

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

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**COURSE/UNIQUE NUMBER:** SW 327 (60735)

**SEMESTER:** SPRING 2016

**MEETING TIME:** MON./WED. 11:00 AM-12:30 PM

**MEETING PLACE:** SSW 2.112

**EMAIL:** SALASWRIGHT@UTEXAS.EDU

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**INSTRUCTOR:** CHRISTOPHER SALAS-WRIGHT, PH.D.

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**OFFICE HOURS:** MONDAY 10:00 AM AND BY APPT.

**HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

*(Wr [Writing] -- Fulfills the writing flag requirement; Required BSW Course)*

**I. Course Description**

This course explores the biopsychosocial and cultural functioning of human beings across the life span using an ecological-systems lens and major social and developmental theories as a framework to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation. The students will gain an understanding of what physical, mental, social and economic justice hazards can adversely impact an individual's growth and development during their lifetime. Emphasis will be placed on examining the ways in which the aforementioned factors interact to influence the health and development of individuals. Frameworks incorporating an eco-systems/developmental perspective, including systems/ecological and psychosocial (life span development) frameworks, are used to conceptualize stages of human growth and development, with a primary focus on adolescence, early adulthood, the middle years, and the aged adult within an intergenerational family context. The impact of the family, social groups, organizations, communities, and society on individuals during these stages of the life span are also discussed. This course emphasizes empirically-based research reflecting a risk and resilience perspective in making client assessments and recommending appropriate interventions. This contributes to a social worker's ability to understand and critically analyze the interactions among individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students will be able to understand how personal values are reflected in socio-cultural contexts, such as culture, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, and religion, and how they can influence human behavior. Increasing access to resources, reducing risks, and considering ethical dilemmas involved in dealing with human behavior are also considered.

*This course carries the Writing Flag.* Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

## II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge about and critically analyze relevant theories of human behavior and development comparing definitional components, philosophical underpinnings, value assumptions, strengths, and limitations. **(PB23)**
2. Analyze the reciprocal relationships of human behavior and social systems, and how this interaction influences health and well-being as well as risk and vulnerability. **(PB24)**
3. Describe the social construction of theoretical concepts, empirical evidence, gaps in knowledge, and relevant controversies regarding theories of human behavior and development. **(PB23)**
4. Analyze the impact of such factors as race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and physical and mental ability on risk and resilience, identity development, and human interactions within social systems. **(PB24)**
5. Understand the interaction between the biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of the human experience and lifespan development. **(PB24)**
6. Conduct a scientific review of empirical evidence and theory to address human behavior and development topics. **(PB23)**

The School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1952. In order to maintain our accreditation status, we engage in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Several required courses in our curriculum are part of this ongoing assessment, including this course. Below is a list of the specific Educational Policies (EP) and Practice Behaviors (PB) that are assessed in this course. The complete EPAS can be optioned from your Student Handbook.

### **E.P. 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.**

**PB23** Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

Objectives 1, 3 and 6

Assignment: Literature Review paper, Case analysis, Case analysis presentations, exams

**PB24** Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

Objectives 2, 4 and 5

Assignment: Literature Review Paper, Case analysis, Case analysis presentations, exams

## III. Teaching Methods

This class is conducted in an active learning approach using a variety of teaching methods such as lectures, videos, guest speakers, and group discussions. Students are expected to complete assigned readings of chapters and cases prior to each class period. Class instruction is designed to encourage student participation and input.

#### IV. Required Readings

##### Required Textbooks:

- Vaughn, M.G., DeLisi, M., & Matto, H.C. (2014). *Human behavior: A cell to society approach*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Scales, T. L., & Wolfer, T. A. (2006). *Decision cases for generalist social work practice: Thinking like a social worker*. Thompson: Brooks/Cole, CA.

**Selected Readings:** Additional readings from other books and journal articles may be assigned, and will be available on UT Canvas.

#### V. Course Requirements

**In order to receive a passing grade for the course ALL assignments need to be completed or you may be in jeopardy of failing the course.**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Outline: Literature Review	--
Draft: Literature Review Paper with Theory	5 pts
Peer Review of Draft	5 pts
Final Draft: Literature Review Paper with Theory	25 pts
Midterm Exam	10 pts
Case Analysis Paper	20 pts
Case Analysis Presentation (Group Project – dates vary)	10 pts
Final Exam	15 pts
Class Attendance <sup>1</sup> and Participation	10 pts
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 pts</b>

#### VI. Grading Scale

94.0-100	=	A
90-93.999	=	A-
87-89.999	=	B+
84-86.999	=	B
80-83.999	=	B-
77-79.999	=	C+
74-76.999	=	C
70-73.999	=	C-
67-69.999	=	D+
64-66.999	=	D
60-63.999	=	D-
Below 60.0	=	F

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<sup>1</sup> Attendance will be checked for five randomly chosen classes throughout the semester. A total of 5 points is assigned for your class attendance. Each absence will result in 1 point reduction.

