

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

**Course Number:** SW n387R33  
**Unique Number:** 87620  
**Semester:** Summer 2024  
**Meeting Time/Place:**  
Tuesday/Thursday  
8:30-11:00AM  
PAR 302

**Professor:** Tammy Linseisen, ACSW, LCSW-S  
**Email:** tlinseisen@mail.utexas.edu  
**Office:** WWH/virtual  
**Office Phone:** 512.431.0014  
**Office Hours:** following class and by appointment

**Child and Adult Attachment in Clinical Social Work Practice**

**I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The concept of attachment has gained increased recognition as the scope of brain research has grown. While attachment theory initially focused on early childhood relationships with caregivers, current literature includes the impact of disrupted attachment through the lifespan. This course will focus on attachment dynamics across developmental stages, including child, adolescent, and adult relationships. Both theoretical and treatment applications will be emphasized, and particular attention will be given to the impact of child maltreatment and parental/family functioning.

**II. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Identify various elements of attachment disruption using a biopsychosocial framework.
2. Critically assess differential diagnoses in children and adults who might have attachment-related issues.
3. Evaluate the ethics and effectiveness of treatments available for attachment-disordered individuals.
4. Apply attachment theory in assessing and treating the individuals and families who interface with social work practice.
5. Develop relational skills considered effective in working with children, families, and adults who have experienced attachment disruption.
6. Discuss the interconnection of current brain research and interpersonal neurobiology on attachment theory and practice.
7. Discern cross-cultural and global attachment issues and practices with particular emphasis on increasing cultural awareness and sensitivity.

**III. TEACHING METHODS**

I use a Compassionate Pedagogy approach to teach this course. From the Baylor University website, “Compassionate pedagogy is a collection of teaching practices designed to foster human connection, communication, and wellbeing. The approach revolves around listening to students’ lived experiences and offering flexibility to accommodate their struggles.” <https://www.baylor.edu/atl/index.php?id=984876>.

Compassionate pedagogy is about consciously facilitating learning in a way that seeks to include and interact caringly with all people (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2021). In alignment with this approach, I teach using a variety of methods to foster a stimulating, creative and collaborative learning community. These methods intentionally draw on diverse pedagogical approaches to be inclusive of a variety of learning styles. They include activities such as readings, writings, small group discussions, role-play, lectures, videos, in-class group activities, learning activities in the community and lots of self-reflection.

For a meaningful experience in this class, you are encouraged to actively participate, take risks, stretch your creativity, apply your critical thinking skills and attend class regularly. This course will highlight diverse perspectives of thought and will encourage you to engage in new ways of thinking that may be represented by speakers, the professor, and classmates from diverse backgrounds. You are encouraged to ask questions, raise issues, provide me with feedback, and meet with me individually as needed to enhance your learning.

In this course you will find a number of approaches to teaching that may be new to you, and I welcome conversation around these approaches. These are designed to address multiple learning styles and to support a community of compassion and connection to create a community of lifelong learners!

#### **Accessibility statement**

I am striving to create a learning experience that is as inclusive in accessibility as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to format, materials, or requirements for this course, please schedule a time to meet with me so we can explore potential options. Students with disabilities may also wish to work with the Office of Accessible Education and Student Support to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in this course, including official accommodations. You can visit their website for contact and additional information - <https://community.utexas.edu/disability/> If you have already been approved for accommodations through the Office of Disability and Access, please meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

#### **IV. REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

##### REQUIRED:

Fern, J. (2020). *Polysecure: Attachment, trauma, and consensual nonmonogamy*. Portland, OR: Thorntree Press.

Brown, D. & Elliott, D. (2016). *Attachment disturbances in adults: Treatment for comprehensive repair*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

Gobbel, R. (2024). *Raising kids with big, baffling behaviors: Brain, body, sensory strategies that work*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Johnson, S. (2020). *The practice of emotionally focused couple therapy: Creating connection*. New York: Routledge.

