

**The University of Texas at Austin
School of Social Work**

Course Number:	393R/360K	Instructor:	Lauren M. Gaspar, LCSW
Unique Number:	62020/61720	E-mail:	lmgaspar@hotmail.com
Semester:	Spring 2015	Phone:	(512) 296-7258
Meeting Time:	Mondays 8:30am-11:30am	Office hours:	Mondays 11:30pm-12:30pm (appt. pref.)
Meeting Place:	SSW 2.132	Office Room:	3.104A

“You can learn more from one hour of play than you can from a whole conversation.”

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Methods of Play Intervention

I. Course Description

This course will cover an overview of the history and development of play therapy and applications of play interventions across the life cycle with an emphasis on children ; discussion of the major theoretical perspectives which provide the basis for individual play therapy, group play therapy, filial therapy, and play interventions with families, adults, adolescents, children and organizations; examination of the relevant practice research; exploration of the role and desired characteristics of the social work practitioner; acquaintance with the various tools and techniques utilized; and consideration of the implications of diversity for the utilization of play therapy and play interventions.

II. Standardized Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to demonstrate:

1. Familiarity with the history and development of play therapy for assessment and as a treatment modality;
2. Understanding of the major theoretical perspectives utilized by practitioners and awareness of practice research;
3. Beginning skills in the use of the various tools/techniques utilized in play therapy and use of play as a therapeutic intervention with individuals, groups, families and organizations.
4. Knowledge of stages of play development and applications for the assessment process.
5. Awareness of the implications of diversity for the use of play therapy and techniques of play as interventions.

III. Teaching Methods

This class will be taught using a variety of methods with an emphasis on experiential learning, i.e., lecture, class discussion, experiential activities, guest speakers, videos, community based activity, course assignments, and readings. The assignments will provide the opportunity for “learning by doing”. For success in this class you must be willing to participate, risk yourself, stretch your creativity, and attend class. It is imperative for effective practitioners working with play as an intervention strategy to participate in an ongoing process of self awareness. You are encouraged to ask questions, give the instructor feedback, and meet with the instructor as needed.

IV. Required Texts and Materials

Required Texts:

Axline, Virginia M. (1992). *Dibs in Search of Self*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Gil, Eliana. (2006). *Helping Abused and Traumatized Children: Integrating Directive and Nondirective Approaches*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Gil, E. & Drewes, A.A. (2006). *Cultural Issues in Play Therapy*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Required Readings:

Additional readings are posted on Canvas and assigned dates are located in **Section X**.

Required Materials:

One package of **one** or more of the following: markers, colored pencils, or crayons

One pair of large scissors (with notice of professor)

V. Required University Policies

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 sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

Classroom Civility

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 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.

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 instructor. The instructor 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 can contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/.

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/dcce/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 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>.

Policy on Social Media and Personal 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.

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.

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.

Use of Canvas in Class

In this class the professor uses Canvas—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.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 by calling 475-9400, available 24 hours per day.

VI. Prof. Gaspar's Class Policies

1. As this is a graduate level class, regular attendance is expected. The professor will pass around a sign-in sheet at the beginning of each class for students to document their attendance. These sheets will only be used in reflection to determine each student's final attendance grade.
2. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions. This includes: having read all articles due, prepared to discuss all articles due, as well as consulting Canvas for other materials that are to be reviewed for that day's class. All Power Point slides will be available in Canvas for that class's lecture. It is your responsibility to print out the handouts for that day in order to take notes and follow along in class. Failure to demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the class participation portion of the final grade.
3. It is important for social work practitioners to be punctual in meeting deadlines as a reflection of professionalism. Therefore, handing in assignments on time is expected. **All assignments are provided at the beginning of the semester so that students can prepare accordingly. Late assignments will not be accepted without a doctor's note.** Any adjustments in due dates due to illness (with doctor's note) MUST be discussed with the instructor at least 24 hours PRIOR to the regularly scheduled date.
4. 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. Therefore, it is expected that students will conduct themselves professionally in the classroom, as well in communication with the professor, at all times, and maintain the same boundaries and standards that they would in a place of employment. This includes proper attire (even during an 8:30am class), use of laptops/iPads/tablets, and cell phone use while in the classroom or when communicating

with fellow students and Professor Gaspar. Cell phones must be silenced and may NOT be in use during class hours under any circumstances, unless during a break.

5. Student feedback is welcome. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback during my hours, by phone, by e-mail, and by appointment if they desire.

