



A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

SWK. 361 ISSUES IN FAMILY TREATMENT

Semester: Fall 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Carmen Shurtleff, MSW
Office Location: Henderson Bldg.
Office Hours: By appointment
Office Phone: 903-886-5893
Office Fax: 903-468-3221
University Email Address: Carmen.Shurtleff@tamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: **email**
Communication Response Time: Within 48 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required

Thomlison, B. (2016). Family assessment handbook: An introduction and practical guide to family assessment (4th ed.). Thomson, Brooks/Cole.

Software Required: **NONE**

Optional Texts and/or Materials: **NONE**

Course Description

This elective course provides students with a general overview of the theories, assessments, and interventions involved with helping families. Information includes working with diverse family structures and with families facing divorce, death, domestic violence, and other social problems.

PROGRAM GOALS:

1. Prepare students for competent and effective generalist social work practice with diverse client systems.
2. Provide students with a foundation of knowledge for professional development, graduate education and lifelong learning
3. Develop student capability to improve human service delivery systems and promote social justice
4. Socialize student to the profession of social work

Student Learning Outcomes

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires a competency-based approach to identify and assess what students demonstrate in practice. In social work, this approach involves assessing students' ability to demonstrate the competencies identified in the educational policy. Listed below are the competencies and associated knowledge, skills, values and/or cognitive and affective processes that comprise the expected outcomes for this course.

	Activity/Assessment	Dimension
Competency 1: Students will demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.		
Students will make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context	the written assignments in the course	Knowledge, Values

Students will use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations	the written assignments in the course	Knowledge, Values
Competency 2: Students will engage in diversity and difference in practice.		
Students will apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels	Topic Check-in's	Knowledge, Values
Students will apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies	Topic Check-In's and written papers	Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive and Affective Processes
Competency 7: Students will Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.		
Students will apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies	Written Papers Topic Check-in's	Knowledge, Skills
Students will develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies	Written Papers, Examinations	Knowledge, Skills
Students will select appropriate intervention strategies based on the	Written papers, Examinations	Knowledge, Skills

assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies		
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

In this class you will utilize the Learning Management Systems (LMS) D2L for instructional and learning opportunities, submitting your assignments, participating in online synchronous and asynchronous discussions, accessing resources, and completing quizzes/tests. Additionally, knowledge and skills in using Microsoft Word PowerPoint and Outlook Email, If you have any issues with using the various systems or software, it is your responsibility to contact support services and to notify the instructor of the problem.

Instructional Methods

This course will be delivered via synchronous and asynchronous sessions via D2L and will consist of live class sessions, pre-recorded lectures, group engagement activities, various assignments with some including experiential learning and practical application of the content areas. In addition, small lectures, discussion activities and workshops may be utilized to provide instruction during this course.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

As a student in this course, you are responsible to engage in active learning and reaching out to the instructor if there are problems or challenges that is interfering in optimal learning. Communication is key when engaged in a fully online, virtual environment.

Expectations for success include:

1. Always demonstrate professional behavior, including demonstrating respect for instructor and peers; being open to feedback and guidance throughout this class and in the program.
2. Adhered to the School of Social Work and University student code of conduct, along with NASW Code of Ethics.

3. Begin reading the assigned text and supplemental readings as soon as possible, with a focus on completing all readings prior to engagement with instructor or peers.
4. Prepare to engage in live class sessions, discussions, and other activities so you can be a contributor as well as receiver of knowledge and skills.
5. Actively participate in engagement activities which will include live virtual class sessions, online discussions, and interactive learning opportunities -as this is vital for learning and success in both this course and the program.
6. Work ahead when possible, completing assignments ahead of due date so you are prepared to submit on the due date.
7. Sign into the D2L course multiple times during the week to access updated announcements or posted resources.
8. Check your university email daily. This is the official method of communication by the university, department, and instructor.
9. Be open and focused on the “process” and not the “product” as earning this degree requires time, effort, work and ultimately growth in knowledge, skills, abilities along with personal and professional attributes.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100% of total points

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Evaluation for course grades are according to the following formula:

Exams (3 @ 20 points each)	60 points
Written Assignment (2@ 40 points each)	80 points
Topic Check-Ins (3 @ 20 points each)	60 points

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS

200 Points

Assessments

DUE DATES:

All Assignments are due in D2L by the due date. I will not be able to accept late work.

