

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SW 513 Lifespan and Neurophysiologic Development in a
Cultural, Ecological, and Transactional Framework
(4 credit hours)**

Instructor: Terri Combs-Orme, Ph.D., Professor
tcombs-orme@utk.edu

**Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 2:30-3:30 (Please call or email
in advance)**

Code of Conduct

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct Code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook (www.utk.csw.edu).

The Honor Statement

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (*Hilltopics*, 2007).

Disability

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact The University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

Course Description

This is a required Foundation course. Theories, frameworks, and research that address culturally sensitive understanding of human development and behavior. Effects of risk/protective factors, culture, and other environmental effects, such as poverty, on developmental milestones. Includes neurophysiologic development across the lifespan, starting with early childhood; the profound influence of the environment on these processes; and implications for early prevention, treatment, policies, and services. Includes identification, assessment, and treatment of developmental delays and neurodevelopmental disorders. Processes critical to understanding human behavior and community risk and resilience for vulnerable populations are emphasized.

This course examines frameworks, theories, and research that address a culturally sensitive understanding of human development and behavior. Lifespan and neurophysiologic development in an ecological and transactional framework provides a foundation for understanding the

processes of human development and how these processes are influenced by culture and the environment. The course examines the effects of risk and protective factors at various ecological levels, such as attachment, poverty, and culture on developmental milestones. It includes neurophysiologic development across the lifespan, starting with early childhood; the profound influence of the environment on these processes; and implications for early prevention, treatment, policies, and services. Typical development will be covered as well as atypical developmental patterns that are consistent with neurodevelopmental disorders. Processes critical to human behavior and risk and resilience for vulnerable populations are emphasized to understand individual or family behavior.

Content in this course will be illustrated and centered around a case study approach in which students read case studies that are paired with theoretical and research material. Class discussion about the theoretical and research material will be linked to case studies, and students will use theory and research to construct hypotheses about individual or family adaptation to the environment. In addition, students will practice forming research questions and going to the literature to assess what is known about their questions.

Course Rationale

To practice accountably and effectively, social workers must be able to understand their clients and their presenting issues within their clients' environmental, cultural, and developmental contexts. In supportive environments, individuals flourish as they progress through developmental stages and stage-salient tasks. Other environments, because of risk factors associated with them, are less supportive of wellbeing. Even so, brain plasticity provides humans with an amazing capacity to adapt to these less supportive and sometimes frankly maladaptive environments, although sometimes at great cost to themselves. Especially for young children, the costs to the developing brain of less adaptive environments are profound because their brains actually become organized around repeated experiences within these less adaptive environments. Neurophysiologic changes and behaviors resulting from these earlier less adaptive environments are often conceptualized by clinicians as psychopathology or presenting problems of clients. Understanding human development as a series of processes mediated by the brain within an environment-dependent context profoundly reframes not only our understanding of our clients and their presenting problems, but also how to intervene appropriately with clients and their environments. This different understanding of human development also suggests the critical importance of effective prevention programs and social policies that promote wellbeing, as well as interventions directed at changing the larger environments of individuals. Thus, knowledge gained in this course will allow social workers not only to better understand, contextualize, and assess clients and their presenting problems, but also to develop more appropriate interventions, prevention programs, or policies for working with or for the benefit of clients and for the necessary environments to support human wellbeing.

Course Competencies:

By the completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments, and/or exams):

1. Articulate, critically analyze, and apply an ecological, transactional (risk and resilience) and developmental perspective of adaptive and maladaptive human development and behavior across the lifespan to the understanding and assessment of client systems and to reciprocal relations among individuals and families. (HBSE-F.1, Pops at-risk & SJ-F.1; Diversity-F.3, F.4; CT/EBP-F.1). *(content: attachment theory and neurophysiology as the major foundations with brief comparisons and contrasts to others; risk and resilience; cultural similarities and differences in development and behavior.)*

This competency is demonstrated in each week's CTE and in class discussion and participation.

