

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

Course Number:	SW 393 R1	Instructor:	Dina M. Kassler, Ph.D.
Unique Number:	60385	Email:	dinakassler@utexas.edu
Semester:	Spring 2024	Office:	SSW 3.104A
Meeting Time/Place:	Tuesdays 11:30 am-2:30 pm Room SSW 2.132	Phone:	(512) 809-3407
		Office Hours:	By appointment only; all via private Zoom meetings

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 semester's end, 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 (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed., text rev.). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425787>

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* (3rd 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** (*March 5th and April 23rd*). 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 be given in two parts: the first part (worth 80 out of 100 exam points) will consist of multiple-choice questions; the second part of the exam (worth 20 out of 100 exam points) will be an open-book differential diagnosis 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. The time allotted for this course (11:30 am – 2:30 pm) will be allowed for you to complete exams (unless an D&A accommodation letter has been provided that addresses exam time availability). Please be punctual for exams! ***No one will be allowed admittance to an exam once the first completed exam has been submitted!***

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-TR in conjunction with the tree structures and tables presented in the book by Dr. Michael B. 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 ***February 6th, February 20th, March 26th, and April 9th***.

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 on 2/6/2024 at 11:30 am; there will be a 5-point penalty for assignments submitted from 11:31 am that day until 11:30 am on 2/7/2024). ***Note that late submissions will only be accepted in the first week following an assignment’s due date.***

VII. CLASS POLICIES

1. When at all possible, social distancing from this instructor is requested. I ask that no one approaches closer than six feet unless absolutely necessary (e.g., to ask a question during an exam). If you have other questions that should remain private, I ask that you request an outside of class Zoom meeting. It is possible we may be able to find a private location where social distancing can be maintained within SHSSW, but that is not guaranteed at this time and should not be expected.
2. Students are expected to attend class sessions promptly, regularly, and participate in an interactive framework between students and professor.
3. 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 mute cell phones and refrain from texting and other non-class activities during class. The professor reserves the right to remove this approval from anyone who violates this policy.
4. The *in-class use of laptops is approved only for class-related activities*. Please refrain from “multi-tasking” while in this interactive class. The professor reserves the right to remove this approval from anyone who violates this policy.
5. While the intent is to be fully in-person, if this course ever meets online, the use of internet-capable devices such as laptops, desktops, tablets, and smart phones will be required. However, during the time we are together for synchronous, live classes, their use is approved only for class-related activities. The professor reserves the right to remove this approval from anyone who violates this policy.
6. 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.
7. 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*.
8. 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.
9. 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**.
10. 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/>.

11. Class discussions ***will not be routinely recorded***. However, if any portion of a class meeting is recorded, it will be for the ***sole use of students in this course***. Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. The information regarding violations of this policy listed below in this syllabus under Section VIII (University Policies), will apply.

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Grading Scale

[No A+]	87.0 to 89.999	B+	77.0 to 79.999	C+	67.0 to 69.999	D+
94.0 and Above	84.0 to 86.999	B	74.0 to 76.999	C*	64.0 to 66.999	D
90.0 to 93.999	80.0 to 83.999	B-	70.0 to 73.999	C-	60.0 to 63.999	D-
			<i>*minimum to pass course</i>		Below 60.0	F

Attendance and Academic Behavior. At the University of Texas at Austin, regular attendance at all class meetings is expected. Instructors are responsible for implementing an attendance policy and must notify students of any special attendance requirements. See more information at <https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/attendance/>. Furthermore, students are expected to abide by the Standards for Social Work Education (available at <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/student-resources/bsw/policies-and-procedures/>). The student shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, and keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements.

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 Center for Access and Restorative Engagement at <https://community.utexas.edu/care/>. The University does not maintain a list of religious holy days.

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.

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.

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>.

Steve Hicks School of Social Work Policies

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.

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.

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 and Mental Health 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.

Resources, Prevention of Discrimination, and Safety

Disability Accommodation Statement. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability and Access (D&A). You may refer to D&A's website for contact and more information: <https://community.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with D&A, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and how they apply in my class.

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.

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

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/>.

Title IX Accommodations for Those Pregnant, Nursing and Parenting. Pregnant, nursing and parenting students, faculty, and staff are eligible for accommodations through the Title IX Office that support equal access to education and work and prevent discrimination. Students may reach out to the Title IX Office for help with accommodations to make up missed classes, complete missed coursework, keep them safe in the classroom, apply for leaves of absence, receive priority registration and other related support. Faculty and staff, including undergraduate students who work on campus and graduate student employees, may reach out for assistance with job or schedule restructuring and obtaining modified or additional work equipment. Visit the Title IX pregnancy and parenting resource page for more information or contact the Title IX Support and Resources team connect with a Case Manager.

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.

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	1/16	Introduction & Overview of Course	Syllabus
		Intro to Mental Health Diagnosis and the DSM-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSM-5-TR (pp. 5-28) ▪ First (pp. 1-21; 157-159) ▪ Corcoran & Walsh (Chapters 1 & 2)
2	1/23	Anxiety Disorders Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSM-5-TR (pp. 215-328) ▪ First (pp. 75-90, 198-228) ▪ Corcoran & Walsh (Chapters 8, 9, & 10)
3	1/30	Depressive Disorders Bipolar Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSM-5-TR (pp. 139-214) ▪ First (pp. 52-74, 182-197) ▪ Corcoran & Walsh (Chapters 6 & 7)
4	2/6	Dissociative Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSM-5-TR (pp. 329-370) ▪ First (pp. 91-93, 229-243)
		Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders	<i>Homework #1 Due</i>
5	2/13	Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSM-5-TR (pp. 101-138) ▪ First (pp. 38-51, 175-181) ▪ Corcoran & Walsh (Ch. 5)
6	2/20	Feeding and Eating Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSM-5-TR (pp. 371-406) ▪ First (pp. 94-98, 244-251) ▪ Corcoran & Walsh (Ch. 11)
		Elimination Disorders	<i>Homework #2 Due</i>

WEEK	DATE	DESCRIPTION/TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
7	2/27	Sleep-Wake Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSM-5-TR (pp. 407-476) ▪ First (pp. 99-108, 252-257)
		“Jeopardy” for Exam #1	In-class activity
8	3/5	Exam #1	Covers all readings, lectures, discussions, and activities from 1/16/2024-2/27/2024
9	3/12	SPRING BREAK	
10	3/19	Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSM-5-TR (pp. 543-665) ▪ First (pp. 129-134, 268-270) ▪ Corcoran & Walsh (Ch. 13)
11	3/26	Sexual Dysfunctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSM-5-TR (pp. 477-520; 779-801) ▪ First (pp. 109-115; 258-261) ▪ Corcoran & Walsh (Ch. 14)
		Gender Dysphoria Paraphilic Disorders	
12	4/2	Personality Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSM-5-TR (pp. 733-778) ▪ First (pp. 276-287) ▪ Corcoran & Walsh (Ch. 16)
13	4/9	Neurodevelopmental Disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSM-5-TR (pp. 35-99; 521-541) ▪ First (pp. 22-37; 116-125; 162-174; 262-267) ▪ Corcoran & Walsh (Chapters 3, 4, & 12)
		Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders	
14	4/16	“Jeopardy” for Exam #2	In-class activity
15	4/23	Exam #2	Covers all readings, lectures, discussions, and activities through 4/16/2024

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Psychiatric Association (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed., text rev.). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425787>

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

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