

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

<b>Course Number:</b>	SW N393R1	<b>Instructor's name:</b>	Mitch Sudolsky, MSSW, LCSW sudolsky@mail.utexas.edu
<b>Unique Number:</b>	94650	<b>Office Number:</b>	SSW 3.104A
<b>Semester:</b>	Summer, 2013	<b>Office Phone:</b>	512-250-1043
<b>Meeting Time/Place:</b>	TTH5:30-8 SSW 2.116	<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesday 4:00-5:00 PM

**CLINICAL ASSESSMENT AND DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS**

**I. Standardized Course Description**

This course will focus on the incidence, etiology, and assessment of health and mental health issues with children, adolescents, adults, and families. The framework of the course is based on social work values and the ethical decision making process, as illuminated by the [NASW Code of Ethics](#). Students will learn models of assessment to evaluate human functioning throughout the lifecycle. A bio-psycho-social-spiritual and cultural emphasis will be applied to the diagnostic categories within the DSM-5. Students will develop an advanced understanding of people from diverse backgrounds, affirming, and respecting their strengths and differences. The course is built on the identification, analysis, and implementation of empirically-based assessment tools that have incorporated statistically valid reliability and validity studies. Major classification systems, such as Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and the International Classification of Diseases, and other schemes for assessing and understanding human behavior, will be covered.

**II. Standardized Course Objectives** By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of biological, psychosocial, and cultural theories on the etiology of mental health and mental illness; **(CL/APB3)**
2. Demonstrate the ability to apply methods of empirically-based assessment tools and techniques, including those developed through classificatory schemes, standardized measures, and qualitative typologies; **(CL/APB10b)**
3. Demonstrate an advanced clinical knowledge of the relationship between assessment and intervention as it relates to the strengths, capacities and resources of individuals and families; **(CL/APB10b)**
4. Demonstrate the ability to adapt assessment models to reflect an understanding, of persons from diverse backgrounds, including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age,

and national origin; **(CL/APB3; CL/APB 5;)**

5. Critically evaluate and analyze different theoretical and assessment models as to their efficacy in given situations. This includes: a) the adequacy of the research and knowledge base; b) the range of applicability; c) the value and ethical issues, including the student's own value system, and d) the policy implications involved in assessment and delivery of services; **(CL/APB1; CL/APB3; CL/APB 5)**
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the limitations in using classification schemes in understanding human behavior and the danger of mislabeling people, particularly those from at-risk populations. Demonstrate advanced knowledge of social work values and the ethical decision making processes as they relate to ethical dilemmas in clinical assessment and practice **(CL/APB10b)**.

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.

**EP 2.1.1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.**

**CL/APB1** Evaluate professional roles and boundaries

Objectives 5

Assignment: Examinations

**EP2.1.3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.**

**CL/APB3** Utilize multiple perspectives to analyze client's strengths and problems

Objectives 1, 4, 5

Assignment: Examinations; Class participation (case discussions)

**EP2.1.5. Advance human rights and social and economic justice.**

**CL/APB5** Determine practice delivery and policies to promote social and economic justice and equity at multiple levels

Objectives 4, 5

Assignment: Examinations; paper; class participation

**EP2.1.10b. Assessment**

**CL/APB10b** Design and conduct a multi-level case assessment based on a systematic and conceptually-driven process

Objectives 2, 3, 6

Assignment: Examinations; class participation (case discussions)

**III. Teaching Methods**

The primary teaching methods will be lectures, discussion, and small group exercises involving case analyses.

**IV. Required and Recommended Texts, and Materials**

Required:

American Psychiatric Association (APA). (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, 5th Edition

Comer, Ronald J. (2014) Fundamentals of Abnormal Psychology, 7th Edition

Other readings as assigned will be posted on Blackboard

**V. Course Requirements**

**Examinations**

Two examinations will be given during the course of the semester (see course schedule for dates). Examinations will include case analyses and short-answer questions. Short-answer questions will be similar to the licensing exam questions and will give the student an opportunity to practice the necessary test-taking skills needed to pass that exam. **Students are required to bring their own copy of DSM-5 in answering case analysis questions on the examinations.**

