

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

Course Number: SW195K	Instructor: Yessenia Castro, PhD (Dr. Castro)
Unique Number: 61855	Office Number: SSW 3.130 E
Semester: Fall 2021	Office Phone: 512-232-0778
Time: Wednesdays, 11:30 – 12:30	Email: ycastro@austin.utexas.edu
Place: SSW 2.130	Office Hours: Mondays 1 pm to 3 pm

SW195K: COLLOQUIUM ON ISSUES IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to introduce social work doctoral students to the diversity of topics and methods pursued by researchers and academicians in social work education and allied fields. Topics covered are broad and include information that facilitates the learning of research methods and the development of knowledge and skills needed to participate in the PhD program and within a community of scholars.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Introduce knowledge and resources needed to make a successful transition to the rigors of being a doctoral student.
2. Increase knowledge of systematic methods for literature reviews including skills for library research, documentation, and academic writing.
3. Broaden understanding concerning the essential information needed to become a social work scholar and researcher.
4. Increase knowledge concerning the current trends and issues within social work, including past and present controversies and critiques.
5. Broaden exposure to a variety of scholars, research methods and fields of study.
6. Develop reflective practices to understand self as a scholar within the field of social work (past and current training, practice experience, approaches, and values) and to consider how one's personal identity and social position facilitate or limit access to privilege, shape life chances, and impact the ability to influence social change.

III. TEACHING METHODS

The primary teaching methods will be small group discussion, lecture, readings, and individual assignments. Guest lectures and audio-visual presentations will also be utilized. Students are expected to ask questions, share experiences, and actively participate in class discussions.

IV. REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Available on the Canvas site for this class.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

STUDENT LED GROUP DISCUSSION: This class will consist predominantly of student-led discussion of the week's topic. The student-led group discussion has two goals. The first goal is to review the week's readings and get any outstanding questions or points of clarification answered by fellow classmates and the instructor. The second goal is to decide, as a class, what are the key conceptual, theoretical, or practical "take home points" from the week's readings. To this end, the following discussion prompts are offered. Students are encouraged to consider any other additional exercises, strategies, or discussion points in pursuit of the above-stated goals as they see fit.

- a. Articulate the "big picture"/overall topic of the week/article(s).
- b. Review (e.g., define, explain) individual concepts, terms, etc., as they come up in discussion, *in your own words*. This helps check one's own understanding.
- c. Ask clarifying questions and make any "stuck points" known. This helps everyone learn and can lead to new insights.
- d. Consider the connections of concepts from the current week's topic/articles with concepts from previous weeks' topics/articles.
- e. Critically evaluate the relevance of the overall discussion topic or, particular concepts or points of discussion, to any of the course objectives. What insights or lessons are offered with regard to any of the course objectives?
- f. Discuss how you might apply insights/lessons learned from the readings or subsequent discussion to enhance your experience as a doctoral student or facilitate your development as a scientist and scholar (in both the short and long term).

All students are expected to meaningfully contribute to the group discussion every week. Refraining from participating in the group discussion will result in loss of participation points.

ATTENDANCE: Students are required to attend all classes. Credit for attendance requires that students arrive on time (11:30 am) and remain for the entire class time (1 hour). See attendance policies below for more information on attendance.

MENTOR MEETINGS: Students are required to meet a minimum of twice per month with their *primary* research mentor. At least one meeting must be one-on-one. The other may be one-on-one or with a group in the context of a *research team meeting*. The purpose of one-on-one meetings should be to develop and implement a research training plan for the year. The purpose of attending group research meetings is to allow the student the opportunity to be exposed to and participate in ongoing research projects, observe and learn about the practical aspects of project implementation, and participate in a community of scholars.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Students are required to complete all preparatory work and assignments, turn assignments in on time, and participate meaningfully in class discussions (see

section on student-led discussions above). Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions. Students should be aware that completion of assigned readings may be necessary prior to completing a homework assignment, and should plan accordingly. Homework assignments should be completed independently unless otherwise specified.

VI. GRADES

This course is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis only. Students will earn 2 points each week (14 classes; 28 points total) provided all attendance and participation criteria (outlined below) are fulfilled at each class. All homework assignments are worth 7 points each (6 assignments, 42 points total). To receive credit for the course, students must earn 75% of points possible (52.5 out of 70 points).

