



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our students, faculty and staff are located across Indigenous lands. On our Calgary campus, we acknowledge and pay tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples who made Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney First Nations). The city of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta (Districts 5 and 6). Our Calgary campus is situated on land northwest of where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, a site known as Moh'kins'tsis to the Blackfoot, Wîchîspa Oyade to the Îyâxe Nakoda (Stoney Nakoda), and Guts'ists'i to the Tsuut'ina and Otos-kwunee to the Metis.

At our Edmonton campus, we acknowledge the Treaty 6 region, the traditional homelands of Cree, Blackfoot, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/ Saulteaux/ Anishinaabe, Inuit and Métis people (Districts 9 and 10). We recognize the rich cultural history of the place, now called the City of Edmonton, which has, for centuries, been a traditional gathering place of Indigenous peoples from across Alberta, BC, and Saskatchewan.

At our Lethbridge campus, we acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot people of the Canadian Plains and pay respect to the Blackfoot people past, present and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship to the land. We offer respect to the Metis and all who have lived on this land and made Lethbridge their home.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, RACIAL JUSTICE, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND DECOLONIZATION

The Faculty of Social Work (FSW), University of Calgary (UCalgary), is committed to promoting and actualizing equity, racial justice, diversity, inclusion and decolonization. We affirm that diversity and uniqueness are enriching and valuable, and that they can strengthen our teaching, learning, research, scholarship, and community connections. We aim to foster an inclusive, thriving and equitable environment for our students, non-academic and academic staff, and community members. We take the stand that equity does not mean sameness in treatment of people, but rather requires measures and accommodations for diverse life experiences and circumstances to ensure that no one of a particular social group is disadvantaged, underrepresented or overlooked in all aspects of our work. We intend to address systemic inequities and compounded disadvantages due to intersectionality of social locations, particularly for those who are members of racialized communities, Indigenous peoples, Black peoples, persons with disabilities, migrant groups (including refugees and immigrants), 2SLGBTQ+ communities, linguistic minorities as well as those who have experienced socioeconomic, caregiving, religious, political, and/or cultural barriers to their education and employment. We also recognize, honour, and integrate into our work diverse perspectives, ways of knowing and doing, experiences, and strengths. An anti-oppressive lens, particularly intersectional, anti-colonial, anti-racist and decolonizing frameworks, will inform our work.

Please refer to our full statement of our [Commitment to Equity, Racial Justice, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization](#), our [Statement on Anti-Black Racism](#) and the work of the faculty's [Anti-Black Racism Task Force](#), our [Statement on Anti-Asian Racism](#), and the university's [Indigenous Strategy](#).

Course & Session Number	SOWK 604_S02	Classroom	Zoom
Course Name	Advanced Practice Theories in Context		
Dates and Time	Start of Classes: Sept 2, 2025 End of Classes: Oct 17, 2025 Dates and Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:30 to 8:30 PM Mountain Time Add/Drop/Withdrawal Dates: Please refer to the course-specific deadline in your Student Centre ¹ .		
Instructor	Julie Stewart MSW, RSW	Office Hours	As Requested
UCalgary E-mail	stewajl@ucalgary.ca	UCalgary Phone	n/a

SYLLABUS STATEMENT

Examines theoretical models, philosophical frameworks and ethical foundations of social work practice as a means to facilitate change while locating social work's development and current practice in historical, economic, political, socio-cultural and environmental contexts.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a critical and comparative exploration of the relationship between clinical practice models and their theoretical underpinnings, in the context of current discourses in mental health. We will begin by situating clinical social work practice historically and in relation to some contemporary topics in mental health. We will then critically examine various models of practice. Readings will offer contrasting perspectives on the models discussed to support critical analysis and reflection. Assignments will invite students to reflect on how their own worldviews intersect with various theories and models in order to articulate their emerging theoretical stance and to apply theory and models to clinical practice. Students will engage in interactive class discussions, presentations and critical reading, group work, brainstorming sessions, and online discussions.

The course will take place **online** via Zoom and Desire2Learn (D2L). To best succeed in the course, students are expected to participate in the asynchronous learning tasks using the D2L learning environment and synchronous Zoom sessions. When unable to participate live due to the time difference or unforeseen circumstances, inform the instructor in advance and propose an alternative participation activity (e.g., watch the recordings, submit a brief reflection, and actively contribute to the follow-up online discussion).

