

Troy University
College of Health and Human Services
School of Social Work and Human Services
SWK _____: Social Work, Criminal Justice, and the Death Penalty

Professor: Dr. Lauren Ricciardelli, PhD, LMSW

Office Hours: Mon. & Wed., 11:00 am - 3:00 pm; Tues., 4 – 6 pm

Contact: lr Ricciardelli@troy.edu

Class Days/Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 6 – 8 pm

Classroom: Riverfront Campus, Room # 201

Course Description

Examples of the various roles that social work professionals can and do take up related to the death penalty include: working directly with death sentenced persons and their families; participating in mitigation work; contributing to the field of research devoted to the intersections of mental health and the criminal justice system; as clinically licensed social workers, by engaging in the critical discourse that is being had between the psychiatric and psychological professions, and the legal profession when death eligibility hinges on a clinical determination; and finally, using social advocacy and policy practice to take up the death penalty from a social justice framework. The elective course, *Social Work, Criminal Justice, and the Death Penalty*, aims to prepare graduate social work students to take an active role in the contemporary death penalty discourse in the United States by examining key insights from professionals who are engaged as legal, forensic, academic, and social work experts. In this course, we will read authors who write accessibly from their own experiences and expertise in death penalty cases and related social issues from a critical, social justice, and human rights perspective—all intended to better inform the burgeoning social work professional at the specialist level. To this end, the present course is comprised of three primary perspectives: (I) criminal justice, (II) sociopolitical, and (III) applied social work. In addition to incorporating a number of sociological theories covered in *Human Behavior and the Social Environment*, the present course is practice and policy oriented, and will consistently appeal to the ethics and values of the social work profession. Topics covered include:

- Historical overview of the criminal justice system and the death penalty in the U.S.
- The history of mitigation and the role of social workers in capital defense practice
- Poverty, social services, criminal justice, and the death penalty
- Juvenile Justice, criminal justice, and the death penalty
- Women, criminal justice, and the death penalty
- Immigration, criminal justice, and the death penalty
- Intellectual disability, criminal justice, and the death penalty
- Serious mental illness, criminal justice, and the death penalty
- Working with the family members of death sentenced persons
- Secondary/ trauma, criminal justice, and the death penalty
- Reform, advocacy, and activism

Required Text

Ricciardelli, L.A. (Ed.). [2019]. *Social work, criminal justice, and the death penalty*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Course Objectives & Corresponding CSWE Practice Competencies #1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8

Upon completion of SWK _____, students will be better able to:

- Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context (1);
- Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication (1);
- Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies (2);
- Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels (3);
- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services (5);
- Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services (5);
- Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice (5);
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies (7);
- Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies (8).

CSWE Competencies:

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice	Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice	Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice	

CSCWE Social Work Competencies

Class Policies

Individuals with Disabilities

Troy University, under the guidelines of ADA and the Rehabilitation Act, is required to make reasonable accommodations for documented physical and mental limitations of otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities. To provide the best possible services to students, employees, and visitors, Troy University has designated the Disability Services Coordinator and Director of Human Resources on each campus the responsible parties for coordinating accommodations for persons with disabilities. For more information about physical access to building or grounds, academic or workplace accommodations, or other ADA related services individuals should contact the Disability Services Coordinator or Director of Human Resources on the specific campus. For additional information, please visit: https://www.troy.edu/studentdevelopment/assets/documents/Troy_University_ADA_Policies.pdf

Ethics and Confidentiality

The NASW *Code of Ethics* is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers. You are asked to be familiar with it. It may be retrieved at: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>. The importance of confidentiality cannot be overstated. In written assignments, as well as oral discussions and presentations, guidelines regarding confidentiality (as expressed in the NASW *Code of Ethics*) are to be strictly observed.

Electronic Devices

Students are asked not to use their laptops during class lectures. Students are asked to excuse themselves from the classroom in the event that they need to use their phone. This includes texting.

Classroom Environment

Students are asked to demonstrate the values of the social work profession in the classroom; namely, students will be asked to demonstrate respect for differing viewpoints, while remaining critically aware of, and using respectful language to express, their own.

Methods of Instruction

The course will incorporate a number of learning opportunities that include: oral lecture; reflective writing assignments and class discussions; applied social policy analysis skills; value-critical thinking; and, student presentations/ student-led learning.

