# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
# STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

| Course Number: | SW 381R | Instructor: | Mercedes Hernandez, PhD, LCSW |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unique Number: | 61435 | Email: | mercedeh@utexas.edu |
| Semester: | Fall 2022 | Office: | 3.106F |
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| | 11:30am – 2:30pm | Office Hours: | Before or after class |
| | SSW 1.212 | | Other time by appointment |

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

## I.    STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

This graduate-level course will focus on evidence-based theories and conceptual approaches that undergird social work practice and research with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations in social systems. A number of frameworks, including, but not limited to, ecological systems theory, critical race theory, the strengths-based perspective, psychodynamic theory, conflict theory, developmental theory, social behavioral theory, exchange and choice theory, social constructionist theory, humanistic theory, and additional theories with antiracism and anti-oppressive focus will serve as conceptual guideposts for understanding social work's person-in-environment, contextual approach to the interaction between human behavior and the social environment across the lifespan. Students apply critical perspectives of theory in practice to (1) evaluate how theoretical knowledge is constructed through the lens of diversity and equity, and (2) explain how micro, mezzo and macro systems are influenced by factors related to racialization, ethnic origin, class, gender identity and expression, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical and mental abilities, caste, immigration/refugee status, national origin of communities and tribal sovereign status. They will apply this knowledge in engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of client systems. The influence privilege and oppression have on risk and resiliency is emphasized as the learning community explores how the environment shapes multi-dimensional (i.e., biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual, intersectional) aspects of the human experience and change across the lifespan.

## II.    STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1.    Demonstrate knowledge about relevant theories of human behavior and development comparing definitional components, philosophical underpinnings, value assumptions, strengths, and limitations.

2.    Critically evaluate theoretical frameworks through an anti-racist, anti-oppressive lens.

3.    Analyze the interaction between human behavior and social systems, identifying how power differentials in these interactions influence health and well-being as well as risk and vulnerability.

4.      Gain knowledge of counternarratives to evaluate theoretical concepts, empirical evidence, and relevant critiques of theories of human behavior and development.

5.      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, intersectionality, and human interactions within social systems.

6.      Understand the interaction between the biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of the human experience and lifespan development.

7.      Conduct a scientific review of empirical evidence and theory to address human behavior, psychosocial, and developmental issues.

8.      Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person in environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with, assess data from, select and implement interventions with, and evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

9.      Reflect on the student's own lived experience and identities and incorporate this greater awareness in order to impact their social work practice.

**EPAS Competencies**
The Steve Hicks 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 UT SHSSW engages in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).

**Using a common evaluation instrument, this course measures the implementation of knowledge, skills, values, and/or cognitive and affective processes to assess the following competencies:**

**Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
Outcome 6.1:  Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies.

**Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
Outcome 7.2: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies.

**Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**
Outcome 8.2: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies.

**Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Outcome 9:2: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks in evaluating practice with individuals, families, and groups.

## III.  TEACHING METHODS

This course is designed to provide the student with a meaningful learning environment that will incorporate diverse perspectives of thought about human behavior. The class will be conducted using active learning approaches that will emphasize inclusion and different learning styles.  Course activities will include a combination of group discussion, small group critique and feedback, audiovisual presentations, case study analyses, readings, experiential exercises, and lecture. Students are expected to be open to learning and actively engaged in class discussion and activities, to take appropriate personal risks, and to demonstrate both critical thinking and self-reflection throughout the course.  Classes are designed to encourage student participation, input and discussion.

## IV.  REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

- **Required**:
    - Hutchison, E.D. & Charlesworth, L.W. (2021). *Essentials of human behavior in the social environment: Integrating person, environment, and the life course* (3rd ed.).  Los Angeles: Sage.

    - Additional required and recommended readings are available on Canvas.

- **Recommended**:
    - American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: APA Press

    - Machi, L.A. & McEvoy, B.T. (2022).  *The literature review: Six steps to success* (4th ed.) Thousand Oaks:  Corwin Press.

## V.  COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade for this course will be based on the following requirements (further guidance for each assignment is included in a separate document found on Canvas):

**Literature Review Matrix and Paper** – You are expected to use critical thinking to complete a scholarly literature review on a selected human behavior topic that may be confronted in social work settings.  This paper allows you to examine a specific topic, problem, or issue in depth by reviewing what other scholars have written about it.  Prior to completing the review, you will complete a matrix identifying five peer-reviewed journal articles relating to your topic that can be incorporated in your review.

**Group Presentation** – You will work in small groups to apply several different theories and content from the week's readings to a case example using news stories from local or national media (e.g., New York Times, Austin Statesman, NPR, PBS, TED Talk, etc.), and share your findings in a class presentation and facilitated discussion.

