THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Professor: Susan M. De Luca, MSW, Ph.D.

Course Numbers: SWN360K (93860), SWN395K (94010), WGSN393(88547)

Unique Number: 93860 E-mail: sdeluca@austin.utexas.edu

 Semester:
 Summer 2014
 Phone: 512.471.1713

 Meeting Time:
 1:30pm -4:00pm
 Office Room: 3.130L

Meeting Place: SWB 2.118 **Office Hours:** By appointment

SUICIDE PREVENTION: THEORIES, ASSESSMENT AND POLICY

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This graduate/upper level undergraduate seminar will examine in depth the topic of suicide, integrating social work theories across the lifespan. Theoretical and empirical perspectives from sociology, psychology and genetics/neuroscience will also be considered utilizing a social-ecological framework. Philosophical and ethical issues related to suicide will be considered; there will be a special emphasis on clinical and community practice and prevention. Cultural, political, religious, media, public health and policy issues related to suicide will also be explored.

II. COUSRSE OBJECTIVES

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.

III. TEACHING METHOD

A variety of teaching methods including interactive lectures, experiential group activities, reading assignments, case studies, and audiovisual materials will be used to help students understand suicide prevention. Students are expected to be the chairs of their own education, meaning they will contribute to their own learning through asking questions, sharing experiences, and actively participating in class discussion.

Use of Canvas in Class

In this class, the professor uses Canvas—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at http://canvas.utexas.edu—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give students online quizzes and surveys. Students can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk by calling 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pelease plan accordingly. It is required that students check their email daily.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course requirements consist of classroom participation, a case study and a literature review (undergraduate)/literature review with intervention and presentation (graduate). Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Students will be evaluated on the required assignments as well as class participation and contribution.

Preparation, participation & contribution (10%)

Students are expected to attend all classes, to arrive on time, and to come prepared to participate **meaningfully** in class discussion, skill-building exercises, small group activities, and assignments. Students are expected to call upon relevant experiences and course readings for contributions.

The success of the class depends upon your preparation, participation and contribution.

Points will be reserved for evaluating students' participation in various in-class activities (e.g., large and small group discussions, etc.). Remember that participation is not so much about quantity as it is quality. You are a major contributing factor to the learning environment of your fellow classmates. Thus, if your behavior in class deters from other students' learning, especially observed by having side conversations, this will be reflected in your grade.

Case Study (40%)

For this assignment, please focus either on a client you have worked with who had suicidal ideation or a suicide attempt, or on a character in a memoir or novel, that describes a person's experience with suicidal thoughts or behaviors; the instructor will provide titles to choose from or you may use your own selection with the instructor's approval. For your paper, 1) provide a brief summary of the person's situation, risk and protective factors for suicide, and level of suicide risk, 2) apply knowledge of research and theory to your analysis of the primary contributors to the person's suicidal state, 3) explain what protective factors help the person stay alive. Please be sure to explore cultural aspects that may exacerbate suicide risk or confer protection from suicidal thoughts. This paper should be about roughly 8-10 pages long. Feel free to use these requirements as your headings and descriptions as subheadings. For example:

Potential Headings/Outline for Paper (suggested length)

Please note: I'm looking for quality writing rather than necessarily page length

Summary of X's Situation (1-2 pages)

Include any past history that might help us understand their suicidal risk (family, cultural, behavioral health, recent losses, etc).

Description of X's Story (2-3 pages)

Risk and protective factors for suicide

Level of suicide risk

Analysis of X's Suicidal State (2-3 pages)

Research supporting this analysis (i.e. peer reviewed or highly regarded websites)

Theory supporting this analysis (a theory we've discussed in class or one you believe fits with the person)

Protective factors help the person stay alive (2-3 pages)

Conclusion/Recommendations (1-2 pages)

Grading of case study: grammar, content, clarity and a comprehension of information discussed in class and in your readings (class readings and additional readings specific for this paper) in order to show me that you understand the information and able to apply it in the "real world".

I **strongly** encourage students to meet with me about their papers from conceptualization/brainstorming to rough drafts. I have consistently found that students' work is far superior with consultation.

Final Paper (50%)

A final paper is typically a project that demonstrates the ability to relate all the information you've learned inside and outside of class and also apply it to a specific deliverable. Therefore, this paper should really reveal to the reader your knowledge of suicide prevention.