Wolynn, M. (2016). *It didn't start with you: How inherited family trauma shapes who we are and how to end the cycle*. New York: Penguin.

### **RECOMMENDED:**

Wallin, D. (2007). *Attachment in psychotherapy*. NY: Guilford.

Perry, B. & Szalavitz, M. (2008). *The boy who was raised as a dog and other stories from a child psychiatrist's notebook: What traumatized children can teach us about loss, love, and healing*. NY: Basic Books.

Siegel, D. & Hartzell, M. (2003). *Parenting from the inside out*. NY: Penguin Putnam, Inc.

Solomon, M. F. & Tatkin, S. (2011). *Love and war in intimate relationships: Connection, disconnection, and mutual regulation in couple therapy*. NY: W. W. Norton.

Muller, R. (2010). *Trauma and the avoidant client: Attachment-based strategies for healing*. NY: W.W. Norton & Co.

Any additional course readings will be located on Canvas, offered in handouts, or provided via internet and downloads.

## **V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### 1. The Clinician's Own Attachment - Self Assessment (25 points)

Self-awareness is one of the keys to effective clinical practice. When working with issues of attachment, it is important to reflect on one's own experiences, the impact of these experiences, resilient qualities, and predominant ways of healing. You will complete a reflective narrative about your own primary and secondary attachment figures and your subsequent attachment qualities and characteristics. Must be submitted to Canvas by 8:30AM on 6/18.

### 2. Attachment Presentation and Fact Sheet (25 points)

Presentations will be over the last two class days. Groups will be determined in class. All fact sheets must be submitted to Canvas by 8:30AM on 7/18.

Students will research a focused area of attachment that interests them and create an in class presentation to offer material in an engaging and educational way and a 4-5 page fact sheet that summarizes the literature researched and provides any pertinent details to assist fellow students to apply the material presented. The fact sheet will go beyond what the presentation slides include and should be organized in a publication-oriented, informational format. The fact sheet will be made available electronically to students. Presentation topics might be focused on identified populations, specific treatment options, or particular problem areas.

### 3. Attachment Final Exam (25 points) Due 7/30 by noon on Canvas

This case-based, take-home exam will offer you the opportunity to apply what you have learned from the course material, including readings, lectures, guest presentations, class

presentations, and discussion material. The exam will consist of both content and application-oriented material and will offer you a chance to apply what you are learning. Ungrading will be used a bit differently with this assignment and the process will be discussed in class.

#### 4. Class Engagement and Participation (25 points)

Active and meaningful presence is powerful for effective learning and absorption of a topic as rich as attachment. I want to incentivize your engagement in the course by offering points to signify the importance of delving into this topic in the classroom and in the preparatory reading. I am hopeful that you will feel safe enough to participate on a deeper level in class discussions, taking healthy risks to work outside of your comfort zone. Healthy risk-taking for professional growth and vulnerability for the clinical learning process are highly regarded in a class like this. You will score your participation points by assessing your attendance, reading preparation, questions asked, small group engagement, general level of interest, respect for others' learning needs and contributions to classroom discussions and activities. Please challenge yourself to participate in the ways that make your learning come alive!

Because of university policy, please note that you will not earn credit for graduate courses if your grade falls below a 'C'.

### **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**

#### **Attendance and participation**

Full attendance and active participation are ideal for a comprehensive learning experience. Classroom exercises, discussions, role-plays, guest speakers and other class experiential exercises are essential for your professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. I realize that extenuating circumstances arise and that everyone is juggling several responsibilities. If you are unable to attend a class, please email me prior to that class. If it is a last-minute absence, please text me, so I don't worry. If circumstances make you miss more than three classes, you may be overextended, so be sure to reach out to me. If you must miss a class, please contact a peer to review what you missed. In addition, you can always schedule a time to meet with me to discuss the missed content in more detail. There are numerous ways to demonstrate participation, depending on your learning style. We will be reviewing a participation rubric in class which will help you set individualized participation goals for the semester.