2. Assess the validity of historically significant theories of human behavior and development for current social issues and problems that clients experience. (HBSE-F.2; Diversity-F.3, F.4; CT/EBP-F.1, F.2, F.3). *(content: brief comparisons and contrasts of major historical theories as appropriate, including psychoanalytic theory, Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, Vygotsky, and others).*

This competency is demonstrated in each week's CTE and in class discussion and participation.

3. Evaluate and apply [selected] evidence-based theories of human development and behavior that are sensitive to gender, class, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, family structure, disability status, and worldview. (HBSE-F.3; Pops at-risk & SJ-F.4; Values/ethics-F.1; Diversity-F.3, F.4; CT/EBP-F.1, F.3, F.4) *(content: evidence for application of attachment theory and neurophysiology with specific attention to gender, class, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, family structure, disability status, and worldview).*

This competency is demonstrated in each week's CTE and in class discussion and participation.

4. Explain the roles of neurophysiology, adaptive and maladaptive environments, and experiences, including the effects of trauma and chronic stress, on brain development and the role of genetics and epigenesis in development during the sensitive period of the first three years of life and across the life span. (HBSE- F.4; CT/EBP-F.3, F.4, F.5). *(content: basic introduction to Mendelian genetics and the Human Genome Project; epigenesis and gene expression; effects of stress and trauma on hormones, brain development, and gene*

expression; effects of early deprivation and parenting on brain development and gene expression).

This competency is demonstrated in each week's CTE and in class discussion and participation.

5. Conduct a scientific review of empirical evidence and theory to address questions about human development and behavior across the lifespan. (Values/ethics-F.3; HBSE-F.7; CT/EBP-F.3, F.4, F.5). (*content: construction and use of theories; how theories are tested; examples and meaning of testing of attachment, neurophysiological theories, and other theories across the lifespan; comparisons and contrast to non-evidence-based theories*).

This competency is demonstrated in each week's CTE, as students select appropriate research articles to respond to the CTE assignment.

Textbooks:

Suggested: *Writing with Style: APA Style for Social Work*. Lenore T. Szuchman & Barbara Thomlison. Wadsworth Publishing; 2nd edition. (*You may also use the American Psychology Association manual or various websites for this purpose. However, this is a good little book that has everything you need.*)

Class Schedule and Required Readings:

Unit I: Frameworks & Paradigms

For the first day of class, please read:

Freud, S. (1999). The social construction of normality. *Families in Society*, 80(4), 333-339.

Note that reading should be completed before the first class.

Unit II: Genetics and human development/behavior.

David, R. & Collins, J. (2007). Disparities in infant mortality: What's genetics go to do with it? *American Journal of Public Health*, 97(7), 1191-1197.

Harper, L.V. (2005). Epigenetic inheritance and the intergenerational transfer of experience. *Psychological Bulletin*, 131, 340-360.

NASW Code of Ethics. (Use NASW web link.)

Sandhu, J.S. (2006). Nature vs. nurture: A case report. *Delaware Medical Journal*, 78(11), 413-417. [case study]

Scarr, S. (1996). How people make their own environments: Implications for parents and policy makers. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 2, 204-228.

Strohman, R.C. (2003). Genetic determinism as a failing paradigm in biology and medicine: Implications for health and wellness. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 39(2), 169-191.

Viding, E. (2004). On the nature and nurture of antisocial behavior and violence. *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, 1036, 267-277.

http://www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human_Genome/project/about.shtml

Unit III: Brain and Behavior

Cicchetti, D. & Cannon, T.D. (1999). Neurodevelopmental processes in the ontogenesis and epigenesis of psychopathology. *Development and Psychopathology*, 11, 375-393.

Davies, M. (2002). A few thoughts about the mind, the brain, and a child with early deprivation. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 47, 421-435.

DiPietro, J.A. (2000). Baby and the brain: Advances in child development. *Annual Review Public Health*, 21, 455-471.

Schore, A.N. (2000). Attachment and the regulation of the right brain. *Attachment & Human Development*, 2(1), 23-47.

Siegel, D.L. (2006). An interpersonal neurobiology approach to psychotherapy: Awareness, mirror neurons, and neural plasticity in the development of well-being. *Psychiatric Annals*, 38(4), 248-256.

