



Generalist Practice with Individuals, Families and Small Groups

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Scott Mata, LMSW

Office Location: Online

Office Hours: By appointment. I am available for Virtual Meetings via Google Meet, Teams, Zoom;
Please email me at least 48 hours in advance to schedule an appointment

Office Phone:

Office Fax:

University Email Address: scott.mata@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: **Email**

Communication Response Time: 48 hours on business days

COURSE INFORMATION

MATERIALS – TEXTBOOKS, READINGS, SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

Textbook(s) Required:

Cummins, L.K., & Sevel, J.A. (2017). Social Work Skills for Beginning Direct Practice (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

American Psychological Association. (2019). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Software Required:

- D2L (in MyLeo)
- Microsoft Office Access at: Student Instructions to Sign Up Free for Microsoft Office

Optional Texts and/or Materials:

All MSW students must purchase the following study materials to prepare for the Graduate Comprehensive Exam they will take in their final semester. You must pass the exam to receive your degree. It is never too early to begin studying for the exam.

Comprehensive Study Guide (Masters, Clinical, Adv. Generalist) Version 9.0. Social Work Examination Services. To purchase access:

<https://swes.net/allproducts/#:~:text=Masters%2C%20Clinical%2C%20Adv.%20Generalist>

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This practice course provides students with an understanding of the history of the social work profession and experience with social work practice skills, values, and knowledge within the context of a strength's perspective. Students will learn problem-solving skills, empowerment-based practice skills, relationship building, and data gathering skills as they relate to all client systems, with a focus on individuals, families, and small groups. Content on diversity and working with populations at risk will be presented throughout the course.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The 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.		
Use 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	Week 4: Values, Ethics and Guiding Principles Week 6: Culturally competent practice Week 9: Common Errors in Practice (Pitfalls)	Knowledge, Values and Cognitive and Affective
Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations	Week 7 Basic Helping Skills Week 4 Values, Ethics and Guiding Principles Week 9 Common Errors in Practice (Pitfalls)	Knowledge, Values and Cognitive and Affective
Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families and Groups		

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Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in- environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies	Simulation of client assessment and proposed intervention	Knowledge, Skills, Values and Cognitive and Affective
Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage	Simulation of client assessment and proposed intervention	Knowledge, Skills, Values and Cognitive and Affective
diverse clients and constituencies		
Competency 7: Students will Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.		
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	Simulation of client assessment and proposed intervention	Knowledge, Skills, Values and Cognitive and Affective
Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs and challenges within clients and constituencies	Simulation of client assessment and proposed intervention	Knowledge, Skills, Values and Cognitive and Affective
Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge and values and preferences of clients and constituencies	Simulation of client assessment and proposed intervention	Knowledge, Skills, Values and Cognitive and Affective

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

MINIMAL TECHNICAL SKILLS NEEDED

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

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

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

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES OR TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN THE COURSE

As a student in this course, you are responsible for engaging in active learning and reaching out to the Instructor if problems or challenges interfere with optimal learning. Communication is vital when engaged in a fully online, virtual environment.

Expectations for success include:

1. Always demonstrate professional behavior, including respect for the Instructor and peers; being open to feedback and guidance throughout this class and the program.
2. Adhered to the School of Social Work and University student code of conduct and NASW Code of Ethics.
3. Begin reading the assigned text and supplemental readings as soon as possible, focusing on completing all readings prior to engagement with the Instructor or peers.
4. Prepare to engage in live class sessions, discussions, and other activities so you can be a contributor as well as a receiver of knowledge and skills.
5. Actively participate in engagement activities, including 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 the due date so you are prepared to submit on the due date.
7. Sign in to the D2L course shell multiple times weekly to access updated announcements or posted resources.
8. Check your university email daily. This is the university, department, and Instructor's official method of communication.

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9. Be open and focused on the "process" and not the "product," as earning this degree requires time, effort, work, growth in knowledge, skills, and abilities, along with personal and professional attributes.

GRADING

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

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades

A = 451- 500 Points

B = 401- 450 Points

C = 351- 400 Points

D = 301- 350 Points

F = 300 & > Points

Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade.