¹ In the Enrolled Courses table, under Deadlines, click on the Calendar icon by each course and the deadlines will appear.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. Identify, understand, critically assess, and analyze the influence of historical, social, political, economic, environmental, and other developments on Social Work theory and practice;
2. Explore the relationship between Social Work and other theories, generating an awareness of your positioning in relation to theoretical approaches to change and application to your Social Work practice;
3. Evaluate, analyze, and critique the influence of “discipline-specific” and other theories on your practice;
4. Identify and critique dominant theories in your professional practice, and evaluate alternative theories and methods appropriate for your practice;
5. Create personal learning objectives relating to the development and evaluation of your professional practice framework and Social Work identity;
6. Understand the relationship between comparative approaches to change and social justice in Social Work practice at multiple levels; and
7. Apply course learnings to your specialization and the exit requirements of the MSW program.

LEARNING RESOURCES

REQUIRED READINGS, TEXTBOOKS AND LEARNING MATERIALS

No textbook is required for this course. This is a graduate level seminar, driven by discussion among MSW colleagues. Therefore, you are expected to read through the material in preparation to contribute to class discussions. **Required readings are listed below, organized by class/topic, and are accessible through D2L via Leganto Reading list.** A list of additional recommended readings will be shared on D2L, and you are welcome to read and integrate the recommended readings into your assignments and class discussions.

September 2 - Introduction

- Cole, A. H. H. (2008). Epistemology. In T. Mizrahi & L. E. Davis (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Work* (20th ed.). Oxford University Press. <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/display/10.1093/acref/9780195306613.001.0001/acref-9780195306613-e-133?rskey=UeUXfP&result=1>
- González, M. J., & Gelman, C. R. (2015). Clinical social work practice in the twenty-first century: A changing landscape. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 43(3), 257–262. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-015-0550-5>

September 4 – Situating Clinical Practice Historically and Personally

- Badwall, H. (2016). Critical reflexivity and moral regulation. *Journal of Progressive Human Services*, 27(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10428232.2016.1108169>

- Blackstock, C. (2020). The occasional evil of angels: Learning from the experiences of Aboriginal peoples and Social Work. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 14(1), 137–152.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1071292ar>
- Reynolds, V. (2013). **“Leaning in” as imperfect allies in community work**. Narrative and Conflict: Explorations in theory and practice, 1(1), 53-75. <https://vikkireynolds.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2013-leaning-in.pdf>

September 9 – Critically Examining Dominant Therapy Discourses

- Liegghio, M., Delay, D. C., & Jenney, A. (2018). Challenging social work epistemology in children’s mental health: The connections between evidence-based practice and young people’s psychiatrisation. *The British Journal of Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcy104>
- Sostar, T., Fidler, K., Nault, O. (2020). *BPD superpowers: What the borderline makes possible*.
<https://tiffanysostar.com/bpd-superpowers/>
- Strong, T. (2017). Counselling, tensions, medicalizing discourse, and conversational work. *Medicalizing counselling: Issues and tensions*. Palgrave Macmillan.

September 11 – Critically Examining Dominant Therapy Discourses Continued

- Baril, A. (2020). Suicidism: A new theoretical framework to conceptualize suicide from an anti-oppressive perspective. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 40(3), 1–41. <https://dsq-sds.org/index.php/dsq/article/view/7053/5711>
- Bera, S.W. (2025, January, 13). Michel Foucault: Narrative Therapy's Philosophical Sources (Part 3) by Philosopher Todd May, PhD. [Video] . Youtube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDeVT40PBVQ>
- Mitchell, G., & Demir, I. (2021). Translating risk: How social workers’ epistemological assumptions shape the way they share knowledge. *Health & Society*, 23(1–2), 17–33.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13698575.2021.1888892>

September 16 – Critically Examining Indigenous Theories and Ways of Knowing

- Focusing Oriented Therapies. (2023, September, 27). Shirley Turcotte: "Aboriginal Therapy and Focusing Oriented Therapy for Complex Trauma". [Video]/ Youtube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CRnC-fHB5Y>
- Duran, E. (2019). Over pathologizing Original People. In Duran, E. *Healing the soul wound: Trauma-informed counseling for indigenous communities*. Teachers College Press. 30-47.
- Linklater, R. (2014). Indigenous perspectives on wellness and wholistic healing. In Linklater, R. *Decolonizing trauma work: Indigenous stories and strategies*. Fernwood Publishing. 74-100.

