

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

Course Number:	SW 360K/393U26	Instructor:	Avery Nelson
Unique Number:	61015/61250	Email:	Avery.cowden @austin.utexas.edu
Semester:	Spring 2025		
Meeting Time/Place:	Wednesdays	Call/text:	512-484-7069
	5:30pm – 8:30pm	Office Hours:	By appointment
	Mezes Hall 1.216		

Juvenile Justice

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is designed to introduce students to the socio-historical context of the juvenile justice system and key micro, mezzo, and macro level issues for social service providers working with juvenile justice system-involved populations. While in the course, students will examine social theories used to explain why youth engage in behaviors deemed “delinquent”; social inequality in the juvenile justice system; juvenile justice system procedures; and practitioner and policy efforts to facilitate positive youth development within the juvenile justice system.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast social theories used to explain youth behavior in the juvenile justice context by evaluating each theory’s underlying values and empirical evidence.
2. Describe key micro, mezzo, and macro level issues for social service providers working with juvenile justice system-involved populations.
3. Evaluate juvenile justice system practices and procedures in the context of their theoretical basis, demonstrated effectiveness, and alignment with the NASW Code of Ethics.
4. Identify the risk factors that increase the likelihood of juvenile justice contact for youth, including those pertaining to race, sexuality, gender identity and expression, ability, and socioeconomic status.
5. Identify the protective factors that decrease the likelihood of juvenile justice contact for youth and describe existing policy and practice strategies that promote positive youth development within the juvenile justice system.

III. TEACHING METHODS

This seminar-style course will meet once a week for three hours. Typical course sessions will include: opening reflections, review of the assigned readings, brief lectures, small group activities, whole-class discussions, and student facilitated presentations and discussions. We will host a number of guest speakers who will share their experiences and expertise and participate in class discussions.

The assignments are designed to promote learning and exploration, challenge assumptions and assist students in developing their own approaches that will shape their practice in the future.

IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

The instructor, guests and students will assign required and suggested readings, along with discussion questions to assist everyone in preparing for the class discussion. Please come to each class prepared to engage in discussions. All required texts are listed in the course schedule and are available via the university library website or online.

Throughout the semester, we will be reading selected chapters from the following titles:

Henning, K. (2021) *The Rage of Innocence: How America Criminalizes Black Youth*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Hubner, J. (2005). *Last chance in Texas: the redemption of criminal youth*. New York, NY: Random House.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation (25% of final grade): This class will require your full participation. Your participation grade is earned through class attendance, participation in class discussions, completion of required readings and assigned reflection responses, one brief reflection paper, and full engagement with student-led teaching assignments. Each student is expected to give their full effort to the group facilitation assignments. If/when group projects are completed by only a portion of group members, non-participation will be reflected in the grade of those who did not contribute.

Unless excused from class for a verifiable reason, **non-attendance will result in a 2-point deduction from the participation grade.**

Student Presentation and Facilitation (40% of final grade): All students will participate in small groups in presenting a portion of one class and facilitating discussion. By the second class, students will form small groups and select a youth case study they would like to explore. Groups will research their topics, prepare a presentation and develop discussion questions for fellow students. Presentations will include relevant background information (biopsychosocial), relevant social theories, micro mezzo and macro issues involved, risk and protective factors, and a plan for action. One week prior to their scheduled presentation, students will submit an outline of their presentation along with discussion questions to the instructor. On the day of the presentation, student groups will facilitate for up to one hour (max) of the class. Students may use any teaching technique they think will best serve their fellow students (creativity is encouraged). These can include role plays, videos, interviews, breakout rooms, slides, etc. Student facilitators must create space for fellow students to engage in discussion- pausing to invite questions and reflections at various intervals.

Final paper (35% of final grade): All students will write a final paper that demonstrates a working understanding of how to approach juvenile justice as a social work practitioner. The paper will include:

- The student's theoretical understanding of the drivers of juvenile justice involvement and structural and institutional features that reinforce the system.
- An approach to youth and educational justice that reduces juvenile justice involvement and/or improves on or re-imagines practices with those who are currently in the system.

- A plan for incorporating learning and research into policy, program or practice approaches as social work practitioners.