**Exam** – A take-home exam will be given at mid-semester.  You will apply theory and course content to a film (link for film will be provided).  The exam will focus on application of theory and human behavior content from the text and class sessions.

**Case Analysis Paper** – To fulfill the EPAS competencies of 6.1, 7.2, 8.2, and 9.2, the case analysis paper is a <u>common assignment</u> for all sections of HBSE. You will complete a case analysis focusing on how to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate practice with an individual, a family, a group, an organization, or a community.

**Student Participation** – This portion of the grade will be determined by attendance <u>and</u> quality of contribution as demonstrated by your preparation level.  Preparation includes completing readings and assignments by due dates and coming to class prepared to discuss them, and "being present" and involved in activities and discussions.

| Assignment | Date Due | Points |
|---|---|---|
| Literature Review | Topic due 8/30<br>Matrix due 9/14<br>Paper due 10/5 | 25 |
| Group Presentation | Depends on choice of topic | 15 |
| Exam | 10/19 | 20 |
| Case Analysis | 12/1 | 30 |
| Participation | Participation is ongoing | 10 |

## VI.    GRADES
94.0 and Above          A
90.0 to 93.999          A-
87.0 to 89.999          B+
84.0 to 86.999          B
80.0 to 83.999          B-
77.0 to 79.999          C+
74.0 to 76.999          C
70.0 to 73.999          C-
67.0 to 69.999          D+
64.0 to 66.999          D
60.0 to 63.999          D-
Below 60.0              F

## VII. CLASS POLICIES

1.  You are expected to read the assigned readings (some students use study groups), attend each class meeting, remain in class for the duration of the session, contribute to class discussions, and participate in skill-building exercises. Failure to attend class regularly (missing more than two class sessions) may result in a lower grade for the course, at the

instructor's discretion. As soon as you know that you will not be able to attend class, you should e-mail or call the instructor.

2. You are encouraged to fully participate in class, especially if you do not understand the material. This course should be a fully interactive one. No question will be regarded as insignificant by the instructor. However, the instructor will reserve the prerogative of asking students to meet separately if discussion or questioning is so extensive that it infringes on the topics that other students need to have covered. The classroom should be an open forum for the liberal exchange of differences of opinion and for discussion of these different perspectives, and for promoting understanding.

3. No late assignments will be accepted except in extreme emergencies and then only with permission of the instructor. If you are in an emergency situation you should contact the instructor and negotiate a new due date. All late assignments will be assessed point penalties at a rate of 5 points a day.

4. The School of Social Work uniformly requires APA editorial style as the standard format for all written assignments. Details of APA style are included in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Information on APA style and format can be found at the Learning Resource Center (LRC) in the School of Social Work and on the UT library website. Another excellent source is Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL). Appropriate referencing is required. Failure to use quotation marks for direct quotes or citations for indirect quotations and/or others' ideas constitutes plagiarism and may result in receiving no credit for the assignment.

5. You should be especially careful not to contribute unwittingly to myths about mental illness and disability in the conduct of practice, research, interpretation of data, and use of terms. The integrity of persons being addressed should be maintained by avoiding language that pathologizes or equates persons with the conditions they have (such as "a schizophrenic," "a borderline," "addicts," "epileptics," or "the disabled") or language that implies that the person as a whole is disordered or disabled, as in the expression "chronics," "psychotics," or "disabled persons." Terms are preferred that preserve the integrity of the person, as in "persons [or people] with disabilities," "a person diagnosed with schizophrenia." Terms conveying negative overtones should be replaced with more neutral expressions. For example, instead of "confined to a wheelchair," state "uses a wheelchair."

6. **Course Modifications:** Any modifications, amendments, or changes to the syllabus and/or assignments are at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be announced in class. It is the responsibility of the student to inquire about any changes that might have been made in their absence; all changes will be published on Canvas.


# 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 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY.** Students who violate University rules on academic 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 academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct.

**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.

**UNIVERSITY ELECTRONIC MAIL STUDENT NOTIFICATION.** Electronic mail (email), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send email communications to all students, and the University will expect that email communications will be received and read in a timely manner.

Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at https://it.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy.

**RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS.** A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable period after the absence. A reasonable accommodation does not include substantial modification to academic standards, or adjustments of requirements essential to any program of instruction. Students and instructors who have questions or concerns about academic accommodations for religious observance or religious beliefs may contact the Office for Inclusion and Equity. The University does not maintain a list of religious holy days.

