Theories and perspectives on ethics: virtue ethics and ethics of care. | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
| **Module Two: Week Two** | 18 Mar | Theories and perspectives on ethics: Radical ethics. | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
| **Module Three: Week One** | 25 Mar | Your values and self-awareness in practice. Personal views in professional spaces. | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
| **Module Three: Week Two** | 1 Apr | What is an ethical dilemma? | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
| **Module Four: Week One** | 8 Apr | Professionalism and guiding practice. Regulation, accountability, and protection . | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
| **Module Four: Week Two** | 29 Apr | The Australian Association of Social Workers: Code of Ethics | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
| **Module Five: Week One** | 6 May | Ethical decision making models: Feminist and person-centred perspectives. | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
| **Module Five: Week Two** | 13 May | Ethical decision making models: Inclusive perspectives. | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
| **Module Six: Week One** | 20 May | The problem with ethics: Radical profession, or middle management? | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
| **Module Six: Week Two** | 27 May | The problem with ethics: Whose ethics? And challenging the institution of ethics. | Watch the lecture videos, read the course readings, complete online activities. |
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# ASSESSMENTS

This course has 3 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

|  | Assessment Name | Due Date | Involvement | Weighting | Learning Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Case Study/Problem Based Learning | 1. 31st March 11.59pm<br>2. 12th May 11.59pm | Individual | 30% (2x15%) | 1, 3, 5 |
| 2 | Ethical Decision Making - Case studies | 5th May 11.59pm | Individual | 30% | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| 3 | Ethical Decision Making | 2nd June 11.59pm | Individual | 40% | 1, 3, 4, 5 |

**Late Submissions** The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

## Assessment 1 - Case Study/Problem Based Learning

**Assessment Type** Case Study / Problem Based Learning

**Purpose** Demonstrate familiarity with, and use of, the AASW Code of Ethics, its components and uses, and to identify ethical issues in day to day social work practice.

**Description** This task is split into two components, each worth 15%. Each task has the same format where you are asked to identify and define one ethical issue that you identify from an on-line panel discussion. The panel will include experienced social work practitioners situated in different settings. Each panel will discuss ethical issues that are experienced in day to day practice and the members are likely to have a range of experiences and views. The panels will be held the week before the assignment is due.

1. Situate the practice approach presented in a relevant theoretical framework.
2. Explain why you agree or disagree with the treatment of the ethical issue described by the practitioner.
3. Use the AASW code of ethics to further support your justification and analysis.

Suggested approach: These two assignments are short pieces, at only 750 words, and as such need to be written in a professional and concise manner. You may use dot points to list items and headings where that is suitable to progress your argument.

Using the ethical issue that you identified, describe its nature and dimensions. Choose a theoretical approach/s that you have learnt about in this course that you think best reflects the approach to practice you heard being described. Was this the correct approach or not?
Apply your knowledge using one or more theories/ approaches to assist you to analyse the issues and how to deal with them. Analyse if / how the practice approach relates the AASW Code of Ethics.

**Weighting** 30% (2x15%)

**Length** 1500 words (750 words each)

**Due Date** 1. 31st March 11.59pm
2. 12th May 11.59pm

**Submission Method** Online

| **Assessment Criteria** | 1. Ethical issue recognition:<br>Student can recognise ethical issues when presented in a complex, multilayered practice context AND can recognise cross-relationships among the issues |
| --- | --- |
| | 2. Connecting theory and practice:<br>Students employ a formal, structured thought process attending to contra or complementary stakeholder and theoretical perspectives. Students argue with evidence (professional framework from the AASW Code of Ethics and theoretical frameworks from scholarly journals) to provide justification and analysis. |
| | 3. Clarity of written communication:<br>Students clearly and succinctly express ideas in a writing that is suitable for a professional audience. Cited evidence follows APA format. |
| **Return Method** | Online |
| **Feedback Provided** | Online |