Papers should be 8-10 pages in length. Students will be graded based on:

- Ensuring that all assertions are backed by research. Students must attempt to challenge their own presumptions- through research- and avoid merely offering an opinion.
- Ensuring that policy, program or practice approaches can be supported with evidence (or suggest a research design to test this approach). As practitioners, we each have an ethical obligation to design interventions that can be supported with evidence.

VI. CLASS POLICIES

Students are expected to attend each class, prepare for each class by doing the required reading, and participate in class discussion and activities. In the event that you have to miss a class, please email me.

Late assignments will result in 2 points lost per day (2 point = 2 percentage from your total grade). Assignments turned in after the start of class on the day the assignment is due will be considered late. No assignments will be accepted after 11:59pm on May 6.

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	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-
				*minimum to pass course		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://disability.utexas.edu/>. 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 Advice Line (BCAL). 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 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>.

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
1/15	<p>Introductions and Syllabus Review</p> <p>What is Juvenile Justice?</p>		<p>Deitch, M., Desktop Guide to Quality Practice for Working with Youth in Confinement. National Institute of Corrections (2009).</p> <p>Deitch, M., Barstow, A., & Lukens, L. (n.d.). Time out to hard time: Young children in the adult criminal justice system. National Institute of Justice.</p>
1/22	<p>History and Trends in Juvenile Justice</p> <p>Presentation Assignments</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Alycia Welch, MPAff, MSSE, Associate Director of Prison and Jail Innovation Lab</p>		<p>Rage of Innocence- Introduction and Ch. 1: American Adolescence in Black and White</p> <p>Last Chance in Texas- Introduction and Ch.1</p> <p>Inderbitzin, Michelle. (2012). Delinquency Interrupted: Research into and Inside of Juvenile Correctional Facilities. Sociology Compass, 6(6), 445–457.</p>
1/29	<p>School to Prison Pipeline</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Kristin Page, Former Prison Educator, and current SpEd teacher in a behavior unit of AISD</p>		<p>Rage of Innocence- Chapter 6: Cops in School</p> <p>National Council on Disability (2015) Breaking the School-to-Prison</p>

			<p>Pipeline for Students with Disabilities, *Suggested Sections (Executive Summary, Key Findings, Addressing Racial Disparities)</p> <p>González, T. (2012). Keeping Kids in Schools: Restorative Justice, Punitive Discipline, and the School to Prison Pipeline. <i>Journal of Law & Education</i>, 41(2), 281-335.</p>
2/5	<p>Adolescent Brain Development/Neuroscience</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Alan Bennett, Travis County Defense Attorney</p>		<p>Steinberg, L. (2017). Adolescent Brain Science and Juvenile Justice Policymaking. <i>Psychology, Public Policy, and Law</i>, 23(4), 410–420.</p> <p>Tiegen, A. (2021). Juvenile Age of Jurisdiction and Transfer to Adult Court Laws. National Conference of State Legislatures. https://www.ncsl.org/civil-and-criminal-justice/juvenile-age-of-jurisdiction-and-transfer-to-adult-court-laws</p> <p>Last Chance in Texas- Ch.2- Ch.4</p>
2/12	<p><u>No Class</u> Watch Violence Interrupters Submit a brief (<1 page) response to the film</p>	<p>Student facilitation group for 2/19: Submit outline and discussion questions</p>	<p>https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/interrupters/</p>

2/19	<p>Mental Health, Trauma, and the Cycle of Offending</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Dr. Lauren Washington, PsyD</p>	<p>Student facilitation group for 2/26: Submit outline and discussion questions</p>	<p>Jamieson, K. (2019) ACEs and Juvenile Justice. Center for Child Counseling</p> <p>Rage of Innocence- Ch. 4: Raising “Brutes” and “Jezebels”: Criminalizing Black Adolescent Sexuality</p> <p>Rage of Innocence- Ch. 9: Policing as Trauma</p>
2/26	<p>Families</p> <p>Foster Care to Prison Pipeline</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Dieter Cantu, Juvenile Justice Reform Expert</p>	<p>Student facilitation group for 3/5: Submit outline and discussion questions</p>	<p>Rage of Innocence- Ch. 11: Things Fall Apart: Black Families in an Era of Mass Incarceration</p> <p>Anspach, R. (2018). The Foster Care to Prison Pipeline: What It Is and How It Works. Teen Vogue. https://www.teenvogue.com/story/the-foster-care-to-prison-pipeline-what-it-is-and-how-it-works</p>
3/5	<p>Victim Impact- Who was Harmed?</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Ami Larson, former Travis County judge</p>	<p>Student facilitation group for 3/12: Submit outline and discussion questions</p>	<p>Eschholz, S., Reed, M.D., Beck, E. & Leonard, P.B. (2003). Offenders’ family members’ responses to capital crimes. <i>Homicide Studies</i> 7, 154-181.</p> <p>Pennington, L. (2015). A Case Study Approach to Procedural Justice: Parents’ Views in Two Juvenile Delinquency Courts in the United States. <i>British Journal of Criminology</i>, 55(5), 901–920.</p> <p>Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2018). Transforming Juvenile Probation:</p>