6. If students are concerned about their class performance, I am more than willing to work with students to help them improve their course grades prior to the end of the semester. Office hours are to be utilized for this purpose. Students must notify the professor that they will be attending office hours so that the professor may arrange for use of time.

7. Small groups are expected to resolve challenges within their group context. I am willing to serve as a consultant if groups have worked diligently to resolve their difference but have been unsuccessful. As the professor, I do reserve the right to award differentially weighted grades on the group project. This will normally occur when a member of the group fails to actively participate in the group, consistently misses deadline for assigned tasks, or produces work that is below the quality standards expected for the project. In other words, if a student's individual performance is consistently below par so that it jeopardizes the grades of the other members of the group, I will down grade that student.

8. Grading on all written assignments must take into account the quality of writing as well as the content. The American Psychological Association (APA)- 6th edition format must be used. Written material should be carefully proof read and errors (punctuation, typographical, spelling) corrected. Good writing requires a reiterative process that must be followed if quality is to improve. I strongly encourage you to read your papers several times and, if possible, have someone else proofread it (before turning it in!).

9. Information shared in the class about community settings and/or clients are considered to be confidential according to the NASW Code of Ethics regarding the sharing of information for supervisory and educational purposes. Part of professional accountability includes treating others with respect and courtesy. Within the class this entails listening to the opinions and concerns of others with openness, offering suggestions and ideas in a positive and respectful manner, and willingness to promote group cohesiveness in the learning environment.

VII. Course Requirements

1. Attendance, Punctuality, Participation (Objectives 1,2,3,4,5)- This portion of the final grade consists of three parts: attendance, punctuality, and class participation. This final grade (one-third per category) is divided as follows:

Attendance- This reflects the number of classes actually attended. Failure to regularly attend class affects ability to contribute constructively to class discussions and will be considered in determining the one-third percentage of this section's final grade. In extenuating circumstances of absence, the student is to inform the instructor; documentation may be required. Students are responsible for any material (class notes, handouts, etc.) missed due to absence.

Punctuality- It is important for social work practitioners to be punctual in both attendance and as a reflection of professionalism. Therefore, students should arrive on time to class and stay through until the class is over. Class is officially considered over at 11:15am. At times, during experiential exercise, class may run over a bit. After 11:15am students may use their own judgement whether to leave class or stay for the rest of lecture/discussion. Students should not leave class during the break. Failure to consistently be punctual and stay through class will be considered in determining the one-third percentage of this section's final grade.

Informed class participation- Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and to be prepared to demonstrate their familiarity with major concepts and ideas from the readings during class discussions and experiential learning assignments. If students are in a field placement concurrent with this

class, informed participation would also include beginning integration of their field group work experiences with class discussion and learning (for students not in a field placement concurrent with this class, this would not apply). The grade on class participation will be based on the quality and quantity of student contributions to class discussion, and on the degree of critical thinking shown in class discussions.

(15% of total grade)

2. Class Experiential (Objectives 3,4)- In addition to participation in class lectures and discussions on readings, students will be expected to participate in experiential exercises. As play therapy requires adults to relate to children on their level and interests, this course is a good opportunity for students to get out of their comfort zone as they take part in some of the exercises.

(15% of total grade)

3. Child Observation (Objectives 1,2,4)- Students will sign up for a one-hour observation time at the UT Child Development Center located just behind the School of Social Work. Students will be shown by CDC staff where to leave their belongings, find a chair, and which classroom to observe. Students should be prepared with paper and a pen for writing down all of their observations to be used in their paper. Other guidelines as instructed by the CDC are listed in the formal guidelines handed out in class.

The child chosen to be observed does not need to be the “social butterfly” of the group, or vice versa the recluse of the class. Every child is observable and able to be assessed on their physical/intellectual, emotional, social and play development.

(Does not count towards final grade)

4. Child Observation Reaction Paper (Objectives 1,2,4,5)- Students must hand-write a one page front and back reaction to observing their child at The UT Child Development Center. These papers will be written in the lobby of the UTCDC or outside, and then turned in at the front desk of the center **IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THEIR OBSERVATION**. Keep in mind I will have a track of which time and day your observation took place and when you turned in your paper. Further expectations for the paper will be provided in class.

