

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

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|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Course Number: | SW 393 R1 | Instructor: | Erin K. MacDonald, LCSW-S |
| Unique Number: | 60400 | Email: | erin.ebert@austin.utexas.edu |
| Semester: | Fall 2023 | Office: | |
| Meeting Time/Place: | Wednesday Afternoon | Office Phone: | 512-465-2022 |
| | 2:30-5:30PM | Office Hours: | By appointment only |
| | SSW 2.112 | | |

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 teaching methodologies to achieve the expectation of student mastery of the skills involved in the examination of social work practice as it is supported by selected scientific findings. Readings, discussion, lecture, experiential exercise, videos, case examples, and presentations are designed to enhance the learning experience. Each class contains reading or video assignments that are expected to be completed prior to class. Students are expected to ask questions, share experiences, and actively participate in class discussions.

IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

Required Texts:

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, Fifth edition (DSM-5-TR)*. Washington, DC

Corcoran, J., & Walsh, J. (2023). *Clinical assessment and diagnosis in Social Work Practice*. Oxford University Press.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to attend all classes, complete all preparatory work and assignments, turn assignments in on time, and participate meaningfully in class discussions and activities. Reading assignments will provide the basis for discussions. Students are encouraged to ask questions and make comments during lectures. Students' questions and comments provide the professor an important assessment tool for whether readings are being completed before class.

Course Assignments: Course will be comprised of 100 points broken down as follows:

Attendance & Participation (15 points):

Class will start promptly at 2:30 pm. Students are expected to attend all classes and arrive on time. Students are expected to be prepared for each class, complete and turn in all assignments, and contribute meaningfully to each week's discussions/experiential learning opportunities. Participation is based upon 1 point per day. A full point will be awarded for engagement in class discussion and evidence of reading prior to class session. Attendance is essential for these points. You cannot earn points for participation if you are not present. If a student cannot attend a class, they should notify the professor ahead of time.

In Class Case Assessments (20 points):

Most of the time, we will have in class cases that you will complete during the course time. This will be done in group and individual formats (depending on the week) and are worth 2 points per case. Please bring a writing utensil (preferably pen) to class in order to hand in the assessment at the end of the class. The goal of these tasks will be to increase your confidence and mastery of the material as well your ability to draw assessment conclusions. We will have an opportunity to go over the case study and questions in class. ***IF YOU ARE ABSENT—you can make this up for 1 point via canvas discussion board***

Exams (2 at 20 points each totaling 40 points):

These exams will have 2 portions—a multiple choice section designed to be similar to the LMSW exam, so you can practice these types of exam questions and exam setting. Once this portion is turned in, you will be given a case/example and can begin the second part of the exam. This will be written format and open-note/DSM once the first section of the exam is submitted.

Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

Diagnostic Info Kit (10 points):

Students will select a diagnosis from the DSM-5 TR and create information about the diagnosis. This could be a pamphlet, a presentation deck, a set of social media graphics, etc. The goal of this creative assignment is to select something of interest as well as something useful. What would you or other clinicians want to know about the diagnosis? What might clients/family want to know? Have you gone to a doctor's office and seen information about skin screenings, etc? This is the idea. There may be an advocacy piece to this assignment if you wish—maybe it's a 1 pager for meeting with legislators? This is a flexible/creative assignment, but will have a rubric covering the information presented, the demonstration of understanding of the selected diagnosis, etc. Please pay attention to the learning objectives for this task. The rubric will be provided on canvas.

Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Case Assessment (15 points):

In this culminating, end of semester paper, students will write an 8pg paper/case assessment on the person/character of their choosing. You may select from a book/audiobook or film. The professor will provide a list of possible choices on canvas.

You will be expected to provide:

- Client Overview: of the client with attention paid to bio-psycho-social-spiritual and cultural intersections

- Diagnostic Assessment: DSM 5 diagnosis and brief discussion of the diagnosis (may need to provide more information if the diagnosis you choose is not one of the major categories we discussed in class...you become the “expert”) Please include your rationale and potential differential diagnosis (es)
- Treatment Approach: What treatment goal would you suggest to address the most pressing problem? What practice intervention(s) would you consider to be the most appropriate for your client and the identified goal? What strength(s) does the client possess and how would you weave this into your approach? Please be specific and provide the evidence-base for your choice.
- References: your paper must include a reference list in APA format including any readings, information, assessment tools, etc. Please remember—that if it isn’t your original idea it needs a citation! (For example—if it is a movie character...you must cite the movie!)

This is a culmination of the semester, so please demonstrate what you’ve learned throughout the semester and be mindful of our course objectives!

Objectives 1-6

VII. CLASS POLICIES

CLASS ATTENDANCE: Class attendance is required. Students may miss no more than 2 class sessions. Students who fail to attend class on a regular basis (missing more than 2 classes without a valid documentation, e.g., medical, death, etc.) may have their course grade lowered than their final grade when points are totaled. Repeated tardiness will result in an absence. If you believe you will be late to class, please alert the instructor via email or canvas message.

In the event of a CANCELED class the professor reserves the right to provide an alternative activity (likely a discussion board post on Canvas). Participation in the task will count for attendance if completed by the date specified.

If a student cannot attend a class (or need to leave early/arrive late), they should notify the professor ahead of time. Students should also notify the professor 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 the professor about it with official documentation of the unforeseen emergency.

It is expected that you will participate in class discussions. Participation in class discussion includes: summarizing content, thinking critically, and respecting others’ opinions regarding the reading assignments—though this does not mean agreement!