VII. CLASS POLICIES

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend all classes and arrive on time on days when class convenes. *Students not present at 11:30 am will be considered late. Late arrivals will result in loss of 1 participation point.* Students are expected to be prepared for each class, complete and turn in all assignments, and contribute meaningfully each class discussions. If a student cannot attend a class, they should notify Dr. Castro ahead of time and provide proper documentation of the reason for the absence. Students should also notify Dr. Castro as soon as possible after a *documentable, unforeseen emergency* that has caused them to miss class with no prior notice. If a student has a documentable, unforeseen emergency that affects their attendance in this course, they should be prepared to approach Dr. Castro about it with official documentation of the unforeseen emergency. In the event class should be conducted remotely, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are at a location with a reliable internet connection on the day of class.

PARTICIPATION: All students are expected to meaningfully contribute to every class. Participation is evaluated based on the extent to which the student makes one or more meaningful contributions in during the class period. In this course, a meaningful contribution is defined as a substantive commentary that helps move the group discussion forward beyond a basic review/reiteration of concepts. Examples of meaningful contributions include (but are not limited to) points d through f in the section "Student-led Group Discussion" above. Additionally, helping another student or the class advance their understanding of a concept with which they are struggling (or otherwise helping them get past a stuck point) constitutes a meaningful contribution.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS: Students will receive specific instructions for each homework assignment before the end of class one week before the assignment is due. Homework assignments will be published on Canvas at 1:30 pm one week before they are due. All Assignments must be submitted via Canvas *prior to the start of class* on the day that it is due. Submission portals on Canvas will close at 11:30 am. Do not submit homework assignments to Dr. Castro via email. *Late homework assignments will not be accepted under any circumstances.*

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION. The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: <https://protect.utexas.edu/>

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.

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/>.

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.

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>.

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 campus carry may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>.

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 and COVID-19 ADVICE LINE (BCCAL). 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 and COVID-19 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 <https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line>. The Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line has been expanded to support The University of Texas at Austin

community during the COVID-19 pandemic. By calling 512-232-5050 - Option 2 for COVID-19, students, faculty and staff can be assisted in English and Spanish with COVID-19 support.

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

Week Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings
1 8/25	Syllabus review and expectations		
2 9/1	The Science of Social Work	Complete the Core Competencies Self-Assessment Review the Individual Development Plan	1. Brekke, 2014 2. Anastas, 2014
3 9/8	Grand Challenges for Social Work: Social Progress Powered by Science Guest Leads: Diana DiNitto, PhD; Yolanda Padilla, PhD	Visit and peruse the Social Work Grand Challenges website: https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/	1. MacLean & Williams, 2012 2. Uehara et al., 2013
4 9/15	The Formation of Scholars		1. Fong, 2014 2. Mor-Barak and Brekke, 2014
5 9/22	Mentoring Up: Navigating Mentoring Relationships	Complete the Individual Development Plan	1. Lee et al., 2015
6 9/29	Impostor Syndrome	Complete the Clance IP Test	1. Abrams, 2018 https://time.com/5312483/how-to-deal-with-impostor-syndrome/ 2. Onwuegbuzie, 2000
7 10/6	Journal Club Guest Lead: Jahanett Ramirez, MD	Article Summary/Critique	TBD
8 10/13	Building Research Infrastructures in Schools of Social Work: Developmental Notes from the 1980s and 1990s. Guest Lead: Luis Zayas, PhD		TBD
9 10/20	Scientific Mindedness	Your weekly log of cognitive biases	1. Lillienfeld & Lynn, 2014 2. Handout: Common Biases that Affect Decision Making

10 10/27	Forming a Good Research Question		TBD
11 11/3	Journal Club Guest Lead: Josephine “Tres” Hinds, PhD	Article Summary/Critique	TBD
12 11/10	The Philosophy of Science		1. Popper, 1959, Chapter 1
13 11/17	The Role of Theory in Research		TBD
14 11/24	Thanksgiving Holiday: No Class		
15 12/1	Doctoral Program Townhall		

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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