September 18 – Critically Examining Psychodynamic and Attachment Theories

- Fraley, C. R. (2018). *A brief overview of adult attachment: theory and research*.
<https://labs.psychology.illinois.edu/~rcfraley/attachment.htm>
- Frankel, A. The Psychodynamic Approach in Bolton, K., W., Hall, J., C., & Lehmann, P. Eds. (2022). *Theoretical Perspectives for Direct Social Work Practice: A Generalist-Eclectic Approach*. Springer Publishing Company, NY, NY.
- Garrett, P. M. (2022). Bowlby, attachment and the potency of a ‘received idea.’ *The British Journal of Social Work*, 53(1), 100–117. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcac091>

Yakeley, J. (2014). Psychodynamic psychotherapy: Developing the evidence base. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 20(4), 269–279. <https://doi.org/10.1192/apt.bp.113.012054>

September 23 - Critically Examining Positivist Theories

- Carona, C. (2022). The philosophical assumptions across the ‘three waves’ of cognitive–behavioural therapy: How compatible are they? *BJPsych Advances*, 29(3), 213–217.
<https://doi.org/10.1192/bja.2022.12>
- Van Dyk, I. S., & Miller, A. (Eds.). (2023). Harms caused by the misapplication of cognitive behavioral therapies (Part 1) [Special issue]. *The Behavior Therapist*, 46(7).
https://services.abct.org/i4a/doclibrary/index.cfm?category_id=26
- Van Dyk, I. S., & Miller, A. (Eds.). (2023). Harms caused by the misapplication of cognitive behavioral therapies (Part 2) [Special issue]. *The Behavior Therapist*, 46(8).
https://services.abct.org/i4a/doclibrary/index.cfm?category_id=26

September 25 - Critically Examining Post-modern Theories

- Shennan, G. (2020). Towards a critical solution-focused practice? *Journal of Solution Focused Practices*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.59874/001c.75064>
- Tilsen, J. B. (2021). Queer theory and narrative therapy: Praxis Allies. In Tilsen, J. *Queering your therapy practice: Queer theory, narrative therapy, and imagining new identities* (pp. 56-80). Routledge.
- Zurn, P., & Maeder, Z. (2023). Curiosity, power and narrative practice: An interview with Perry Zurn. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, (1), 63–70.
https://doi.org/10.4320/MNAQ7105https://dulwichcentre.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Meader_CuriosityPowerAndNarrativePractice_IJNTCW_20231.pdf

October 2 – Integration Week

- Fruggeri, L., Balestra, F., & Venturelli, E. (2022). Reflexivity: becoming aware of one’s own premises. In Fruggeri, L., Balestra, F., & Venturelli, E. *Psychotherapeutic competencies: Techniques, relationships, and epistemology in systemic practice*. Routledge. (97-112).
- Fruggeri, L., Balestra, F., & Venturelli, E. (2022). Complex thinking: the exploration of different perspectives. In Fruggeri, L., Balestra, F., & Venturelli, E. *Psychotherapeutic competencies: Techniques, relationships, and epistemology in systemic practice*. Routledge. (97-112).

October 7 – Critically Examining Trauma-Focused Therapies

- Ross, N. & Morrison, J. (2020). Chapter 7: Safety, Belonging, and Voice: critical clinical practice with girls and women struggling with substance use. In C. Brown & J. E. MacDonald (Eds.), *Critical clinical social work: Counter-storying for social justice* (pp. 171–194). Canadian Scholars.
- Lopez Levers, L., Ventura, E. M., Bledsoe, D. E. (2012). Models for trauma intervention: Integrative approaches to therapy. In Lopez Levers (Ed.), *Trauma Counselling: Theories and Interventions*. (pp. 493-503). Springer Publish Company, NY, NY.
- Reynolds, V. (2020), Trauma and resistance: ‘hang time’ and other innovative responses to oppression, violence and suffering. *Journal of Family Therapy*. doi:10.1111/1467-6427.12293
<https://vikkireynolds.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2020-reynolds-jft-trauma-resistance-hang-time.pdf>

October 16 – Final Integration Week

- Everett, B., MacFarlane D., Reynolds, V., & Anderson, H. (2013). Not on our backs: Supporting counsellors in navigating the ethics of multiple relationships within queer, Two Spirit, and/or trans communities. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 47(1), 14-28.
<https://vikkireynolds.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2017/12/2013notonourbackseverettmacfarlane-reynoldsanderson.pdf>
- Mingus, M. (2019, December 18). *How to give a good apology: Part 1 – The four parts of accountability*. Leaving Evidence. <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2019/12/18/how-to-give-a-good-apology-part-1-the-four-parts-of-accountability/>

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND REQUIREMENTS

A D2L site is set up for this course, which contains required readings and other relevant class resources and materials. A laptop, desktop or mobile device with Internet access, microphone and speaker is required for D2L and Zoom access.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES

This course is one of four core courses within Practice with Individuals, Families and Groups, as well as Trauma-Informed Practice.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Important Dates for Fall 2025