Academic Honesty

All academic work must meet the standards contained in *The Oracle: The Troy University Student Handbook*. Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is academic dishonesty and is an unacceptable activity at Troy University. Based on United States law, words and ideas are intellectual property and are protected from theft. Plagiarism is defined as representing someone else's ideas or work as your own original ideas or work. Plagiarism encompasses many things, and is by far the most common manifestation of academic fraud. For example, copying a passage straight from a book, a website, or any other source into a paper without using quotation marks and explicitly citing the source is plagiarism. Additionally, paraphrasing is plagiarism where you fail to cite your original source and, in some cases, where you fail to use quotation marks as well. It is very important that students properly acknowledge all ideas, work, and even distinctive words or phrases that are not their own. All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- (1) Turning in someone else's work as your own;
- (2) Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit;
- (3) Failing to put a quotation in quotation marks;
- (4) Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation;
- (5) Changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit;
- (6) Copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not;
- (7) Additionally, if you download a paper from the Internet and submit it as your own work or if you submit a paper you wrote and submitted in a previous class, you have committed acts of plagiarism.

Penalties

At Troy University, penalties for plagiarism include, but are not limited to, a reduction of grade on an assignment and/or a course as well as such sanctions as loss of student privileges, probation, suspension, and expulsion. These penalties for plagiarism are described in the Standards of Content section of *The Oracle: The Troy University Student Handbook*. If you are unsure if an assignment is plagiarized, use the following checklist for guidance:

- (1) You put all direct quotes in quotation marks;
- (2) You changed words used by the author into synonyms;
- (3) You completely paraphrased the ideas to which you referred;
- (4) Your sentence is mostly made up of your own thoughts, but contains a reference to the author's ideas;
- (5) You mention the author's name in the sentence;
- (6) When in doubt, provide the proper citation to show that the ideas and materials are not your own.

Final Examination Policy

Troy University requires that a final examination is administered in every course and that the examination is to be administered during the officially scheduled examination period as published by the Office of the Provost. Students may be allowed to alter their examination schedules for the following reasons only:

- (1) Any student having more than two final examinations in the same day may, with the approval of the Department Chair, make arrangements with the instructor to stand the third examination during the "Special Examination Period" of each semester of the academic year;

- (2) Students who have been officially excused from class for the purpose of representing the institution may secure permission to stand final examinations in advance of that scheduled date;
- (3) Students who have a military obligation (e.g., induction or summer camp) may secure permission to stand final examination in advance of the scheduled date.

*** *In the latter two instances above, written permission must be obtained in advance from the Department Chair or Dean (Faculty Handbook, 2012.)*

Appeal of Grades

Step 1. Within the first four weeks of the start of the following term or semester in which the grade is received, the student shall have informally appealed the grade to the instructor. If that instructor is not teaching at Troy University during the term following issuance of the grade, the student will make contact with the instructor through the department chair to informally appeal the grade.

Step 2. If the issue is not resolved at this informal level and the student wishes to pursue the appeal, the student shall request in writing a meeting with the respective department chair. This request shall be addressed to the department chair and shall be received no later than the end of the fifth week of instruction for the term or semester following issuance of the grade. The request must summarize the student's complaint and the student's informal appeal to the instructor.

Step 3. Within two weeks of receipt of the request, the department chair shall discuss the appeal with the student and with the instructor, separately or at the same time. If the department chair upholds the decision, the matter is closed. The decision is final.

Step 4. If the department chair does not support the decision of the instructor, the matter shall be appealed within two weeks of the department chair's decision to the designated associate dean or dean of the college. The department chair will forward the appeal package to the designated associate dean or dean. The designated associate dean or dean will empanel three fulltime faculty colleagues from the department and/or discipline to review the matter. The decision of this panel shall be final and binding on all parties.

*** *Students may not use this procedure to appeal grades resulting from violations of academic honesty. Students should refer to the Oracle, the University's official student handbook, for these appeals.*

Attendance and Participation

Students are asked to come to class prepared and having read the assigned readings, and to complete all course assignments in a timely manner. Participation also includes the completion of the course assignments. Students are asked to notify me in advance if they will not be in attendance. Students are asked not to exceed 2 absences over the term. No distinction is made between excused and non-excused absences; therefore, neither documentation nor rationale is required. For each absence over 2, 7-points will be deducted from the final grade. In the event that a student accrues more than 2 absences, it will be the student's option to negotiate additional coursework/ assignment(s) that may be used to supplement this deduction.

Acceptance is at my discretion and will consider the student's demonstrated effort during the term.