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments are due by the deadline given on the syllabus. Assignments that are past the deadline without valid documentation will automatically lose one grade level prior to the final grade.

Students should notify the professor as soon as possible after a **documentable, unforeseen emergency** that has/would cause an assignment to be late or if an extension is needed. ***In the***

case of a late assignment/extension request due to a documented and unforeseen emergency, the professor will assist the student in getting caught up with the assignment without penalty.

STUDENT CONCERNS: Students who would like to discuss a concern with the professor related to the class should make an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

USE OF THE CANVAS WEBSITE: Web-based, password-protected class sites using Canvas software are available for all accredited courses taught at The University of Texas. Syllabi, handouts, assignments and other resources are types of information that may be available within these sites. Site activities could include exchanging email, engaging in class discussions and chats, and exchanging files. In addition, class e-mail rosters will be a component of the sites. Students who do not want their names included in these electronic class rosters must restrict their directory information in the Office of the Registrar or online. For information on restricting directory information see: https://registrar.utexas.edu/schedules/199/print/front#P97_11126

This class will utilize Canvas for the distribution of class readings and any other multi-media content. Assignments may be submitted via Canvas. The primary mode of communication for this course will be email via the Canvas course website. Note below (in University Policies) that email is an official form of communication for The University of Texas at Austin and students are strongly encouraged to check their email daily.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM: Electronic Devices are discouraged from being used in the classroom unless it's for academic purposes. Collaborative conversation and participation are essential elements of this course, and electronics can distract from the ability to be fully engaged. Points will be taken away from participation grade if electronic devices are being misused.

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Grading Scale

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| [No A+] | | 87.0 to 89.999 | B+ | 77.0 to 79.999 | C+ | 67.0 to 69.999 | D+ |
| 94.0 and Above | A | 84.0 to 86.999 | B | 74.0 to 76.999 | C* | 64.0 to 66.999 | D |
| 90.0 to 93.999 | A- | 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**

| Date | Topic | Assignment Due | Readings |
|---------|--|----------------|--|
| 1/17/24 | Introductions Syllabus Review -Introduction to Clinical Assessment and Classification Systems -Clinical Interviews - Biopsychosocial-spiritual Assessment -Clinical Interviewing | | Corcoran & Walsh Ch. 1 & 2 DSM 5-TR, Section 1, DSM 5 Basics Introduction Use of the Manual |
| 1/24/24 | -Neurodevelopmental Disorders -Autism Spectrum Disorder -Attention | | C&W 3, 4 & 5 DSM 5-TR, Neurodevelopmental Disorders, Disruptive, |

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| | Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder | | Impulse Control and Contact Disorders. |
| 1/31/24 | Disruptive, Impulse Control, and Conduct Disorders -Substance-related Disorders | | C&W Ch.14, 15 DSM 5-TR, Disruptive, Impulse Control and Conduct Disorders and Substance Related Disorders |
| 2/7/24 | Schizophrenia Spectrum & other psychotic disorders Catatonia Disorder | | C&W Ch. 6 DSM 5-TR, Schizophrenia Spectrum and Psychotic Disorders. |
| 2/14/24 | Bipolar Disorder & related disorders Depressive Disorders | | C&W Ch. 7 & 8 DSM 5-TR, Bipolar and Related Disorders, Depressive Disorders. |
| 2/21/24 | <i>EXAM 1</i> | | |
| 2/28/24 | Anxiety Disorders & related disorders Specific Phobia and Social Anxiety Panic Disorder & Agoraphobia Generalized Anxiety Disorder Obsessive Compulsive Disorder | | C&W Ch. 9 & 10 DSM 5-TR, Anxiety Disorders and Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders. |

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| 3/6/24 | -Trauma and Stressor related disorders - Dissociative Disorders | <i>Diagnostic Info Kit can be submitted anytime in March</i> | C & W Ch. 11 DSM 5-TR, Trauma-and- stress-related disorders, Dissociative Disorders. |
| 3/13/24 | SPRING BREAK | <i>Diagnostic Info Kit can be submitted anytime in March</i> | |
| 3/20/24 | Personality Disorders | <i>Diagnostic Info Kit can be submitted anytime in March</i> | C&W Ch. 17 DSM 5-TR, Personality Disorders, Alternative DSM 5 model for personality Disorders. Canvas reading |
| 3/27/24 | Feeding & Eating Disorders Gender Dysphoria | <i>Diagnostic Info Kit can be submitted anytime in March</i> | C&W Ch. 12 & 13 DSM 5-TR, Feeding and Eating Disorders, Gender Dysphoria |
| 4/3/24 | -Neurocognitive Disorders - Mental Status Exams Suicidal and non-suicidal injury | | C& W. Ch. 16 DSM 5-TR, Neurocognitive Disorders DSM 5-TR-Suicidal Behavior Disorder, page 920 |
| 4/10/24 | Independent Work Day for Case Assessment | | Please use this day to work on your final case assessment—you can also utilize the writing center! |
| 4/17/24 | EXAM 2 | | |
| 4/24/24 | WRAP UP Questions, review, where do we go from here | | |

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| 4/29/24 | LAST DAY OF CLASSES - this is a Monday, we will not meet | <i>Final Case Assessment Due by 11:59pm</i> | |
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X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, Fifth edition (DSM-5-TR)*. Washington, DC

Corcoran, J., & Walsh, J. (2010). *Clinical assessment and diagnosis in social work practice*. Oxford University Press.

Pomeroy, E. (2014). *The clinical assessment workbook: Balancing strengths and differential diagnosis* (2nd ed.). Cengage Learning.