- Start of Term: Monday, August 25
- First Day of Class: Tuesday, September 2
- End of Term: Wednesday, December 24
- Last Day of Class: Friday, December 5
- Fee Deadline: Friday, September 19
- Labour Day, no classes: Monday, September 1
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, no classes: Tuesday, September 30
- Thanksgiving Day, no classes: Monday, October 13
- Remembrance Day, no classes: Tuesday, November 11
- Term Break, no classes: Sunday-Saturday, November 9-15

Date	Topic	Assignments
Introduction		
Sept 2	Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions and course orientation• Course outline overview• Assignments and AI ethics• Community building• Why does theory matter to practice?• Theories/Concepts: Epistemology, Ontology, Post-oppositionality	

	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • González (2015) • Cole (2008) • Chow (2025) 	
Situating Clinical Practice Historically and Personally		
Sept 4	Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situating advanced clinical practice historically • Exploring what sustains us in exploring harm and accountability • Critically reflecting on the limits of critical reflexivity Theories/Concepts: professionalism, helping roles, power, moves to innocence <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badwall (2016) • Blackstock (2020) • Reynolds (2013) 	
Critically Examining Dominant Therapy Discourses		
Sept 9	Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically examining the effects of Medicalization discourse on clinical social work practice and on service users Theories/Concepts: Diagnosis and curative framings, positivism, evidence-based practice, ableism, neoliberalism <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong (2017) • Liegghio, Delay, & Jenney, (2018) • Sostar, Fidler, & Nault (2020) <p>Guest Speaker: Tiffany Sostar</p>	
Critically Examining Dominant Therapy Discourses Continued		
Sept 11	Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically examining the effect of risk management discourses on clinical social work practice and service users Theories/Concepts: Informed consent, carcerality, compulsory aliveness, liability, normativity <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baril (2020) • Bera (2025) Note: Video of Todd May’s discussion of Foucault’s Discipline and Punish starts at minute 33. Then watch to end. 	Assignment 1—Part A due

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitchell & Demir (2021) 	
Critically Examining Indigenous Theories and Ways of Knowing		
Sept 16	<p>Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Examination of Indigenous theories and ways of knowing • Cultural Humility and ethical engagement <p>Theories/Concepts: Focusing Oriented Therapy, diagnosis as naming ceremony, decolonizing versus decolonial practices</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing Oriented Therapies (2023) Video • Duran (2019) • Linklater (2014) <p>Guest Speaker: Mackenzie Kuzyk</p>	
Critically Examining Psychodynamic and Relational Theories		
Sept 18	<p>Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical examination of psychodynamic & attachment theories • Examining attachment and psychodynamic theories in reaction to psychoanalytic theory <p>Theories/Concepts: ego, pathologization, politicization, mother blame, race, gender, psychoanalysis, psychodynamic therapy, EFT, EFFT</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraley (2018) • Frankel (2022) • Garrett (2022) • Yakeley (2014) 	Assignment 1—Part B due
Critically Examining Positivist theories		
Sept 23	<p>Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical examination of behavioural and cognitive theories • Situating models theoretically <p>Theories/Concepts: rationality/irrationality, homework, core beliefs, CBT, DBT, ACT, culturally responsive adaptations, individualism</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carona (2022) • Miller & van Dyk (2023) **Read any two articles from the two-volume special issue of the journal, “Harms caused by the misapplication of cognitive behavioral therapies” 	
Critically Examining Post-modern Theories		

Sept 25	<p>Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical examination of post-modern theories • Situating models theoretically <p>Theories/Concepts: post-positivism, critical theory, social constructivism, social constructionism Solution Focused Brief Therapy, Narrative therapy, therapeutic/nontherapeutic curiosity, anti-individualism</p> <p><u>positivism, critical, constructivism, constructionism</u></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shennan (2020). • Tilsen (2021). • Zurn, & Maeder (2023). 	
Sept 30: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (No Class)		
	No class	
Integration Week		
Oct 2	<p>Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection and synthesis discussion of theories explored to date • Exploring interaction between epistemologies—clients', social workers', systems (education, healthcare, legal) • Exploring practice challenges: who defines what is helpful in clinical social work/counselling? • Time for student questions and preparing for group assignment <p>Theories/Concepts: epistemological competence, client and clinician expertise</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruggeri, Balestra, & Venturelli (2022) Chapters 5 and 6 	
Examining Theory Through Trauma Discourses		
Oct 7	<p>Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical analysis of trauma treatment models • Identifying the theories/premises behind trauma treatment models? <p>Theories/Concepts: EMDR, ART, Prolonged Exposure Therapy, Response-Based Practice, Sanism, ableism, embodiment, the P in PTSD, neurobiology</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lopez Levers, Ventura, & Bledsoe (2012) • Ross & Morrison (2020) • Reynolds (2020) 	

