School of Humanities Creative Industries SocialSci

SWRK4300: Social Work Theory and Practice

Ourimbah and Newcastle City Precinct

Semester 1 - 2025

The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others. The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.

OVERVIEW

Course Description

The final year of the social work degree builds on learning from the three previous years of study in the BSW program. This course focuses on advanced theory and practice issues with a focus on interpersonal intervention skills relating to individual, group and community practice. A compulsory attendance of 80% is a course requirement for SWRK4300 to fulfil Australian Association of Social Workers accreditation requirements for 12317 Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) students.

Academic Progress Requirements

This course is a compulsory program requirement and is monitored for academic progress purposes. The course must be completed to progress in the program or meet other program requirements.

Failure or withdrawal from this course will result in students being considered under the Student Academic Progress Procedure.

Requisites

Program Enrolment Rule:
Available to students in the following program(s):
Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) [12317]

Course Pre-Requisite:
Must have successfully completed the following course(s):
SWRK3002
SWRK3300
SWRK4500

Course Pre-Requisite or Concurrent:
Must have passed or be currently enrolled in the following course(s):
SWRK4009

Assumed Knowledge

SWRK3002 and SWRK3300

Contact Hours

Ourimbah
Lecture
Face to Face On Campus
1 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s) starting Week 1
1hr large group lecture + 2hr small workshop
Practical
Face to Face On Campus

COURSE OUTLINE

www.newcastle.edu.au
CRICOS Provider 00109J

1 days per week for 1 week(s) starting Week 13
Interpersonal Skill Assessment Week 13. See Canvas for interview schedule.
Practical
Face to Face On Campus
2 days per week for 1 week(s) starting Week 13
Interpersonal Skill Assessment Week 13. See Canvas for interview schedule.
Workshop
Face to Face On Campus
2 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s) starting Week 1

Newcastle City Precinct
Lecture
Face to Face On Campus
1 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s) starting Week 1
1hr large group lecture + 2hr small workshop
Practical
Face to Face On Campus
1 days per week for 1 week(s) starting Week 13
Interpersonal Skill Assessment Week 13. See Canvas for interview schedule.
Workshop
Face to Face On Campus
2 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s) starting Week 1

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

Course Coordinator

Ourimbah and Newcastle City Precinct
A/Pr Wendy Foote
Wendy.Foote@newcastle.edu.au
(02) 40553041
Consultation: Consultations available via email.

Teaching Staff Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site.

School Office

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SYLLABUS

Course Content

- Skills in critical anti-oppressive and strengths base direct practice
- Skills in engagement, assessment and the formulation/practice of responses
- Skills in working with people with mental health issues
- Skills in working with grief and loss issues
- Skills in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Skills in working with diverse populations
- Other practice models, approaches and frameworks used in direct social work practice

Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Formulate an advanced awareness of their own values, interpersonal skills and ability to align these with professional practice.

2. Demonstrate a high level of effective communication in a range of contexts, presenting information clearly, concisely and in a balanced and constructive way.

3. Generate a critical understanding of the application of the AASW Code of ethics.

4. Apply advanced knowledge from a range of theoretical frameworks, to work with communities and people.

Course Materials

Recommended Reading:
Weekly reading list is also on Canvas. In addition:
Maidment. J. and Egan, R. (2023). Practice skills in social work and welfare. 4th. edition. A&U.
Geldard, D., Geldard and Yin Foo, R. (2022). Basic Personal Counselling: A training manual for counsellors 9 Edition. Centage.

Further details on course materials can be found on the course Canvas website.

COMPULSORY REQUIREMENTS

In order to pass this course, each student must complete ALL of the following compulsory requirements:

Course Assessment Requirements:

- Assessment 3 - Skills assessment: Pass requirement - Must pass this assessment item to pass the course.

SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Learning Activity	Assessment Due
1	24 Feb	Core themes and critical, de-colonised framework, using an anti-oppressive strengths-based approach. Course structure and assessments. Method of learning. Use of AI.	Establishing the foundations for practice. Developing the environment for learning and group agreement. Language that reflects the Framework of the curriculum. Use of AI.	

