

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

**Course Number: 381R**

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**Unique Number: 60515**

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**Semester: Fall 2015**

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**Meeting Time/Place:**  
**Wednesdays 5:30**  
**Room 2.112**

**Office Hours: Wednesdays**  
**3:00pm-5:00pm**

## THEORIES AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

### I. Course Description

This graduate-level course will focus on empirically based theories and conceptual approaches that undergird social work practice and research. Ecological-systems theory, lifespan developmental framework and cell to society framework will serve as conceptual guideposts for understanding social work's person-in-environment approach to the reciprocal relationship between human behavior and the social environment. The course will also examine other traditional and alternative theories, including Psychodynamic, Cognitive Behavioral, Social Learning, Empowerment, Psychosocial, and Feminist. Students will use critical perspective to understand (1) theoretical knowledge construction, 2) theory integration into various aspects of social work practice and (3) theory relevance to explaining the influence of factors related to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and ability to human behavior and development. Methodological, empirical, and ethical considerations of contemporary issues (i.e., poverty, privilege, oppression, risk, and resiliency) and multi-dimensional aspects of the human experience across the lifespan (i.e., biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual) will be critically examined.

### 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, the school engages in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Several required courses in the school's 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 Paper, 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 Paper, Case Analysis Presentations, Exams

### **III. Teaching Methods**

This class will be taught using a variety of methods with an emphasis on experiential learning via an active learning-centered model. Teaching methods might include role-plays and simulations, case examples, student presentations, videos, class discussions, small group interactions, collegial consultation, lectures and guest lectures. The assignments will provide the opportunity for "learning by doing" in role-play, small groups, and individual and group projects. To achieve success in learning in this course, students must be willing to participate, take appropriate personal risks, utilize their creativity, and attend class. Students are encouraged to ask questions as well as provide the professor with information and feedback.

#### **IV. Required Readings**

Required Textbooks:

Hutchison, E. D. (2015). *Dimensions of human behavior: Person and environment* (5th ed.) Sage Publication, Inc., CA.

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 will be assigned and available on UT Canvas.

Recommended Reading:

American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

#### **V. Course Requirements**

In order to receive a passing grade for the course ALL assignments need to be completed.

Literature Review Paper: 100 Points

Case Analysis Paper: 70 Points

Midterm Exam: 60 Points

Case Analysis Presentation: 70 Points

Final Exam: 60 Points

Class participation and Case Homework: 40 Points

TOTAL 400 Points

#### **VI. Grading Scale**

400-375 = A

374-360 = A-

359-349 = B+

348-336 = B

335-320 = B-

319-310 = C+

309-296 = C

295-280 = C- (class failed, no credit)

279-270 = D+

269-256 = D

255-240 = D-

240-0 = F

## Assignments

**Literature Review Paper.** Students will be required to complete a literature review research paper with theory on a topic of interest to the student. The objectives of this assignment are:

1. To use critical thinking skills in completion of a scholarly literature review.
2. To demonstrate mastery of the American Psychological Association (APA) format.
3. To review evidence based literature regarding a topic of interest related to a human development and behavior problem area.
4. To relate a theory(s) to a human development and behavior problem area.

Students are expected to use critical thinking to complete the scholarly literature review on a selected human development and behavior problem area. The problem area should be related to the student's Group Presentation case.

This paper allows students to do an in depth examination of a specific topic through a review of what other scholars have written about the problem. Students must demonstrate critical thinking skills and mastery of American Psychological Association (APA) writing format in this paper. Students should analyze and synthesize 10 evidence-based, peer reviewed journal articles. The paper should be no more than 8-10 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 10 journal articles.

Students are expected to complete a draft of this paper for submission on September 23, 2015. The draft will be reviewed and returned to students with comments by October 7, 2015. Students will then have an opportunity to revise the paper and submit a final version on October 14, 2015. Completion of the draft paper will be worth 25 points.

A separate assignment sheet will be provided.

**Due Date: Draft due September 23, 2015, Final due October 14, 2015. (100 Points)**

**Case Analysis Presentation.** Students will be divided into groups and each group will be required to lead the case discussion for one case. The objectives of this assignment are:

1. To gain experience leading and participating in case conferences/staffings.
2. To further skills in assessment and intervention planning used evidence based resources as guidance.
3. To gain experience applying theoretical perspective to client situations.
4. To gain experience leading creative, engaging oral presentations.