Group Presentations		
Oct 9	Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Presentations: Critically Examining Models in Context and Developing Practice Tools 	Assignment 2 – Today Today's presenters submit their practice tools the night before
Group Presentation continued		
Oct 14	Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Presentations: Critically Examining Models in Context and Developing Practice Tools 	Assignment 2– Today Today's presenters submit their practice tools the night before
Integration Week		
Oct 16	Zoom Session 5:30 – 8:30 PM MST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical examination of discourses of Professionalism Exploring Harm and practices of repair Final reflections on role of theory in practice, discourse, and emerging theoretical stance Theories/Concepts: Professionalism, white supremacy, ableism, repair Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everett, MacFarlane, Reynolds, & Anderson (2013) Mingus (2019) 	Assignment 3 – Due October 20th

ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM CONDUCT AND RELATED INFORMATION

INSTRUCTOR EMAIL POLICY

All course communication must occur through your @ucalgary email. I will respond to emails sent via your @ucalgary emails within 48 hours excluding weekends and statutory holidays.

GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

You are expected to practice professional communication in all interactions with the instructor and your peers. Please use your @ucalgary email for all school-related communications. Your email should start with a proper greeting (e.g. Dear/ Good Day), address the instructor by name, and include a sign-off (e.g. Sincerely/ Best regards) and your name.

GUIDELINES FOR ZOOM SESSIONS IN ONLINE CLASSES

You are expected to participate actively in all Zoom sessions. Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that allows you to be fully present and engaged in Zoom sessions. **Unless advised (or agreed) otherwise by your instructor, your video camera should be turned on during class and you are expected to manage your microphone as required.** Please reach out to your instructor if you experience challenges that prevent you from having your camera turned on. You are expected to behave in a professional manner during all Zoom sessions. Please do not share the Zoom links with anyone who is not registered in this course.

MEDIA RECORDING FOR ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING (By Instructor)

The instructor may use Zoom media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a Zoom session

RECORDINGS OF ONLINE CLASSES (By Students)

Recording of lectures is generally not permitted. You must seek authorization from your instructor to record any lecture. Any student with a disability who is registered with Student Accessibility Services (SAS), and who requires an accommodation to make audio recordings of course material shall be provided with such an accommodation if determined necessary by an Access Advisor in SAS. Please refer to the [Recording of Lectures Policy](#) and [Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#) for the additional information.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

Summary of Assignments	Due Dates	Weight
1. Reflection on Personal and Peer Epistemology and Emerging Theoretical Stance	Part A Sept 11 th Part B 18 th	40%
2. Group assignment: Critically Examining Theories in Context and Developing Practice Tools (Part A: 15%; Part B: 25%)	Oct 9 th or 14 th	40%
3. Relational Engagement Reflection & Self-Assessment	Oct 20 th	20%

ASSIGNMENT 1 - Reflection on Personal and Peer Epistemology

Aligned Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3

PART A

Due Date: Sept 11th

The first phase of Assignment 1 invites students to notice and articulate their own epistemology, how it shapes their interactions with the world, and reflect critically on how it might inform their clinical social work. Students will write a 500-750 word reflection on epistemology and ontology in which they:

1. Critically examine their own epistemological/ontological orientation.
2. Illustrate their ways of thinking/knowing using clear examples (the examples do not have to be clinical in nature) and reflect on what social factors, life experiences may have shaped their thinking/knowing.
3. Identify a theory (of the theories introduced in the first week of class) that is aligned with the student's reflections on their own ways of looking/knowing and briefly describe its basic premises (citing scholarly source).
4. Describe what this way of looking makes possible and provide an example of how it might benefit a service user in clinical practice.
5. Provide a critique (supported by scholarly source) from another theoretical lens about what that student's most aligned theory might miss or obscure that could benefit a service user in clinical practice.

Students will post their reflections on the class D2L discussion board so that peers may review them and consider others' ways of thinking and knowing (these posts will also be used for assignment 2).

Given the reflective nature of this assignment, you may choose to write in first person. The reflection must include a minimum of 2 scholarly sources which must be referenced according to APA format [American Psychological Association, 2020 Publication Manual (7th ed.)].

Assessment Criteria:

- Clearly articulates awareness of both personal epistemology and ontology (how they think/how they know).
- Provides clear, relevant examples to illustrate how they think and know (can be examples from everyday life).
- Clearly articulates social contributors to their epistemology and ontology.
- Identifies a theory aligned with their epistemology/ontology. Clearly, briefly, and accurately describes the theory's basic premises.
- Clearly articulates a potential benefit to service users of this theory.
- Clearly articulates what is obscured/missed by this theory that a service user could find beneficial.