Waller, R.J. (2003). Application of the kindling hypothesis to the long-term effects of racism. *Social Work in Mental Health*, 3(3), 81-89.

Unit IV: Stress, trauma, and hormones

Carroll, G. (1998). Mundane extreme environmental stress and African American families: A case for recognizing different realities. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 29(2), 271-284.

Champagne, F.A. & Curley, J.P. (2005). How social experiences influence the brain. *Current Opinion in Neurobiology* 15, 704-709.

McEwen BS. (1998) Protective and damaging effects of stress mediators. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 338, 171-179.

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. Excessive stress disrupts the architecture of the developing brain. Working paper. developingchild.net. 1-16.

Talge, N.M. Neal, C., Glover, V. & the Early Stress, Translational Research and Prevention Science Network: Fetal and Neonatal Experience on Child and Adolescent Mental Health (2007). Antenatal maternal stress and long-term effects on child neurodevelopment: how and why? *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 48(3/4), 245–261.

Taylor, S.E. et al. (2000). Biobehavioral responses to stress in females: Tend-and-befriend, not fight-or-flight. *Psychological Review* 107(3), 411-429.

(Review) Waller, R.J. (2003). Application of the kindling hypothesis to the long-term effects of racism. *Social Work in Mental Health*, 3(3), 81-89.

Optional value-added:

Boyce, W.T. & Bruce, J.E. (2005). Biological sensitivity to context: I. An evolutionary–developmental theory of the origins and functions of stress reactivity. *Development and Psychopathology*, 17, 271–301.

Unit V: Gender and Sexual Orientation

Epstein, R. (2007). Smooth thinking about sexuality. Gay and straight....*Scientific American Mind*, October/November, p. 14.

Garrett, B. (2003). The biology of sex and gender. In *Brain and Behavior*, (pp. 154-187). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.

Kennedy, R. Out in School. *Metro Pulse* April 30, 2008.

Knafo, A., Iervolino, A.C. & Plomin, R. (2005). Masculine girls and feminine boys: Genetic and environmental contributions to atypical gender development in early childhood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 88(2), 400-412.

Maccoby, E.E. (2000). Perspectives on gender development. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 24, 398-406.

Martin, C.L., Ruble, D.N. & Szkrybalo, J. (2002). Cognitive theories of early gender development. *Psychological Bulletin*, 128 (6), 903-933.

Slater, S. (1999). Chapter 1. Lesbian families. In *The lesbian family life cycle* (pp. 3 – 14). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Vigue, D.I. (6/8/2000). 'Coming out' stirs debate at school: 1st-grade teacher tells class he is gay. *Boston Globe*, p. B01.

Wilgosh, L. (2002). Examining gender images, expectations, and competence as perceived impediments to personal, academic and career development. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 24, 239-260.

Unit VI: Pregnancy & Birth

Azmitia, E.C. (2001). Impact of drugs and alcohol on the brain through the life cycle: Knowledge for social workers. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions* 1(3), 41-63.

Coussons-Read, M., Okun, M., & Simms, S. (2003). The psychoimmunology of pregnancy. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 21(2), 103-112.

Domian, E.W. (2001). Cultural practices and social support of pregnant women in a Northern New Mexico Community. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(4), 331-336.

Rich-Edwards, J.W. & Grizzard, T.A. (2005). Psychosocial stress and neuroendocrine mechanisms in preterm delivery. *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 192, S30-35.

Sesma, H.W. & Georgieff, M.K. (2003). The effect of adverse intrauterine and newborn environments on cognitive development: The experience of premature delivery and diabetes during pregnancy. *Development and Psychopathology*, 15, 991-1015.

Unit VII: Infancy

Balbernie, R. (2002). An infant in context: Multiple risks, and a relationship. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 23(3), 329-341.

Combs-Orme, T., Wilson, E., Cain, D., Page, T. & Kirby, L. (2003). Context-based parenting of infants. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 20(6), 437-472.

Perry, B.D. (2002). Childhood experience and the expression of genetic potential: What childhood neglect tells us about nature and nurture. *Brain and Mind*, 3(1), 79-100.