A separate assignment sheet will be provided.

**Due Date: Dependent on date case discussion scheduled, see course schedule (70 Points)**

**Exams.** There will be a mid-term exam and final exam covering the course readings, PowerPoints, and class lectures. If videos and guest lecturers are part of the class, then these may also be covered on exams. Exams will not be cumulative. If a student is unable to take an exam on the assigned date for any reason other than an emergency, the student must notify the instructor at least one week in advance of the test date. The class sessions the week before the mid-term and final exam will include a review for exam preparation.

**Due Dates: October 21, 2015 and December 2, 2015 (60 points per exam)**

**Case Analyses Paper.** Students are required to complete a written case analyses. The objectives of this assignment are:

1. To apply critical thinking to the problem identification, assessment and intervention planning for a case situation.
2. To practice using evidence based resources to guide case interventions.
3. To apply a theoretical framework(s) to a case and presenting problem.
4. To gain experience writing a formal case analysis using APA format.

A separate assignment sheet will be provided.

**Due Date: November 4, 2015 (70 Points)**

**Class Participation and Case Homework.** Students will receive 30 points of their total grade for completion of brief evaluation case forms, class attendance, class participation and professional conduct.

**(40 Points)**

VII. Class 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.

#### **Maintaining Confidentiality**

Information shared in class about agencies and clients is considered confidential according to the NASW Code of Ethics re: the sharing of information for educational purposes. However, discussion outside of class with individuals outside of the course regarding information shared in class about clients, supervisors or agencies is a breach of confidentiality. Breach of confidentiality is grounds for disciplinary action within the School and/or possible expulsion from the program.

#### **Professional Accountability/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.

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 being willing to promote group cohesiveness in the learning environment.

### **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/](http://www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/).

### **Use of Computers/Cell Phones in the Classroom**

Class participation is essential. Cell phones should be turned off when class begins and remain off throughout the duration of the class. Text-messaging is not allowed during class time without special circumstances about which the professor has been made aware. Laptop computers and tablets will be allowed for note-taking in the classroom but should be put away during interactive portions of class. .

### **Time Management**

Assignments are due by 5:30 p.m. on the day of class through Blackboard or hard copy format. Papers turned in after 5:30 pm on the day of class are considered late. Students will lose 5 points per calendar day that an assignment is late. Students will not lose 5 points for one assignment turned in one day late during the semester. On subsequent days, assignments must be submitted before 5:30 p.m. to avoid an additional 5 point deduction. Late papers may be accepted via Canvas with permission of the professor. The student is responsible for emailing the professor to indicate that the assignment has been submitted.

### **Attendance**

Attendance and participation for the full three hours of class and is expected for all students. After two absences, the student will be asked to arrange for an office visit with the professor to discuss the attendance policy.

Three or more absences may result in the student being dropped from the class. A student is considered late when arriving to class after 5:40pm. Two late arrivals will count as one class absence.

Classroom exercises, discussions, role-plays, guest speakers and other class experiential exercises are essential for the students' professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. This form of learning cannot be "made up" once missed. Students will be expected to contact their peers to secure any missed notes or handouts. The student may schedule an office visit with the professor if they wish to discuss missed classroom material in more detail.

As in any professional situation, students are expected to notify the instructor prior to class by email or cell phone if they will be late or cannot attend class due to an illness or emergency.

### **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.

### **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 <https://www.utexas.edu/student-affairs/policies/title-ix>.

### **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/>).

### **APA Guidelines and Crediting Sources**

When using information from other sources, references and bibliography should conform to current APA style. Instances of plagiarism will be dealt with according to University policy.

### **Writing Assignments**

Students are expected to produce high quality written work in terms of clarity,

appearance, writing style, and content. Points will be deducted for errors, misspellings, incorrect grammar and punctuation, poor organization, insufficient information, and inferior word processing. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the SSW Writing consultant, who can be reached at [dinittowritingconsultant@gmail.com](mailto:dinittowritingconsultant@gmail.com).

### **Concerns about Grades**

Students with concerns or questions about grades are invited to discuss these with the professor. The professor cannot consider grade revisions beyond two weeks after the assignment is returned to the student.