All posts to D2L must be made no later than September 11th by 11:59pm MST.

Part 1 of assignment 1 is worth 20% of the total grade for the course.

AI Usage

This assignment is the first step in a human dialogue between peers. AI is not to be used for this assignment. Grammar and spell checking is permitted.

Part B

Due Date: Sept 18th

The second phase of assignment 1 invites students to engage in respectful, curious discussion of similar and differing epistemologies with peers and to explore a post-oppositional stance as a resource for collaborative practice. Clinical social work involves working with multi-disciplinary teams and diverse clients and requires the skill of respecting, considering and collaborating across differing epistemologies. Engaging in dialogue with people who see and think differently than we do helps clarify our own thinking and see things we might not on our own.

Students will review the D2L posts of their colleagues from Assignment 1 and provide written responses to at least three (3) different posts. Responses should not be lengthy but should demonstrate critical reflection and curiosity by sharing briefly how the post extended, deepened, or complicated their thinking about their own epistemology, or about a different way of thinking/knowing as well as offering a question that invites the peer to extend, deepen, or complicate their understanding of their own world view or emerging theoretical stance. The purpose is not to argue, but to deepen understanding of other ways of looking, and to communicate in ways we might with clients or colleagues.

This reflection allows students to practice the clinical and professional skill of understanding, respecting, valuing, and communicating across differing epistemologies and theoretical lenses.

Given the reflective nature of this assignment, you may choose to write in first person. Additional references are not required for this assignment, but any reference to the ideas/work of others (including course content/readings) must be referenced according to APA format [American Psychological Association, 2020 Publication Manual (7th ed.)].

Assessment Criteria:

Responds to three (3) peers and in each response:

- Clearly articulates effect of reading peer reflection on their own thinking
- Offers a reflective question to support peer in continued reflection on own epistemology
- Engages with peers' ideas in a respectful manner

All posts to D2L must be made by not later than September 16th by 11:59pm MST.

Part 2 of assignment 1 is worth 20% of the total grade for the course.

AI Usage

This is the second step in a human dialogue between peers. AI is not to be used for this assignment. Grammar and spell checking is permitted.

ASSIGNMENT 2 - Reimagining Ethical Clinical Practice Through Theoretical Lenses

Aligned Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Due Dates: Part A – Oct 8th (15%) at 11:59 PM | Part B – Oct 9th and 14th (25%)

Assignment Description:

Theory is not a distant abstraction but a living orientation to the therapeutic relationship. In **clinical practice**, theory helps us interpret client narratives, guide assessment and diagnosis, shape interventions, and remain ethically attuned to the lived experiences of those we serve. This final assignment invites your group to engage in **praxis** by applying a clinical theory or critical framework to a **real-world mental health or psychosocial issue** encountered in clinical settings.

Your task is to collaboratively select a **clinical issue** (e.g., trauma, depression, substance use, disordered eating, grief, etc.) and engage a theoretical framework (e.g., attachment theory, narrative therapy, trauma-informed care, queer theory, critical race theory, feminist theory, etc.) to shape both your **analysis** and **clinical response**. You'll explore how theory informs client engagement, assessment, treatment planning, and ethical decision-making.

You will apply theory to real-life practice by creating a **clinically usable resource** (e.g., a psychoeducation tool, practice guide, or therapy group structure) and presenting your work to the class in an engaging, reflective format.

Part A: Theory-Informed Clinical Practice Guide (15%)

Your group will create a **2-page clinical guide or intervention tool** grounded in your selected theory and clinical issue. This guide should be usable by clinical social workers, therapists, or peer support staff in real-life settings. Choose one clinical practice area to focus on in your guide:

- Individual therapy
- Group therapy
- Intake/Assessment
- Psychoeducation
- Case formulation
- Safety planning
- Trauma intervention
- Identity-affirming care

Examples include:

- A trauma-informed safety plan template
- A queer-affirming intake assessment tool
- A narrative therapy resource for grief support
- A culturally responsive case formulation guide

Your guide should include:

- A brief framing of the issue and its relevance in clinical practice
- Key theoretical principles or concepts

- Practical applications or clinical interventions that reflect the theory in action
- Ethical, relational, and accessibility considerations in clinical care

Submission: Upload to D2L one day before your group presentation.