Example:

Assignments 20%

Discussions 20%

Midterm Exam 30%

Final Exam 30%

TOTAL 100%

Evaluation for the course grade is according to the following formula:

Assessments	Value
Simulation of Client Assessment	100 points
Documentation Activities (2 @ 50 pts)	100 points
Midterm Exam	100 points
Comprehensive Final Exam	100 points
TOTAL	400 points

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ASSESSMENTS

Simulation of Client Assessment & Proposed Intervention

Interview someone whom you do not know personally or well (maybe someone from work or social organization). DO NOT interview another student from your classes. Following the instructions in “Assignments” on D2L, write a complete assessment. (See APPENDIX A)

Criteria	Level 4 30 points	Level 3 24 points	Level 2 21 points	Level 1 18 points	Criterion Score
Criteria 1 Paper includes all required content	All 11 headings are addressed and complete	8 headings are addressed and complete	8 headings are addressed but not complete	Less than 8 headings are addressed and/or paper lacks	/30
Criteria 2 Assessment is based on client information and thoughtful	Strong assessment that matches client's information	Missing 1-2 parts of assessment and/or does not match client's information	Assessment is inadequate; lacks information or does not match client information	Assessment and information are inadequate or lacking	/30
Criteria 3 Professionally Written (content and word choice)	Professionally written	Minor mistakes but overall is professionally written	Professional writing needs improvement	Lacks professionalism	/30
Grammar, Spelling, Punctuation, and Format	Grammar, spelling, and punctuation are all correct	Minor mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation	Major mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation are all correct	Several mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation are all correct	/10

Documentation activities

Students will participate in two Documentation activities throughout the semester. The documentation activities are to assist students in appropriate documentation, using the correct format and verbiage, and to gain further knowledge of the legalities associated with documentation in social work. Students will need to follow the guidelines set forth by the instructor. There are guidelines to follow below, and a rubric for grading located in the APPENDIX B.

DOCUMENTATION ACTIVITY

General Professional Guidelines

- **Consider case management record to be a legal and/or medical document**

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- Documentation follows the agency/organization/state or other governing body protocols, and these are followed in the charting. There may be differences in states; know state requirements.
- Documentation reflects any significant client, family or ancillary service provider contact
- Documentation is sufficiently detailed and organized to enable another social worker to assume work with the client at any time.
- Do not leave blanks; write N/A (or not applicable)
- Mark any error with a single line and initials – never use correction fluid or tape; on computer, add an addendum. You cannot just omit the error. Always explain to the client documentation process and any limits of confidentiality and share with client when possible/appropriate (consider cultural concerns and history in response to "secrecy" of documentation)

Tips and Suggestions

- Highlight the client's strengths, supports and coping mechanisms
- Use a professional writing style avoiding jargon, using shorter words with precise meanings, writing short paragraphs focused on a single concept
- Do not just report facts as you have been told. Instead, specify where the information came from (*client reports/states, client is diagnosed with*)
- Remember to report negative (absent) as well as positive (present) observations/information/findings
- Each page should have client's name or identification and include a confidentiality notice
- Use *Clinician's Thesaurus* or other documentation resource. READ READ READ – read other professional's progress/case notes.

What to avoid

- Never use your own or casual abbreviations (use medical abbreviations)
- Do not take shortcuts at the cost of clarity
- Do not use generalizations or over-interpretations
- SPELL CHECK! This is your integrity!
- Do not use jargon
- Do not diagnose if the client does not have a clinical diagnosis (*client is depressed, rather say client states that he is having feelings of sadness or depressed mood*). OR describe symptoms (*client describes seeing hallucinations or is feeling sad daily*)

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- Do not make recommendations without backing of facts and reason

Initial Intake or Assessment Note

- Completed documentation within 48 hours of meeting depending on your agency
- Includes introduction of social work case manager/program role and purpose
- Includes client rights and responsibilities and grievance mechanism
- Includes, but is not limited to:
 - referral reasons/process
 - behavioral observations
 - current living situation
 - family history
 - support system
 - education/employment
 - financial/insurance
 - mental health/substance abuse
 - medications/medical concerns
 - coping behaviors
 - legal issues
 - advance directives
 - client/family goals
 - clinical assessment
 - psychosocial concerns/problem identification
 - violence/suicidality history
 - spiritual/cultural factors

Goal Planning/Care Plan

- Both short- and long-term goals/care plan documented
- Signature of both client and social work case manager

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- Priorities and consequences of achievement/non-achievement
- Achievements toward or changes in goals documented
- Signature (or other documentation of commitment of client and worker)

Progress Notes

- Always dated by contact/intervention (If writing late state *late entry*. If adding information state *addendum to note dated XX/XX/XXXX*)
- Document type or place of contact using:
 - *Home visit, face-to-face, clinic/agency visit, hospital, telephone, mail, collateral contact, community contact, etc.*
- Document outcome of contact using: Missed by client, completed, rescheduled, etc.
- Outline reason for contact (client called requesting..., CM conducted scheduled home visit...)
- Write in third person and refer to all individuals by title (client, case manager, sister of client, nurse, housing manager)
- Write in present tense and identify source for material that is controversial/potentially untrue/client perception. For example, The client describes her parents as severe alcoholics rather than the client's parents were alcoholics.
- Describe client mood, affect, symptoms using client words first, then professional impression
- Always end notes with plan (CM will send referral, client will meet with housing CM...)
- Sign using credentials (e.g. Sally Social-worker, BSW student)

SOAP Case Note Template:

Some social workers use the SOAP framework to organize their case notes. The SOAP process starts with documenting the client's subjective thoughts and feelings. Then, the caseworker will notate their objective observations about the client's circumstances. The social worker will provide an assessment of the goals and any challenges they will need to address first, as well as an action plan to meet those goals.