# Assessment 2 - Ethical Decision Making - Case studies

| **Assessment Type** | Case Study / Problem Based Learning |
| --- | --- |
| **Purpose** | Development of a Professional Development module for ethical decision making that is suitable for use in your placement |
| **Description** | You must design an ethical decision making model that is adapted to your organisational context.<br>Provide a diagram to communicate your model, and rationale for your design.<br><br>The ethical decision making model that you develop needs to:<br>• be capable of guiding the user through a process of ethical considerations and decision making in this professional setting.<br>• take into consideration the legislation, policies and practice guidelines that apply to this setting.<br>• refer to the professional guidelines provided by the AASW Code of Ethics, and<br>• consider if there is a body of knowledge about the issue that needs to be considered<br>• provide a step-by-step process working through an ethical issue to arrive at a conclusion. |
| **Weighting** | 30% |
| **Length** | diagram plus 1,000 words |
| **Due Date** | 5th May 11.59pm |
| **Submission Method** | Online |
| **Assessment Criteria** | 1. Demonstrated knowledge of the literature, specifically in relation to:<br>• Core social work values<br>• The philosophy underpinning your model<br>• Ethical dilemmas in social work<br>• Ethical decision making<br>2. Demonstrated capacity to identify the elements that need to be included in an ethical decision making process.<br>3. Capacity to reflect upon personal values and your relationship to professional ethics.<br>4. Inclusion of spiritual and cultural considerations and specifically Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and diverse cultures.<br>5. A rationale about how your model is designed to fit the specific context of the professional setting you have designed it for. |
| **Return Method** | Online |
| **Feedback Provided** | Online |

# Assessment 3 - Ethical Decision Making

| **Assessment Type** | Written Assignment |
| --- | --- |
| **Purpose** | Application of an ethical decision-making model to a case study. |
| **Description** | For this task, you will undertake an ethical analysis of a case study from either your placement or other professional social work setting to an ethical decision making process. You may use the ethical decision making process that you have developed or you may apply another model suitable to your context. The case study that you choose may be |

from the range of social work practice for example, management, community work, advocacy, research or policy, or direct work with an individual or families.

Your assignment should entail:

The application of an ethical decision making model/process must:

•         Description of relevant features and presenting issues in the case study

•         Identification and critical exploration of ethical values and principles that are relevant, with particular reference to AASW Code of Ethics

•         Research and literature that informs the situation

•         Personal reactions and reflections about the use of the process that you adopted.

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| **Weighting** | 40% |
| **Length** | 2000 words |
| **Due Date** | 2nd June 11.59pm |
| **Submission Method** | Online |
| **Assessment Criteria** | Criteria for Assessment |

1. Demonstrated knowledge of the literature on values, ethics, ethical principles, ethical decision making models, theoretical frameworks, ethical codes and standards of practice, including AASW Code of Ethics.

2. Demonstrated capacity to apply knowledge to a practice scenario.

3. Critical thinking and analysis of ethical issues.

4. Ability to engage in a detailed and informed ethical decision making process.

5. Demonstrated capacity to structure and present discussion, including: introduction and conclusion; clear structure and format, progressive development of ideas; professional written expression and accurate referencing.

6. Demonstrated capacity to make an informed and well considered ethical practice decision.

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| **Return Method** | Online |
| **Feedback Provided** | Online |

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Grading Scheme**

This course is graded as follows:

| Range of Marks | Grade | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 85-100 | High Distinction (HD) | Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives. |
| 75-84 | Distinction (D) | Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives. |
| 65-74 | Credit (C) | Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes. |
| 50-64 | Pass (P) | Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes. |
| 0-49 | Fail (FF) | Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action. |

*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

**Communication Methods**

Communication methods used in this course include:

- Canvas Course Site: Students will receive communications via the posting of content or announcements on the Canvas course site.

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| **Course Evaluation** | Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement. |
| **Oral Interviews** | As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the Oral Examination Guidelines. In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the Student Conduct Rule. |
| **Academic Misconduct** | All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35. |
| **Adverse Circumstances** | The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where: |
| | 1.     the assessment item is a major assessment item; or |
| | 2.     the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system; |
| | 3.     you are requesting a change of placement; or |
| | 4.     the course has a compulsory attendance requirement. |
| | Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at: |
| | https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236 |
| **Important Policy Information** | The 'HELP for Students' tab in UoNline contains important information that all students should be familiar with, including various systems, policies and procedures. |