1. **Case Analyses (to assess PB 23 and 24).** Students are required to complete a case analysis. The case analysis is due on the date assigned in the syllabus at the beginning of class. You are responsible for getting the case assignment to the professor or TA on the day it is due. The assigned case for the Decision Case Analysis is Case #8.
2. **Case Analysis Presentation (to assess PB 23 and 24):** One group will be assigned to lead the case discussion for each case. The group will present the case, their analysis on the case, and recommendations for the case. Literature review findings need to be included in the case analysis presentation. The case analysis presentation is a group effort and typically between 45-50 minutes is used by the groups. Students are expected to attend class for all case presentations.

Case 9 (The Ridge)	Group Presentation on April 18, 2016
Case 2 (Twice a Victim)	Group Presentation on April 20, 2016
Case 7 (In Need of Support)	Group Presentation on April 25, 2016
Case 5 (Carla Fights the System)	Group Presentation on April 27, 2016
Case 3 (I Can't Find Her!)	Group Presentation on May 2, 2016

3. **Exams (to assess PB 23 and 24).** There will be a mid-term exam and final exam covering the readings, PowerPoints, and class lectures. If videos and guest lecturers are part of the class, then these may also be covered on exams. Exams are not cumulative. If you are unable to take an exam on the assigned date for any reason other than an emergency, you must notify the instructor at least one week in advance of the test date. If you do not, then it may result in not taking the exam. On exam days, arrive in class on time. If you arrive late, extra time will not be given for the exam. If you do not take the exams, you may be in jeopardy of not passing the course.
4. **Literature Review Paper with Theory (to assess PB23 and 24).** There will be a literature review research paper with theory on a topic of interest to the student. Students are expected to use critical thinking to complete a scholarly literature review with a theory application on *a selected human development and behavior problem area related to the case selected for Group Presentation.* This paper allows you to do an in-depth examination of a specific topic through reviewing what other scholars have written about the problem. Through this assignment you will demonstrate critical thinking skills and mastery of American Psychological Association (APA) writing format. Your critical thinking skills will be reflected through analyzing and synthesizing *a minimum of 8 evidence-based, peer reviewed journal articles.* The paper should be no more than 7-9 full double-spaced pages using Times New Roman 12 point font (not including title or reference list pages), written in APA format. APA style headings and subheadings should be used throughout. At least one theory needs to be reflected in one of the 8+ journal articles (or an additional scholarly book/chapter). You are responsible for getting the literature review paper to the professor or TA on the day it is due.
5. **Class Participation.** Students will receive 10 points of their total grade for class attendance, class participation and professional conduct. Attendance will be checked for five randomly chosen classes throughout the semester. A total of 5 points is assigned for your class attendance. Each absence will result in 1 point reduction.

## VII. Class Policies

1. **Class Attendance.** Class attendance is required every class period for the entire class period.
2. **Class preparation.** Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Failure to demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the class participation grade.
3. **General assignment requirements.** All assignments must be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double-spaced and have one inch margins. Assignments that fail to do so will receive a grade reduction. References/sources used in papers must be in APA format and from evidenced-based journals. If questions about the credibility of a reference arise, consult with the TA or instructor. The instructor is available by email to answer questions about assignments. Students should submit questions or requests for clarifications at least 24 hours before an assignment is due. If an assignment is due in less than 24 hours, the instructor cannot guarantee a timely response. Assignments are expected to be completed by the beginning of the class on stated due dates unless the professor changes the assignment. If the professor makes any assignment changes, they will be based on a class discussion and majority vote approval.
4. **Assignment due dates.** Students will be penalized if an assignment is late. Students will be informed of any changes in assignments, due dates, and other class content. When you submit assignments via Canvas, make sure to check that you included all attachments. If your assignment is not attached, you may lose credit because the professor never got the assignment. Also, ensure that the assignment is attached as a .doc or .docx file. If an extension is requested for an assignment, it needs to be requested 48 hours before the assignment is due.
5. **Change of Syllabus.** The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus if circumstances require an adjustment of course content.

## VIII. University Policies

1. **The University of Texas Honor Code.** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.
2. **Professional Conduct and Civility in the Classroom.** The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this

environment we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

- 3. Unanticipated Distress.** Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at [www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/](http://www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/).
- 4. Policy on Social Media and Professional Communication.** Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including any information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in any way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

- 5. Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty.** Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>).