Siegel, D.J. (2000). Toward an interpersonal neurobiology of the developing mind: Attachment relationships, "mindsight," and neural integration. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 22(1-2), 67-94.

Weatherston, D. (2001). Infant mental health: A review of relevant literature. *Psychoanalytic Social Work*, 8(1), 39-69.

Unit VIII: Childhood

Fish, B. & Chapman, B. (2004). Mental Health risks to infants and toddlers in foster care. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 32, 121-140.

Johnson, D.J., Jaegar, E., Randolph, S.M., Cauce, A.M., Ward, J., & National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network. (2003). Studying the effects of early child care experiences on the development of children of color in the United States: Toward a more inclusive research agenda. *Child Development*, 74, 1227-1244.

Logue, M. E. (2007) Early childhood learning standards: Tools for promoting social and academic success in kindergarten. *Children & Schools*, 29, 35-43.

Masten, A. S., & Coatsworth, J. D. (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons from research on successful children. *American Psychologist*, 53, 205-220.

Brooks, J. E. (2006). Strengthening resilience in children and youths: Maximizing opportunities through the schools. *Children & Schools*, 28, 69-76.

Fraser, M. W., Kirby, L. D., Smokowski, P. R. (2004). Risk and resilience in childhood. In M. W. Fraser (Ed.), *Risk and resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective*, (pp. 13-66) (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Iwaniec, D., Larkin, E., & Higgins, S. (2005). Research review: Risk and resilience in cases of emotional abuse. *Child and Family Social Work*, 11, 73-82.

Levy-Wasser, N. & Katz, S. (2004). The relationship between attachment style, birth order, and adjustment in children who grow up with a sibling with mental retardation. *The British Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, 50, 89-98.

Miller, K. M. (2006). The impact of parental incarceration on children: an emerging need for effective interventions. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 23, 472-486.

Unit IX: Adolescence

Barrow, F.H., Armstrong, M.I., Vargo, A. & Boothroyd, R.A. (2007). Understanding the findings of resilience-related research for fostering the development of African-American adolescents. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 16, 393-413.

Cicchetti, D. & Rogosch, F.A. (2002). A developmental psychopathology perspective on adolescence. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 70, 6-20.

Eccles, J.S., Wong, C.A. & Peck, S.C. (2006). Ethnicity as a social context for the development of African-American adolescents. *Journal of School Psychology*, (44), 407-426

Holleran, L. K. & Waller, M. A. (2003). Sources of resilience among Chicano/a youth: Forging identities in the borderlands. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 20, 335-350.

Millstein, S.G. & Halpern-Felsher, B.L. (2001). Perceptions of risk and vulnerability. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 31S, 10-27.

Ramirez, J.M. (2003). Hormones and aggression in childhood and adolescence. *Aggression & Violent Behavior*, 8, 621-644.

Stanton, B., Cuthill, S. & Amador, C. (2001). Adolescence and poverty. *Adolescent Medicine: State-of-the-Art Reviews* 12(3), 525-538.

Walker, E.F. (2002). Adolescent neurodevelopment and psychopathology. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 11(1), 24-28.

Optional value-added:

Krahnstover Davison, K. & Susman, E.J. (2001). Are hormone levels and cognitive ability related during early adolescence? *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 25(5), 416-428.

Saltzburg, S. (2004). Learning that an adolescent child is gay or lesbian. *Social Work*, 49, 109-118.

Unit X: Transition to young adulthood: 18-25

Arnett, J.J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55 (5), 469-480.

Bynner, J. (2005). Rethinking the youth phase of the life-course. The case for emerging adulthood? *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8(4), 367-384.

Jordan, B. & Dunlap, G. (2001). Construction of adulthood and disability. *Mental Retardation*, 39, 286-296.

Irwin, C. E., & Rickert, V. I. (2005). Editorial: Coercive sexual experiences during adolescence and young adulthood: A public health problem. *Journal of Adolescent Health* (36)5, 359-361.