2	3 Mar	Self in Practice. 2a. Self awareness and your way of knowing, being and doing. (The integrated self). 2b. Self awareness through the Johari window / Fook's 4 areas 2c. Culture	Establishing foundations for practice. Identifying your prior knowledge, experience and values. Using 'the four quandrants'. Establishing the foundations for practice. Stages of helping. Class exercises and discussion – moving towards engagement. Encourage specific conversations, practice using open questions, reflection, silence, and scaling questions.	
3	10 Mar	Skills in Practice - Making a space. 3a. Preparing yourself to see your client 3b. Supervision 3c. Listening – types of listening	Foundations for interpersonal skills: being attentive, tuning in and listening. Linking big picture/narratives to individual circumstances. Identifying strengths in a problem saturated social narrative.	
4	17 Mar	Skills in Practice - engaging with your clients and making a space to talk. Use of Interpreters – in class lecture/presentation.	Establishing the foundations for practice. Stages of helping Class exercises, moving towards engagement. Specific conversations: focus on exploration, curiosity and new ways of listening: Refining scaling and exception questions, introducing future oriented questions.	
5	24 Mar	Skills in Practice Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 5a. Policy of genocide and its consequences: intergenerational trauma. 5b. Finding your place: Non Aboriginal social workers working in an ACO. 5c. Yarning about the assessment approach in an ACO	Assessment/ engagement/ formulation of help Class exercises and discussion – moving towards engagement. Cultural competence/empathy in action: Preparing for work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Migration mapping and genograms.	Weeks 5–9 Assessment 3 (Part A) In class, or Sunday 11.59pm for video submissions.

6	31 Mar	Skills in Practice: Specific approaches in assessment What is the 'it'/ the buried or presenting problem? 6a. Types of assessment models, purpose of assessment. 6b. Preparing for an assessment to be undertaken during a home visit and analysis and assessment outcome (DCJ) 6c. Critical anti-oppressive approaches to assessment	Assessment/ engagement/ formulation of help Class exercises and discussion – engagement. Thinking about your client, refining your introduction, and initial engagement with them.	Weeks 5–9 Assessment 3 (Part A) In class, or Sunday 11.59pm for video submissions.
7	7 Apr	Toolbox: 7a. Understanding the ideas/ theories that impact on clients and social work practice. 7b. Planning approaches – working alongside clients. 7c. Example of a Family support process to formulate help.	Assessment/ engagement/ formulation of help Class exercises and discussion –engagement. Refining your introduction and learning into your client.	Weeks 5–9 Assessment 3 (Part A) In class, or Sunday 11.59pm for video submissions. Assessment 1: Written assignment 1 due 13.04.2025, 11.59pm
Recess				
Recess				
8	28 Apr	Toolbox: Specific approaches: Narrative approaches a. Narrative therapy approaches and tools. b. Supervision – using critical analysis in supervision.	Assessment/ engagement/ formulation of help. Applications of narrative therapy and solutions focused ideas in your practice	Weeks 5–9 Assessment 3 (Part A) In class, or Sunday 11.59pm for video submissions. Assessment 2: Written assignment 2 due 04.05.2025, 11.59pm
9	5 May	Toolbox: Solutions focused therapy. a. Solutions focused therapy approach b. Tools of the approach – eg scaling, exceptions, miracle question.	Assessment/ engagement/ formulation of help. Application of your engagement – begin to explore assessment.	Weeks 5–9 Assessment 3 (Part A) In class, or Sunday 11.59pm for video submissions. All demonstration assessments must be completed in this week's class.
10	12 May	Toolbox: Climate change/ crisis and the role of social work: a. Its impact on our communities and social work	Assessment/ engagement/ formulation of help. Disaster contexts. Application of your engagement – begin to	

		b. example of de-colonised, First nations leadership at the community level	explore assessment.	
11	19 May	Toolbox: Working with grief and loss. a. Social work methods in responding to grief and loss. b. Actors in the lecture theatre – group process with students	Assessment/ engagement/ formulation of help. Working with end of life issues, loss and bereavement.	
12	26 May	Toolbox: Working with intense reactions. a. The anatomy of suicide b. Assessing and responding.	Assessment/ engagement/ formulation of help. Working with risk, suicidality, and self care.	
13	2 Jun			Assessment 3 (Part B): Demonstration and reflection **Ourimbah**: 03/06/25; in class **NUspace**: 05/06/25, 06/06/25; in class * Individual times and dates to be confirmed by week 7. * NUspace students are advised to put the 2 days aside of this week for assessment 3b.
Exams				
Exams				