Troy University Grading Rubric

Grade	Description	Credit	Grade Points/ Credit Hour
A	Excellent.	Yes	4
B	Above Average.	Yes	3
C	Average.	Yes	2
D	Below Average.	Yes	1
F	Failure.	No	0
AU	Audit.	No	0
DF	Dropped course with academic penalty. (<i>Calculates as an F in the GPA.</i>)	No	0
DP	Dropped course passing.	No	0
DR	Dropped course prior to the published deadline.	No	0
FA	Failure to attend.	No	0
I	Incomplete.	No	0
FI	Course requirements not completed by end of time limit for course assigned an Incomplete. Assigned by Registrar. (<i>Calculates as an F in the GPA.</i>)	No	0
NG	No grade reported by faculty at end of term. Assigned by Registrar.	No	0
P	Pass.	Yes	0
W	Withdrawal prior to the published deadline.	No	0
WF	Withdrawal with academic penalty. (<i>Calculates as an F in the GPA.</i>)	No	0
WP	Withdrawal passing.	No	0

Professionalism

Professionalism is a required attribute among social workers and human service professionals. Most importantly, professionalism is demonstrating the values of the social work profession through words, ethics, actions, and demeanor. Professionalism in the classroom entails coming to class on time, being appropriately dressed for an adult learning environment, reading the assigned materials and critically reflecting on it, being prepared to engage in discussion, and completing all assigned activities. Additionally, it is contributing appropriately to in-class exercises and small group activities. The School of Social Work and Human Services reserves the right to remove any student who is not in accordance with the Professionalism Statement and the Troy University Oracle: https://www.troy.edu/oracle/assets/documents/2017-2018_Oracle.pdf

Weighted Assignments

1. 13th: A Value-Critical Analysis (10-pts./ 10 %)

- Week Due: 1
- Competencies Covered: 1, 3, 5
- Description: We will watch Ava DuVernay's film documentary, *13th*, and engage in a value-critical analysis of the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, including an in-class discussion of policy implications.

2. Social Stratification Monopoly Reflection Exercise (10-pts./ 10 %)

- Week Due: 3
- Competencies Covered: 1, 2, 3
- Description: We will form small groups and play Social Stratification Monopoly. You will be asked to reflect upon your experience and to respond to a set of questions I provide.

3. *Raised in the System*: Application of Systems and Critical Theories (10-pts./ 10 %)

- Week Due: 4
- Competencies Covered: 1, 3, 5, 7
- Description: We will review the film documentary, *Raised in the System*, which examines youth incarceration as a contributing factor to mass incarceration. We will apply the tenets of Systems and Critical theories and engage in class discussion.

4. Biopsychosocial Assessment (15-pts./ 15 %)

- Week Due: 6
- Competencies Covered: 1, 7
- Description: Details to follow.

5. Family Assessment (15-pts./ 15 %)

- Week Due: 7
- Competencies Covered: 1, 7
- Description: Details to follow.

6. Interview Skills Quiz (15-pts./ 15 %)

- Week Due: 8
- Competencies Covered: 1
- Description: Details to follow.

7. End-of-Term Advocacy/ Reform Project (25-pts./ 25 %)

- Week Due: 9
- Competencies Covered: 1, 3, 5, 8

- Description: Based on our readings this term, you will select a specific criminal justice or death penalty issue for which you would like to advocate change. Details to follow.

Tentative Course Format & Outline

Week	Tuesday	Topic/ Assignment	Thursday	Topic/ Assignment
1	10.15.19	An historical overview of the criminal justice system and the death penalty in the United States ** <i>Foreword and Chapter 1</i> ** 13 th	10.17.2019	An historical overview of the criminal justice system and the death penalty in the United States ** <i>Chapters 7 and 9</i> ** 13 th
2	10.22.2019	The history of mitigation and the role of social workers in capital defense ** <i>Chapters 4 and 5</i>	10.24.2019	<u>NO CLASS</u>
3	10.29.2019	Poverty, social services, criminal justice, and the death penalty ** <i>Chapters 8 and 12</i>	10.31.2019	<u>NO CLASS</u>
4	11.5.2019	Juvenile Justice, criminal justice, and the death penalty ** <i>Raised in the System</i>	11.7.2019	<u>NO CLASS</u>
5	11.12.2019	Women, criminal justice, and the death penalty ** <i>Guest Speaker</i>	11.14.2019	Immigration, criminal justice, and the death penalty ** <i>Chapter 15</i>
6	11.19.2019	Intellectual disability, criminal justice, and the death penalty ** <i>Chapter 14</i> ** <i>The Standard of Proof of Intellectual Disability in Georgia: The Execution of Warren Lee Hill</i>	11.21.2019	<u>NO CLASS</u>
7	11.26.2019	Serious mental illness, criminal justice, and the death penalty ** <i>Chapter 13</i>	11.28.2019	<u>NO CLASS</u>
8	12.3.2019	Working with the family members of death sentenced persons ** <i>Chapter 16</i>	12.5.2019	Secondary/ trauma, criminal justice, and the death penalty ** <i>Chapter 17</i>
9	12.10.2019	Reform, advocacy, and activism	12.12.2019	<u>NO CLASS</u>

	<i>** Chapters 10, 11, and 18</i>	
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