



## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

### SWK 361 – Issues in Family Treatment

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INSTRUCTOR: Elizabeth LaMont, MSW. Ph.D.  
OFFICE: Henderson 306  
OFFICE HOURS: Mondays from 1-5 p.m.  
Tuesdays from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Online\*, by phone, and other times by appointment  
OFFICE PHONE: 903-468-3013 cell : 719-839-0063  
E-MAIL: elizabeth.lamont@tamuc.edu

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\* Online means that I can meet you in Virtual Office or in Chat

#### **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:**

ONLINE: Students are expected to attend class by logging in to the course in a timely manner, reflecting responsibility which is inherent in the development as a social work professional. The instructor has the ability to see when you log in, what sections you visit and how much time you spend in the course material. Assignments submitted on time are also counted as attendance; therefore, an assignment not submitted is counted as an absence for that week. Students are expected to participate in class, even when there is not a specific grade attached (see Topic Check-in). Course topics, PowerPoint lectures, discussions, groups, videos, and other experiential exercises are essential for a student's professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. In this online course, a student is considered absent if he/she fails to log in sufficient time for the material for that week or fails to complete an assignment that is due that week.

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

Weekly	Up to 2 absences No penalty	3 absences 1 letter grade drop	4 absences 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"	

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. Class weeks for this course begin on Mondays at 12:00 a.m. and close on Sundays at 11:59 p.m. Late assignments for papers and/or projects (with the exception of final exams) 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).

**OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Quizzes (3 throughout the course) = 30 points total
2. Discussion board (3 throughout the course) = 30 points total
3. Written assignments (3 throughout the course) = 60 points total
4. Group = 20 points
5. Topic Check-in = 20 points
6. Final exam (written case evaluation) = 40 points total

Assignments will open two weeks in advance for students who wish to work ahead. They close when they are due. But items such as discussions will remain available as “Read Only” after the closing date. Pay attention; however, to things such as not posting *response* comments prior to the 11:59 p.m. Wednesday date. This is important because I want you to read what everyone has to say before you choose who to comment to and what you want to say. (See Discussion Board for more details.)

Week	Reading(s)	Assignment/Activities
1- Aug 26		Listen to Syllabus PowerPoint
2- Sep 2	Syllabus; Chapter 9 – Critical and Reflective Thinking	Topic Check-in
3- Sep 9	Chapter 1 – Family Contexts	Discussion Board #1
4- Sep 16	Chapter 2 – A Framework for Understanding Families	Quiz on Chaps 1, 2, 9
5- Sep 23	Chapter 3 – The Family System	Paper #1
6- Sep 30		Topic Check-in

7- Oct 7	Chapter 4 – Intergenerational Family Systems	Discussion Board #2
8- Oct 14	Chapter 5 –Family Assessment	Quiz 2 on Chaps 3, 4, 5
9- Oct 21	Chapter 6 – Designing Family Interventions	Paper #2
10- Oct 28		Topic Check-in
11- Nov 4	Chapter 7 – Evaluation	Discussion Board #3
12- Nov 11		Online Groups
13- Nov 18	Chapter 8 – Evidenced-based Practice	Quiz 3 on Chaps 6, 7, 8
14- Nov 25	Online article	Paper #3
15- Dec 2		Topic Check-in
16- Dec 9		Final Exam due

## ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

**1. Quizzes** – There are three quizzes throughout the course; each one is worth 10 points (20 questions worth ½ point each). Quizzes will only open on Monday at 12 a.m. in the week they are listed and will close at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday. (They are not opened two weeks in advance.) There are no allowances for opening a quiz after it has closed (in order to be completed late). Each quiz is on specific chapters 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.

If you score a C or lower on a quiz, you have the option to take a “re-take” quiz. Note: The grade on the re-take quiz is **final** *even if it is a lower score than the original quiz*, so only open and begin a retake quiz if you believe you can do better. It will be on the same material but will not be the same quiz. You must request a retake by Thursday noon, following the week of that quiz and it must be completed by Sunday night (11:59 p.m.) of that same week.

**2. Discussion** – There are 3 discussion assignments throughout this course. They are worth 10 points each. To get full points on every discussion assignment you must do all of the following:

**a.** Post your initial response to the discussion by 12 noon on Thursday of the week in which the discussion is listed.

**b.** Your 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 after 12:01 p.m. on Thursday but 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.** Proper grammar is expected. I highly recommend typing your thoughts and comments in a file on a word processing program and check for spelling and grammatical errors. Professionalism and professional presentation is an expectation and not an option. Points will be taken off for sloppy spelling and writing.

**3. Papers** – You will have three written assignments throughout the course on an assigned topic. Each paper is worth 20 points. All assignments are 3-4 pages double-spaced. They are submitted via the dropbox in your eCollege course for the week they are due. *Do not submit them as an email. They must be a document with your last name as part of the file name and they must be a Word document (.doc or .docx extensions).* You are required to use the template “Writing paper template.dotx” for every paper, changing the elements (but not the format) to fit your paper. The template is located in Doc Sharing. A grading rubric is supplied for each paper so you know exactly what you are being graded on. You are permitted to rewrite your paper if the initial grade you received is not satisfactory. All rewrites are due one week from the due date of the original paper. (Graded papers are returned to you on Wednesdays).

**4. Group** – Prior to Week 12 you will be assigned to a group and given specific instructions for the group activity your group is to complete. This assignment will be given to you (and your group members) in Week 9 and must be completed by the end of Week 12. It is worth 20 points.

**5. Topic Check-in** – These are scattered throughout the course. They only require that you log in for that week and either read the topic information or watch the video. Your time online for that week is monitored to see that you have completed the requested task. This is worth 20 points.

**6. Final Exam** – This is worth 40 points and is a comprehensive exam on everything you learned in the course. It is a case analysis of a family. You will be assigned a case from the back of the textbook and asked to discuss specific things about the case (following the exam questions) based on what you have learned in this course about working with families.

## **POLICY ON EXTRA CREDIT**

I do not allow extra credit but I do allow rewrites for papers and retakes for quizzes. There is no make up or rewrite for discussions. I do not make ups for any missed assignment unless you have a doctor’s excuse. It is only to make up a low grade. Deadlines still apply. Note that re-writing does not guarantee an improved grade. You do have the possibility to earn a lower grade than the original.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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