As social work students, you will have many deadlines in practice that you will be expected to meet. Many times not meeting deadlines can result in having an adverse effect on your clients' lives. It can also result in termination in employment. The School of Social Work feel it is good to help you get into the habit of meeting those expectations now vs. later. Our goal for each of you is to be successful not only in this course, but also in the practice setting.

Thank you for understanding and your willingness to take the first step toward your own success.

There will be NO MAKE-UP exams offered. You will need to take the exam by the due date in D2L.

ASSIGNMENT:

1. **Exams/ Quizzes – (3 @ 20 points each)** There are three quizzes throughout the course; each one is worth 10 points (20 questions worth ½ point each). Quizzes are open in the course and must be completed by 11:30 p.m. on the Sunday in the week they are listed. 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, and have extended times. Meaning, I feel that you can learn as much by going back through the material and locating it again, versus memorizing some concept. I still advise you to have notes or to have read the material to reduce flipping through pages to find the answers.
2. **Papers – APPENDIX A & B (2 @ 40 points each)** There will have two written assignments throughout the course on an assigned topic. Each paper is worth 20 points. All assignments are to be APA format with Times New Roman, 12 point font, and double-spaced. The papers much include a cover page and reference page APA. Assignments are submitted to via the corresponding file in D2L 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). A grading rubric is supplied for each paper so you know exactly what you are being graded on. Note: Points will be deducted for errors in spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. **You must copy and paste the rubric to each of your papers.**

3. **Topic Check-in – (3 @ 20 points each)** There are three Topic Check-Ins throughout the course. They require that you log in for that week and watch the video. For credit for this, you must complete the assignment by uploading **your two-paragraph paper** (totaling a page) after viewing the video and with a one paragraph summary of what the video was about, and a one paragraph summary of your thoughts on what you saw. Please use APA formatting with a cover page, and Times New Roman 12 pt. fonts, double-spaced. Be sure you upload by Sunday at 11:30 pm of the week assigned.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor via email. Instructor will respond to email queries within two business days.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor via email. Instructor will respond to email queries within two business days.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

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
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

School of Social Work and Council on Social Work Education Specific Policies

Course Engagement

Final Evaluation and Grade Depends on both Classroom attendance and Participation

Inadequate participation or lack of required time commitment in each class significantly affects students' grades. No matter the course venue, students must engage in a comparable amount of time. Expectations of both Face-to-Face classes and those with Online components include time spent reading and studying course material. To earn a level of competency within a specific course, students must demonstrate both mastery of content and active engagement.

Mastery of content areas is evidenced by successful completion of course assignments such as written papers, group project deliverables, tests/quizzes and other tangible products designed by instructors to evaluate knowledge and skills.

Additionally, the Social Work Profession is built upon human interactions and building human relationships – which is defined as engagement. Engagement is defined as meaningful involvement in interactions with instructor, peers, outside stakeholders as appropriate (such as contacting a social worker to interview for a required assignment). Within the classroom setting, whether virtual or F2F, students must actively participate in 80% of engagement activities as outlined by individual instructors. These activities may include, but are not limited to participation in live, synchronous virtual classes, attending a Face-to-Face course when appropriate, interacting with peers in posted discussions and collaborating in group interactive projects.

Students must meet standards for content mastery on tangible assignments and meet the threshold of active engagement of the time set during a semester by the instructor.

Instructors are experts in each course content area and set the standards for students to meet for successful completion of the course.

Student Conduct

Students preparing to become professional social workers must adhere to the *University Code of Conduct, Department Code of Conduct and National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics*.

