



SOCWORK 1025A (570)
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL WELFARE
Fall 2026

Instructor: Dr. Kym Briggs

In sending emails to the instructor, please ensure you add the course number and section in the subject line for easy reference and response. Response time will usually be within 24 business hours (Mon-Fri. 9am-5 pm).

Instructor: Dr. Kym Briggs, RSW, BA(Hon), MEd, EdD

Email: kbriggs@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Mondays, 11:30am – 12:30pm
Or by appointment

Course and Faculty Contact:

For Course Information (Day, Time and Location), please go to student.uwo.ca, login, select Academics then Fall 2026. For Faculty Contact information please see the class OWL.

Calendar Description:

An introductory course addressing key concepts and contemporary issues in professional social work practice in Canada. The ethical underpinnings of the profession along with micro, mezzo, macro levels of intervention will be discussed, and an emphasis placed on their application to diverse populations of practice in the Canadian context. The course will also emphasize pursuing a critical analysis of Canada's existing social welfare programs and institutions. Attention will be given to the history of the social work profession and society's response to human needs in the Canadian context. Required for admission to the Social Work program.

Antirequisite(s): Social Work 1021AB, Social Work 1022A/B, or the former Social Work 1020. Extra information: 3 lecture hours. This course is open to all students, but is required for admission to the professional Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) program.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: CATEGORY A

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course, or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

National Day For Truth and Reconciliation Policy

That September 30 be recognized as a day that honours the survivors of the Canadian residential school system, their families, and communities. Acknowledgement of the horrendous abuses committed at the schools is a critical part of establishing collective awareness of our history, but it must be accompanied by broader reflection and response to the legacy of colonization and disenfranchisement that spans centuries. September 30 will be observed as a non-instructional day to allow students and employees to observe this day as an opportunity to advance the work of 'Truth and Reconciliation' as we reflect on the meaning of decolonization, and the actions required by the Western community to achieve it. If September 30 falls on the weekend, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives will be consulted as to when to observe the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Statement of Commitment:

At King's University College, we learn and work on land that is part of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty from the original inhabitants of this land, the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenapeewak, and Attawandaron peoples; all of whom have longstanding relationships to the land of Southwestern Ontario and the City of London. As an uninvited guest, I am grateful to inhabit this land, and hope to maintain the spirit of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty to work collaboratively with the original inhabitants to protect it.

As a social worker, I consider the uniqueness of every individual I work with, and value and stress the importance of culture and cultural practices. I am aware of the historical harm caused by my profession against Indigenous people, and that this continues to impact Indigenous people in many ways. I am committed to learning ways to professionally and personally put the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) recommendations into action. In my teaching, I strive to listen intently and to learn from everyone. I also attempt to identify and challenge harmful practices and policies within social work.

Course Description:

This is a half course introduction to social work and social welfare. Emphasis is on integrating social work practice with social welfare policies. There is a focus on connecting personal problems to public issues. The profession of social work is analyzed as to its functions, values, theoretical base, and methods of intervention and fields of practice with individuals, families and communities. This is a course for those interested in understanding the profession of social work and the practice of social work with vulnerable and marginalized populations in society. It is also a required course for admission to the BSW (Honours) program at King's University College.

Course Objectives:

The course is organized to provide students with increased foundation knowledge and awareness in the following areas:

1. Students will learn about the historical development of Canada's social work and social welfare system and the influence of political ideology and cultural beliefs on both;
2. Students will begin to understand the influence of current economic, social and political trends (particularly globalization) on the future development of Canada's social welfare system;
3. Students will gain an appreciation of the lived reality of oppressed and disadvantaged groups in Canada;
4. Students will examine the various professional roles and fields of practice which may be assumed by social workers;

5. Students will gain an understanding of the importance of values, ethics and principles inherent in the profession of social work and their importance in the practice of social work;
6. Students will begin to understand the basic methods of social work practice with individuals, families, groups and communities;

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course:

- Students will demonstrate a beginning knowledge of the history of the social work profession and the social welfare system in Canada;
- Students will be able to identify the impact of the cultural beliefs (English and French) and dominant political philosophies on the development of Canada's current social welfare system;
- Students will demonstrate a beginning knowledge of the importance of values, ethics and principles inherent in the profession of social work and their importance in the practice of social work;
- Students will begin to understand the influence of current economic, social and political trends, specifically globalization and social justice, on the future development of the social work profession and the social welfare system within the Canadian context;
- Students will be able to identify and discuss the most relevant social (welfare) policies and programs that impact the lives of vulnerable people specifically women, the poor, immigrants/refugees, disabled, elderly, children and First Nations people;
- Students will be able to describe the basic methods of social work practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities; while gaining an appreciation of the lived experience of oppressed and disadvantaged groups in Canada;
- Students will be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of the various professional roles and fields of practice assumed by social workers in the profession.