(5% of total grade)

5. Response to Relevant Issues (1,2,3,4,5)- As a way to stay informed with the current grumblings in the play therapy community, students will choose 2 articles twice in the semester to write a response to. The articles from the *Play Therapy Journal* through the Association of Play Therapy, all vary on topic, perspective, approach, theme, and practice, and are available in Canvas for students to choose from. Once students have chosen their two articles for that period, they will hand in a one page, single spaced, typed (12 pt. font) response *per article* that can include, but is not limited to, what they learned from the article, what insights they gained, what felt controversial, what left them feeling curious, what they want to keep learning following the article, or how the article has better informed their understanding of play therapy. **DUE: February 9th & March 23rd**

(15% of total grade)

6. Paper 1: Play Observation (Objectives 1,2,4,5) - Students are required to write a paper assessing their child’s physical/intellectual, emotional, social and play development while integrating concepts from supplemental readings, class discussion, the required text Dibs in Search of Self, and any other outside readings to review their play observation at the Child Development Center. Further expectations for the paper will be provided in class. **DUE: March 2nd**

(25% of total grade)

7. Paper 2: Play Therapy Assessment, Treatment, and Intervention (Objectives 1-5)- Students will choose from a series of client case examples provided by the professor. Based on the concepts from supplemental readings, class discussion, and outside resources, a 7-8 page assessment, treatment plan, and plan for intervention will be written for the client. Further expectations for the paper will be provided in class. **DUE: April 20th**

(25% of total grade)

VIII. Course Grading Criteria

Class Participation.....	(15%)
Class Experiential.....	(15%)
Response to Relevant Issues.....	(15%)
Child Observation Reaction Paper.....	(05%)
Play Observation Paper.....	(25%)
Clin. Assess, TX, and Interv. Pape.....	(25%)
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TOTAL.....	100%

IX. Grading Scale

Grades will be posted on Blackboard. Students should be able to track their progress throughout the course. Should you have questions about any assignment for this class, please consult with the Professor in advance of the due date.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

94.0-100 points	A
90.0–93.999 points	A- (very good)

To receive an “A” in this course you must have excellent attendance and participation, and you must produce work that is of superior quality.

87.0 -89.999 points	B+ (well above average)
84.0 -86.999 points	B (above average)
80.0–83.999 points	B- (slightly above average)

Work earning grades of B+ and B generally exceeds assignment/performance expectations; 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).

77.0-79.999 points	C+ (average)
74.0–76.999 points	C
70.0-73.999 points	C-

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

67.0-69.999 points	D+ (below average)
64.0-66.999 points	D
60.0-63.999 points	D-

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

Below 60.0	F (failing)
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X. Course Schedule

Date	Description	Text/Readings
01/26	Introductions and Class Overview Review of Syllabus The Historical Development and Theory of Play Therapy	
02/02	Play and Socialization by Developmental Ages Assessment as the Basis for Play Therapy Techniques	<i>Axline:</i> Dibs CAN: Timberlake et al. CAN: Hay et al.
02/09	Intake- Involving Guardians in Treatment Beginning Stages of Treatment Viewing: Lego movie Response to Relevant Issues due	<i>Axline:</i> Dibs <i>Gil:</i> Chp. 1 CAN: Borenstein
02/16	Non- Directive vs. Directive Play Therapy Practice Techniques and How-To's Role Play Practice Viewing: Lego movie	<i>Axline:</i> Dibs <i>Gil:</i> Chp. 2 CAN: Malchiodi CAN: Landreth
02/23	Non- Directive and Practice Techniques con't Role Play Practice	<i>Axline:</i> Dibs <i>Gil:</i> Chp. 3 <i>G&D:</i> Chp. 1
03/02	PAPER #1 DUE- Play Observation Materials and Room Set-Up Interpretation of Play Limit setting	<i>Gil:</i> Chp. 4 <i>G&D:</i> Chp. 2

03/09	Materials and Room Set-Up (con't) Interpretation of Play (con't) Limit setting (con't)	<i>Gil: Chp. 5&6</i>
03/16	<i>SPRING BREAK</i>	
03/23	Problematic Attachment and Play Therapy <i>Response to Relevant Issues due</i>	<i>Gil: Chp. 7&8</i>
03/30	Liability/Ethics/Best Practice/Documentation of Sessions Anticipated Treatment Issues based on Diagnosis and Presenting Problems	<i>G&D: Chp. 5-8</i>
04/06	Trauma and Play Therapy Treatment Planning	<i>Gil: Chp. 9-11</i> CAN: Stein CAN: Johnson
04/13	Art Therapy	<i>G&D: Chp. 4</i> CAN: Rubin
04/20	Introduction to Sand Tray Therapy PAPER #2 DUE- Clin. Assess., Treatment, and Intervention	CAN: Signell CAN: Zhou
04/27	Technique and Practice of Sand Tray Therapy	
05/04	Termination, Course Evaluation, and Wrap Up	CAN: Denouement and Term CAN: Cangelosi