As social work students, you will be asked to work collaboratively on a group paper. These assignments will require you to work with others to produce one cohesive final essay. Group essays allow students to develop teamwork skills and enhance collaborative thinking through co-authorship.
Pre-Writing

- Identify individual strengths/weaknesses
- Balance power within the group
- Brainstorm
- Formulate a common draft thesis or argument

Envision your final product. What should it look like? What is its purpose/goal? Who is the intended audience? How should you accomplish your purpose?
PLANNING

- Divide responsibility

- Schedule meetings, and stick to them: How often will the group meet? When and where will the group meet? How will the group share information if not in person?

- Have each group member write down the due date for the final paper and also the due dates for drafts.
RESEARCH

- How will the group find appropriate sources (books, journal articles, newspaper articles, visual media, trustworthy websites, interviews)?
- Have each member research the part of the paper for which they are responsible.
- As a group, discuss which research findings will be used and which will be eliminated.
- How will the group present the findings (text only, graphs, charts, pictures, tables)?
DRAFTING/Writing

1. As a group, create an outline

2. Keeping the group outline in mind, each group member separately writes their portion of the paper; Google docs is a great resource to use for group writing.

3. Meet as a group to combine each individual's writing component. Some groups may designate one person for this task. If so, ensure that this person carries a lighter load in research and drafting.
Revising, Editing, and Proofreading

- Each member should read the entire draft, from start to finish.

- Revise the ideas and structure of the paper before worrying about smaller, sentence-level errors. Is the argument clear? Is the evidence presented in a logical order? Do the transitions connect the ideas effectively? If ideas clash, talk out the pros and cons of each approach until the group reaches an agreement.

- Reconcile differences in style, voice, and tone to make the paper fluid and cohesive.

- Proofreading: Check for typos, spelling errors, punctuation problems, formatting issues, and grammatical mistakes. Reading the paper aloud is a very helpful strategy at this point.

★ The reading and revising steps should be repeated until all group members are satisfied with the paper.
HELPFUL HINTS

- Maintain a positive and helpful attitude
- Start early, and allow plenty of time for revising
- Plan a strategy for scheduling: Doodle.com, whenisgood.net, and meetingwizard.com are free websites that can make scheduling easier.
- Find a convenient and effective way to share files: Google docs and Drop box are good methods
- Try separating the tasks of revising and editing/proofreading
- Schedule an appointment at the University Writing Center to work with a writing consultant