Kenny, M. E., Barton, C. E. (2003). Attachment theory and research: Contributions for understanding late adolescent and young adult development. In Demick, J., & Andreoletti, C (Eds.), *Handbook of adult development* (pp. 371-389). New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Luecken, L. J., & Appelhans, B. M. (2006). Early parental loss and salivary cortisone in young adulthood: The moderating role of family development. *Development and Psychopathology*, 18, 295-308.

Unit XI: Adulthood

Hequembourg, A., & Brallier, S. (2005). Gendered stories of parental caregiving among siblings. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 19(1), 53-71.

Howell, L. C., & Beth, A. (2002). Midlife myths and realities: Women reflect on their experiences. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 14(3/4), 189-204.

Irwin, R. R. (2006). Spiritual development in adulthood: Key concepts and models. In C. Hoare (Ed.), *Handbook of adult development and learning* (pp. 307 – 325). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Lang, F. R., & Heckhausen, J. (2006). Motivation and interpersonal regulation across adulthood: Managing the challenges and constraints of social contexts. In C. Hoare (Ed.), *Handbook of adult development and learning* (pp. 149 – 167). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Seltzer, M.M. & Ryff, C.D. (ND). The parental experience in midlife: Past, present, and future.

Sinott, J.D. (2003). Adult development. Living in balance. From *Handbook of Adult Development*, pp. 221-238.

Stewart, A. J., & Torges, C. M. (2006). Social, historical, and developmental influences on the psychology of the baby boomer at midlife. In S. K. Whitbourne, & S. L. Willis Eds.), *The baby boomers grow up: Contemporary perspectives in midlife* (pp. 23 – 43). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Toro, C.T. & Deakin, J.F.W. (2007). Adult neurogenesis and schizophrenia: A window on abnormal early brain development? *Schizophrenia Research*, 90, 1-14.

Unit XII: Aging

Angel, L. L., Douglas, N., & Angel, J. L. (2003). Gender, widowhood, and long-term care in the older Mexican American population. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 15(2/3), 89-105.

"Around the Globe..."

Burke, D., Hickie, I., Breakspear, M., & Gotz, J. (2007). Possibilities for the prevention and treatment of cognitive impairments and dementia. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 190, 371-372.

Covan, E. K. (2005). Meaning of aging in women's lives. *Journal of Women & Aging*, 17(3), 3-22.

Kraaij, V. & Garnefski, N. (2002). Negative life events and depressive symptoms in late life: Buffering effects of parental and partner bonding? *Personal Relationships*, 9, 205-214.

Lindau, S.T. et al. (2007). A study of sexuality and health among older adults in the United States. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 357, 762-774.

Martin, P., & Martin, M. (2002). Proximal and distal influences on development: The model of developmental adaptation. *Developmental Review*, 22, 78-96.

Negash, S. & Petersen, R.C. (2006). Societal influences that affect cognitive functioning in old age. In K. Warner Schaie, Laura L. Carstensen, eds. *Social structures, aging, and self-regulation in the elderly*. New York : Springer Pub.

Silverstone, B. (2005). Social work with the older people of tomorrow: Restoring the person-in-situation. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 86, 309-319.

Unit XIII: The "Oldest Old" and End-of-Life Issues

Berg, A. I., Hassing, L. B., McClearn, G. E., & Johansson, B. (2006). What matters for life-satisfaction in the oldest old? *Aging & Mental Health*, 10, 257-264.

Carmel, S., Baron-Epel, O. & Shemy, G. (2007). The will-to-live and survival at old age: Gender differences. *Social Science & Medicine*, 65, 518-523.

Keller-Cohen, D., Fiori, K., Toller, A., & Bybee, D. (2006). Social relations, language, and cognition in the 'oldest old'. *Aging & Society*, 26, 585-605.

Walker, A.C. (2007). Lifespan issues and end-of-life decision making. In *Handbook of Thanatology: The essential body of knowledge for the study of death, dying, and bereavment*.

Grades and Assignments

This course provides information that is crucial to the rest of your MSSW studies. You can expect to devote about 10-12 hours per week to the class, including in-class time, readings, preparation of papers, and communication with the professor and your fellow students. There is no short-cut; class attendance and readings are necessary for you to learn this material, which is truly a foundation for the rest of your studies.