Students will pick a topic of their choosing related to a specific population at-risk for suicidal behaviors. Please tell me well in advance so that I can help you with the development of your paper. Be careful if you use the same population for your case study (this is why I will approve your topics) because I cannot accept the same work for two separate grades. Please be sure to explore cultural aspects that may exacerbate suicide risk or confer protection from suicidal thoughts. Please provide the following deliverables based on your rank:

- 1) Undergraduate students will write a 7-page literature review on the topic.
 - a. The literature review will include risk/protective factors, theory and existing prevention programs specific to this population
 - b. Students will present their research to the class via Pechakucha (handout on Canvas)
- 2) Graduate students will write a 15-page paper that will include:
 - a. A literature review (roughly 5 pages that includes background, risk/protective factors and theory)
 - b. A novel suicide prevention program/intervention created by the student (either micro, mezzo or macro level focusing on the population of their choice) based on a

theoretical perspective discussed in class or a theoretical framework of his/her choice. (10 pages discussing current suicide prevention programs (but keep to a minimum as you're just providing context) your adaptation or novel program/intervention and how this fits based on theory and culture)

c. Students will present their research to the class via Pechakucha (handout on Canvas)

Grading of case study: grammar, content, clarity and application of information discussed in class and in your readings (class readings and additional readings specific for this paper) a creativity.

I **strongly** encourage students to meet with me about their papers from conceptualization/brainstorming to rough drafts. I have consistently found that students' work is far superior with consultation.

V. GRADING CRITERIA

Students should be able to track their progress throughout the course. <u>Should you have questions</u> about any assignment for this class, please consult with me in advance of the due date.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

94.00-100 points A (excellent) 90.00–93.999 points A- (very good)

To receive an "A" in this course you must have excellent attendance, participation, and you must produce work that is of <u>superior</u> quality.

87.00-89.999 points

84 -86.999 points

80–83.999 points

B+ (well above average)

B (above average)

B- (slightly above average)

Work earning grades of B+ and B generally <u>exceeds assignment/performance expectations</u>; demonstrates varying degrees of in-depth critical thinking and analysis that resulted in work additional to that laid out in the assignment directions (i.e., coherence and integration of ideas);

77.00-79.999 points C+ (average)
74.00–76.999 points C
70.00-73.999 points C

Work earning grades of C+, C and C- may <u>substantially to minimally meet requirements</u>, have minor to more significant gaps, and lack evidence of in depth thinking and analysis. Social Work majors must make a grade of C- or above to avoid having to repeat the course.

67.00-69.999 points D+ (below average)

64.00-66.999 points	D
60.00-63.999 points	D

Grades in the D range reflect work that has <u>important gaps in the assignment</u> both in terms of not meeting the requirements and lacking critical thinking and analysis.

Below 60.0 points or below

F (failing)

Writing guidelines. Papers must be typewritten in <u>12pt Times New Roman font</u>, <u>double-spaced</u>, <u>proofread for spelling and grammatical errors (APA)</u>. Papers, responses to essay questions, and presentations awarded the highest grades include the following elements:

- Evidence of independent, critical thinking
- Integration of material from lectures and course readings

Late assignments. No assignments will be accepted late except for extreme reasons (i.e. serious illness) with documentation.

VI. REQUIRED READINGS

Maris, R., Berman, A. & Silverman, M. (2000). Comprehensive Textbook of Suicidology. The Guilford Press.

Hawton, K. (Ed.), (2005). Prevention and treatment of suicidal behavior: From science to practice. New York: Oxford University Press. (On Canvas)

The Professor will assign additional readings from books and articles to enrich the course.

COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Topics	Readings and Assignments
Class 1 June 9 (M)	Introduction and theory of suicide	Ch. 1 and 2 (Maris)
Class 2 June 11 (W)	Empirical foundations, history, current initiatives	Ch. 3 and 4 (Maris)
Class 3 June 16 (M)	Demographics and IPT	Ch. 5 and 6 (Maris) Suicide in Older Adults (Conwell & Duberstein)
Class 4 June 18 (W)	Race, culture, work, and economy	Ch. 7 and 8 (Maris)
Class 5 June 23 (M)	Relationships & Help-seeking	Ch. 9 and 10 (Maris)
Class 6 June 25 (W)	Notes, attempts, and methods (Prevention and Assessment)	Ch. 11 and 12 (Maris) Restriction of Access (Hawton)
Class 7 June 30 (M)	Physical illness and psychiatric diagnosis (Stigma	Ch. 13 and 14 (Maris)
Class 8 July 2 (W)	Suicide Prevention, Evaluation, and Assessment (Public Health Approach) Guest Speaker: Gina Signoracci, Ph.D. Clinical Research Psychologist VISN 19 Denver VA MIRECC Topic: Rehabilitation Approaches	Traumatic Stress (Mehlum) The Burden of Suicide (Jamison) Making Mental Health Safer (Appleby, Swinson, Kapur) Psychosocial Treatments (Hawton)
Class 9 July 7 (M)	NSSI & LGBT	Haas et al., 2011 (On Canvas)
Class 10 July 9 (W)	Substance abuse, alcoholism, and biology Guest Speaker: Beeta Homaifar, Ph.D. VISN 19 Denver VA MIRECC Topic: Safety Planning	Ch. 15 and 16 (Maris) Interplay of Genes (Marusic) Resistance of Suicide (van Praag) Psychobiological Approaches (van Heeringen)

