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

Course Number:	SW393 R1	Instructor:	Mercedes Hernandez, Ph.D., LCSW
Unique Number:	61215	E-mail:	mercedeh@utexas.edu
Semester:	Spring 2025	Telephone:	(512) 471-8189
Meeting Time and	Tuesdays	Office:	WWH 302
Place:			
	11:30am-2:30pm	Office Hours:	Before or after class
	MEZ 1.216		other time by appointment

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 with which 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 the 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

The Clinical Assessment and Differential Diagnosis course (SW 393R 1) will:

Objective # Objectives

- Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of biological, psychosocial, and cultural theories on the etiology of mental health and mental illness;
- Demonstrate the ability to apply methods of empirically based assessment tools and techniques, including those developed through classificatory schemes, standardized measures, and qualitative typologies:
- 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;

- 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;
- 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;
- 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

Class format is both didactic and interactive. Case vignettes, video clips and semi-structured class exercises will accompany lectures, readings, and assignments with emphasis on issues of diversity and its impact on assessment. The combination of these approaches will highlight the process of assessment and differential diagnostic skills.

IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders*, 5th ed.-Text Revision. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Association.

DSM-5-TR full version is available through the UT library at https://dsm-psychiatryonline-org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/doi/book/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425787

(Pocket version is not acceptable as a substitute for the DSM-5-TR, as the full version contains much more necessary information.)

Note: DSM-5-TR Updates available at

https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/updates-to-dsm/updates-to-dsm-5-tr-criteria-text

Required Online Readings: All additional readings are available on Canvas.

Recommended

Black, D. W. & Andreason, N. C. (2020). *Introductory textbook of psychiatry* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.

Introductory textbook of psychiatry (6th ed) is available through the UT library at https://www-r2library-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/resource/title/1585624705

Morrison, J. (2023). *The DSM-5-TR made easy: The clinicians guide to diagnosis*. New York, NY: Guildford Press.

The DSM-5-TR made easy is available through the UT library at https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU INST/be14ds/alma991058483372806011

V. Course Requirements

The grade for the course will be based on your ability to demonstrate knowledge and apply assessment skills presented in class including differential diagnosis. Class attendance, participation, and promptness in completing assignments are considered when assigning the grade. This is a professional practice class, and each student is expected to demonstrate behavior that meets the criteria of the National Association of Social Workers code of ethics and meets the standards for professional practice of social work.

VI. CLASS POLICIES

- 1. You are expected to read the assigned readings (some students use study groups), attend each class meeting, remain in class for the duration of the session, contribute to class discussions, and participate in skill-building exercises. Failure to attend class regularly (missing more than two class sessions) may result in a lower grade for the course, at the instructor's discretion. As soon as you know that you will not be able to attend class, you should e-mail or call the instructor.
- 2. You should expect to spend an additional three hours (for each hour of class or lecture per week) of your own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for assignments or exams, reviewing online content, etc.
- 3. You are encouraged to fully participate in class, especially if you do not understand the material. This course should be a fully interactive one. No question will be regarded as insignificant by the instructor. However, the instructor will reserve the prerogative of asking students to meet separately if discussion or questioning is so extensive that it infringes on the topics that other students need to have covered. The classroom should be an open forum for the liberal exchange of differences of opinion and for discussion of these different perspectives, and for promoting understanding.
- 4. No late assignments will be accepted except in extreme emergencies and then only with permission of the instructor. If you are in an emergency situation you should contact the instructor and negotiate a new due date. All late assignments will be assessed point penalties at a rate of 5 points a day.
- 5. You should be especially careful not to contribute unwittingly to myths about mental illness and disability in the conduct of practice, research, interpretation of data, and use of terms. The integrity of persons being addressed should be maintained by avoiding language that pathologizes or equates persons with the conditions they have (such as "a schizophrenic," "a borderline," "addicts," "epileptics," or "the disabled") or language that implies that the person as a whole is disordered or disabled, as in the expression "chronics," "psychotics," or "disabled persons." Terms are preferred that preserve the integrity of the person, as in "persons [or people] with disabilities," "a person diagnosed with schizophrenia." Terms conveying negative overtones should be replaced with more neutral expressions. For example, instead of "confined to a wheelchair," state "uses a wheelchair."