Your grade in this class is based on:

- ** Weekly critical thinking exercises (80%);
- ** Attendance and participation (20%)

The good news: There is no final exam.

My grading values:

A = 94-100

B+ = 90-93

B = 84-89

C+ = 80-83

C = 73-79

D = 66-72

F = <66

CTEs

Each week (prior to the discussion of the unit), students will complete a critical thinking exercise demonstrating understanding and application of that week's readings. Each unit's exercise will appear on the "Critical Thinking Exercises" link at the bottom of the unit page immediately after your last class. Thus, the CTE for unit 2 will appear in that unit (at the bottom of the page) at the end of the first class on Monday or Wednesday.

CTEs are always due before the class meeting on the topic. A calendar will be provided on the Blackboard site showing all due dates.

Much of my class planning will be built on these assignments, and I will grade and return them to you before class, so you will lose 5 points from your grade for each day that the assignment is late.

Even if you miss class, you still must complete the critical thinking exercise within the required time frame. Late work cannot be turned in more than 5 days late, and then the grade will be recorded as a zero (0).

Purposes

The weekly critical thinking assignments are designed to accomplish five purposes:

1. Assure that you come to class ready to discuss the material in an informed, critical way. I do not repeat everything that is important in lectures. Rather, I build on it.
2. Demonstrate that you read and understood the readings (and therefore your answers should integrate important points from the readings). Use the important constructs found in the glossary appropriately. Don't just use the terms; integrate them into your papers in ways that clearly demonstrate your understanding.

3. Demonstrate your critical thinking about the material (and therefore your answers should not just regurgitate what you read, but should integrate and synthesize the material in a meaningful way and be critical, analytical, and thoughtful). Do not just summarize the articles.

4. Guide the instructor in planning class sessions to clarify, elaborate, and discuss the material based on class members' levels of understanding. If I note common misunderstandings or shallow understanding of important issues, we will spend time on those issues in class. In cases where it is clear that all students understand important material, I may present more advanced material.

5. Enhance your abilities to write critical scholarly papers. Therefore I provide extensive feedback, and I expect to see my comments reflected in future papers.

Format

Papers must be written in the American Psychological Association (APA) style. After the first two weeks you will lose significant points for failing to adhere faithfully to the style. Your Szuchman and Thomlinson textbook is a good reference for the style, and there also are many www links to guide you, as well. See my hints for writing good papers under "CTEs". (Please note: APA style is complicated. You can't fake it, so use the book.)

Each question will ask you use and synthesize the material from the readings and sometimes to apply those readings to scenarios, social work applications, or your personal life. Think of each answer as a formal paper (in terms of writing and presentation), though it is shorter.

Each exercise will specify a maximum length, usually 250 words, not counting references. (This is not a suggested maximum; do not go over.) You do not need to write an abstract. There is no minimum length, but you need to fully answer the question. ONLY MICROSOFT WORD AND PLAIN TEXT CAN BE SUBMITTED. I cannot read other formats. Papers must be submitted by the Digital Dropbox on BlackBoard, and I will demonstrate how to do that during the first class session.

References

Each paper must include references to (not just listed, but woven in) a majority of the required readings for that week. In addition, you must select and integrate at least one scholarly article from the optional list for that week.

If you prefer, you may select an article yourself instead of using the optional list. The pertinence, timeliness, relevance, and demonstrated understanding and application of the article are part of your grade on the CTE.) Just adding an article to your reference section will not help your grade; it should be

integrated in a way that demonstrates your understanding and integration of it. (Note: I frequently look at these articles to verify your understanding.)

Your paper should include a "References" page as shown in APA format, including both class readings used (not just read) and the references you find on your own.

Note: There are 12 CTEs, but your grade will be based only on the 10 best grades. You may choose to skip 2 assignments, or you may do them all and drop your 2 lowest grades.

You would do well to read the exercise instructions before doing the readings, so that you can be alert to meaningful material in the readings. If you do not spend adequate time on this assignment, it will be reflected in your grade.