**Paper**

Each student is to select a problem area of interest and write a scholarly paper focused on assessment and treatment. A review of the scholarly literature on a particular disorder should be integrated with a work of literary fiction or nonfiction (e.g., biography, autobiography, account by a family member) whose focus is a person with this psychiatric disorder. Papers must be 10-12 pages (excluding references and title page), typed, double-spaced with 12-point font and one-inch margins on all sides. Citations must be provided for all assertions of fact, and APA format must be used. It is recommended that students start on this assignment right away because the instructor expects a thorough search of the literature in social work, psychology, psychiatry and related fields in order to demonstrate that one has mastered the up-to-date, current knowledge and methods concerning assessment and treatment of the problem area. A search of the literature must include journal articles as well as books. Emphasis should be given to the most recent (within the past 5 to 7 years) literature and studies. Of course, seminal pieces that fall outside of this time parameter should still be included. Papers will be graded on both content and writing style. An outline of the paper is provided below:

- I Introduction/Statement of the Problem. This should include specification of your problem area of interest. For example, “depression” can mean many things. You would need to clarify if, by “depression,” you meant major depressive disorder, dysthymic disorder, etc. Also, set parameters (e.g., age,

- gender, etc.) on the problem you are assessing. (For example, “This paper addresses adolescent females with a diagnosis of major depressive disorder.”)
- II. Critical examination of assessment methods and instruments relevant to the particular problem area.
    - A. What are the preferred methods to assess this problem? If you were a social worker in the field, based on your review of the literature, how would you assess for the existence and severity of this problem in a client system? What challenges or difficulties might you expect to encounter in a clinical interview?
    - B. Describe what standardized measures, such as rating scales and self-report instruments you would use and why you would use them.
  - III. A review of the literature regarding the efficacy of treatment approaches with the problem area. The primary focus here should be on outcome studies.
  - IV. An overview of any relevant contributions of diversity and/or social justice issues to the understanding of the assessment and treatment of the problem area.
  - V. Provide a brief synopsis of the literary work you have chosen. Describe the person who is the focus of the book, and use what you have learned from this work in addressing other areas in this paper, e.g. diagnostic criteria, assessment, treatment, social justice issues, etc.
  - VI. Conclusions that summarize the knowledge discussed in the paper.

### **Overall Criteria for Evaluating Student Assignments**

**The skills possessed by effective professional social workers include the ability to write well and to speak in an articulate and persuasive manner to groups. Your written work should be well conceptualized and researched, clearly organized, and supported by examples and details. Papers must be typewritten, proofread for spelling and grammatical errors, double-spaced and in 12 font, and must follow the APA style format. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) is the style manual to be used for all assignments. Incorrect use of APA style may result in a deduction of points on assignments. Appropriate referencing (authors, titles, page numbers, etc.) of assignments is required. This includes giving due credit to others when indirect quotes (paraphrasing) and direct (verbatim) quotes are used. Short direct quotes (less than 40 words) must be placed in quotation marks. Long direct quotes (40 or more words) should be indented. Paraphrasing requires more than changing a word or two in a sentence. Failure to give due to credit to others will result in a “0” for the assignment and/or an “F” for the course. Plagiarism is a form of scholastic dishonesty and will be addressed as such. If you do not know how to cite appropriately, please learn before you submit any assignments.**

### **Papers must include the following elements:**

- **Clear answers to all required questions**
- **Adherence to assignment parameters around length of paper (Note: papers less than the minimum length will receive no higher than a grade of 80; papers exceeding the maximum**

length will only be graded on a review of the maximum number of pages stipulated by the assignment)

- Evidence of independent, critical thinking
- Research from peer-reviewed professional journals and from recent books
- Integration of material from lectures and course readings
- Use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation appropriate to graduate level written work.

### **Class participation, attendance, and preparation**

Students are expected to come to class on time, complete assigned readings on time, and to contribute to class discussions. Students will be required to participate in small group in-class assignments which involve analyses of cases and class presentations of group findings.