#### **Assignments**

There is flexibility in how you submit most assignments. Whether you choose to submit a paper, a video, or a PowerPoint (or other presentation software), the standards remain the same. I will be reviewing the content as well as the style in which it is presented. Think of the assignments as components of a professional portfolio and think about how you'd like to present your knowledge to potential employers. Be sure to cite your sources and references in a bibliography regardless of the type of submission, to abide by university plagiarism policies.

### **Time management**

The due dates on the syllabus and on Canvas are designed to keep you on track throughout the semester. This steady flow of submissions allows for you to receive continuous feedback so you can incorporate changes and adjustments into your practice. There are no penalties for late assignments in this course. When you feel like you need additional time to complete the work, email me ahead of time and indicate a targeted date for submission. This process allows students the flexibility to complete all work in a time frame that works with their schedules, while still acknowledging of the importance of timely feedback. If concerns arise about submissions, the professor will request a meeting with the student to address the barriers to timely completion.

### **Use of computers/cell phones in the classroom**

Attachment is a practice course, and class participation is essential to successful learning. In today's world, learning occurs both in the virtual space as well as in the real physical space. Please be respectful with your use of cell phones and personal messages during class time. This course has minimal paper handouts and relies heavily on the use of electronic handouts during class. Be sure to bring a device with you to class. You are free to have your laptops open and available throughout class to take notes and to access materials.

### **Use of Canvas in class**

In this class I use Canvas Web based course management system with password protected access at <http://canvas.utexas.edu> to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post evaluations, to submit assignments, and to give you online quizzes and surveys. You can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk. For more information go to <http://www.utexas.edu/its/helpdesk/>

### **Feedback**

You will be asked to provide feedback on your learning and my teaching strategies in informal as well as formal ways. It is very important for me to know your reactions to what is taking place in class, ensuring that together we can create a dynamic and effective learning community. You are also encouraged to provide ongoing feedback to me during class and office visits.

## **VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**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**

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**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**

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**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

1 6/6 Course Overview/Syllabus Review

Introduction to course material  
Ungrading  
Group Building  
Presentations Planning  
**PLEASE NOTE: Readings are due on the dates listed.**

- |    |      |   |
|----|------|---|
| 2  | 6/11 | General Attachment Overview<br>History of Attachment<br><i>See Canvas</i>   |
| 3  | 6/13 | Childhood Attachment<br>Patterns of Attachment<br><i>See Canvas</i>   |
| 4  | 6/18 | The Parent's Own Attachment<br><i>See Canvas</i>  |
| 5  | 6/20 | Healthy Attachment and Attunement<br>The Strange Situation<br>Attachment Styles   |
| 6  | 6/25 | Interventions<br>Little "t" and Big "T" Trauma<br>Disorganized Attachment<br>Harmful and ineffective practices                                    |
| 7  | 6/27 | Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)<br>Guest Professor:<br>Mary Beer, LCSW-S<br>Clinical Associate Professor<br><i>See Canvas</i>          |
| 8  | 7/2  | Adult Attachment<br><i>See Canvas</i>   |
| 9  | 7/9  | Adult Attachment, continued<br>Affective Regulation<br>Interpersonal Neurobiology<br>Culture and Attachment<br>Interventions<br><i>See Canvas</i> |
| 10 | 7/11 | Couples Attachment<br><i>See Canvas</i>   |

- 11    7/16    Somatic Interventions  
              *See Canvas*
  
- 12    7/18    AEDP  
              EMDR and Attachment  
              *See Canvas*
  
- 13    7/23    Attachment Presentations  
              Fact Sheets posted - review
  
- 14    7/25    Attachment Presentations  
              Fact Sheets posted - review  
              Presentations in Class  
              Our Class Termination

Course-Instructor Survey on your own

\*Any additional information not listed on the course schedule will be provided in class as a handout, posted on Canvas with notification, or emailed directly to the student. Professor reserves the right to make changes to the course schedule as needed.

## **X. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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