Department Code of Conduct

"Faculty have the authority to request students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the class/lab/internship practicum or to block access to online courses and may refer offenses to the [Academic and Professional Issues Committee (API)] or to the Department Head. More serious offenses by be referred to the University Police Department and/or the Judicial Affairs Office for disciplinary action" (Student Guidebook p 35)

Social Work students conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. Closely linked with professional recognition is the social worker's compliance with the profession's ethical standards. It is imperative for professional social workers to be competent and ethical in practice if the profession is to maintain the public trust. It is essential that each social work student gain a thorough understanding of the ethical principles that guide practice and actively demonstrate in behavior, both in and out of the classroom. Student conduct is to reflect the tenets of *NASW Code of Ethics* (located at <https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>) on the NASW website: <https://www.socialworkers.org>

University Code of Conduct *located in the Student Guidebook at <http://www.tamuc.edu/campuslife/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf> (pp 34- 66). On the University Website under Campus Life Documents*

To become aware of university policies related to student academic and behavioral expectations for students refer to the Guidebook

Appendix A
Paper I: Del Sol Rubric
(Chapter 16 in textbook)

Points	Consisting of	Which means	Points Awarded	Comments
15	Paper content	You have discussed each of the four questions accurately and informatively. Your paper has good organization and correct headers.		
15	Discussion	Utilizing critical thinking. Meaning have delved into the topics and presented a deeper discussion of the material rather than just short, superficial answers.		
5	Professional Presentation	All grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation are correct.		
5	Paper format	An assessment template format is used. This paper uses a question/answer format.		
40	Total Points			

**Paper 2: Fernandez Family
Rubric**
(Fernandez Case is located in your textbook)

Points Possible	Consisting of	For
15	Your assessment has covered the important family issues for treatment as based first on the case and then on added information. Utilize and incorporate information from the text to help you in understanding this family. MUST CITE TWO TIMES from the text.	Content
15	Utilizing critical thinking and based on your assessment, you discuss two interventions that would be appropriate for this family and tell why they are appropriate.	Discussion
5	All grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation are correct.	Professional Presentation
5	APA including Cover Sheet, Font, Double Space and Reference Page	Format
40	Total points	

Rubric for Topic Check- Ins

Possible Points	Point breakdown	Points Awarded	Comments
5	First Paragraph addresses the content of the video with a minimum of 5 sentences (Summary)		
5	Second Paragraph discusses what the student learned from the video in at least 10-15 sentences.		
5	Student applied knowledge from the text and video in their second paragraph.		
5	College level writing requirements: grammar, spelling, and paragraphing are correct		
20	Total		

Instructions:

Complete the Topic Check-In #1 assignment by typing **TWO** paragraphs following the Topic Check-In instructions and uploading it to the correct file.

Part 1 - Write a minimum of five-sentence paragraph summarizing the content of the video.

Part 2 - Discuss what you have learned about what babies think. You must write several paragraphs and at least 15 sentences in Part 2. You are to include information from the text and video.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week	Readings	Assignment/Activities
Week 1 8/25/25	Syllabus Chapter 10 – Critical and Reflective Thinking	Review of Syllabus and navigation of course
Week 2 9/1/25	Chapter 1 Family Contexts	Topic Check-in #1 Due Sunday 9/7/25 by 11:30 pm.

Week 3 9/8/25	Chapter 2 A Framework for Understanding Families	
Week 4 9/15/25		Quiz 1 on Chapters: 1, 2, 10 Due Sunday 9/21/25 by 11:30 pm.
Week 5 9/22/25		Paper #1 Due Sunday 9/28/25 by 11:30 pm.
Week 6 9/29/25	Chapter 3 The Family System	
Week 7 10/6/25	Chapter 6 Intergenerational Family Systems	Topic Check-in #2 Due Sunday 10/12/25 by 11:30 pm.
Week 8 10/13/25	Chapter 4 Family Assessment	
Week 9 10/20/25		Quiz # 2 on Chapter: 3, 4, 6 Due Sunday 10/26/25 by 11:30 pm.
Week 10/27/25	Chapter 5 Designing Family Interventions	
Week 11 11/3/25	Chapter 8- Cognitive/Behavioral Strategies	Paper #2 Due Sunday 11/9/25 by 11:30 pm.
Week 12 11/10/23	Chapter 9 – Assessment/Evaluation	Topic Check-in #3 Due Sunday 11/16/25 by 11:30 pm.
Week 13 11/17/23	THANKSGIVING BREAK BEGINS WEDNESDAY OF THIS WEEK.	
Week 14 11/24/25	Chapter 7 – Family Centered Interventions	
Week 15 12/1/25		
Week 16 12/8/25	NOTE THE DUE DATE!!!	Quiz #3 Chapters: 5, 7, 8, 9 Due MONDAY 12/8/25 by 11:30 pm.

