

Module specification

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Module Code	SWK703
Module Title	Social Work Theory and Practice
Level	7
Credit value	30 Credits
Faculty	FSLS
HECoS Code	100503
Cost Code	GASW
Pre-requisite module	N/A

Programmes in which module to be offered

Programme title	Core/Optional/Standalone
MA Social Work (Qualified Status)	Core

Breakdown of module hours

Learning and teaching hours	31hrs
Placement tutor support hours	0 hrs
Supervised learning hours e.g. practical classes, workshops	0 hrs
Project supervision hours	0 hrs
Active learning and teaching hours total	31 hrs
Placement hours	0 hrs
Guided independent study hours	269 hrs
Module duration (Total hours)	300 hrs

Module aims

This module introduces students to key social work theories, models, methods, and approaches, including sociological, psychological, biological, criminological, and interdisciplinary perspectives. Using a life course perspective, students explore how theory and methods underpin assessment, planning, intervention, and review in social work practice, and they critically examine how social workers integrate professional judgement, communication, engagement, relationship-building, ethical decision-making, and use of self when supporting individuals, families, and communities. Emphasising reflective, anti-oppressive, trauma-

informed, and strengths-based approaches, the module develops students' knowledge, skills, and confidence to apply theory and practice effectively and ethically, while considering the influence of professional boundaries, accountability, interpersonal dispositions, and ethical conduct on everyday decision-making. It aims to develop students' critical understanding of sociological, psychological, biological, criminological, and interdisciplinary theories relevant to social work practice; enable them to apply theory to understanding human growth, development, and lived experience across the life course; introduce key social work methods and models and their application in assessment, planning, and intervention; develop core professional communication skills for effective engagement with individuals; promote understanding of professional boundaries, accountability, interpersonal dispositions, and ethical conduct; support anti-oppressive, trauma-informed, strengths-based approaches to practice; and encourage reflective practice and the development of professional judgement.

Module Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, students will be able to:

1	Critically apply a range of theoretical perspectives to inform social work assessment, planning, intervention, and practice decisions.
2	Critically evaluate social work methods, models and approaches, and their application in assessment, intervention and decision making.
3	Critically evaluate how a life course perspective can enhance understanding of human growth, development.
4	Critically evaluate interpersonal dispositions and the professional use of self in social work practice.
5	Demonstrate critical awareness of professional boundaries, accountability and ethical responsibilities in social work.

Assessment

Indicative Assessment Tasks: Practice-based applied assessment requiring the critical application and justification of social work theories, models, methods and approach to a case study scenario.

This section outlines the type of assessment task the student will be expected to complete as part of the module. More details will be made available in the relevant academic year module handbook.

Students will complete a practice-based applied assignment in which they critically apply and justify relevant social work theories, models, methods, and approaches in response to a case study scenario. The assessment will require students to integrate theory and practice, critically evaluate their professional reasoning and decision-making, and articulate a coherent, evidence-informed approach to assessment and intervention.

Assessment 1: Coursework - Practice-based applied case study scenario.



Assessment number	Learning Outcomes to be met	Type of assessment	Duration/Word Count	Weighting (%)	Alternative assessment, if applicable
1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Coursework	4,000	100	N/A

Derogations

N/A

Learning and Teaching Strategies

The module is aligned with the University Teaching and Learning Strategy (Active Learning Framework), combining student-centred seminars, workshops, and practical exercises. Through embodied and experiential activities, students develop communication, professional curiosity, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness, applying theory and evidence to complex safeguarding scenarios while fostering professional judgement and multi-agency collaboration.

- Interactive lectures and seminars
- Online pre-work or reflective activities before seminars
- Case study analysis and group discussions
- Applied workshops and scenario exercises
- Directed reading and reflective practice tasks
- Roll play – Embodied pedagogies
- Interactive webinars or workshops
- Digital resources (videos, readings, quizzes) to support deeper engagement
- Active classroom discussions

Welsh Elements

Students can present their work, access forms, resources, email correspondence, work placements and personal tutorials in Welsh.

Indicative Syllabus Outline

- A range of social, psychological, biological, criminological, interdisciplinary, and other relevant theoretical perspectives applicable to social work practice.
- Sociological perspectives on inequality, power, social structures, and social exclusion
- Psychological perspectives, including attachment, trauma, learning, and development
- Biological and biopsychosocial perspectives on behaviour and wellbeing
- Criminological perspectives on social behaviour and justice
- Human growth, development, and life transitions across the life-course
- Application of theoretical perspectives to understand individual needs and lived experience

- Trauma-informed frameworks and their influence on assessment and intervention
- Social work practice models and methods
- Application of theory, methods, and approaches to assessment, planning, intervention, and review
- Strengths-based approaches to promoting wellbeing
- Anti-oppressive practice and ethical decision-making frameworks
- Interpersonal dispositions, communication, and relationship-based practice
- Exploring the professional use of self, emotion and reflective practice
- Professional boundaries, accountability, and ethical conduct
- Multi-agency and inter-professional collaboration

Indicative Bibliography

Please note the essential reads and other indicative reading are subject to annual review and update.

Essential Reads:

Ruch, G., Turney, D. and Ward, A. (eds.) (2018), *Relationship-Based Social Work: Getting to the Heart of Practice*. 2nd ed. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Teater, B. (2020), *An Introduction to Applying Social Work Theories and Methods*. 3rd ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Other indicative reading:

Beckett, C., Maynard, A. and Jordan, P. (2017), *Values and Ethics in Social Work*. 3rd ed. London: SAGE.

Beckett, C. (2020), *Supervision: A Guide for the Helping Professions*. London: Sage Publications.

Cairns, K. and Cairns, B. (2016), *Attachment, Trauma and Resilience: Therapeutic Caring for Children*. London: CoramBAAF.

Duschinsky, R., Lampitt, S. and Bell, S. (2016), *Sustaining Social Work: Between Power and Powerlessness*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Dyke, C. (2023), *Writing Analytical Assessments in Social Work: Critical Skills for Social Work*. 3rd ed. Northwich: Critical Publishing.

Fook, J. and Gardner, F. (eds.) (2013), *Critical Reflection in Context: Applications in Health and Social Care*. London: Routledge.

Fook, J. (2023), *Social Work: A Critical Approach to Practice*. 4th ed. London: SAGE.

Green, L. (2017), *Understanding the Life Course: Sociological and Psychological Perspectives*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press

James, E., Mitchell, R. and Morgan, H. (eds.) (2020), *Social Work, Cats and Rocket Science: Stories of Making a Difference in Social Work with Adults*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Killick, C. and Taylor, B.J. (2020), *Assessment, Risk and Decision Making in Social Work: An Introduction*. Exeter: Learning Matters.

Kline, R. and Preston-Shoot, M. (2012), *Professional Accountability in Social Care and Health: Challenging Unacceptable Practice and Its Management*. Los Angeles, CA: Learning Matters.

Livingston, W., Redcliffe, J. and Quinn Aziz, A. (eds.) (2023), *Social Work in Wales*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Parker, J. and Crabtree, S. Ashencaen. (2017), *Social Work with Disadvantaged and Marginalised People*. Exeter: Learning Matters.

Thompson, S. and Thompson, N. (2023), *The Critically Reflective Practitioner*. 3rd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Walker, J. and Horner, N. (2020), *Social Work and Human Development*. 6th ed. Exeter: Learning Matters.

Administrative Information

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