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	Written assignment 1	13.04.2025, 11.59pm	Individual	20%	1, 2, 3
2	Written assignment 2	04.05.2025, 11.59pm	Individual	30%	1, 2, 3
3	Skills assessment*	Part A. Between weeks 5–9, in class, or Sunday 11.59pm for video submissions. Part B. **Ourimbah**: 03.06.2025; in class **NUspace**: 05.06.25, 06.06.25; in class	Individual	50% (10% and 40%)	1, 2, 3, 4

* This assessment has a compulsory requirement.

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 - Written assignment 1

Assessment Type Written Assignment
Description This assignment is designed to enhance student understanding of, and confidence in, articulating their practice framework. This includes their personal beliefs, values and principles, cultural knowledge and beliefs, and professional practice skills and knowledge.
Weighting 20%
Length 1,250 words (+/- 10%)
Due Date 13.04.2025, 11.59pm
Submission Method Online
Assessment Criteria Please see the assessment rubric on the course Canvas site.
Return Method Online
Feedback Provided Online
Opportunity to Reattempt Students will not be given the opportunity to reattempt this assessment.

Assessment 2 - Written assignment 2

Assessment Type Written Assignment
Description Critical reflection is core to social work practice, just as with articulating a robust practice framework, the ability for all social workers to engage in truly critically reflective practice is essential for accountable, ethical and quality practice. Social work is rarely involved in areas in which answers are black and white. Social workers deal with information, values and perspectives from diverse areas. Critical thinking aims to challenge our own and other people's values, beliefs and assumptions and ensure that there is rigor in the way we think about our work.

In this hypothetical situation you must respond as if you are the professional who has carriage of the work: you take the role of being responsible for acting. Each student's situation will be different depending on the placement setting. All settings throw up practice issues to reflect on, whether they are research, community development or direct practice settings. The definition of ‘practice’ is broad for the purposes of this assignment and includes interactions

with team members, the organisation, the community and clients. The example that you use should provide you will an opportunity to plan a different approach. This is a chance to “redo” an experience of practice.

The student should identify:
* Context: The setting, some characteristics of the person/s you will be working with, the issue/s that are the subject of social work.
* The Plan: Approaches and strategies that you plan to use with a rationale for your approach, theories that underpin the planned approach, any ethical or legal issues that should be considered.
* Critical Reflection: Consider the difference between the original approach and the planned approach you have described here.
*In addition: Identify a list of issues, personal challenges or questions you would discuss with your supervisor, in a pre-intervention supervision meeting.

Weighting	30%
Length	2,200 words (+/- 10%)
Due Date	04.05.2025, 11.59pm
Submission Method	Online
Assessment Criteria	Please see the assessment rubric on the course Canvas site.
Return Method	Online
Feedback Provided	Online
Opportunity to Reattempt	Students will not be given the opportunity to reattempt this assessment.

Assessment 3 - Skills assessment

Assessment Type	Practical Demonstration
Description	Practical Demonstration (Simulation) The purpose of Part A is to develop engagement skills and critical reflection of practice. The purpose of Part B is to refine engagement skills, develop preliminary assessment skills and critical reflection. Part A (10%) A demonstration of the first stage of an engagement with a client. This skills based role-play will simulate the first meeting with a client, introductions and the beginning of the engagement process. You may do this in class, or submit a video record, as organised with your tutor between weeks 5-9. This assessment provides students with early feedback on the development of their practice skills in a supported learning environment. Part B (40%) This assessment will include participation in a skills-based simulation role-play followed by a student led practice reflection. Reflective practice is a cornerstone for effective supervision and professional development in social work. It is a process of self-analysis, self-evaluation, self-dialogue and self-observation. Practical reflection identifies and modifies professionals' personal assumptions underpinning practice. One re-attempt of this assessment task will be available to students who fail the demonstration. This will be organised within one week of the original assessment, at a time arranged by the course coordinator. Please note, although it will be the same task, students will be provided with a different case scenario. The results of the re-attempt will be either pass or fail.
Weighting	50% (10% and 40%)
Compulsory Requirements	Pass requirement - Must pass this assessment item to pass the course.
Length	Part A: 14 mins (7 mins simulation followed by 7 mins reflective analysis) Part B: 50 mins (25 mins simulation followed by 25 mins reflective analysis)