- 6. Use of Course Materials.** The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.
- 7. Documented Disability Statement.** Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471- 6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.
- 8. Religious Holidays.** By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.
- 9. Title IX Reporting.** In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Students who report incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct to faculty, instructors, and/or staff who supervise students, will be provided a list of University resources. If the incident is impacting the academic environment, a report will be provided to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.
- 10. Classroom Confidentiality.** Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.
- 11. Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students.** Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current

with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

**12. Safety.** As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

**13. Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL).** If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

**14. Emergency Evacuation Policy.** Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

#### IV. Course Schedule

Class	Topic	Dates	Readings	Due
1	An Overview of HBSE	1/20	--	--
2	Literature Review 101	1/25	Vaughn and colleagues, Chapter 1 Scales & Wolfer, Chapter 1	Introductory Assignment (email 1/24)
3	Social Environment and Human Behavior	1/27	Vaughn and colleagues, Chapter 13	--
4	Social Environment and Human Behavior	2/1	Hutchison, E. D., & Lee, S.M. (2011). Communities. In E.D. Hutchison (Ed.), <i>Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment</i> (pp. 415-444) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.	--
5	Theoretical Perspectives on HBSE	2/3	Hutchison, Chapter 2	--
6	Theoretical Perspectives on HBSE	2/8	Hackman, D.A., & Farah, M.J. (2009). Socioeconomic status and the developing brain. <i>Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 13</i> (2), 65-73.	Literature Review Outline
7	The Strengths Perspective	2/10	Saleeby, D. (2008). The strengths perspective: Putting possibility and hope to work in our work into practice. In. K.M. Sowers & C.N. Dulmus (Eds.), <i>Comprehensive Handbook of Social Work and Social Welfare</i> (pp. 123-142). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.	--
8	The Life Course Perspective	2/15	Hutchison, E. D. (2011). A life course perspective. In E. D. Hutchison (Ed.), <i>Dimensions of human behavior: The changing life course</i> (pp. 1-38). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.	--
9	The Life Course Perspective	2/17	Moffitt, T. E. (1993). Adolescence-limited and life-course- persistent antisocial behavior: a developmental taxonomy. <i>Psychological review, 100</i> (4), 674-701.	Draft of Literature Review
10	The Life Course Perspective	2/22	--	--
11	Decision Cases	2/24	Scales & Wolfer, Chapter 2	--
12	The (Bio)Psychosocial Person	2/29	Vaughn and colleagues, Chapter 2	--

Class	Topic	Dates	Readings	Due
13	The (Bio)Psychosocial Person	3/2	Vaughn and colleagues, Chapter 5	Literature Review Final Draft
14	MID TERM EXAM	3/7	--	MID TERM EXAM
15	Pregnancy: A Biosocial Case Study	3/9	Vaughn and colleagues, Chapter 3	--
16	Pregnancy: A Biosocial Case Study	3/21	Collins Jr, J.W. and colleagues (2004). Very low birthweight in African American infants: The role of maternal exposure to interpersonal racial discrimination. <i>American Journal of Public Health, 94</i> (12), 2132-2138.	--
17	Systems	3/23	Vaughn and colleagues, Chapter 9	--
18	Systems	3/28	Vaughn and colleagues, Chapter 10	--
19	Biopsychosocial... Spiritual?	3/30	Vaughn and colleagues, Chapter 14	--
20	Biopsychosocial... Spiritual?	4/4	Brantley, J. (2005). Mindfulness-based stress reduction. In S.M. Orsillo & L. Roemer (Eds.), <i>Acceptance and mindfulness-based approaches to anxiety</i> (pp. 131-145). New York: Springer US.	--
21	Migration and Culture	4/6	Marks, A. K., Ejese, K., & García Coll, C. (2014). Understanding the US immigrant paradox in childhood and adolescence. <i>Child Development Perspectives, 8</i> (2), 59-64.	--
22	Migration and Culture	4/11	Schwartz, S.J., Unger, J.B., Zamboanga, B.L., & Szapocznik, J. (2010). Rethinking the concept of acculturation: Implications for theory and research. <i>American Psychologist, 64</i> (4), 237-251.	Decision Case Paper Due (Case #8)
23	Migration and Culture	4/13	--	--
24	Physical Environment	4/18	Vaughn and colleagues, Chapter 12  Scales & Wolfer, Case #9	Presentation (Group # 9)
25	Physical Environment	4/20	Scales & Wolfer, Case #2	Presentation (Group #2)

<b>Class</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Due</b>
26	Attachment: A Biosocial Construct	4/25	Farmer, R. L. (2008). Linking to social work: Attaching and bonding (pp. 51-78). In Neuroscience and social work practice: The missing link. SAGE Publications.  Scales & Wolfer, Case #7	Presentation (Group # 7)
27	Attachment: A Biosocial Construct	4/27	Scales & Wolfer, Case #5	Presentation (Group # 5)
28	Wrap Up	5/2	Scales & Wolfer, Case #2	Presentation (Group # 3)
29	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	5/4	--	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>