



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SWK 361 – Issues in Family Treatment

INSTRUCTOR: Elizabeth LaMont, MSW. Ph.D.
OFFICE: Henderson 306
OFFICE HOURS: M – noon to 5 p.m.; T – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Th 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Other times by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This elective course is designed to enable students to understand the theories and the process of helping families. Information is provided on diverse family structures and work with families facing divorce, death, domestic violence, and other social problems.

GOALS AND COMPETENCIES:

1. Prepare BSW graduates for entry-level professional social work practice that reflects generalist social work knowledge and skills. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- 1.1 Apply critical thinking and effective communication (2.1.3)
- 1.2 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research (2.1.6)
- 1.3 Apply knowledge of HBSE to practice (2.1.7)
- 1.4 Apply knowledge of policy to practice (2.1.8)
- 1.5 Apply change strategies with all levels of systems (2.1.10)

2. Enable BSW graduates to practice ethically and apply social work values to promote equality and justice. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- 2.1 Apply social work ethics & principles (2.1.2)
- 2.2 Engage diversity in practice (2.1.4)
- 2.3 Promote human rights and social and economic justice (2.1.5)

3. Provide meaningful contexts through which BSW students engage in leadership, service, and professional excellence. Graduates will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- 3.1 Identify and respond as a professional social worker (2.1.1)
- 3.2 Respond to professional contexts that shape practice, demonstrating qualities of leadership for the profession. (2.1.9)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- 1. To further the students understanding of the multi problem, crisis-prone family.
- 2. To enhance the student’s awareness of current, state-of-the-art models of helping families dealing with stress, dysfunction, and coping techniques.
- 3. To explore a variety of approaches to assessment and intervention when dealing with the difficulty of family problems.
- 4. To provide students with a good systems-oriented understanding of families and how they are evolving in today’s society.

TEXT:

Thomlison, B. (2007). *Family Assessment Handbook: An Introduction and Practical Guide to Family Assessment*. CA: Thomson, Brooks/Cole

GRADING:

Grading and evaluation - Grades will be determined according to the following percentage points earned against possible points.

Evaluation for the course grade will be computed according to the following formula:

Possible Points Grade

200 to 180 –A

179 to 160 –B

159 to 140 –C

139 to 120 –D

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Students are expected to attend class, reflecting responsibility which is inherent in the development as a social work professional. Roll will be taken regularly. Students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate when class begins as well as be present throughout the entire class meeting. Classroom exercises, discussions, role plays, guest speakers and other in-class experiential exercises are essential for a student’s professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. Tardiness (or early departure) of more than 15 minutes will count as .5 absence (2 tardies/early departures = 1 absence). A student is considered absent if he/she arrives more than 30 minutes late to class, leaves 30 or more minutes early or does not come to class.

The following penalties for absences (unexcused, or excused, according to university policy) will be administered:

Weekly	Up to 2 absences	3 absences	4 absences	
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	No penalty	1 letter grade drop	Class grade of "F"	
Bi-weekly	Up to 3 absences No penalty	4 absences 1 letter grade drop	5 absences 1 letter grade drop	6 absences Class grade of "F"
Summer 10-week	Up to 1 absence No penalty	2 absences 1 letter grade drop	3 absences Class grade of "F"	

ONLINE OR WEB-ENHANCED CLASSES: Just as students are required to attend face-to-face classes, students are required to log in and participate in online components. To receive credit for attendance online via eCollege, students must log in and complete assignments in a timely manner. Not logging in to eCollege (which can be monitored by the instructor) and completing assignments online during the appropriate time is the equivalent of an absence for each week this occurs.

Final evaluation and grades depend on both presence and participation. Students' grades will be significantly impacted by inadequate participation or lack of required time commitment each week. Students are expected to spend a comparable amount of time in the online learning environment as they would in class (3 hours a week in the classroom). In addition, just as in traditional F2F classrooms, students are expected to spend time reading and studying class materials.

NOTE: PROBLEMS WITH YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION AND/OR COMPUTER ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS REASONS FOR LACK OF PARTICIPATION. You have access to the university's computer labs (in the social work department AND other campus facilities, including the library) as well as local libraries and other access to computers and ISPs.

If you believe that you are unable to fulfill the requirements for the course you should talk with your instructor about the possibility of dropping or withdrawing.

Class participation has three components: (1) Appropriate interactions with classmates, (2) Attentiveness, and (3) Active involvement in class activities. Evaluation of class participation is based on instructor observation. Students will be given feedback if problems are evident.

POLICY ON DUE DATES: Assignments are due at 11:59 p.m. on the Sunday of the week in which the assignment is located. (This means you must read ahead on the schedule.) Class weeks for this course begin on Mondays at 12:00 a.m. and close on Sundays at 11:59 p.m. So the assignment for the first two quizzes means that they must be completed by 11:59 p.m. on the Sunday of Week 2 (specifically 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Jan 21.) See the course calendar under Doc Sharing for this course for specific details on all due dates. The file is titled "Course Calendar." Late assignments for papers and/or projects will be accepted with a penalty of one grade deduction for every day the assignment is late. Late assignments will not be accepted for discussion board postings and quizzes.