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VII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic 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	Α	84.0 to 86.999	В	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 co	ourse	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

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modified or additional work equipment. Visit the <u>Title IX pregnancy and parenting resource page</u> for more information or contact the <u>Title IX Support and Resources team</u> 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.

VIII. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Assignment 1</u>: Article Assessment (15% of Final Grade)

You will select one of three articles found on Canvas and write a short answer paper (4-5 pages) addressing the DSM-5-TR and considerations for practice for social workers. A detailed guideline for the article assessment will be provided.

Assignment 2: Case Study Summaries (5% of Final Grade)

Each week we will work on a case study in class. Working with your group, you will provide a detailed response to questions related to the case study and submit your responses after class. We will have an opportunity to go over the case study and questions in class.

Assignment 3: Presentation (10% of Final Grade)

For this assignment, you will work with your group to present an article addressing the week's topic and discuss implications for assessment and practice. A detailed guideline will be provided.

Exams (30% Each; 60% of Final Grade)

There will be two exams. The first is an in-class exam at midterm consisting of case studies. The second exam, due at the end of the semester, is a take home comprehensive exam and will be similar in format to the first exam.

Class Participation (10% of Final Grade)

Class participation grade includes attendance, punctuality, and informed class discussion. Your contribution to the success of this course is important. Hence, students are expected to actively contribute to the class discussions and learning in and outside of the classroom.

Note: Any information contained in this course outline (including, topics, readings, assignments, and dates) is subject to change as deemed necessary by the instructor.

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit	Topics	Assignment Due	Readings
1 1/14/25	 Essentials of Psychiatric Diagnosis Introduction to the DSM-5-TR 		Required: DSM-5-TR: Introduction & Use of the Manual (pp 5-28) Yamada, 2013 [Instructor note: Skim] Recommended: Alarcón 2016; First 2022; Gambrill 2014; Mezzich 2005; Miranda 2008; Möller 2009; Robbins, 2014; Szasz 1961; Watters 2010

Unit	Topics	Assignment Due	Readings
2 1/21/25	 Culture and Diagnosis Assessing Other Conditions That May be the Focus of Clinical Attention Mental Status Exam: Behavioral Components 		Required: DSM-5-TR: Culture and psychiatric diagnosis (pp 859-879) Lewis-Fernandez 2014 [Instructor note: Skim] DSM-5-TR: Other Conditions That May be a Focus of Clinical Attention (pp. 821-836) Morrison 2014, Diagnosis and the Mental Status, pp 119-126 Morrison 2014, Mental Status Exam I: Behavior aspects, pp 123-135 Recommended: Black 2014; Canino 2008; Garcia-Barrera 2013; La Roche 2015; Lassiter 2011; Paniagua 2009; Snyderman & Rovener 2009 Video – MSE Training https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_ziBs7jVBU&list=PLjrSkZjk1CFCS AjlyVEOqnfL1BLPhhQxQ
3 1/28/25	 Mental Status Exam: Cognitive Components Psychiatric Assessment Tools Voice Hearing Exercise 	Assignment 1 Due 1/29/25 11:59pm	Required: Morrison 2014: Mental Status Exam II: Cognitive aspects Luhrmann, 2015 DSM-5-TR: Assessment measures (pp 841-857) Online assessment measures of cross-cutting symptoms: https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/educational-resources/assessment-measures [Instructor note: Skim]