### **Determination of final grade:**

**Examinations: 60%**

**Paper: 25%**

**Class participation: 15%**

### **GRADUATE GRADING SCALE**

100 - 94 = A

93 - 90 = A-

89 - 87 = B+

86 - 84 = B

83 - 80 = B-

79 - 77 = C+

76 - 74 = C

73 - 70 = C- (Class failed/no credit: 73 and below)

69 - 67 = D+

66 - 64 = D

63 - 60 = D-

59 and below = F

**A** = *Significantly exceeds assignment/performance expectations* (evidence of critical thinking, quality and quantity of research, and analysis that resulted in work additional to that set forth in the assignment directions);

**B** = Assignment/overall performance in course meets all the requirements with evidence of critical thinking, evidence of research effort, and analysis (i.e. coherence and integration of ideas);

**C** = Average. Assignment/performance meets all the requirements but lacks evidence of in depth thinking and analysis and lacks evidence of research from professional journals or recent or influential books.

**D** = There are important gaps in the assignment both in terms of requirements and critical thinking and analysis

## **VI. CLASS POLICIES**

1. It is important for social work practitioners to be punctual in both attendance and in meeting deadlines. These expectations will also apply to students in this course. Students are expected to turn in assignments on the due date at the beginning of class. Assignments turned in after class starts will be considered late. Students will lose 3 points for each day that an assignment is late. Any adjustments in due dates due to extenuating circumstances must be discussed with the instructor **at least 24 hours PRIOR** to the regularly scheduled due date.
2. Students who fail to attend class on a regular basis (missing more than one class without a valid excuse, e.g., family emergency or illness for which documentation may be required) will be penalized one point per unexcused absence when points are totaled.
3. This course is part of a professional training program. The behavior that is expected of social workers in professional practice is also expected of students in this course. Students are expected to arrive at class punctually, to remain in class for its duration, and to maintain focus upon course content during class. Cell phones, laptops, tablets and other electronic devices must be turned off and put away. Eating is only permitted during breaks. Social work practitioners respect others. Therefore, differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected.
4. Student feedback is welcomed. Students are encouraged to provide feedback to the instructor during office hours, by e-mail, and by appointment.
5. If students are concerned about their grades, the instructor is available to work with students to help them improve their course grades prior to the end of the semester. **Final grades assigned in the course are not negotiable.**

### **Special Accommodations for Students with a Disability**

Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

### **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/academicintegrity.html>).

**Course Schedule**

Date	Description	Text / Readings
6/6/13	Introduction Overview of Syllabus Defining mental disorder	
6/11/13	Introduction to Assessment and Classification Systems  DSM Multiaxial system	Comer, Ch. 1,2  DSM 5, p. 5-25  Mayor's Mental Health Task Force Report, p. 1-7  Maia Szalavitz, When the cure is not worth the cost, New York Times, April 11, 2007  Community Action Network, Frequently Asked Questions about Adult Mental Health
6/13/13	Mental status examination  Methods of assessment	Comer, Ch. 3  Nicholi, "The Therapist-Patient Relationship"
6/18/13 6/20/13	Mood Disorders  Assessment of suicidality	Comer, Ch. 6,7  DSM p. 155-188; 123-140  Brooke Shields, War of words, New York Times, July 1, 2005
6/25/13	Childhood and Adolescent Disorders  ADHD & Conduct Disorder	Comer, Ch. 14  DSM, p. 31-41, 50-66
6/27/13	Psychiatric disorders and aging  Delirium, Dementia, Amnestic, and other Cognitive Disorders	Comer, Ch. 15  DSM p. 591-614

7/2/13	Mental Disorders due to a General Medical Condition  Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders	Comer Ch. 12  DSM, p. 87-122
7/4/13	Independence Day holiday	
7/9/13	Schizophrenia  <b>Exam 1</b>	
7/11/13	Anxiety Disorders; stress and mental health  Anxiolytic medications	Comer , Ch. 4; p. 246-263  DSM, p. 189-233; 235-264
7/16/13	PTSD  Assessment and crisis intervention  Dissociative Disorders  Adjustment disorders	Comer, Ch. 5  DSM p. 265-307
7/18/13	Substance-related Disorders	Comer, Ch.10  DSM p.481-589
7/23/13	Eating Disorders	Comer, Ch. 9  DSM p. 338-354
7/25/13	Personality Disorders  Disruptive, impulse-control and conduct disorders  Assessment of potential for violence  <b>Paper Due</b>	Comer, Ch. 13,16  DSM p. 645-684; 461-480



7/30/13	Somatic symptom and related disorders Factitious Disorders Sleep Disorders Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders	Comer, p. 235-246, Ch. 8,11 DSM p. 309-327; 423-459; 685-705
8/1/13	<b>Exam II</b>	