POLICY ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Every student is expected to do his/her own work. Law, ethical standards, university policy, and departmental policy demand that students refrain from plagiarism and any form of cheating. Plagiarism is the "Act of appropriating the literacy composition of another, or parts of passages

from of his [or her] writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the products of one's own mind." (Black's Law Dictionary, Abridged Fifth Edition, 1983). When using others' words, phrases, or ideas in writing, the original author should be given proper credit.

Cheating may take different forms. These include, but are not limited to, copying others' answers during an exam, using notes or other forms of help during an examination or quiz, except when explicitly permitted by the instructor, giving or receiving help on exams or assignments, or submitting work for one class which has already been submitted for another class for credit. Use of citations from the Internet without paraphrasing content AND proper referencing is regarded as plagiarism. Professors have the right to use electronic review programs (such as Turn It In™) to identify plagiarism.

The department does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. A student found to be engaging in such illegal and unethical conduct may receive a failing grade in the course and may be subjected to further disciplinary proceedings. Any assignment or exam that lacks honesty will be given a grade of "0".

ACCEPTABLE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:

“Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws, in addition to the regulations of the University. The standards of Student Conduct including disciplinary rules and procedures are designed to provide and conform to the basic tenets of due process, as developed by institutions of higher education. As such, the University distinguishes these procedures and regulations as an educational and growth process which is not intended to conform to adversary proceedings as in a court of law. (Student’s Guide Book, 2011, p. 35).

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

The Department of Social Work expects all social work students to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional manner. Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession articulates its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards as set forth in the *NASW Code of Ethics* to guide social workers’ conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve. Accordingly, we expect social work students to demonstrate courtesy, respect and support for fellow students, instructors, clients, and all other persons.

All students enrolled in BSW or MSW classes are expected to observe the tenets of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Social Work Student Code of Conduct. Our Code of Conduct is reflective of professional and academic expectations – a student who cannot demonstrate appropriate behaviors will not be appropriate for practice in the social work profession. Students who violate these Codes may be asked to meet with appropriate Social Work faculty (instructors or Program Directors). In addition, the department’s Academic and Professional Issues (API) Committee is responsible for dealing with student issues when requested by faculty.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy of Texas A&M University-Commerce and the Social Work Department to do

everything we can to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law, and the University's commitment to providing equal opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example, in accessibility, seating placement or in arrangements for examinations should not hesitate to inform the instructor. If required, large type, Braille or cassette recordings of syllabus or assignments can be provided.

Students with conditions that require special attention or accommodation should contact the Director of Disability Resources & Services at 903-468-5150 (located in the Library, Room 132).

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. Quizzes (5 throughout the course) = 25% of course grade
2. Case Studies (3 discussions throughout the course) = 30% of course grade
3. Blog/Discussion (6 throughout the course) = 30% of course grade
4. Final exam (opens in finals week) = 15% of course grade

COURSE SCHEDULE (Note: A more detailed and comprehensive schedule is located at the end of this syllabus)				
Week	Reading(s)	Assignment/Activities	Link to Comp.	SLO
1	Syllabus; Online Material; Chapter 1- Family Contexts			1
2	Chapter 2 – A Framework for Understanding Families	Quiz on Syllabus	2.2	2
3	Chapter 3 – The Family System	Quiz on Chapters 1&2	2.3	2
4	Chapter 4 – Intergenerational Family Systems	Blog on Chapter 3	1.1	1
5	Chapter 5 –Family Assessment	Blog on Chapter 4	1.1	4
6	Chapter 6 – Designing Family Interventions	Quiz on Chapter 5	3.1; 3.2	3
7	Chapter 7 – Evaluation	Quiz on Chapter 6	3.1; 3.2	4
8	Chapter 8 – Evidenced-based Practice	Blog on 7	1.2; 2.1; 2.2	3
9	SPRING BREAK			
10	Chapter 9 – Critical and Reflective Thinking	Blog on 8	1.1;1.3;1.4	1
11	Chapter 10 – Narrative	Blog on 9	1.5	1
12	Chapter 11- Exploring Your	Quiz on 10	1.1; 2.1;	2

	Own Family Systems		3.2	
13	Case Discussion #1	General Blog	All	All
14	Case Discussion #2	Case Discussion #1	All	All
15	Case Discussion #3	Case Discussion #2	All	All
16	Course Material Review	Case Discussion #3	All	All
Finals		Final Exam		