Students with concerns related to equitable distribution of work on a group project should first give the colleague in question a chance to address the concerns. Discussing the problem with your peer first is requested, using skillful and direct communication provided in a way that can be heard. If significant concerns remain, the student(s) is/are encouraged to approach the professor during the assignment's completion process, **before** the assignment is due.

### **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/>.

### **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>.

Email will be a frequently used mode of communication between the professor and students. All students are responsible for checking their email on a regular basis for class updates. Students are also responsible for alerting the instructor about any changes to their email addresses. Students can use email to ask the instructor questions between class meetings. However, a student will be expected to use sound professional judgment when deciding what is appropriate to discuss in email as opposed to scheduling an office appointment or visiting the professor during office hours.

### **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. For more information go to <http://www.utexas.edu/its/helpdesk/>

### **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.

### **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 concerned about the well-being of a UT student or employee who may be 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.

### Change of Syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus if circumstances require an adjustment of course content.

### VIII. Course Schedule

Class	Topic	Dates	Readings	Due
1	Welcome Introduction An Overview of HBSE Literature Reviews	8/26		
2	A Multidimensional Approach to Human Behavior Decision Cases	9/2	Hutchison, Chapter 1 Scales & Wolfer, Chapter 1	Possible Literature Review Topics with Preferred Case Assignments
3	Theoretical Perspectives on HBSE	9/9	Hutchison, Chapter 2 Scales & Wolfer, Chapter 2 <b>Canvas:</b> Saleebey, The Strengths Perspective....	
4	Lifespan Development	9/16	Scales & Wolfer, Case #4 <b>Canvas:</b> Robbins, Chatterjee and	

			Canda, Chapter 7 Hutchison, The Changing Life Course Perspective, Chapter 1	
5	The Psychological Person	9/23	Hutchison, Chapter 4 Scales & Wolfer, Case #1	Draft, Literature Review
6	The Psychological Person, Relationships, Stress and Coping	9/30	Hutchison, Chapter 5 Scales and Wolfer, Case #3	
7	The Spiritual Person	10/7	Hutchison, Chapter 6 Scales and Wolfer, Case #12	Brief Evaluation (Case #12)
8	The Physical Environment	10/14	Hutchison, Chapter 7 Scales and Wolfer, Case #10	Final, Literature Review Brief Evaluation (Case #10)
9	Mid-Term Exam	10/21		
10	Culture  Social Structure and Social Institutions	10/28	Hutchison, Chapters 8 and 9 Scales and Wolfer, Case #2 Scales and Wolfer, Case #11 <b>Canvas:</b> Ortega and Faller, Training Child Welfare Workers.....	Brief Evaluation (Case #2)

11	Families	11/4	Hutchison, Chapter 10 Scales and Wolfer, Case #5	Brief Evaluation (Case #5) Case Analysis Paper (Case #8)
12	Formal Organizations  Technology	11/11	Hutchison, Chapter 12 Scales and Wolfer, Case #7 <b>Canvas:</b> Vaughn and colleagues, Chapter 11	Brief Evaluation (Case #7)
13	Communities and Social Movements	11/18	Hutchison, Chapters 13 and 14 Scales and Wolfer, Case #9	Brief Evaluation (Case #9)
14	Final Exam	12/2		

### References

Ashman, K. (2000). *Human behavior, communities, organizations, and groups in the macro social environment: An empowerment approach* (2nd ed.). Australia: Wadsworth Pub.

Aveyard, H. (2010). *Doing a literature review in health and social care a practical guide* (2nd ed.). Maidenhead, Berkshire, England: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.

Dale, O. (2009). *Human behavior and the social environment: Social systems theory*. (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon/Pearson.

Faller, K., & Ortega, R. (n.d.). Cultural Humility for Child Welfare Professionals: A

- Paradigm Shift. *PsycEXTRA Dataset*.
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- Haight, W., & Taylor, E. (2007). *Human behavior for social work practice: A developmental-ecological framework*. Chicago, Ill.: Lyceum Books.
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- Hudson, C. (2010). *Complex systems and human behavior*. Chicago, Ill.: Lyceum Books.
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- Robbins, S., & Chatterjee, P. (2006). *Contemporary human behavior theory: A critical perspective for social work*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
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2. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Vaughn, M., & DeLisi, M. (2013). *Human Behavior a Cell to Society Approach*.

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