		Substance Use and Suicidal Behavior (Rossow)
Class 11 July 14 (M)	Aggression, violence, and indirect self-destructive behavior (Media/Messaging) Guest Speaker: John Blosnich, Ph.D. Postdoctoral Research Fellow, VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences Graduate School of Public Health University of Pittsburgh Topic: LGBT Suicidal Risk	Ch. 17 and 18 (Maris) Suicide in Prisons (Paton) Media Influences (Hawton) Haas et al., 2011 (On Canvas)
Class 12 July 16 (W)	Ethics, religion, philosophy and the law Guest Speaker: Megan Lytle, Ph.D. Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Rochester Medical Center Department of Psychiatry Topic: Accessing difficult-to-reach populations	TBD
Class 13 July 21 (M)	TBD	TBD
Class 14 July 23 (W)	Presentations	
Class 15 July 28 (M)	Final Papers & Survivors of Suicide Guest Speaker Marian Trattner, MSW	Ch. 21 and 22 (Maris)

VII. COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Attendance

It is important for practitioners to be punctual in both attendance and in meeting deadlines. Therefore, class attendance is expected, as is handing in assignments on time. Students anticipating being absent from class for a legitimate reason (serious illness, family emergency) should notify the professor in advance by e-mail and provide documentation of emergency. An attendance sheet will not be passed around. Instead, minute papers will be used to track your attendance. If you are late, and do not complete the minute paper, you will be considered absent. Students with two unexcused absences will have 5 points deducted from their final grade. Beyond that, the instructor will deduct one (1) point from your final grade for each unexcused absence. Any student missing more than 4 classes (excused or unexcused) will not pass this course. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absences. It is the student's responsibility to discuss extenuating circumstances related to absences with the Instructor.

Mutual Learning

The professor welcomes feedback about the course and the course will be viewed as a mutual learning process between students and the Instructor. Students are encouraged to request and to provide feedback during office hours, by e-mail, and by appointment if they desire. The professor will utilize a mid-course evaluation to gain student feedback. **PLEASE** schedule office appointments with me if you have concerns about your performance in the course, or if you have specific learning needs or challenges that I can address to strengthen your participation and learning in the course.

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.

Professional Conduct in Class

The Professor expects students to act like 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. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the Professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism. In addition, due to the nature of this class, sensitive information may be disclosed and you will be held to the same rules of confidentiality that you would be expected to have at your agency.

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://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/).

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). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. 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/.

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, an examination, a work assignment, or a 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.

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 to keep the university informed about changes to their e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail/Canvas page daily 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.

A note on email

Please allow 24 hours for email response. It is likely that you will receive a response sooner than that. However, in the case that you do not, you are encouraged to re-contact the professor. I also expect the same response time in return.

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.

Use of class materials. The materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, exams, quizzes, and homework assignments are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized copying of the class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor 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 includes,

among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with other current or future students.

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 among 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.

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 of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered 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're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Additional Readings

(to explore specific topics of interest, for your papers, etc.)

