



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SWK 361 – Issues in Family Treatment

INSTRUCTOR: Elizabeth LaMont, MSW. Ph.D.
OFFICE: Henderson 306
OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 1- 5 p.m.;
4-7 p.m. Tuesdays in *Virtual Office*; Anytime 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. (2010). *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. Discussion board (3 throughout the course) = 45 points total
2. Written assignments (3 throughout the course) = 115 points total
3. Topic Check-in (4 throughout course) = 40 points

Assignments will open up to three weeks in advance for students who wish to look 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. Thursday 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.)

SWK 361 Schedule

Week	Reading(s)	Assignment/Activities
1- Aug. 25	Syllabus	Listen to Syllabus PowerPoint
2- Sep. 1	Labor Day Holiday	
3- Sep. 8	Chapter 9 – Critical and Reflective Thinking	Topic Check-in #1
4- Sep. 15	Chapter 1 – Family Contexts	Discussion Board #1
5- Sep. 22	Chapter 2 – A Framework for Understanding Families	Topic Check-in #2

6- Sep. 29	Chapter 3 – The Family System	Paper #1
7- Oct. 6	Chapter 4 – Intergenerational Family Systems	Discussion Board #2
8- Oct. 13	Chapter 5 –Family Assessment	Topic Check-in #3
9- Oct. 20	Chapter 6 – Designing Family Interventions	Paper #2
10- Oct. 27		
11- Nov. 3	Chapter 7 – Evaluation	Topic Check-in #4
12- Nov. 10		
13- Nov. 17	Chapter 8 – Evidenced-based Practice	Discussion Board #3
14- Nov. 24		
15- Dec. 1	Article	Paper #3 – Final Exam
Finals		No finals for this class

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

1. Discussion board – There are 3 discussion assignments throughout this course. They are worth 15 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.

2. Papers – You will have three written assignments throughout the course on an assigned topic. Two papers are worth 70 points (35 each). Your final exam, which is also a paper, is worth 45 points. All assignments have instructions and a grading rubric which outlines the points for the paper. All written assignments 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.docx” for every paper, changing the elements (**but do not change the format**) to fit your paper. Rename it to your paper’s file name. 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. (see Paper re-write policy in this syllabus).

3. Topic Check-in – There are 4 Topic Check-ins throughout this course and they are worth 10 points each. They require that you log in for that week and watch the assigned video. For credit (10 points), you must click into your Journal after viewing the video and post a one paragraph summary of what the video was about, and a one paragraph summary of your thoughts on what you saw. Be sure that you date your journal entry. The combined assignments are worth 40 points. These cannot be made up. They must be completed in the week they are assigned. Late posts will not count and will result in a zero for that Topic Check-in.

4. Final Exam – This is worth 45 points and is a comprehensive paper asking you to evaluate a case utilizing the knowledge you gained in this course. Note that it is due the final day of class – December 5 by 6 p.m. in the Dropbox. You can submit it early if you choose. Because it is a final exam, it will be longer than the other two papers, but it will still utilize the Writing paper template.docx. **There is no rewrite for this paper.**

POLICY ON EXTRA CREDIT

I do not allow extra credit but I do allow rewrites for papers. There is no make up or rewrite for discussions. Note that re-writing does not guarantee an improved grade. You do have the possibility to earn a lower grade than the original.

POLICY ON PAPER RE-WRITES: The writing assignments are part of the re-write process for better learning. If you submit any of the written papers on time and are not satisfied with the grade you received, you may re-write the paper, *utilizing the feedback provided in your paper*, and re-submit it for a complete re-grade. Note: This means you have the potential to do worse. However, more likely if you incorporate the feedback, you have the potential to get an A paper. All re-write grades are final, and the re-write must be submitted within **one week** of the original due date. For example: the paper is due on Oct. 5th. You will have the grade within 3 days (by Oct. 8th). You may submit a re-write **with the subject line** – “Rewrite of ... “[name of assignment] – no later than midnight on Oct. 12th. No paper re-writes are accepted after one week of the original due date. Submit them in the rewrite dropbox for the same week the original paper was due.

Assignments eligible for re-writes are Paper #1 and #2. Note: Paper #3, which is the final exam, does not have time allotted for a rewrite. However, I will review drafts of the final paper up until Wednesday, Nov. 26th (by 6 p.m. – and they must be emailed to me not put in the Dropbox, so I know you want a review) and give you feedback you can use to submit a good paper.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

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