Class-specific policy on AI (e.g. Chat GPT)

King's is committed to fostering a culture of professionalism, honesty, and academic integrity, and all members of our community—faculty, staff, and students—have a role to play in promoting an ethical learning environment. Furthermore, through the work they submit for academic evaluation, students develop important habits of critical thinking, independent inquiry, and creativity. Thus, it is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor.

Within this course, use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, co-pilot, translation tools, and grammar-checking tools) is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

Course Website – OWL Brightspace

The course website (<https://westernu.brightspace.com>) is accessible to all students registered in this

course. It contains the course outline (syllabus), announcements, and other course resource materials. The OWL may be used for in-class communication, discussion boards, tests, quizzes, posting of lecture materials, etc., at the instructor's discretion.

Evaluation:

1. **Mid-Term Exam:** It will be a 90-minute exam consisting of 60 True/False and multiple-choice questions. It will cover materials from weeks 1 – 4 of the course. This exam is in-class.

Due: Monday October 19th, 2026, at 2:30pm

Mark: 35%

2. **TED Talk Assignment:** Students will be required to watch a 20-minute online TED Talk from a list of talks provided. After watching the TED talk, the student will be required to submit a three-page, double-spaced reflection on the content of the talk. Assignment details and rubric will be posted on OWL.

Due: Monday, November 2nd @ 11.55pm by electronic submission through the Assignment portal on OWL Brightspace

Mark: 20%

3. **Final Exam:** The final exam will take place during the December exam period. You will be expected to answer three (3) essay questions. You are responsible for materials from the whole course for this exam. More information on the exam will be posted closer to the end of the term.

Due: December Final Exam Period – Date TBD

Mark: 45%

****Any missed or unsubmitted exam or assignment will get a grade of zero.***

****Friday make-up exams may only be written with the instructor's consent. Students will incur a fee of \$45.00 per make-up assessment booked with the Exam Office.***

Textbook:

Hick, S. & Stokes, J. (2017). *Social Work in Canada: An Introduction* (4th Ed). Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing. ISBN 978-1-55077-256-2

Cost: \$119.95 approximate, Print Textbook

\$69.95 approximate, Digital Textbook

<http://thompsonbooks.com/higher-ed/social-work-welfare-canada-catalog/social-work-in-canada/pricing/>

Used books are acceptable as long as they are the 2017 edition.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: September 14th

Topic: **Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare**

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will understand course objectives and instructor expectations
- Students will develop a beginning knowledge of Canada's social welfare state and the eroding social safety net.
- Students will be able to describe the programs and institutions that make up the Canadian social welfare system, and how these programs are funded and provided
- Students will be able to identify different approaches to social welfare
- Students will understand how social policy influences the delivery of social welfare services.

Readings:

Chapter 1: Social Work and Social Welfare in Canada

Week 2: September 21st

Topic: **History of the Social Work Profession**

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to describe the history of the social work profession and of social work in Canada.
- Students will understand globalization and neoliberalism as challenges to social welfare and social work in Canada
- Students will understand the international dimension of social work practice

Readings:

Chapter 2: Toward a history of Social Work in Canada

Chapter 14: International Social Work Practice

Week 3: September 28th

Topic: **Social Work Theories and Practice with Individuals, Groups, & Communities**

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to describe some social work theories and approaches
- Students will be able to describe the role of social workers in helping individuals and families.
- Students will be able to describe the role of social workers in working with groups.
- Students will be able to describe the role of social workers in working with communities.

Readings:

Chapter 3: Social Work Theories and Practice Models

Chapter 4: Individuals, Groups and Communities

Week 4: October 5th

Topic: **Social Work and Child Welfare in Canada**

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will understand the major challenges facing children and youth in Canada and be able to describe the role of social work in responding to these challenges.
- Student will be able to describe the role of child welfare in Canadian society and be able to identify the individual, societal and family circumstances that contribute to the abuse and neglect of children.
- Students shall understand the history and purposes of child-related income security benefits.

