

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

<b>Course Number:</b>	SW n393 R1	<b>Instructor:</b>	Dina M. Kassler, Ph.D.
<b>Unique Number:</b>	89565	<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:dinakassler@utexas.edu">dinakassler@utexas.edu</a>
<b>Semester:</b>	Summer 2021	<b>Office:</b>	No on-campus presence
<b>Meeting Time/Place:</b>	Mon / Wed 2:30-5:00 pm Online via Zoom	<b>Phone:</b>	(512) 809-3407
		<b>Office Hours:</b>	Mon / Wed, 2:00-2:30 pm Other times by appointment

**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 most current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. 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 will be able to:***

1. Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of biological, psychosocial, and cultural theories on the etiology of mental health and mental illness
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
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
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
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

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.

### III. TEACHING METHODS

This course is designed to include a variety of experiences intended to achieve the student educational outcome of mastering knowledge and skill in this area. Included may be lectures, readings, discussions, presentations, and videos. Students will be asked to engage in informed discussion of the class assigned readings and be asked to apply these readings to in-class exercises, homework assignments, and exams. Teaching and learning will be collaborative and interactive.

### IV. TEXTS

#### **Required:**

American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Author.

First, M.B. (2014). *DSM-5 handbook of differential diagnosis*. American Psychiatric Publishing.

#### **Recommended:**

Corcoran, J., & Walsh, J.M. (2020). *Mental health in social work: A casebook on diagnosis and strengths-based assessment* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Pearson.

### V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### **1. Class Attendance and Contribution**

Due to the format and content of this course, both attendance and contribution are imperative. Students are expected to be in class, or in extenuating circumstances to notify the professor that they will be absent. Because attendance and participation are expected, a lack of these may adversely affect a student's final course grade, i.e., attendance and quality of contribution, as demonstrated by student preparation level, will determine if final course grades will be affected.

Students will be allowed **one (1) absence** without penalty. Roll will be noted at the beginning of each class period (*N.B.* Once students are known to the professor, this will not be verbal but will continue to be noted every class period). In cases where a student misses more than one class period, the professor reserves the right to lower that student's final grade by **3% points for each class missed** after the first.

#### **2. Exams, 50% (2 @ 25%)**

There will be **two exams (June 30<sup>th</sup> and July 26<sup>th</sup>)**. Each exam will be worth 25% of the total course grade (for a cumulative worth of 50% of the final grade). The exams will be based on readings, discussions, videos, exercises, and lecture material. The exams will consist of two open-book differential diagnoses which will require accurate

diagnosis along with the reasoning that went into your decision (similar to the homework assignments described below).

Exams will cover the material indicated at the end of this syllabus. Please be punctual for exams! The time allotted for this course (2:30 pm – 5:00 pm) will be allowed for you to complete exams (unless an SSD accommodation letter has been provided that addresses time availability)!

**All exams are to be submitted electronically through Canvas on the day scheduled and within the timeframe allotted.** These are not “take-home” exams despite being completed in your own home setting.

***N.B.*** It is expected that all students’ **cameras will remain turned on during these exams**. If technical difficulties are being experienced or a student has any extenuating circumstances, please inform the instructor as soon as possible. Breaks are allowed with cameras turned off.

### **3. Differential Diagnosis Homework Assignments, 50% (4 @ 12.5% each)**

Students will be assigned four homework assignments across the semester. Clinical case descriptions will be provided by the professor. It is expected that students will utilize the DSM-5 in conjunction with the tree structures and tables presented in the book by First in order to accurately diagnose the cases presented.

The purpose of these assignments is to help students learn and build on their skills in formulating a comprehensive differential diagnosis. A full “thought process” is expected in these assignments, i.e., students are expected to convey the methods and steps taken to arrive at the diagnosis chosen. This is an extremely valuable and important way for you to explain the reasoning for your answers and may result in partial credit even if the final diagnosis is incorrect (i.e., if your thought process is adequately justified).

These homework assignments will be available on Canvas at least 2 weeks in advance of their due dates. As indicated in the “Course Schedule” at the end of this syllabus, these assignments will be due on ***June 16<sup>th</sup>, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, July 7<sup>th</sup>, and July 14<sup>th</sup>***.

It is expected that these homework assignments will be approximately 2-4 pages in length and typically not exceed 5 pages. DO NOT think “bigger is better.” Concise descriptions are highly preferred over a “throw it all at the wall and see what sticks” approach. Evaluation components of this assignment will include the depth and accuracy of the material presented as well as the clarity with which concepts were conveyed.

**All assignments are to be submitted electronically through Canvas.** Late assignments will be accepted with penalties assessed based on arrival time; penalties will accrue at the rate of **5 points (out of 100 pts) for each 24-hour period late** beginning immediately following the start of class time (e.g., the first homework is due 6/16/21 at 2:30 pm; there will be a 5-point penalty for assignments submitted from 2:31 pm that day until 2:30 pm on 6/17/21).