**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

| Date | Topic | Assignment Due | Readings |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Unit 1** **8/23/22** | • Introduction and course overview<br>• A multidimensional approach to human behavior and social work practice<br>• The strengths perspective<br>• The ecological/ systems framework | | • Required:<br>  o Hutchison - Chapter 1<br>  o Unger, 2013<br>  o Review syllabus & assignments<br><br>• Recommended:<br>  o Greenfield, 2012<br>    Saewyc, 2010 |
| **Unit 2** **8/30/22** | • Integrating theory, research, and practice<br>• Writing literature reviews<br>• The helping process<br>• Decision cases<br>• Theoretical perspectives | **DUE:**<br>• **Literature review topics (bring to class)**<br><br>• **Finalization of group case presentations** | • Required:<br>  o Hutchison - Chapter 2<br>  o Hepworth 2013, Chapter 3, pp. 35-45<br>  o Review Research Help tab on Canvas<br>• Recommended:<br>  o Goldberg, 2012<br>  o Beck, 2016 |
| **Unit 3** **9/6/22** | • Postmodern views of culture<br>• Social justice, structure and institutions<br>• Theories of social inequality<br>• Theories of social inequality: Critical race, feminist<br>• Global perspectives | | • Required:<br>  o Hutchison, Chapters 6 & 9<br>• Recommended:<br>  o Braveman, 2011<br>  o Brown, Excerpt, 2017 |

| Unit 4 9/13/22 | Continuation of discussion on social justice, structure, and social inequality | **DUE:**<br>• **Literature review matrix 9/14 at 11:59 p.m.**<br>• **Group case presentation 1** | • Required:<br>  o Hutchison, Chapters 6 & 9<br>• Recommended:<br>  o Braveman, 2011<br>  o Brown, Excerpt, 2017 |
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| Unit 5 9/20/22 | • Biopsychological dimensions<br>• Brain-based implications for human behavior<br>• Psychological dimensions | **DUE:**<br>• **Group case presentation 2** | • Required:<br>  o Hutchison – Chapters 3 & 4<br>  o Perry, 2014<br>• Recommended:<br>  o First, 2018 |
| Unit 6 9/27/22 | • Spiritual dimensions | | • Required:<br>  o Hutchison - Chapters 5<br>  o Kulis, 2012<br>• Recommended:<br>  o Sallis, 2012 |
| Unit 7 10/4/22 | • Theoretical perspectives for understanding families<br>• Challenges that impact family life: Interpersonal violence, poverty, divorce, substance misuse<br>• Group structure/dynamics<br>• Formal organizations communities | **DUE:**<br>• **Literature review 10/5 at 11:59 p.m.**<br><br>**Take-home Exam posted** | • Required:<br>  o Hutchison - Chapter 7 & 8<br>  o Barrio, 2016<br>• Recommended:<br>  o Schwartz, 2013<br>  o Kolbert, 2013<br>  o Alaggia, 2012 |
| Unit 8 10/11/22 | • The life course perspective<br>• Psychosocial /developmental frameworks<br>• Pre-pregnancy and prenatal development | | • Required:<br>  o Hutchison, Chapters 10 & 11<br>• Recommended:<br>  o Cloitre, 2009<br>  o Warner, 2011 |
| Unit 9 10/18/22 | • Development in toddlerhood and early childhood | **DUE:**<br>• **Exam 10/19 at 11:59 p.m.** | • Required:<br>  o Hutchison, Chapter 12 |

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| | • Family and community risks and opportunities | | • Recommended:<br>   o Finger, 2009 |
| **Unit 10**<br>**10/25/22** | • Development in middle childhood | **DUE:**<br>• **Group case presentation 3** | • Required:<br>   o Hutchison, Chapter 13<br>• Recommended:<br>   o Dubow, 2009<br>   o Zayas, 2015 |
| **Unit 11**<br>**11/1/22** | • Development in adolescence | **DUE:**<br>• **Group case presentation 4** | • Required:<br>   o Hutchison, Chapter 14<br>• Recommended:<br>   o Kim, 2011<br>   o Steelman, 2016 |
| **Unit 12**<br>**11/8/22** | • Development in young and middle adulthood<br>• Group case presentation | **DUE:**<br>• **Group case presentation 5** | • Required:<br>   o Hutchison, Chapter 15<br>• Recommended:<br>   o Walker, 2012<br>   o Ainspan, 2018 |
| **Unit 13**<br>**11/15/22** | • Development in late adulthood<br>• Loss and grief<br>• HBSE in a changing world | **DUE:**<br>• **Group case presentation 6** | • Required:<br>   o Hutchison, Chapter 16<br>• Recommended:<br>   o Goodcase, 2017<br>   o Almack, 2010 |
| **11/22/22** | **Fall Break** | | |
| **Unit 14**<br>**11/29/22** | • Review and wrap up | **DUE:**<br>• **Case Analysis 12/1 at 11:59 p.m.** | Continue work on case analysis paper |

# X. BIBLIOGRAPHY
**(Not intended to replace your own literature review)**

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