Readings:

Chapter 5: Social Work and Child Welfare in Canada

Week 5: October 12th - Thanksgiving Holiday & Reading Week – No class

Week 6: October 19th – Mid-term Exam – In class

Week 7: October 26th

Topic: **Health, Mental Health & Social Work Practice**

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to describe the key features of Canada's health care system.
- Students will understand the importance of social determinants of health

- Students will be able to describe the role of social workers in the health care system.
- Students will be able to distinguish between mental illness and mental wellness
- Students will gain working knowledge of the importance of the Mental Health Act;
- Students will be able to describe the various roles and interventions assumed by social workers in the context of mental illness.
- Students will be able to describe the role and interventions of social workers in working with individuals and families in the context of modern-day health care.

Readings:

Chapter 6: Social Work and the Health of Canadians

Chapter 7: Mental Health and Social Work Practice

Week 8: November 2nd

TED Talk Assignment Due

Topic: **Social Work Practice with Women, Sexual & Gender Diversity**

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will understand the major challenges facing women in Canada and be able to describe the role of social work in responding to these challenges.
- Students will understand the models of family, different types of family formations, and factors changing the modern family.
- Students will be able to critically examine the current discourse surrounding gender and sexual diversity and connect these to circumstances and life experiences of men, women and members of LGBT community.
- Students will be able to describe the role of social workers in working with the members of the LGBT community.

Readings:

Chapter 8: Social Work with Women in Canada

Chapter 12: Social Work and Sexual and Gender Diversity

Week 9: November 9th

Topic: **Social Work Practice with Indigenous Peoples of Canada**

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will understand the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada as it relates to their current social issues
- Students will understand the effect of colonialism and government policy objectives on Indigenous Peoples.
- Students will be able to describe the role of social workers in working with Indigenous Peoples.

Readings:

Chapter 9: Social Work and Indigenous Communities

Week 10: November 16th

Topic: **Social Work with Immigrants and Racialized Canadians**

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to identify legislation and policies that govern immigration in Canada
- Students will be able to identify the challenges facing immigrants and newcomers to Canada
- Students will understand the dynamics of racism at an individual, community and institutional level.
- Students will develop a working knowledge of the various roles social workers assume in working with newcomers and immigrants to Canada.

Readings:

Chapter 10: Racialized Canadians and Immigrants

Week 11: November 23rd

Topic: **Social Work Practice with the Elderly**

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will understand the diversity within the aging population
- Students will be able to describe theories of aging and issues of concern for the aging population

- Students will be able to describe income security benefits for the aging population

Readings:

Chapter 11: Social Work with Older Canadians

Week 12: November 30th

Topic: **Social Work Practice with Persons with Disabilities**

Learning Outcomes:

- Students will understand disability as part of the human experience
- Students will be able to describe the approaches to disabilities as well as barriers to full inclusion
- Students will be able to describe income security benefits for peoples with disabilities

Readings:

Chapter 13: Social Work and Persons with Disabilities

Week 13: December 7th: Course Review & Exam Prep.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK POLICIES – BSW Program 2026-2027

School of Social Work Attendance Policy – Pre-Program Courses

In accordance with Western University policies

https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?PolicyCategoryID=5&Command=showCategory&Keywords=attendance&SubHeadingID=68&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_68, attendance is expected in Social Work courses: “Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of Registration.

The School of Social Work considers “too many classes” to be three classes. You may receive written warning from your instructor after your second missed class advising you that after a third missed class they may request that you be barred from writing the final exam.

School of Social Work Policy on Grade Adjustment for Late Assignments

Failure to meet deadlines without prior permission of the Instructor will result in a reduction of marks.

Marks for papers/assignments received after the due date will be reduced by 2% per day (including weekends) to a maximum of 5 days, after which time the assignment will not be accepted.

General Course Policies 2026–2027

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION FOR STUDENT ABSENCE

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below. In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/S_MC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:
https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

ABSENCES FROM FINAL EXAMINATIONS

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such

students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

3. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's (Western) is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

Mental Health and Wellness at King's - King's University College

You can reach supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Social Worker who can offer help.

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Case Manager/Social Worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

4. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see https://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

5. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality_Reports - TurnItIn.html.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

6. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

7. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

8. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.