IMPORTANT: Writing skills are important, including grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, organization, and vocabulary. Please regard these assignments as an opportunity to sharpen the writing skills you will need throughout your time in the MSSW program.

As part of the goal to teach you to write, the University permits professors to require students to work with the Writing Center on their papers. This is a resource in the English Department that provides one-on-one writing tutors, and it has been very helpful to my students in the past. If you are required to work with the Writing Center, I will notify you within the first few weeks of class. Even if I do not require you to go to the WC, you may find it helpful if your writing needs improvement. See the UT Writing Center link under "Resources" on this Online@utk web site.

Attendance and Participation

There is no substitute for class attendance, and I do take attendance.

Class experiences are not duplicated in the readings, and crucial learning occurs during class. Class discussions will point out the highlights of the reading material, indicating what you should pay particular attention to in the readings. Class exercises, videos, or speakers will provide examples or illustrations of important material; this learning cannot be made up if it's missed. Most importantly, class discussions and contributions by your fellow students make up a majority of your thinking and learning.

I take attendance each class. Generally speaking, you will lose 5 points from this portion of your grade for each class missed.

Please note that these grades apply irrespective of any reason for absence, so I suggest that you save your absences for illnesses and true emergencies. Work-related absences, including court appearances, are not an exception.

It is also important that you be on time to class, as it is disruptive to me and to the class for students to arrive late. Please figure the traffic and parking

into the time you leave for class!!! These things are predictable and so are not excuses for being late. Don't act surprised that traffic is heavy and parking is scarce!! This is UT!!

If you must miss a class, feel free to attend that session in the other class if you can. Be sure to let me know so I can mark my attendance record accordingly.

The professor is not in charge of your learning--you are. A quarter of your grade measures your active participation in the learning process of this course. There are two aspects:

Class discussion

In a good class, you learn as much from each other as you do from the professor, so students are required to be part of class discussions. This includes asking questions, answering when called upon (which I will do randomly and regularly). You will not be penalized for giving a "wrong" answer. You will be penalized for not attempting to address the question, being obviously totally unfamiliar with that week's content, or being unwilling to engage with the class.

This also includes your response to the occasional request to complete out-of-class exercises and bring material to class. In the class, I will call on students to provide material about these out-of-class exercises, and the quality of your preparation will be assessed by your response. Finally, frequently I will ask you to write a short response to a question at the beginning of class. These responses will not be graded, but they will be part of class participation.

I will provide students with updates on the quality of class participation so that you can improve your performance if you are not satisfied.

Note: study the vocabulary before each class and be ready to define the terms for the class.

Also note: If you are not satisfied with an answer you give in class and want to improve your participation grade, write a short paragraph of the answer you wish you'd given and email it to me before the next class.

Discussion board

The Discussion Board offers another way to participate in class, and if you have difficulty speaking up in class you should use the board as a way of participating.

When you have questions about the content of the unit, post them on the Discussion Board link found at the bottom of the page for each unit. Each of you should check the Board daily and post frequently. If you see a question you want to answer, post your answer, with reference to the assigned readings, other readings, websites, or other sources. You also may upload

articles or URLs about current events or other topics for your fellow students. Note that students are not penalized for "wrong" or incomplete answers, but rather rewarded for active involvement.

In addition, each week I will post a question for you to ponder in relationship to the readings. I hope you will use this opportunity to think critically about these issues, to voice disagreements, and to provoke your fellow students and professor to thought.

Students who receive high marks for the discussion board will be those who post and answer questions almost weekly, with thoughtful questions and answers and the use of good authoritative sources. They will pose critical, thought-providing issues, and demonstrate deep thought about the issues. They will sometimes disagree with the Professor! They will challenge me and their fellow students to think more critically and to demand critical thought from others.

BTW, it will do you no good to post remarks ("I didn't understand that either.") or evaluative comments ("Good answer, Joe."). Posting is an opportunity to learn by asking questions, answering questions, and engaging.

Respectful and professional conduct and treatment of your professor and fellow students is expected, and issues in this area will be reflected in your grade.