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

1. **Quizzes** – There are five quizzes throughout the course; each one is worth 5 points (equaling 25 points total and 25% of the course grade). Quizzes will open and close at the specified times in the course calendar. There are no allowances for opening a quiz after it has closed (in order to be completed late). Each quiz is on a specific topic (such as the syllabus or a chapter) and there are no overlaps. All quizzes are open book; however, all quizzes are also timed, which means you are advised to have notes or to have read the material to reduce flipping through pages to find the answers.
2. **Case Studies** – There are three case studies at the end of the course which you will be required to analyze based on the material you have learned in this course. You will be assigned a random case study each time (these are located in the back of the text) to analyze in a specific manner (such as assessment or intervention). Each one is worth 10 points to total 30% of your course grade.
3. **Blog/Discussion** – There are six blog/discussion assignments throughout this course. They are worth five points each for a total of 30% of your course grade. To get full points on every blog/discussion assignment you must do all of the following:
 - a. Post your initial response to the discussion by 11:59 p.m. on the Wednesday prior to the Sunday due date for the full assignment.
 - b. Initial post must be a true discussion of your understanding of the topic assignment and must be a minimum of 15 sentences.
 - c. You must post at least one comment to three other student posts prior to the Sunday due date. These comments must be a minimum of five sentences and must add to the discussion. Though you are free to say things like “Interesting thought” or “Nice discussion.” These comments and those similar are not counted as part of the five sentences.
 - d. Note that I am being very specific so that you can specifically understand the expectations for an “A” grade.
4. **Final Exam** – This is worth 15% of your course grade and is a comprehensive exam on everything you learned in the course. It is a combination of True/False, Multiple Choice, and Short Answer. You will be provided a study guide two weeks prior to the exam. This exam is also open book/open note. However, as with the quizzes, it will be timed and it is suggested that you study your material so as to not have to look up all the answers.

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Department of Social Work Code of Conduct for Social Work Students

The Department of Social Work expects all social work students to conduct themselves in an ethical, professional manner, consistent with our profession's Code of Ethics.

Preamble of the NASW Code of Ethics: The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The *NASW Code of Ethics* sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

Accordingly, we expect social work students to demonstrate courtesy, respect and support for fellow students, instructors, clients, and all other persons. While the values of the profession are codified in the NASW Code of Ethics, we feel that the following additional standards of behavior are to be exhibited as well by all students enrolled in our program:

- 1. Accountability** – Attend class, arrive on time, return from breaks in a timely manner • Participate in activities and assignments in a level comparable to peers • Complete work in a timely fashion according to directions • Be prepared and engaged in the learning process.
- 2. Respect** – Treat your peers, instructors, and all other persons with dignity and respect at all times Listen while others are speaking • Give constructive feedback when appropriate Approach conflict in a cooperative manner • Use positive and nonjudgmental language
- 3. Confidentiality and Boundaries** – Treat any personal information that you hear (or read) about a peer or an instructor as strictly confidential • Maintain information shared in class as confidential • Use judgment in self-disclosing information of a personal nature in the classroom (Class time is not therapy or treatment – seek a referral if you need it) • Never use names of clients or disclose other identifying information • Exercise clear and appropriate boundaries between yourself, other students, your instructors, and in other professional relationships.
- 4. Competence** – Apply yourself to all your academic pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness • Meet deadlines given by your instructors • Constantly strive to learn and improve your abilities • Come to class prepared • Seek appropriate support when having difficulties • Take responsibility for the quality of completed tests and assignments • Strive to achieve greater awareness of personal issues that may impede your effectiveness with clients.
- 5. Diversity** – Strive to become more open to people, ideas, and creeds that you are not familiar with Embrace diversity • Maintain speech free of racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, stereotyping, etc. •

Exhibit a willingness to serve diverse groups of persons • Demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact.

6. Integrity – Practice honesty with yourself, your peers, and your instructors • Constantly strive to improve your abilities • Commit yourself to the academic discipline of citing other people’s work properly • Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed • Accept and benefit from constructive feedback.

7. Communication – Strive to improve both verbal and written communication skills as those skills are the benchmark for effective professional practice and helping relationships • Demonstrate appropriately assertive communication with peers and instructors • Practice positive, constructive, respectful and professional communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal) with peers, instructors and all other persons.

Adapted from Florida Atlantic University School of Social Work

All students enrolled in BSW or MSW classes are expected to observe the tenets of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Social Work Student Code of Conduct. Students who violate these may be asked to meet with appropriate Social Work faculty (instructors or Program Directors). In addition, the department’s Academic and Professional Issues (API) Committee is responsible for dealing with academic and non-academic student issues when requested by faculty. The API is comprised of the various program directors and is chaired by the Department Head. The decisions or actions of the API are considered the final say of the department. Students may be disciplined or dismissed from the program for violation of this Code of Conduct. Students have the right to appeal any decision to the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, as specified by university policy.

By signing below, I verify that I agree to abide by the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and the Code of Conduct stated above.

Printed Name Date

Signature