Due Date	Part A: Between weeks 5-9, in class, or Sunday 11.59pm for video submissions. Part B: **Ourimbah**, 03.06.25; in class **Callaghan** 05.06.25; 06.06.25, in class
Submission Method	In Class Online
Assessment Criteria	Please see the assessment rubric on the course Canvas site.
Return Method	Online
Feedback Provided	Online
Opportunity to Reattempt	Students will be given the opportunity to reattempt this assessment.

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).

Attendance

Attendance/participation will be recorded in the following components:

- Workshop (Method of recording: Roll)

80% attendance requirement for workshops

Placement Requirements

This is a placement course covered by the Student Professional Experience Policy. Refer to https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=30 for further information.

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.
- Email: Students will receive communications via their student email account.
- Face to Face: Communication will be provided via face to face meetings or supervision.

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.
The skills assessment is required by the AASW - as a result there are no alternative assessment methods to 3a. and 3b.
As a result of student feedback, the following changes have been made to this offering of the course:

- Additional familiarity with actors will be provided in 2025. An actor will attend class a few weeks before assessment 3b. to familiarise students with the 3b assessment process. The UoN Social Work External Advisory Group has recommended greater emphasis on psychosocial assessments, resulting in additional resources being introduced in 2025 and a different delivery where lecture material is broken into chunks and some delivery by practitioners. Accreditation requirements include centralising de-colonisation, critical social work theory and the inclusion of community engagement as a way of helping. As a result, these elements have been woven through the 2025 curriculum. Lastly, students requested assessment dates be co-ordinated with the research subject, accordingly assessment dates for the two subjects are spread out.

Learning Analytics

The University uses an evidence-based approach to enhancing student learning and delivering support. Our careful analysis of data through learning analytics informs decision making processes related to student learning, academic outcomes, and support services. Learning analytics may be used to identify targeted individual opportunities for additional support services or interventions.

Interviews on Assessment Items

An Interview may be conducted on any assessment item in this course, in accordance with the Interview on Assessment Items Procedure. The purpose of the interview is to verify the author of the material submitted in response to the assessment task and provide a quality assurance measure.

In the event the Course Coordinator is not satisfied that a student's oral responses are consistent with the work originally submitted, the matter will be referred to the Student Academic Conduct Officer, who will take appropriate action under the Student Conduct Rule.

Academic Integrity and Ethical Academic Conduct Policy

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.

Please refer to the Academic Integrity and Ethical Academic Conduct Policy

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.

Use of generative artificial intelligence in course assessments

It is critical that any work submitted for assessment is your own original work. Before using generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, Microsoft Copilot, etc) in any assessable work you must ensure that such use is in line with the requirements for the course and expectations of your Course Coordinator

Misuse of AI tools may be considered a breach of the University's Student Conduct Rule and could result in disciplinary action.

Artificial Intelligence detection software may be used to review any work you submit. If you have used AI in any way other than has been expressly permitted by your course coordinator, you may be engaging in academic misconduct and be subject to penalties.

For information, refer to:

- Generative AI Tools
- Academic Integrity

Important Policy Information

The Help button in the Canvas Navigation menu contains helpful information for using the Learning Management System. Students should familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/respect-at-uni/policies-and-procedures that support a safe and respectful environment at the University

Other information

All students must satisfy the eight domains of the inherent requirements in the Bachelor of Social Work. Please click on the link and read the 'Inherent requirements for Bachelor of Social Work':
Inherent requirements for Bachelor of Social Work / Inherent requirements / Students with a disability (AccessAbility) / Personal support / Support / Current Students / The University of Newcastle, Australia
(https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/support/personal/accessability/inherent-requirements/bachelor-of-social-work)

This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.
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