			<p>A Vision for Getting It Right. https://www.aecf.org/resources/transforming-juvenile-probation</p>
3/12	<p>Risk and Protective Factors</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Dr. Nichole Kuck, PsyD.</p>	<p>Student facilitation group for 3/26: Submit outline and discussion questions</p>	<p>Rios. (2012). Stealing a Bag of Potato Chips and Other Crimes of Resistance. <i>Contexts</i> (Berkeley, Calif.), 11(1), 48–53. https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504212436496</p> <p>Borum, R., Lodewijks, H. P. B., Bartel, P. A., & Forth, A. E. (2021). The Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY). In K. S. Douglas & R. K. Otto (Eds.), <i>Handbook of violence risk assessment</i> (2nd ed., pp. 438–461). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315518374-22</p> <p>Last Chance in Texas-Ch. 5-7</p>
3/19	SPRING BREAK		
3/26	<p>Economic Cost</p> <p>Guest speaker: Jennifer Toon, Lioness Justice Impacted Women’s Alliance</p>	<p>Student facilitation group for 4/2: Submit outline and discussion questions</p>	<p>Sticker Shock: Calculating the Full Price Tag for Youth Incarceration. (December 2014). Justice Policy Institute. http://defendyouthrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Sticker-Shock-Costs-of-Incarceration.pdf</p>

			<p>Rovner, J, (2023). Juvenile Life Without Parole: An Overview, The Sentencing Project, https://www.sentencingproject.org/policy-brief/juvenile-life-without-parole-an-overview/</p> <p>Hollandsworth, S. (2017). "The Prisoner," Texas Monthly. https://www.texasmonthly.com/true-crime/the-prisoner/</p> <p>Second Look for Justice, Safety & Savings: Quick Guide, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, May 2020 https://texascje.org/system/files/publications/Second%20Look%20for%20Justice%20Safety%20and%20Savings%20Quick%20Guide.pdf</p>
4/2	FIELD TRIP PLACE HOLDER	Student facilitation group for 4/9: Submit outline and discussion questions	
4/9	Restorative Justice Advocacy	Student facilitation group for 4/17: Submit outline and discussion questions	<p>Ierley, A. & Ivker, C. (2003). Restoring school communities; A report on the Colorado restorative justice in schools program. Victim Offender Mediation Association.</p> <p>Bazemore, G. (1999). Crime victims, restorative justice, and the juvenile court: Exploring victim needs and involvement in the response to youth crime.</p>

			<i>International Review of Victimology</i> , 6, 295-320.
4/16	Reducing Confinement What Now?		Rage of Innocence- Ch. 12: #BlackBoyJoy and #BlackGirlMagic: Adolescent Resilience and Systems Reform Mendel, R. (2023). Why Youth Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence. The Sentencing Project. https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/why-youth-incarceration-fails-an-updated-review-of-the-evidence/
4/23	Recap, Instructor Surveys	Final paper due	

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/the-foster-care-to-prison-pipeline-what-it-is-and-how-it-works>

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Closing Youth Prisons: Lessons from Agency Administrators:
https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/101917/closing-youth-prisons-lessons-from-agency-administrators_1.pdf

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<https://genderjusticeandopportunity.georgetown.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2020/06/girlhood-interrupted.pdf>

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Mooney, H., & Leighton, P. (2019). Troubled Affluent Youth's Experiences in a Therapeutic Boarding School: The Elite Arm of the Youth Control Complex and Its Implications for Youth Justice. *Critical Criminology*, 27(4), 611-626.

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Parents' Views in Two Juvenile Delinquency Courts in the United States. *British Journal of Criminology*, 55(5), 901–920.

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