Part B: Group Presentation (25%)

Each group will deliver a **30-minute presentation** with a **10-minute facilitated discussion**. Your presentation should include:

- **Framing the Clinical Issue:** Provide a clear overview of the issue, including psychosocial, diagnostic, and cultural dimensions. Who is impacted and how?
- **Theory Overview and Critique:** Describe your selected theory or framework. What are its core assumptions? What are its strengths and limitations in a clinical context?
- **Theory-to-Practice Application:** How does the theory shape your clinical orientation? How might it inform therapy goals, intervention planning, or client engagement? What tensions or insights arise from applying it?
- **Presentation of Your Guide/Tool:** Walk the class through your 2-page clinical resource. Show how it reflects your chosen theory and issue. Explain how and when it could be used in practice.
- **Ethical/Relational Reflection:** Reflect on your process and positionality. What ethical questions emerged? How did your values and lived experiences influence your clinical lens?
- **Facilitated Discussion:** Pose 1–2 thoughtful questions to engage peers in discussion about theory and clinical application.

Assessment Criteria:

- Clearly articulates the clinical issue, with attention to biopsychosocial, cultural, and ethical factors
- Demonstrates critical and appropriate use of theory in clinical practice
- Connects theory to actionable clinical tools or strategies
- Clinical resource is creative, relevant, and grounded in theoretical principles
- Ethical, cultural, and relational considerations are thoughtfully integrated
- Group reflects on dynamics of power, identity, and care in theory application
- Presentation is well-structured, insightful, and facilitates rich peer dialogue
- Incorporates at least **8 sources** (minimum 4 scholarly/peer-reviewed; others may include clinical toolkits, podcasts, blogs, community practice guides, etc.)

This assignment is worth a combined 40% of the total grade for the course.

AI Usage

Brainstorming and selection of models and clinical concern should be completed by group members without the use of AI. If AI is used in this assignment, it may be used in development stage for tools and presentation, but all final products must be the work of students. See AI statement on page 17 of syllabus for further guidance on its use in this assignment.

Assignment 3: Relational Engagement Self-Assessment (20%)

Aligned Course Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Due Date: Oct 20th

Developing our ideas and articulating our ways of thinking and of seeing the world is a collaborative practice. This course relies on relationships with the texts, the instructor, and the peer group to co-construct new articulations of our respective and shared practices. In order to engage in this collective process, students will be expected to come prepared, having reviewed the assigned readings, to listen carefully to one another, and contribute to discussions/activities by sharing insights, content, critiques, and connections to their field of practice. Engagement is gauged not only by the quantity of contributions and how students facilitate a collective learning space by being mindful of how space/voice are used. This includes being thoughtful of how ideas are shared in ways that create the conditions for ethical spaces of engagement and collective care. Recognizing that engagement and participation are animated in multiple ways, some more overt than others, students will be invited to reflect on and assess their involvement and engagement in the course by submitting a 250-300 word reflection via D2L Dropbox by 11:59 pm on October 20th.

Assessment Criteria: Students will complete a reflection summary on October 20th based on their experiences (250-300 words Word Doc). Reflections and ratings will be included around students' engagement, learning, and collaboration levels. Students will provide a suggested grade out of 10. Criteria will consist of rating self for 1) ongoing and active participation, 2) contribution to new insights, 3) content and critique, 4) drawing connection to field of practice while engaging in thoughtful discussion, 5) explore deeper meanings, 6) have confidence in leadership, 7) reflect on social work values, 8) take risks, 9) develop skills and self-assessment around work within group assignment.

After reviewing the student's recommendation, please note that the instructor determines the final participation grade.

This assignment is worth 20% of the total grade for the course.

AI Usage

This assignment is a personal reflection on your participation in the course. AI should not be used for this assignment.

ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE AND COURSE ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS

Because of this class's participatory nature, attendance and punctuality for synchronous Zoom sessions are expected. Please email the instructor ahead of class if you are unable to attend, will be late, or are required to leave early. Students are encouraged to see participation as a way to practice and deepen their abilities to use their voice and honour the voices of others they will journey with as social workers.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all assignments electronically through their respective Dropbox in D2L or via the appropriate D2L discussion forum. All assignments are due by 11:59 pm on their due date. Please note that it is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted.

MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be accepted only in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the instructor and assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with a grade reduction. Please email the instructor at least 24 hours PRIOR to the assignment due date if you expect that you will need an extension. The total possible grade of an assignment will be reduced by 2.5% for each day/partial day (including weekend days) the assignment is handed in beyond the due time or a negotiated extension date. Assignments will not be accepted 7 days after due date.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING

The ability to communicate ideas clearly in writing is an essential skill of clinical practice. All assignments will be assessed partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented and referenced in APA 7th edition format. If you need writing support, please connect with the [Student Success Centre](#).