- Aseltine, R. H., Jr., & DeMartino, R. (2004). An outcome evaluation of the SOS Suicide Prevention Program. *Am J Public Health*, 94(3), 446-451.
- Aseltine, R. H., Jr., James, A., Schilling, E. A., & Glanovsky, J. (2007). Evaluating the SOS suicide prevention program: a replication and extension. *BMC Public Health*, 7, 161.
- Barber, B. K., & Schluterman, J. M. (2008). Connectedness in the lives of children and adolescents: a call for greater conceptual clarity. *J Adolesc Health*, 43(3), 209-216.
- Bearman, P. S., & Moody, J. (2004). Suicide and friendships among American adolescents. *Am J Public Health*, 94(1), 89-95.
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- Black, D. R., Tobler, N. S., & Sciacca, J. P. (1998). Peer helping/involvement: an efficacious way to meet the challenge of reducing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among youth? *J Sch Health*, 68(3), 87-93.
- Boldt, M. (1982). Normative Evaluations of Suicide and Death: A Cross-Generational Study. *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying, 13*(2), 145-157.
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- Bongar, B. (Ed.), (1992). Suicide: Guidelines for assessment, management, and treatment. New York: Oxford University Press.
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- Borowsky, I. W., Ireland, M., & Resnick, M. D. (2001). Adolescent suicide attempts: risks and protectors. *Pediatrics*, 107(3), 485-493.
- Borowsky, I. W., Resnick, M. D., Ireland, M., & Blum, R. W. (1999). Suicide attempts among American Indian and Alaska Native youth: risk and protective factors. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*, *153*(6), 573-580.
- Brent, D. A., Perper, J. A., Moritz, G., Baugher, M., Schweers, J., & Roth, C. (1993). Firearms and adolescent suicide. A community case-control study. *Am J Dis Child*, 147(10), 1066-1071.
- Bridge, J. A., Iyengar, S., Salary, C. B., Barbe, R. P., Birmaher, B., Pincus, H. A., et al. (2007). Clinical response and risk for reported suicidal ideation and suicide attempts in pediatric antidepressant treatment: a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *JAMA*, 297(15), 1683-1696.
- Brown, C. H., Wang, W., Kellam, S. G., Muthen, B. O., Petras, H., Toyinbo, P., et al. (2008). Methods for testing theory and evaluating impact in randomized field trials: intent-to-treat analyses for integrating the perspectives of person, place, and time. *Drug Alcohol Depend*, 95 Suppl 1, S74-S104.
- Brown, C. H., Wyman, P. A., Brinales, J. M., & Gibbons, R. D. (2007). The role of randomized trials in testing interventions for the prevention of youth suicide. *Int Rev Psychiatry*, 19(6), 617-631.
- Brown, C. H., Wyman, P. A., Guo, J., & Pena, J. (2006). Dynamic wait-listed designs for randomized trials: new designs for prevention of youth suicide. *Clin Trials*, 3(3), 259-271.
- Cabassa, L., Lester, R. & Zayas, L. (2007). "It's like being in a labyrinth:" Hispanic immigrants' perceptions of depression and attitudes toward treatments. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 9(1), 1-16.
- Cabassa, L., Zayas, L. & Hansen, M. (2006). Latino adults' access to mental health care: a review of epidemiological studies. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health*, 33(3), 316-330.
- Carter, M., McGee, R., Taylor, B. & Williams, S. (2007). Health outcomes in adolescence: associations with family, friends and school engagement. *Journal of Adolescence*, 30(1), 51-62.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2001). School health guidelines to prevent unintentional injuries and violence. *MMWR Recomm Rep.*, 50, 1-73.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2006). *Connectedness as a strategic direction for the prevention of suicidal behavior*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.
- Cigularov, K., Chen, P., Thurber, B. & Stallones, L. (2008). What prevents adolescents from seeking help after a suicide education program? *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior*, 38(1), 74-86.

- Czyz, E., Horwitz, A., Eisenberg, D., Kramer, A. & King, C. (2013). Self-reported barriers to professional help seeking among college students at elevated risk for suicide. *Journal of American College Health*, 61, 398-406
- De Luca, S., Yueqi, Y., Lytle, M. & Brownson, C. (2014). The Associations of Race/Ethnicity and Suicidal Ideation Among College Students: A Latent Class Analysis Examining Precipitating Events and Disclosure Patterns. *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior*. DOI: 10.1111/sltb.12102
- De Luca, S. & Wyman, P. (2012). Association between school engagement and disclosure of suicidal ideation to adults among Latino adolescents. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 33, 99-110.
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- Freedenthal, S. (2007). Challenges in assessing intent to die: Can suicide attempters be trusted? *Omega: The Journal of Death and Dying, 55,* 57-70.
- Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act: S. 2634. (2004). Available at: http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgibine/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108 cong bills& docid=f:s2634enr.text.pdf
- Gibbons, R. D., Brown, C. H., Hur, K., Marcus, S. M., Bhaumik, D. K., Erkens, J. A., et al. (2007). Early evidence on the effects of regulators' suicidality warnings on SSRI prescriptions and suicide in children and adolescents. *Am J Psychiatry*, 164(9), 1356-1363.
- Goldsmith, S. K., Pellmar, T.C., Kleinman, A.M., & Bunney, W.E. (2002). *Reducing suicide: A national imperative*. Washington, DC: Institute of Medicine.
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