The SOAP framework can be conducive for unexpected encounters or encounters without clear guidelines to follow regarding documentation. Check out one of our social work case note templates with example information below to see the SOAP framework in action.

- Subjective: "I am feeling jittery, sad, and unable to work these days. I'm not sleeping and I was fired."

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- **Objective:** The client is a 26-year-old male and has a history of anxiety, depression, and panic attacks. PHQ-9 score was 22 for severe depression, and GAD-7 score was 14 for moderate anxiety.
- **Assessment:** The client's mental health needs to be addressed through therapy first. Then employment can be secured.
- **Plan:** Client was referred to behavioral health for follow-up and will be seen by a licensed clinical social worker this week to begin an intensive short-term therapy plan. Client provided with groceries, food stamps, and 30-day bus pass. Client was referred to employment assistance.

RUBRIC

Criteria	Level 4 30 points	Level 3 24 points	Level 2 21 points	Level 1 18 points	Criterion Score
Criteria 1 Time/date/place/signature are included	All items are included	One item is missing	Two items are missing	Three items are missing	/10
Criteria 2 Reason for visit and outcome are included	Both are included and described well	Both are included but the description is lacking	One item is missing	One item is missing and the other lacks a good description	/15
Criteria 3 Clinical Observations such as mood and affect	Both are included and described well	Both are included but the description is lacking	One item is missing	One item is missing and the other lacks a good description	/15
Professionalism and Grammar	Written with a professional tone and grammar is correct	Written with a professional tone but has minor grammar errors	Professional tone is somewhat lacking or has multiple grammar errors	Lacks professionalism or has major grammar errors	/10

Midterm Exam

There will be a midterm exam including questions from text, readings, and handouts provided up to the exam date.

Comprehensive Final Exam

There will be an online comprehensive Final Exam including questions from text, handouts provided throughout the semester, and any additional readings.

Course Outline/Calendar

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University 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@etamu.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.

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>

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE

CWID AND PASSWORD

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@etamu.edu.

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TECHNOLOGY-RELATED ISSUES

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 ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

MINIMAL TECHNICAL SKILLS NEEDED

Students will need reliable computer and internet access for this course. Students must be able to effectively use myLeo email, myLeo Online D2L, and Microsoft Office.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) – D2L

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

- View the [Learning Management System Requirements Webpage](#).
- Learn more on the [LMS Browser Support Webpage](#).

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 on the [Brightspace Support Webpage](#).

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

INTERACTION WITH INSTRUCTOR STATEMENT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor. Correspondence will always be through university email (your “myLeo” mail) and announcements in myLeo online (D2L). You will not RECEIVE email through D2L, so be sure to check your ETAMU email for communication. Students are encouraged to check university email daily.

INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN EMAILS WITH INSTRUCTOR:

- Course name and subject in the subject line

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- Salutation (Good afternoon, Dr. Jackson)
 - Proper email etiquette (no “text” emails – use proper grammar and punctuation)
 - Student name and CWID after the body of the email (possibly add to student signature on email)
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COURSE AND UNIVERSITY 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.

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 online in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the [Rules of Netiquette Webpage](#) for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

ETAMU ATTENDANCE

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the [Attendance Webpage](#) and the [Class Attendance Policy](#)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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

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

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

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USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources

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

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

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

NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University 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

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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 ETAMU 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.

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

EAST TEXAS A&M SUPPORTS STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH – COUNSELING SERVICES

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, 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

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code or go to https://studentsupport.telushealth.com/us/about#download_app to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



As an Institutional Member of the National Association of Schools of Music, East Texas State A&M University supports the Association's commitment to student health and wellness. The following web address provides links to information for resources related to physical and mental well-being, as well as assists in offering preventative measures that students can take to avoid serious and/or chronic conditions: [Musician Health and Safety - East Texas A&M University](#)

DEPARTMENT AND ACCREDITING AGENCY STATEMENT:

School of Music Mission Statement:

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The School of Music at East Texas A&M University promotes excellence in music through the rigorous study of music history, literature, theory, composition, pedagogy, and the preparation of music performance in applied study and ensembles to meet the highest standards of aesthetic expression.

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