## **VI. GRADES**

A	94.0 and Above
A-	90.0 – 93.999%
B+	87.0 – 89.999%

B	84.0 – 86.999%
B-	80.0 – 83.999%
C+	77.0 – 79.999%
C	74.0 – 76.999%
C-	70.0 – 73.999%
D+	67.0 – 69.999%
D	64.0 – 66.999%
D-	60.0 – 63.999%
F	Below 60.0

## VII. CLASS POLICIES

1. Students are expected to attend class sessions promptly, regularly, and participate in an interactive framework between students and professor. While camera usage is not required on non-exam days, it is expected that students will leave them on for the majority of class time and especially during breakout group sessions.
2. The professor and students have the ethical responsibility to ensure that the class environment is maintained as a respectful and confidential setting. To this end, please attempt to secure a quiet location for class time and, if needed, please wear headphones to minimize your fellow classmates from being overheard by others.
3. Because this course will be provided via Zoom, the use of computers/electronic devices is required; however, the use of electronics during class time is approved only for course-related activities. As such, it is expected that students will not be “multitasking” during class. Please refrain from texting and other non-class activities across our time together.
4. Students are expected to **complete the readings prior to class** and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and learning assignments. Failure to regularly attend class and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade.
5. Except in the case of extreme emergencies, **late assignments will not be accepted without penalty**. Students are expected to electronically submit all required assignments on the due date **before the beginning of class**. Assignments submitted after the start of class will be considered late. If the due date is a problem, the student should contact the professor and negotiate whether another due date can be arranged **well in advance**.
6. Students are expected to both learn and demonstrate knowledge of differential diagnosis. This will require extensive diagnostic practice on homework assignments and in-class exercises. Students will further demonstrate their level of applied knowledge of differential diagnosis and assessment on exams.
7. If students are concerned about their class performance, the professor is more than willing 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.**
8. Use of Canvas: In this class the professor uses Canvas — a Web-based course management system with password-protected access — to distribute course materials, communicate and collaborate online, post grades, and receive submitted assignments. Canvas is used to provide access to PowerPoint presentations of lecture materials and

pre-exam review materials. 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. or visiting <http://it.utexas.edu/> Please plan accordingly.

## **VIII. 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 AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM.** The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as race, 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. This atmosphere includes working intentionally to recognize and dismantle racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism in the classroom. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment, we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

**UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS.** Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>.

**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 (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g. blogs) 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.

**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/>.

**USE OF COURSE MATERIALS.** The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

**DOCUMENTED DISABILITY STATEMENT.** Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471- 6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS.** By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**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 on the basis of sex <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>. Faculty, field instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, or

any other forms of sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>.

**CAMPUS CARRY POLICY.** The University's policy on concealed firearms may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>. You also may find this information by accessing the Quick Links menu on the School's website.

**CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY.** Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

**USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS.** Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

**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 have concerns about their behavioral health, or if they are concerned about the behavioral health of someone else, students may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

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

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

## IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule is intended only as a guide. Students should complete the readings as they are outlined in order to space them evenly throughout the semester. This is especially important since the exams will cover the required readings for that period of time. The student is responsible for all readings whether or not the material is covered in lectures.

WEEK	DATE	DESCRIPTION/TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
1	6/7	Introduction & Overview of Course	Syllabus
		Intro to Mental Health Diagnosis and the DSM-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corcoran &amp; Walsh (Ch. 1)</li> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 5-25)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 1-21; 157-159)</li> </ul>
	6/9	Anxiety, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders, Trauma-Related Disorders, and Stressor-Related Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corcoran &amp; Walsh (Chapters 8, 9, &amp; 10)</li> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 189-290)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 75-90, 198-228)</li> </ul>
2	6/14	Mood Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corcoran &amp; Walsh (Chapters 6 &amp; 7)</li> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 123-188)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 52-74, 182-197)</li> </ul>
	6/16	Dissociative Disorders, Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders, and Psychological Factors Affecting Physical Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 291-327)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 91-93, 229-243)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Homework #1 Due</i></b></p>
3	6/21	Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corcoran &amp; Walsh (Ch. 5)</li> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 87-122)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 38-51, 175-181)</li> </ul>
	6/23	Feeding and Eating Disorders Elimination Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corcoran &amp; Walsh (Ch. 11)</li> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 329-360)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 94-98, 244-251)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Homework #2 Due</i></b></p>
4	6/28	Sleep-Wake Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 361-422)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 99-108, 252-257)</li> </ul>
		“Jeopardy” for Exam #1	In-class activity

	6/30	<b>Exam #1</b>	Covers all readings, lectures, discussions, and activities from 6/7/21-6/28/21
5	7/5	Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corcoran &amp; Walsh (Ch. 13)</li> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 481-589)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 129-134, 268-270)</li> </ul>
	7/7	Sexual Dysfunctions, Gender Dysphoria, and Paraphilic Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corcoran &amp; Walsh (Ch. 14)</li> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 423-459, 685-705)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 109-115; 258-261)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Homework #3 Due</i></b></p>
6	7/12	Personality Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corcoran &amp; Walsh (Ch. 16)</li> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 645-684)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 276-287)</li> </ul>
	7/14	Neurodevelopmental Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corcoran &amp; Walsh (Chapters 3 &amp; 4)</li> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 31-86)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 22-37; 162-174)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Homework #4 Due</i></b></p>
7	7/19	Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corcoran &amp; Walsh (Ch. 12)</li> <li>▪ DSM-5 (pp. 461-480)</li> <li>▪ First (pp. 116-125; 262-267)</li> </ul>
	7/21	<b>“Jeopardy” for Exam #2</b>	In-class activity
8	7/26	<b>Exam #2</b>	Covers all readings, lectures, discussions, and activities through 7/21/21

## X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Author.

Corcoran, J., & Walsh, J.M. (2020). *Mental health in social work: A casebook on diagnosis and strengths-based assessment* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Pearson.

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