Unit	Topics	Assignment Due	Readings
4 2/4/25	 Schizophrenia Spectrum and other Psychotic Disorders (Part I) 	Case Study Summary Due 2/5/25 12pm	Required: DSM-5-TR: Schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders (pp 101-138) Diagnostic interview video Recommended: Breitborde 2017; Chung 2023; de Portugal 2010; Gaebel 2018; Hernandez 2019; Lieberman 2019; Nasrallah, 2022; Olbert 2018; Outram 2014; Saks 2022; Tandon 2013; Wasow 2001
5 2/11/25	 Schizophrenia Spectrum and other Psychotic Disorders (Part II) 		Required: DSM-5-TR: Schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders (pp 101-138) Diagnostic interview video Recommended: Breitborde 2017; Chung 2023; de Portugal 2010; Gaebel 2018; Hernandez 2019; Lieberman 2019; Nasrallah, 2022; Olbert 2018; Outram 2014; Saks 2022; Tandon 2013; Wasow 2001
6 2/18/25	 Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders 	Case Study Summary Due 2/19/25 12pm *Presentation	Required:

Unit	Topics	Assignment Due	Readings
7 2/25/25	 Depressive Disorders 	Case Study Summary Due 2/26/25 12pm *Presentation	Required:
8 3/4/25	Bipolar and Related DisordersReview		Required: DSM-5-TR: Bipolar and Related Disorders (pp 139-175) Diagnostic interview video Recommended: Akinhanmi 2018; Cerimele 2018; Patel 2006; Strakowski 2000
9 3/11/25	■ Exam 1		
3/18/24	Spring Break		
10 3/25/25	 Neurodevelopmental Disorders Disruptive, Impulse Control, and Conduct Disorders 	Case Study Summary Due 3/26/25 12pm	 DSM-5-TR: Neurodevelopmental Disorders (pp 35-99) DSM-5-TR: Disruptive, Impulse Control and Conduct Disorders (pp 521-541) Ballentine 2019 Recommended: Coccaro 2012; Magaña 2013; 2017; Mulrooney 2019; Pardini 2010; Salvador-Carulla 2008; Vanegas 2016

Unit	Topics	Assignment Due	Readings
11 4/1/25	 Anxiety Disorders Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders 	Case Study Summary Due 4/2/25 12pm *Presentation	Required: DSM-5-TR: Anxiety Disorders (pp 215-261) DSM-5-TR: Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders (pp 263-294) Diagnostic interview video Recommended: Fawcett 2013; Lewis-Fernandez 2002; Marnane 2013; Pertusa 2010; Stein 2016; Szaflarski 2017
12 4/8/25	 Trauma and Stressor Related Disorders 	Case Study Summary Due 4/9/25 12pm *Presentation	Required: DSM-5-TR: Trauma and Stressor Related Disorders (pp 295-328) Holmes (2016) Recommended: DiMauro 2014; Friedman 2011; Maercker, 2022; Pai 2017; Shear 2022; Stein 2013; Strain 2011
13 4/15/25	 Personality Disorders Take home exam posted 	Case Study Summary Due 4/16/25 12pm *Presentation	Required: DSM-5-TR: Personality Disorders (pp 733-778) Diagnostic interview video Recommended: Alik 2005; Bourke 2013; Holm 2008; Hopwood 2011; McKay 2012; Rammstedt 2007; Sheehan 2016; Silverstein 2007; Strickland 2013

Unit	Topics	Assignment Due	Readings
	 Eating Disorders Diagnostic Trends and Controversies Review and Wrap-up 	Case Study Summary Due 4/23/25 12pm	Required: DSM-5-TR: Feeding and Eating Disorders (pp 371-405)
14 4/22/25		Take home Exam 2 Due 4/24/25 11:59pm	Recommended: Cuthbert 2018; De Cuypere 2011; Franko 2007; Fusar-Poli 2019; Micali 2017; Pilgrim, 2018; Reyes-Rodriguez 2019; Sauer- Zavala 2017; Stephan 2016; Strother 2012

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

REQUIRED READINGS

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RECOMMENDED READINGS

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