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

It is expected that all work submitted in assignments is the student's own work, written expressly by the student for this particular course. Students are reminded that [academic misconduct](#), including plagiarism, has serious consequences, as set out in the University Calendar.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

Whenever new tools and technologies are introduced in society, particularly at the scale of Artificial Intelligence in contemporary times, they shake things up and bring forward important ethical considerations. The mental wellbeing of communities, families, and individuals, our primary concern as social workers, is impacted by climate change. Therefore, it is important to consider the impact of AI and search engine use on our environment and natural world. Before proceeding with the permitted use of AI (as outlined below), please be considerate of the ways you choose to engage with AI tools.

Accountable, reflexive and ethical use of AI tools

In this course, you are expected to complete and draw upon the required readings, learning activities and additional research to complete the assignments. If you intend to use artificial intelligence tools as

learning aids or to help produce assignments, please discuss with your instructor in advance. You are ultimately accountable for the work you submit. Your approved use of AI tools must be documented in an appendix for each assignment. The documentation should include

1. what tool(s) were used,
2. how they were used,
3. how the results from the AI were incorporated into the submitted work,
4. what you did to verify the AI generated results,
5. what you did to extend your work beyond the AI generated contents and
6. your critical reflection on ethical use of AI tools.

Failure to cite the use of AI generated content in an assignment will be considered a breach of academic integrity and subject to Academic Misconduct procedures.

GRADING

A student's final grade for the course is the sum of the separate assignments. It is not necessary to pass each assignment separately to pass the course. The University of Calgary [Graduate Grading System](#) and Faculty of Social Work Percentage Conversion will be used. This grading system overrides the grading system in D2L.

Grade	Grade Point	Description	Percentage Range
A+	4.0	Outstanding performance	95-100
A	4.0	Excellent performance	95-100
A-	3.7	Very good performance	90-94
B+	3.3	Good performance	85-89
B	3.0	Satisfactory performance. Note: The grade point value (3.0) associated with this grade is the minimum acceptable average that a graduate student must maintain throughout the programme as computed at the end of each year of their program.	80-84
B-	2.7	Minimum pass. Note: Students who accumulate two grades of " B- " or lower can be required by the faculty to withdraw from the programme regardless of the grade point average.	75-79
C+	2.3	All grades of " C+ " or lower are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.	70-74
C	2.00		65-69
C-	1.70		60-64
D+	1.30		55-59

D	1.00		50-54
F	0.00		Below 50
CR		Completed Requirements. Carries no weight in calculating the grade point average. This will be noted in the calendar description as “Not Included in GPA” where applicable.	

COURSE EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK

At the close of each term, students can provide feedback on their academic learning experience in their courses, including their instructors, through university-wide online surveys. They will receive an email from [UCalgary Course Experience Surveys](#) with direct links to their current course surveys, or they can access within the D2L course shell. Students are welcome to discuss the process and content of the course at any time with the instructor. They are expected to provide comments that are consistent with the [University of Calgary Code of Conduct](#), the [Alberta College of Social Work Standards of Practice \(2023\)](#) and the [Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics \(2024\)](#).

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY POLICIES AND SUPPORTS

Professional Conduct

As members of the University community, students and staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary’s [Code of Conduct](#). They are also expected to demonstrate professional behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. Consistent with the aims of the Social Work Program and the University of Calgary, all students and staff are expected to respect, appreciate, and encourage expression of diverse world views and perspectives; to offer their fellow community members unconditional respect and constructive feedback; and to contribute to building learning communities that promote individual and collective professional and personal growth. While critical thought and debate is valued in response to concepts and opinions shared in class, feedback must always be focused on the ideas or opinions shared and not on the person who has stated them.

Students and staff are expected to model behaviours in class, including evaluations of teaching and learning, that are consistent with our professional values and ethics, as outlined in the [Canadian Association for Social Workers, Code of Ethics](#) (2024) and the [Alberta College of Social Work Standards of Practice](#) (2023).

Academic Accommodation

It is the student’s responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures. Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS). SAS will process the request and issue

letters of accommodation to instructors. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. Please refer to the full policy on [Student Accommodations](#).

Research Ethics

Students are advised that any research with human participants – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the [Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board](#) or the [Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board](#). In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required. Some courses will include assignments that involve conducting research with human participants; in these cases, the instructor will have applied for and received ethics approval for the course assignment.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please refer to the [Integrity and Conduct](#) section in the University of Calgary Calendar.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by professor(s) (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the professor(s). These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Copyright Legislation

All students who use materials protected by copyright are expected to comply with the University of Calgary policy on [Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright](#) and requirements of the [Copyright Act](#) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the [Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. [Private information](#) related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's [Sexual and Gender-based Violence Policy](#) guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances.

Other Important Information

Please visit the [Registrar's website](#) for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/ Assembly Points
- Safewalk